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THE
LAB
SCHOOL

WINTER/
SPRING

'21



Inside the Issue

pg. 8

Activism Through Art,
Music, Words

pg. 10

Lessons from Virtual
Plus and Hybrid
Learning

pg. 16

Lab's Facilities Team:
Our Indefatigable
Superheroes

pg. 20

Short: Changemakers
Club

VIRTUAL PLUS



SILK ROAD. During one of the first Virtual Plus days on campus, Elementary students in Silk Road Club practiced interviewing each other using what, where, when, how, and why in preparation to interview their family members about their heritage and family trees.



RENAISSANCE CLUB. Using Leonardo da Vinci's notebook and the interest in the natural world during the Renaissance, Intermediate Renaissance Club students scavenged the wetlands and the playground for items from nature like an acorn, moss, or "something that feels smooth," then created an art project that focused on appreciating nature.

LAB STRONG. Junior High students enjoyed time on campus to work on projects, collaborate on assignments, and socialize with each other—with masks and social distancing.



TIDAL BASIN COLORS. On a Virtual Plus day in DC, High School Science students strolled along the Tidal Basin, observing and discussing how "color" is different from "pigment" and the science behind seasonal color change in plants. They foraged for natural pigments by picking, crushing, wetting, and rubbing natural items onto paper, then created images using these pigments.



WINTER/SPRING 2021

Table of Contents

FEATURES

- pg. 2 Talking 'bout a Revolution
- pg. 4 A Conversation with Lab's New Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Anthony Perry, PhD
- pg. 6 Seeing Yourself Reflected Back
- pg. 8 Activism Through Art, Music, Words
- pg. 10 Lessons from Virtual Plus and Hybrid Learning
- pg. 12 Armchair Travelers, Armchair Scholars
- pg. 15 ADHD Comic
- pg. 16 Lab's Facilities Team: Our Indefatigable Superheroes
- pg. 28 Celebrating Aaron Boose

IN EVERY ISSUE

- pg. 19 Student Profile
- pg. 20 Shorts
- pg. 22 From Where I Sit
- pg. 23 Why I Teach
- pg. 24 Alumni News

The Lab School of Washington is an innovative learning community fostering scholarship and creativity in students with language-based learning differences. In an environment of inquiry and hands-on exploration, Lab School students learn to advocate for themselves as they become engaged and compassionate members of a global society.



FOXHALL FARM: Elementary students enjoyed getting their hands dirty as they helped prepare the Foxhall Farm for its fall harvest.

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Talking 'bout a Revolution

“I write to
know what
I think.”

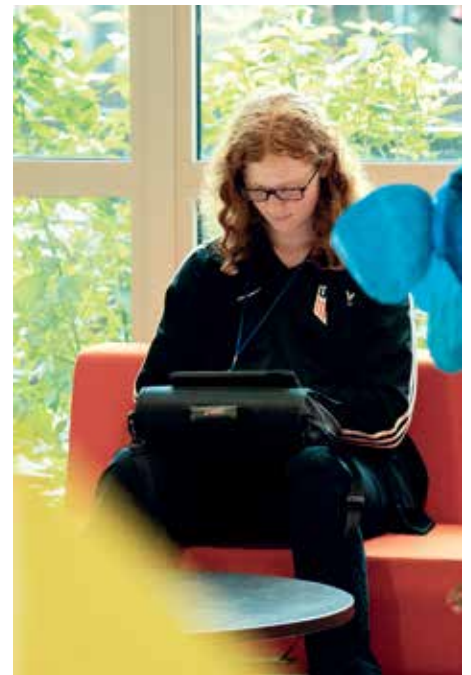
—JOAN DIDION

“Because, but, so.” Three small words, yes, but they can create a world of ideas. Learning how to use words like these helps students see how a sentence can be constantly expandable and that one idea can bring forth countless others. Tools like sentence expansion are part of The Writing Revolution (TWR)—a national program that transforms instruction across the curriculum through a proven, coherent method that enables all students to develop the literacy and critical thinking skills they need to engage productively in society.

In early 2019, The Lab School started training teachers in TWR and continues to widen instruction not only to classroom, reading, and English teachers, but also to those who teach other academic subjects. “Writing, reading, and thinking are indelibly linked,” says Director of Speech, Language, and Literacy Services **Melissa Wood**. “A research and evidence-based set of strategies to embed into the entire curriculum, TWR is a writing program, but more importantly, it’s a language program. Learning to write starts with oral expertise and skill, and when students develop rich oral language, their comprehension increases. And the better students are at writing complex sentences, the more they can capture and connect complex ideas they have in their heads or make sense of the ideas that authors have complexly conveyed through writing.”

By teaching writing tools like sentence expansion, the use of appositives and subordinating conjunctions, and scaffolding from sentence level to composition, students strengthen their ability to conjoin ideas with fluidity. “Whether in English, History, or Science, our teachers can challenge and encourage their students to think critically and deeply about the content they are studying, which is far more instructive than having them simply answer open-ended questions,” says Ms. Wood.

“TWR was one of the most effective professional development trainings I’ve ever attended; I was flooded with lesson ideas from the materials being presented. TWR is so scaffolded and sequential, which is so important for our students, and the idea of clicking into common content is a game changer. Being able to use background



knowledge from Academic Clubs, Art, Science, and other classes, or a book we are all reading in writing class has changed how motivated the students are, how confident they feel when generating paragraphs and sentences, and is so unifying!” says Intermediate Homeroom Teacher **Danielle Dibari**. “I can’t say enough good things about TWR.”

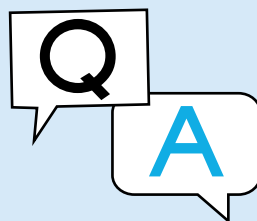
Using the common language of TWR from Elementary through High School helps students retain what they learn and build from it as the content drives the rigor. And the pre-made templates work just as effectively remotely as they do in person.

Not everyone was an immediate TWR convert. According to Ms. Wood, longtime Lab Junior High English Teacher **Debby Wise** was initially hesitant about implementing TWR in her classroom, but is now a proselyte. “Helping kids develop stronger sentences using the sentence expansion strategies has been almost magic. These strategies have been specific yet allow for creativity in word choice, so the sentences are far more interesting than what was there before,” says Ms. Wise. “I’ve also found that the exercises are especially good for testing comprehension. I can go through a chapter or chapters and then create exercises using the information from the text, which then forces the kids to return to the text, too, pushing them to expand and better organize their ideas.”

“By the end of the year teaching with TWR, many of my students who had begun the year unable to write a single sentence on a topic were able to write a five-sentence paragraph using a topic sentence, three details, and a concluding sentence. The growth was quite amazing,” says Elementary Classroom Assistant **Amy Reichert**.

“As their confidence in oral and written language—and executive functioning skills—increase, we see students’ in all divisions discover the joy of writing,” says Ms. Wood. “Our students are learning exactly how to generate writings that reflect their knowledge and sophistication. What once seemed daunting is now right at their fingertips!”





A Conversation with Lab's New Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Anthony Perry, PhD

Charlene Carruthers, in her book *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*, argues that “everyone invested in collective liberation must answer the following questions critical to determining the health and success of our movements: *Who am I?, Who are my people?, What do we want?, What are we building?, and Are we ready to win?*”

Before many people at The Lab School met **Anthony Perry, PhD** on individual and group Zooms, he sent out an email to our “staffulty”—as he calls our faculty and staff, a term that has been joyfully adopted by the community—setting out to answer the question “Who am I?”

We sat down to talk with Dr. Perry, our new director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, to learn more about who he is and what he hopes to bring to The Lab School community. Prior to Lab, Dr. Perry worked as a Spanish teacher for 15 years at five different schools across the country where he also worked on various DEI initiatives.

Q When you started at Lab, you sent a very powerful and personal email. Why do you think sharing personal information is important?

A We are all connected, and we all need to do the work of equity and inclusion. If people are to truly engage with each other with the goal of collective liberation, we must share the answers of Charlene Carruthers' five questions with each other. Seeing each other as individuals helps peel back some of the layers of discomfort.

Q Why the switch from long-time Spanish teacher to director of DEI?

A As director of DEI, I can work to make sure that my classroom is not the only place where people can invariably show up as their authentic selves.

Q What are three of your most immediate or important goals in your new job?

A My goals are not set in stone but here are my plans for big picture success: 1. Use my voice and my position to hold all of us at Lab to the commitment of DEI. 2. Encourage students, staff, alumni, and parents to think deeply about what an equitable and inclusive Lab School looks like. 3. Build trust and relationships. Rome was not built in a day, nor by one person. I can't do this work on my own; I want us all to work together.

Q In what ways should students feel supported academically, socially, and emotionally?

A Every student has to be valued and validated. Students need to come to campus knowing that the school has taken into consideration all parts of who they are and has worked to recognize and value all those parts.

If people feel as if they can't be their true selves somewhere, why would they put their whole selves into that work? I never want others to feel as if they have

to hide a part of themselves. This goes for students, staff—all everyone in the community.

Q Talk about how teachers—and administration—can develop better culturally responsive teaching practices?

A Doing this takes time and commitment. As of late, there is a huge sense of urgency to do something, to make change, to “fix” everything that continues to be inequitable and non-inclusive. That sense of urgency doesn't often make space for long-term engagement. It's not that we don't act; we do! But we also need to give ourselves the time to thoroughly engage in culturally responsive teaching.

And what does commitment to DEI really mean? Sometimes we don't see the whole picture, but must recognize the process. For example, when one of my Spanish classes concluded at the end of a year, the students might not be fluent but they had acquired the tools and the determination to take the next steps. DEI work is a process, too; no one becomes fluent overnight.

As I said in one of my emails to our community, this is going to be exhausting work, there will be unimaginable frustration, there may be tears. We can only do that kind of work with time and commitment.

Q What should a school do to ensure Black and Latinx students can show up and learn as their full, genuine selves?

A You have to hire more staff who look like and share a variety of experiences and identities with Black and Latinx students. Students and their families need to see their gender, gender expression, socio-economic status, religion, and race in their school—not just in the classrooms or hallways, but also in the offices of top leadership.

And in order for Black and Brown students to feel as if their voices are validated, they have to see their Black and Brown staff and faculty retained and promoted. It's about being respected and seeing respect shown equally and consistently.

Q How can faculty and staff help each other have more honest and intentional conversations about power and privilege?

A Practice. Let's use the handy sports analogy. When you are training for a race, some days your runs feel painful and slow, other days effortless, freeing. It's the same with difficult conversations. No one shows up in a vacuum for a perfect conversation. It's crucial to recognize that every time a conversation about equity and inclusion occurs, whether planned or not, those involved are bringing different experiences to it. Having ground rules helps. There has to be space for people to speak with honesty and rawness without fear of retaliation.

Q Depending on their age, how can students be encouraged to help each other have more honest and intentional conversations about power and privilege?

A We are having conversations about equity and inclusion with students in many settings—classes, clubs, affinity groups. We are also providing families with tools to have these conversations at home. It's empowering for a student to go home and at the dinner table say, “We talked about this at school, what do you think?” And already, I have had many families reach out to me for resources about how to breach difficult topics with their children, how to better instill their family's important values.

Q During the last several months, the BLM protests seem to have taken awareness about racial discrimination and its long history to a new level. Why now? What has changed? Do you think 2020 will have finally been a turning point?

A I would love to be hopeful, yes. I think that overall, things are moving in a direction of a more equitable and inclusive world. But there has to be systemic change. I thought after the shootings at Sandy Hook and later Stoneman Douglas High School that those events would be the catalyst for

change around gun control. But sadly, that did not happen. History shows that events like the Civil War or violence against women while simply marching for equality had to happen in order for enslaved people to be freed and women to get the vote. Civil wars and social movements don't come out of nowhere, and I know we are benefiting from the work of people before us, but I am not sure I will see total equity and inclusion in my lifetime. That said, I do want to be hopeful. I am hopeful, or I wouldn't do this work.

Q Tell me about the role of the new DEI division coordinators: Elementary Homeroom Co-Teacher **Lauren Caldwell**; Intermediate Academic Club Teacher **Liora Valero**; Junior High English Teacher **Amanda Palmer**; and High School History Teacher **Jewell Watson-Hellkamp**.

A They are each working with their division since each division has its own identity and the students in each are at different stages of intellectual and psychosocial development. We will share tools and resources, set goals, serve as a support system for each other, and help make intentional and systemic change throughout the school.

Q Did you have a learning curve, culturally, when you married your Lebanese husband? Has your inter-cultural relationship personally broadened how you see issues around DEI?

A Joe was born in Lebanon and moved to South Africa in High School then headed to Georgetown University. I have lived in Spain and Argentina, so I think we have enjoyed sharing our experiences in different countries and cultures, and having different nationalities. Our existence is inter-cultural . . . from food to music to languages spoken. Joe is an amazing cook and can recreate anything he tries at a restaurant . . . it's almost scientific. I am definitely not wont for food whether it be Lebanese, soul food, or a mix of both!

Seeing Yourself Reflected Back

If there is one universal human desire, it may be the longing to be heard, seen, and understood for all of who you are—no matter the day, the mood, the moment.

As part of The Lab School's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative, all four divisions have been deepening their efforts

around Affinity Groups. Based on surveys and input from students, the groups run the gamut from Gender Blender in Elementary and Latinx in Intermediate to the White Anti-Racist Group in Junior High and Family Structure/Adoption in High

School. The groups cover races, religions, learning and physical differences, genders, family structures, sexuality, and more.

No matter the age of the students, each group—facilitated by two or three faculty or staff members—starts with a check-in or an ice-breaker. "The goal is to have the groups be student-led," says Junior High Dean of Students **Rashaad Phillips**. "The facilitators have activities or topics in their back pockets, but most times, we kick off a meeting with 'What's on your mind today?'" In the Junior High Students of Color Group, which I co-facilitate, there is usually a mix of what students bring up and what the facilitators have prepared for that meeting. Recently, we have been talking about the nuances of racial identity where

Q Do you have a role model who has helped shape your career?

A Dr. Kim Bullock, the director of DEI at St. George's School where I worked for three years. She has and continues to support me; she lifts me up through her belief in me. I think most of us have felt that imposter syndrome at one time or another, especially being Black or Brown. Her encouragement around my potential and growth has been incredibly helpful. I see what she has done for me and I try to do that for others.

Q Tell me an anecdote about what you hope to bring to your new DEI position at Lab?

A At St. George's on National Coming Out Day, I gave a speech, telling a very personal story about my own experiences about knowing I was gay and coming out to my mother and grandmother. I didn't always feel fully seen at St. George's, so sharing this story with the whole school in chapel felt like standing on a precarious ledge. But I was able to because I had a group of wonderful colleagues who sustained me. Being vulnerable, I believe, gives others permission to do so, too, and through that vulnerability, we all get closer to feeling fully valued and heard.

Q Why is music such a powerful balm for you—if that is even the right word?

A Since I can remember, I have never gone a day without listening to music. Part of that love and need for music ties back to my parents, my whole family. Music was part of our daily experiences, and there was always music on road trips, for family gatherings, for happy and sad occasions, and definitely on Saturdays, which were cleaning days. The music got us through. And my grandmother's house was invariably filled with gospel music. For me, music is a way to exist, and a way to deal with emotions. And I love how music impacts memory. When something important happens, why not have a song to go with it ... a soundtrack to bring a memory back in vivid color?

a conversation may start with an activity like a virtual 'Privilege Walk' or with students bringing up something they read, posing questions, or sharing a personal experience. Sometimes the kids are quiet, most times we go over our allotted time because they don't want to stop the discussion."

"I think the Affinity Groups are a healthy step-away from academic classes," says Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion **Anthony Perry**. "They also serve as community builders on several levels. Our new DEI Coordinators—Elementary Homeroom Co-Teacher **Lauren Caldwell**; Intermediate Academic Club Teacher **Liora Valero**; Junior High English Teacher **Amanda Palmer**; and High School History Teacher **Jewell Watson-Hellkamp**—oversee the Affinity Groups in the divisions they serve, working with the facilitators for each group as well as overseeing the growth of the overall program. And students may meet new peers, making connections not only with them but also with the faculty and staff facilitators in a different capacity than in the classroom."

Being in an Affinity Group—a group of people linked by a shared identity, a common interest and/or purpose—offers students a chance to feel more comfortable asking questions, sharing experiences, or discussing certain topics. "I've had students in my group say that they wouldn't feel comfortable voicing this or that, but that in this space they feel the freedom and empowerment to do so," says Mr. Phillips.

In the Junior High School's Family Structure/Adoption Group, for example, members made personal collages about who they are as individuals and what family means to them, learned about famous adoptees such as Nelson Mandela and Simone Biles, and listened to Assistant Physical Education Teacher **Joe Scoria '05** share his personal adoption story. In High School, students have embraced several Affinity Groups related to religion—from Agnostic to Christianity to Judaism. Members of Elementary's Gender Blender Group talked about where the gender binary shows up in the world and the use of gender pronouns, while the Differences Group learned about types of diabetes and how it can affect people of all ages. Ms. Valero, the DEI coordinator for Intermediate, says that along with better developing the division's groups, she is working on creating resources for families to use at home, and encouraging Affinity Group facilitators to keep I AM U in mind as an anchor for the work. [I AM U was the February 2020 all-school event, spearheaded by the late Clinical Social Worker **Aaron Boose**, which celebrated the many identities at Lab, unifying them through through the arts. The second annual I AM U event will be held virtually in April 2021.]

"Students have a lot to contribute to these discussions. Many of them are eager to express their opinions and points of view, and to hear what their peers have to say," says Junior High Reading Teacher **Sara Hudgins**, one of the faculty/staff facilitators of the Junior High School Girls/Women's Group. "After some of our discussions, I find myself looking at the world a bit differently and pondering my own beliefs."



Often, it started with an image . . . a photograph of a little Black boy holding an action figure of the late American Actor **Chadwick Boseman**; a colorful, mosaic-like piece of street art from the Murals That Matter exhibit outside DC's National Building Museum of a young Black man with the words "Am I Next?"; or an image of "Society's Cage"—a cage-like art installation standing among the white stone monuments and landmark museums on the Mall.

ACTIVISM THROUGH ART, MUSIC,



Street art from the Murals That Matter exhibit outside DC's National Building Museum.

The questions and the discussions followed: *Why does this image speak to you? What did the artist intend? How does it connect to race, to Black Lives Matter, to 2020? How does looking at it make you feel?* Many of the projects and units in the two semester-long Junior High classes taught by Dean of Students **Rashaad Phillips** and English Teacher, Teaching Artist – Video **Adam Toal** focus on issues around social justice and questions about identity and equity. Using the arts as a catalyst, students in both classes are delving into heady topics, taking risks in class discussions and individual work, and making connections where before they may not have even glimpsed one.

"We started by building a vocabulary," says Mr. Phillips whose class is called *Between the World and Me: Current Events and Identity Development*. "To talk genuinely about current events and how issues around race, socio-economic status, gender, and sexual orientation are inextricably linked to what is happening in the world, you need to develop a vocabulary . . . *What does DEI really mean? What's the difference between equity and equality? Why is diversity about far more than just race? Why is inclusion so important?* From there, you can breach topics like the history of voter suppression, what society teaches are the 'norms' for boys and girls, and why professional sports often serve as political platforms."

“I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change . . .
I’m changing the things I cannot accept.”

—POLITICAL ACTIVIST ANGELA DAVIS

At the beginning of the year, Mr. Toal’s class worked collectively to create two video podcasts, “Music as Activism,” which featured an interview with the late Clinical Social Worker **Aaron Boose**, and “Art as Activism,” which focused on discussions around the deaths of Black people by police brutality, Black Lives Matters, and the protests and public art that sprung from these events. In the “Art of Activism” podcast discussion, one student pondered, “I read an article with a photo of a little Black boy with the quote, ‘When

do I stop being cute and start being dangerous?’ I feel like you have to be very careful in society if you are a Black boy. It’s as if you need to keep asking, ‘Are you going to shoot me when I’m not cute anymore?’”

WORDS

“We were asking some tough questions about the killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd . . . and how outrage can spark art and creativity,” says Mr. Toal. “Based on what was happening in the world, the time was ripe to plant the seeds of how to express big and oftentimes raw topics through words, music, art, and video. Later in the semester, we worked on some less intense, more fanciful topics.” Students worked together on a film based on a short story as well as individual mini-projects—from stop-motion videos to music videos. “While we were on campus during hybrid learning, we took advantage of our being together to collaborate on storyboarding, filming with one and two cameras, and using the green screen; from home, we focused on experimenting with music and its effect on video, editing, lighting, and the power of silence.”

In Mr. Phillips’ class, students also experimented with video using TikTok, Instagram Reel, and iMovie to create PSAs based on words they had discussed like democracy, liberty, freedom, voting, and justice. “The kids really got into it,” says Mr. Phillips. “We had original songs, videos showing voting options, a ‘vote’ dance video, and even a video where action figures discussed the challenges some people have when trying to cast their vote.” His students also worked on projects around the influence of advertisements and what it means to be an ally.

“In our class, we have had some fun and lots of opportunities to learn and create, but maybe more importantly, especially this year, my students realized more deeply the power of discussion, and the disadvantage of having only parts of a story or one point of view shared,” says Mr. Toal.

A RAP BY AARON BOOSE FEATURED, IN PART, IN MR. TOAL’S CLASS “MUSIC AS ACTIVISM” VIDEO PODCAST

Which side will prevail good or the evil
Before camera phones the world didn't believe you
Now we got Karen's and BBQ Becky's
An injustice system that never tried to protect me
So now you see the rage
I'm going like Luke Cage
So much grief and loss I don't even know the stage
It might be depression
It might be denial
I've experienced this trauma since I was a young child
the land of the foul
but I'm still black and proud
tryna lead my folks like General Colin Powell . . .





LESSONS from Virtual-Plus and Hybrid Learning

What do you envision when someone utters the word “flexible”? A yogi in full lotus position? Maybe one of those wacky inflatable tube men dancing, boneless, in a carefree wind? Since the start of the quarantine from the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the word “flexible” might also make you think of The Lab School of Washington.

The Lab community learned a great deal last spring when everyone had to suddenly flip to full virtual learning—and virtual living. There was a steep learning curve, lots of new technology to master, the sense of collective loss from not being together, but also some significant silver linings. “Just as we learned much from the virtual period from March to June that enhanced the experience of this fall, we learned much from this short pilot of hybrid teaching and learning that will help us be prepared for a hybrid 2021 spring semester,” says Head of School **Kim Wargo**. “This year has required us to use a different approach to planning—outlining several weeks or at most months ahead, rather than for the year, the semester, or the quarter—because of the many changing variables.” Indeed; think “flexible.”

Following Virtual Plus opportunities, which started in late September and afforded small groups of students and faculty on campus to promote connection, social-emotional well-being, and learning, Lab transitioned to its Hybrid Pilot—from mid-October until the Thanksgiving break—a combination of in-person and remote teaching and learning. “The pilot allowed us to test processes, recognize limitations,

and figure out how best to design and navigate a safe campus so as to bring more of the community back in-person for the spring semester,” says Ms. Wargo who daily reviews the metrics of Covid cases and speaks with leaders in the DMV as well as those at other independent schools and organizations in the area. “Everything we are doing sets safety firmly at the top.”

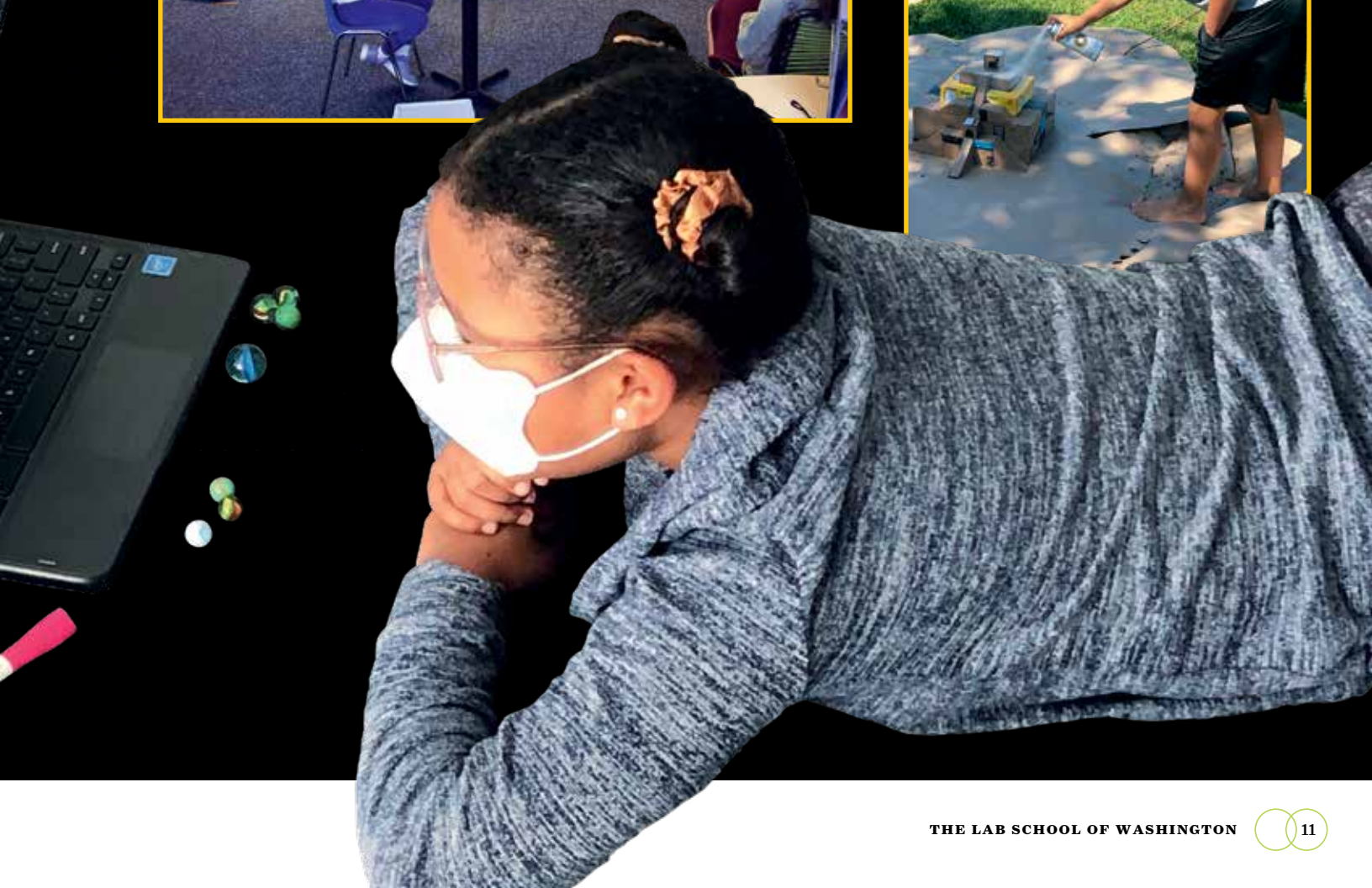
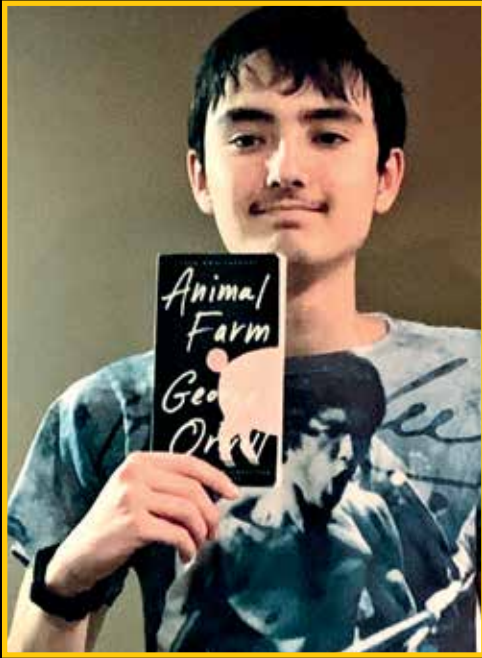
“While virtual learning has gotten easier over time and instruction has continued to be effective, engaging, and even multisensory—the Lab way!—we did see that during the Virtual-Plus and Hybrid Pilot that the connections formed between teachers and students as well as peer-to-peer were undoubtedly beneficial. The in-person opportunities supported our efforts to build trust with students and lay the groundwork for risk-taking during instruction in the upcoming months,” says Head of Intermediate **Kim Brown**.

Some of the biggest challenges during the Hybrid Pilot involved students who were placed in small cohorts, missing their other friends and “normal” school where they could visit with whomever they wanted between classes, and juggling in-person and virtual instruction. “It was difficult for our on-campus crew to work with the students and try to troubleshoot technology to plug in teachers who were virtual while dealing with bathroom breaks, snack time, arrival duties, and all the other things that happen on campus,” says Head of Elementary **Amy Oswalt**. “We are definitely working as a school to improve this for however we end up teaching in 2021.”

“Until the pandemic ends, we need to continue to work on the risk/reward ratios of on- and off-campus learning. There are many pieces to this including supporting our community members who may have health-related issues that prevent them from returning to campus at this time, beefing up safety and preventative measures in all of our facilities, and ensuring the big-picture financial sustainability of the school,” says Ms. Wargo. “I do feel that along with all the challenges, there is now a light at the end of the tunnel, and we can start thinking about how to apply lessons learned going forward. It would be a missed opportunity to simply revert back to everything as it was pre-Covid. Perhaps we think about our spaces differently, shift priorities around the balance of social, emotional, and academic growth, or build into our curriculum more outdoor learning opportunities. Perhaps—with a longer lens—we look into opportunities to offer Lab’s successful distance learning model to the greater national and international population of people with learning differences.”

That inflatable tube man still dancing in your mind? It is the flexibility of thought that arises from times of adversity, after all, that often brings about the best, most surprising changes.





Armchair Travelers, ARMCHAIR SCHOLARS

If the internet gave us a particular gift, it put the world at one's fingertips. And now more than ever, being able to learn and explore without leaving your living room or classroom is all the more important—and fulfilling.

This year, The Lab School purchased a subscription to Virtual Field Trips, which provides K–12 teachers with educational, destination-based videos for social studies, geography, life science, and ancient civilization curricula. The resources help educators take their students “around the globe, or around the block, and open their eyes to the majestic and magnificent world around them!” Teachers in all divisions have taken advantage of this tool and gone beyond it to explore other resources and experts.

VIRTUAL VISITORS FROM BOTH COASTS

In Academic Club Teacher **Liora Valero's** Intermediate Renaissance Club, Geophysicist **Trevre Andrews** visited the class virtually to speak about what geologists do, what they knew about geology during the Renaissance, and what geology tells us about the earth and its connection to understanding human history. “Students talked about their favorite rocks and crystals, and asked great questions, like ‘Where are the oldest rocks?’, ‘How are fossils formed?’, and ‘How did rocks from the bottom of the ocean get to the tops of mountains?’” says Ms. Valero. “One of the most exciting facts Mr. Andrews shared was that many of our granite table tops come from rocks that dinosaurs once walked on!”

Museum Club welcomed Curator **Kevin Schott** from the Penn Museum in Philadelphia. Did you know that Queen Puabi from the Sumerian city of Ur (c. 2600 BC) had a headdress of gold, lapis lazuli, and other precious stones and metals which weighed more than five pounds? Curators in Academic Club Teacher **Sara Hawkins' class** do, thanks to Mr. Schott's virtual visit. Queen Puabi's headdress as well as many other artifacts from Mesopotamia are part of an exhibit at the Penn Museum. From Mr. Schott's presentation, Lab's curators learned about anthropology and archaeology, how artifacts are excavated, cleaned, protected, and then shown in museums for the public to see and for researchers to study. They now understand the key questions that go into creating a museum exhibit—from who is the audience and what do you want the audience to discover to what is the simplest, most engaging way to show this information and what is the big, “takeaway”



Students worked on related projects from their virtual field trips, visits, and units such as making dream catchers and teepee models based on the cultural mores of Native Americans, practicing hieroglyphics with sidewalk chalk, and using a metal embossing technique to create replicas of illustrations from the Epic of Gilgamesh among others.



idea. The students were able to ask questions about the artifacts and exhibit—and about Mesopotamia and the fact that the history of cities began in the Middle East.

TO ANCIENT GREECE AND ANCIENT ROME

In High School History and Government Teacher **Cristine Colombo**'s class, students have been traveling and excavating . . . so to speak. The class took virtual field trips to both Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, focusing on the achievements and legacy of the cultures, then searched their own homes for objects that represent the legacy of the Ancient cultures based on what they learned.

The trip to Ancient Greece included a video that highlighted the many ways Western culture is specifically influenced by the Ancient Greeks including the Greek Gods. From around their homes, students collected items such as sports equipment to exemplify the Olympics, pottery or statues to exemplify art styles, a geometry textbook to show the advancements in math, and olive oil as an example of a type of food eaten.

The Ancient Rome experience focused on the achievements, inventions, and advancements of the Romans. Some items students showed from home were arches in doorways and windows—the keystone arch being a Roman invention, a clock with Roman numerals and a calendar, designed by Julius Caesar, which specifically focused on the months of July and August, added to the calendar and named for Julius and Augustus Caesar. Students also showed the bathtub in their home to represent the practice of Romans to bathe regularly and to frequent public bath houses. Home may never appear or feel the same . . .

A CLOSE LOOK AT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In Elementary, Homeroom Co-Teacher **Adzua Robinson** led her students on a virtual expedition of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian to further expand their study of Pre-Columbian America and the lives of Indigenous Peoples.

Led by two registered members of different Native tribes—Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa and Ojibwe, the tour featured an interactive slide presentation where the students navigated and submitted their thoughts as they were shown images of the exhibits. The focus was on three particular exhibits: the Story of Thanksgiving, the Story of Pocahontas, and

General Custer's Last Stand.

"The field trip asked students to think about how much Native American culture has influenced and still influences American culture. It also challenged them to think critically about the stories they've heard about Native people and how those stories are presented," explains Ms. Robinson. "For instance, when asked about the Battle of Little Bighorn, many students thought that General Custer was the victor of the battle based on imagery when he was, in fact, defeated. Students were asked to examine why the story was presented in that way. And for the story of Pocahontas, students were led to understand that we've never actually heard Pocahontas's story in her own words and were then asked to think about how they have felt when something happened and they were not able to tell their part of the story."

She adds, "In all, the trip was a great way to deepen our understanding of the unit and to help students to try to

put themselves into the shoes of their American Revolution Academic Club characters while trying to discard the lens of the European world view. I could almost see the gears churning in their brains . . ."

VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP CLUB

Some of the extra-curricular clubs in Junior High and High School have been enjoying some armchair adventures. Led by English Teacher **Susie Wolk** and using the Virtual Field Trip resource, Junior High club members started with a trip to Tokyo followed by another adventure checking out the creatures in the Amazon Rain Forest where they saw, among other things, camouflaging insects. "We also had time that day for a stop at Etosha National Park in the northern part of Namibia, where we went on a short African Safari," laughs Ms. Wolk. "We traversed many a mile in a very short time!" Other experiences have included focusing on celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

and, through a National Geographic voyage, learning about the history of Latin America by visiting the ancient and amazingly constructed Inca city of Machu Picchu in Peru. "It's been great fun, and we have learned so many wonderful and abstruse facts," she says. "We all need some travel and exploration right now!"

And in High School's Virtual Adventure Club led by English Teacher **Jennifer Sherman**, students are traveling to and learning about different regions in Italy . . . they even learned how to make cannoli with chocolate chips. "We have discovered that the planning of our trips is almost as exciting as the trips themselves," says Ms. Sherman.

Until we can get back into the world, these virtual adventures seem to be great ways to learn about and revel in the world—past, present, and future.

New Experiences

ON THE LANDSCAPE OF THE IMAGINATION

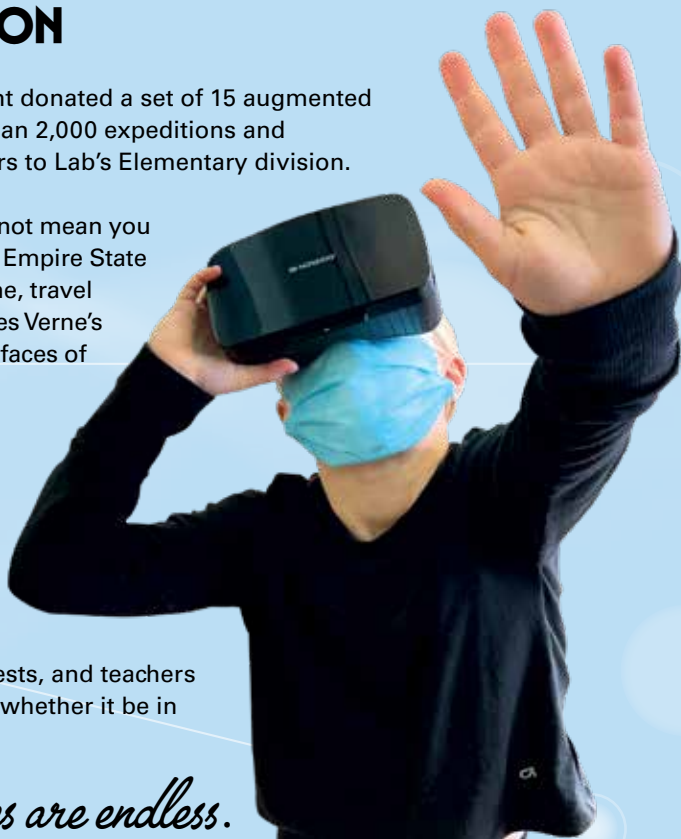
Not all the best gifts come in tiny packages. This fall, a generous parent donated a set of 15 augmented reality/virtual reality (AR/VR) goggles with a tablet loaded with more than 2,000 expeditions and experiences and several hours of professional development for teachers to Lab's Elementary division.

Sure, we're still in quarantine as the pandemic rages on, but that does not mean you can't strap on some goggles and see the view of New York City from the Empire State Building, walk around the Roman Coliseum as if you stepped back in time, travel through the systems and organs of the human body, or journey into Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* to discover the many lands below the surfaces of the seas.

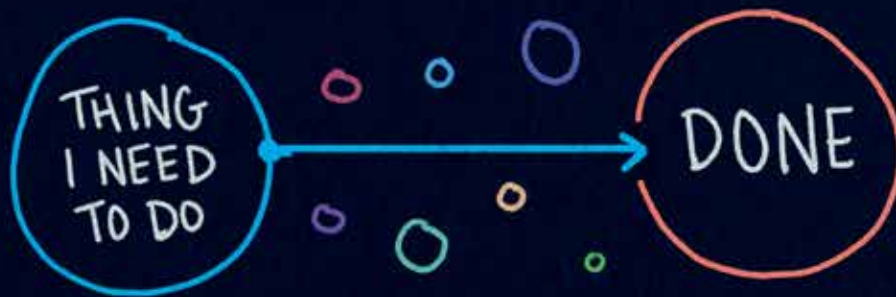
With a headset and motion tracking, VR lets you look around a virtual space as if you're actually there, or play a game like you're really in it. AR, though similar, is the real-time use of information in the form of text, graphics, audio, and other virtual enhancements integrated with real-world objects.

"We're thrilled and so grateful for this gift!" says Head of Elementary **Amy Oswalt**. "Students can use the goggles to pursue individual interests, and teachers can employ the technology to enhance what they are teaching in class whether it be in Gods and Goddesses Club or a unit about the Barrier Reefs in Science.

The possibilities are endless.



THE PLAN



THE REALITY



adhd.com

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@danidonovan

LAB'S FACILITIES TEAM:

OUR INDEFATIGABLE SUPERHEROES

OUR FACILITIES TEAM ARE HEROES. THEY WERE HEROES BEFORE COVID-19; NOW, THEY ARE SUPERHEROES.

So much of what keeps the school going is done behind the scenes by these dedicated, hard-working, and big-hearted people: Crew Chief **Francisco Maravilla**, Crew Coordinator **Nadia Romero**, Facilities Associate, Foxhall Campus **Gonzalo Romero**, Facilities Associate, Bus Driver **Hipolito Soriano**, Facilities Associate, Bus Driver **Darrell Jefferson**, Facilities Associate **Emilio Trujillo**, and Day Porter/Contractor **Aníbal Vega**, headed up by Associate Head of School for Finance and Operations **Laurelle Sheedy McCready** and Interim Director of Facilities and Operations **Mike Huber**.

To document everything that Facilities does, a special, several-page insert to this magazine would be necessary. Think: fulfilling all repairs and maintenance, orchestrating arrival and dismissal, setting up and taking down events of all sizes, monitoring security, HVAC, and other complex systems, cleaning and disinfecting everything, painting, raking, watering, moving furniture and boxes, fulfilling daily requests of all sizes and types, and carving out extra time to work on major capital improvement projects . . . all the while keeping the entire community's safety top of mind. These are broad strokes, a tiny tip of the proverbial iceberg. In the November 2020 Middle States Accreditation report, Facilities received a special commendation.

In addition to all that they do, the Facilities team cares deeply for and about the students, their families, and the faculty and staff. They show it through their hard work, their morning—and afternoon—"holas" and waves from the shuttles, and their kindness. It goes without saying, that the whole community feels the same way about them!

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SUPERHEROES ►



FRANCISCO MARAVILLA



NADIA ROMERO

FRANCISCO MARAVILLA

In many ways, Mr. Maravilla is a self-taught expert. He watches, listens, and learns. A skilled handyman who can solve, fix, or create a workaround for most maintenance issues, he teaches himself what he does not know. On his off-time, he often consults YouTube to teach himself new job-related skills; he thinks, he tinkers.

"I love my job. I try to do anything and everything that people ask me to do. I love to help," says Mr. Maravilla who started at Lab in 2012. For the eight years prior to Lab, he worked at National Presbyterian School for Ms. McCready . . . his current boss! "She has always been good to me, encouraging," he says.

"I know that one of my responsibilities is to take care of the staff and students and that's why I like to greet and welcome them every day. As for the Facilities team, we work well together . . . we do our best to support each other, and we share our cultures and tastes."

Mr. Maravilla has three children, Hugo, who used to work at Lab and who now lives in El Salvador, Karen, and Dalia, and two grandchildren with a third due in July. He lives with Dalia and his grandson, Alejandro. "He's 5 years old, very smart and curious. We watch a lot of educational TV together like the Discovery and History channels. The other day he asked me if I knew which planet rotates the opposite way from all the others. I did not. 'Popito,' he said, 'Now you do. It's Venus.'"

NADIA ROMERO

"I love what Lab does . . . I enjoy seeing what kids are capable of accomplishing in a place where they have the right help.

I have seen how teachers put a lot of love in their teaching. I have been here for about 12 years, and I consider some of the staff family because of the closeness we have developed and the support they have offered me," says Ms. Romero.

As the "maestro" of the group, Ms. Romero juggles a lot each day—from small requests to bigger jobs like planning and preparing for events, which she says she particularly enjoys. There is always a lot to do, and often, there are last minute changes and requests. But when all is said and done, she says, it is gratifying to see people happy, enjoying a set-up for an event like graduation or last year's I Am U event, which she thought was incredibly special, the whole school interacting in creative and thoughtful ways.

She adds, "The Facilities team has been together for so long, we consider ourselves family. We support each other through the good times and the bad, and we have learned to communicate in order to get the job done. No matter where we are from, here we are family."

Ms. Romero has three children—a son, a member of the Air Force who is married with a baby girl, a daughter who works as a social worker and who has a four-year old son, and an 8-year-old son who revels in building intricate Lego creations.

GONZALO ROMERO

Mr. Romero is the first to arrive at Foxhall every morning. In fact, he is there long before anyone else arrives. In those quiet, early hours, he opens the building and checks each space to be sure they are ready for the day. Then he heads outside to check the parking lot and other outside areas to ensure that

everything is clean and safe. During the day, he checks and cleans the bathrooms, disinfects all spaces and surfaces, circulates throughout the building and outside, and assists staff as needed.

"I like to take care of people around me. For nine years, I have worked at Foxhall where the teachers are very friendly and I try my best to respond to their needs. The children greet me almost always, and when they do, they make me feel really happy to know that my work is valued," says Mr. Romero. He adds that he greatly enjoys working as part of a team with all of Lab, especially the other members of the Facilities team. He says that, for him, Lab is like a family.

One of Mr. Romero's favorite days each year is when he gets to spend some time with the student Principal for a Day. He helps that student oversee arrival, deliver a special lunch or snack, or help in any other special project the student has planned during his or her short tenure.

Mr. Romero's mother lives in the area and his young-adult son lives out of state. He has been a part of The Lab School for 12 years.

HIPOLITO SORIANO

Mr. Soriano, who has been at The Lab School for 17 years, says that he has known some of the faculty and staff for many years and considers them friends. And he enjoys the coexistence among the Facilities team—a strong group who support each other. He says he enjoys driving the High School students to their community hours and internships, and hearing them talk about what they do in the jobs. It makes him feel really good, he adds, knowing that his job is helping them to succeed and to be independent.

Although there is never an "average" day for any of the Facilities team members, on any given day, Mr. Soriano checks in upon arrival, circulates—outside and inside—ensuring that everything is set up, open, and ready for a new day. He stays on top of emptying trashcans and keeping the campus clean and safe, and he helps with dismissal, running the staff shuttle, and closing down the campus at night. He says when the pandemic is over, he looks forward



GONZALO ROMERO



HIPOLITO SORIANO

to returning to driving students to their in-person sports practices and games, the juniors to their internships, and the students and staff who regularly ride the shuttles. “I like to keep people happy at school, and make sure the school is safe,” he says.

He has three daughters, ages 10-29. In his off time, he enjoys spending time with his youngest daughter, playing in the park and taking walks together.

DARRELL JEFFERSON

Fourteen years ago, when Mr. Jefferson started at The Lab School in Transportation, he remembers telling Founder **Sally L. Smith** that she did not need to worry about him; he would do a great job. Known for his irrepressible smile, Mr. Jefferson has certainly lived up to the bargain, serving as an indispensable part of the Facilities team, primarily as a bus driver.

A self-proclaimed “mama’s boy” (sadly, his beloved mother died in late 2020), Mr. Jefferson says he learned his work ethic not only from his mother, older brother (who attended American University and served in the military), and older sister—he has nine siblings in all!—but also from his grandparents with whom he spent many summers as a kid helping on their farm. “My family taught me to be kind, reliable, and to protect people, especially women and children,” he says.”

He extends his warmth and care to the community at Lab—whether to the students and staff he sees daily on the shuttles, always asking them about their forthcoming basketball games, what they’re doing in school, or how they are being the most positive version of themselves. “The

Lab School is made up of good people. I like being a part of it. I like to treat the school like my home, always looking for ways to make it better.”

Mr. Jefferson has three children, two grandchildren, and a large extended family. On his off-time, he enjoys playing basketball, fishing, and relishing in the speed and heft of racecars and monster trucks.

EMILIO TRUJILLO

After 24 years at Lab, Mr. Trujillo certainly knows the lay of the land. He has seen the children of several staff members grow, graduate, and return to share news of their careers and families. He remembers a couple of very enthusiastic basketball players during a victorious tournament who are now members of the faculty and staff. He recalls when the gym was new, when Occupational Therapy was housed temporarily in trailers, and when the old Kelly Theater opened for its first show.

“Right from the start, I fell in love with the school and my work here,” he says. “I care greatly about the people and the place. I feel responsible for taking care of the students, families, and teachers. And our Facilities team, we are like family, we share our cultures, problems, achievements, and future plans.”

For the last few years, Mr. Trujillo has worked afternoons and evenings, his day starting at dismissal. He says that it’s a happy time of day. The kids, and the staff, have had full days and are ready to head home. He enjoys the good energy. From there, he focuses on the assignments on any given day—painting a stairwell, fixing a furnace, setting up and taking down for an event.

Mr. Trujillo and his wife live with their three children, one of whom, Ricardo, the oldest, used to work at Lab. One year when his mother was visiting from Mexico, Mr. Trujillo drove her to see the campus. “This is where I spend half of my life, I told her. We both sat and smiled. I think she enjoyed seeing the location of my other family,” he says.

ANÍBAL VEGA

Mr. Vega says he likes being a part of the Facilities family because they haven’t made him feel different from them as a contract worker. “They have received me very well and each one has taught me what they know without selfishness,” says Mr. Vega who before he started at Lab two years ago worked in maintenance at Union Station. He adds that he thinks that The Lab School is a great community of support for the students and that the teachers are kind and patient. “I feel that I have found a new family here at Lab,” he says.

Always with a smile of his face, Mr. Vega, like his Facilities colleagues, helps keep the campus running. Each day, he arrives and checks in. He looks over the list of tasks, walks around the campus and fixes anything that is in need. He also stocks the bathrooms and disinfects the classrooms, entrances, handrails, and doors. After 5pm, he supervises the night cleaning crew. He says he invariably enjoys coming onto campus and being greeted with smiles from students and staff; he likes interacting with everyone.

Mr. Vera has two grown children who live in the United States, and two others who live in El Salvador. He also has two granddaughters ages 5 and 3.



DARRELL JEFFERSON



EMILIO TRUJILLO



ANÍBAL VEGA

STUDENT PROFILE

LOGAN JOHNS '22

Since sixth grade, **Logan Johns '22** has been called Mr. Mayor. “We joke that Logan is the Mayor of Lab; he knows everybody and is a wonderful connector and community builder,” says Associate Head of High School **Christopher Lanier**. “He has a big heart and is kind to everyone. He not only checks in with his peers but also with the faculty.”

A student at Lab since second grade, Logan says he has always been a social kid but, in many ways, Lab has helped him step beyond his comfort zone. During his sophomore year, for example, he attended the Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC)—the National Association of Independent School’s student equity and justice conference, which focuses on self-reflecting, forming allies, and building community—which he says was “hands down the best choice I made in 2019. I knew something electrifying would happen to me there . . . and it turned out to be making friends who I think will always be in my life, and learning a lot about other people who have different points of view from me. And it surprised me to meet people who don’t look like me but who can still understand some of my experiences. I’ll also always remember how Mr. Boose [the late Clinical Social Worker **Aaron Boose**] helped me grow more comfortable with being uncomfortable. That’s powerful.”

During the The 2018 Young Men of Color Symposium and (Re)defining Power Conference, “Unlearning Dominance to Learn Accountability to Experience Freedom,” which Logan attended with several peers and faculty and staff from Lab, he says he had a realization about what he wanted to do with his life. “I met some incredible people at that conference, too, and I started to think that I definitely wanted to pursue a career as a political activist, or a photojournalist. It felt like an epiphany to me,” laughs Logan. “But I guess it’s not that much of a stretch since both my parents are political journalists.”

For two years, Logan has been involved in Eye to

Eye—a highly successful national mentoring movement that pairs kids who have learning differences like dyslexia and ADHD with college and high school mentors who have been similarly diagnosed. “I’m really proud of being part of Eye to Eye. I’m big on helping people, especially kids who look like me and who need to understand and accept their LD. I want them to know that their differences are not disabilities or disadvantages, and sometimes they’re even superpowers.”

With a grandfather who ran track and field and played soccer for Jamaica, and parents who were track and field stars in college, Logan thrives on the basketball court, soccer field, and in track and field. “Being on a team is the best. I’m a social person and can talk everyone’s heads off, but when I am playing, I focus,” says Logan. “And it’s not just the sports themselves. Coach Scolah and Coach Baytop [Assistant Physical Education Teacher **Joe Scolah '05** and Junior High Substitute Teacher **Gaia Baytop**] have been there for me as an athlete, but also in life. When my stepfather died suddenly during my sophomore year, I really struggled. I always felt like I had two dads, and losing him, well, it’s hard to describe. I also had some dark times when **Giovanni Little** [Class of 2015] was killed; he always treated me like a little brother. Coach Scolah and Coach Baytop definitely helped me through.”

Already worth his salt as a political activist, in spring 2020, Logan co-founded a Black Lives Matter rally at Washington Episcopal School in Bethesda. “All we want is change. A change so that everyone can stop being looked at as a criminal. All we want is to be loved and not treated like property. If I want a change on this planet for my people, then you should, too,” he said to the crowd of several hundred.

“I love my culture. I love who I am, and what I stand for. I shouldn’t get strange looks for having a certain skin color or for enjoying different cultural traditions,” says Logan. “I want to do what I can now—and in the future—to bring people together.”



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CHANGEMAKERS CLUB

For each legendary activist like Martin Luther King, Jr., Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Rachel Carson, there are thousands of lesser-known but equally bold individuals who fought for social justice. Intermediate's new Academic Club, headed up by Teaching Artist - Writing **Amy Young**, Changemakers Club is focusing on people who have used their voices, taken great action, and even risked their lives for positive change in the Civil Rights, women's suffrage, immigration rights, and the environmental movements. "The club is a way to talk about the world in a positive way," says Ms. Young. "Already, I notice a sense of agency in my students; they are eager to apply what they are learning about social justice to their world today."

Starting with the Civil Rights movement, changemakers recreated the Selma to Montgomery March in their homes and made posters of their traced shoes juxtaposed with famous quotes from American statesman and civil rights leader John Lewis. "The foundation for the club is underscoring the importance of the democratic process . . . for all people," says Ms. Young.

Although virtual, the club is set in the "Great Change Café" where ideas are plenty and discussions rich. Students serve as stewards of known and lesser-known changemakers, amplifying these activists' words and their work through discussions and arts-centered projects.

Prior to the 2020 election, students created "get out and vote" postcards, which they distributed in their neighborhoods, a project based on discussions about the meaning of community. Other projects include creating Women's Suffrage trading cards, picturing changemakers of the movement with quotes and salient facts for

"I am always amazed at the thoughtful questions and astute observations my students make about the world around them," says Ms. Young. "In them, I am witnessing a new confidence, a new sense of self emerging as they learn more about the power of courageous individuals who have used their voices to help change what matters to them."

each; hosting an open mic Zoom where students share causes and changemakers important to them; and creating ledger paintings in the style of those done by Native Americans during the club's study of Standing Rock and the Battle of Little Big Horn.

While adding pins and badges to their tie-dye sashes as they move through their study of these movements, students also learn about a current "changemaker of the week" such as **Tyler Okeke**, a 19-year-old activist, who champions lowering the voting age from 18 to 16.



ART IS ABOUT IDEAS

Whether drawing, painting, or sculpting, art is about ideas. And process. It is about slowing down—focusing, observing, visualizing . . . and sticking to one's resolve. High School Director of Visual Arts and Teaching Artist **Rebecca Alberts'** new Drawing, Painting, and Sculpture Intensive (DPSI) was added to the curriculum with thoughts of this process in mind.

"Whether my students go on to study art in college or not, they are building the groundwork for formalist ideas and learning the skills necessary in any class, area of study, or career—like turning mistakes or failures into opportunities, developing perseverance and habits of plain old hard work, and building confidence," says Ms. Alberts.

During the first quarter, the DPSI class started with focusing on drawing, using predominantly charcoal. Students explored space and form through the use of line, mass, and value. Following drawing, students worked with oil paints, which involved the study of color

theory, color mixing, brush work, and the use of oil paint . . . quite a different media and process from watercolor or tempera paints. Students began their use of oil paints on canvas paper, then canvas boards, and lastly learned how to stretch their own canvases.

Building on the foundational ideas from the start of the year, but using different media, the second half of this full-year intensive involves sculpture. The class will explore reductive sculpture—carving non-representational forms of something from a block of plaster—and additive sculpture, where students use wire to capture a human gesture on which they will apply plaster. Work in sculpture brings with it a very different constant attention to three-dimensions, as well as the employment of a wooden base as an extension of the work in progress. While sculpture employs the same formalist ideas as drawing and painting, they are approached differently as sculpture deals in the three-dimensional space. Likewise,

when students are presented with considerations around how to present two-dimensional work—and how that can add or detract from a piece—they learn the considerations of how the base to a sculptural piece becomes an extension of the piece.

"Overall, DPSI is about building on the basic groundwork of art skills and processes," says Ms. Alberts. "My students are also learning how to present their own work and participate in thoughtful critiques of their peers' work as well as learning how to critically interact with their own work. Being virtual has its challenges, certainly, but I have been impressed with my students' desire to create their own at-home studios and to explore, take risks, and revel in the process of creating."

PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

Veterinary Council Association. The Black Student Fund. Senator Bill Cassidy's Office. Bittersweet Catering. Imagination Stage. Grit Talent Agency. cox graae + spack architects. The Center for Urban Ecology. Euclidian Trust. GW Medical Associates. These are just some of the employers working with Lab School juniors during their year-long internship. Although the internships are virtual this year because of Covid-19, the experience is as rich. And one of the silver linings of interning virtually is that students are not limited by geography; they can apprentice anywhere.

"The internships are based on Lab's philosophy of individualized education," says Internship Coordinator **Christopher Edmonds**. "I work with

each student to find a placement that helps them pursue their interests and passions. The kids really get into their internship, and the Career Literacy Class, since they have more agency to pick what they want to learn . . . what career path they may want to pursue."

Depending on the nature of the business, employers work with the students on related assignments like research, social media, data entry, technology, culinary arts, acting skills, communications—giving students real-world work experience along with a taste of that career path. Employers also work with students on their career portfolios such as their résumés, personal statements, and how to build a network.

"I am incredibly humbled by the



generosity and dedication of the organizations we work with," says Mr. Edmonds. "The fact that—especially during these challenging times when the world seems upside down and organizations are navigating their own struggles—these employers are willing to put together a meaningful virtual mentoring experience is nothing less than stunning."

ROCKET MAN

Being quarantined at home during this pandemic may have pushed students in **Jonathan Alexis'** High School Earth Science Class to ask more pointed questions and feel more empathy during their virtual visit with **Commander Chris Cassidy** of NASA, about the International Space Station [ISS].

Lab students along with other students from across the United States watched a live Earth-to-space video call with Expedition 63 Commander Chris Cassidy, during which video questions were asked through the Society for Science & the Public: Science News in High Schools program. After reviewing background information on the ISS and Expedition 63 on NASA websites, Mr. Alexis' students shared their thoughts, curiosities, and dreams regarding what it would be like to live and work on the ISS in written and visual reflections.

The student's questions were as varied as the planets: "How do stars form? And where do stars get the materials they need to form?" "Can fish survive in space? If so, can they be raised for food or kept as pets?" "How do you cope with living up in space? Do you ever get any panic attacks? Do you ever at any point in time not want to be an astronaut?" "Did your time in space make you better at something you weren't good at before?" The class also learned that Expedition 63, in space from April–October 2020, included research investigations focused

on biology, Earth science, human research, physical sciences and technology development, providing the foundation for continuing human spaceflight beyond low-Earth orbit to the Moon and Mars.

With Commander Cassidy's experiences in mind, the class discussed challenges they would face if living on the International Space Station such as dealing with the lack of gravity, sleeping with straps on, and missing their family and friends. They also sketched images or wrote short essays depicting thoughts that came up while watching the ISS Astronaut interview.



FROM WHERE I SIT



Christopher Edmonds
Internship Coordinator

High School Internship Coordinator **Christopher Edmonds'** father always told him, "You have two ears and one mouth for a reason." Sound advice. In his role at Lab, not only does Mr. Edmonds help place his juniors in year-long internships that embrace their passions and encourage their intellectual and personal growth, but he also teaches a Career Literacy Class that on many levels underscores his father's insight that listening is as crucial a communications skill for life as is talking or presenting.

Mr. Edmonds came to Lab in 2018 with robust experience working not only in college and career readiness in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, in particular with underserved populations, but also

for not-for-profit funds and university programs designed for the advancement of minorities. "I find here at Lab that teaching students who learn differently makes us better teachers. And I believe vehemently that we need to build programs around people instead of around educational outcomes."

"My class is rooted in character education, which I believe is tantamount to improving society. To prepare students for life after graduation, I focus on four components. The first is developing core competencies where students learn to apply classroom lessons to professional skills. Things like logic and problem-solving skills (Math) or writing a résumé, cover letter, or professional email (English) are



applied in my class. Next comes occupational competencies where a student, for example, who loves animals may take an internship with a veterinarian only to discover that the career interest is less about animals and more about biology. The third component focuses on students developing professional competencies like interviewing or negotiating skills, and the fourth homes in on the expansion of one's network and social capital.

Class projects to develop these competencies include, among others, conducting a job interview with a partner and learning to listen and then share that person's story. The exercise prepares them for their actual interview with an employer. The students also work on a creating a "blueprint of [their] lives" where they ponder questions like "What makes you somebody?", and "What is your primary value and what would be your life's slogan?"

With his students and his colleagues, Mr. Edmonds weaves in a great deal of reflection and work around the

school's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative. "Nurturing an appreciation for DEI is a career literacy skill, and an essential life skill," says Mr. Edmonds. "Part of being in the work force is to see, validate, and celebrate diversity—to ensure that all communities are intentionally included.

"We intentionally talk about the distinction between success and greatness . . . greatness being using your success to help others, especially those less fortunate. My hope is that when my students graduate from Lab, they continue to intentionally step into brave

spaces to be themselves and influence policy," says Mr. Edmonds who seeks every opportunity to dismantle the "cis-male, hyper-masculine, patriarchal conditioning" of his youth. He adds, "Understanding and loving yourself puts you in a powerful position to understand and love others."

WHY I TEACH



Noel Bicknell

Head of Academic Clubs, Academic Club Teacher

"When I started at The Lab School, I thought I would stay for a year, maybe two," laughs Head of Academic Clubs, Academic Club Teacher **Noel Bicknell**. "That was more than 20 years ago."

Relocating to DC with his family from Maine, where he was teaching in an elementary school, he wanted to pursue his master's degree. He met Lab School Founder **Sally L. Smith** with her famous yellow pad and purple pen . . . and that was it. He completed American University's Master of Arts in Special Education: Learning Disabilities program and took over the recently vacated spot as Academic Club Teacher for the Renaissance Club. During his two decades at Lab, Mr. Bicknell has taught Studio Art, Music, both Renaissance and Industrial Clubs, and in 2010, he became Head of Academic Clubs.

"In our *Academic Clubs*, students seek that feeling of belonging . . . they naturally want to be included and experience successful learning," says Mr. Bicknell. "Academic Clubs—through adopting personas, creating dramatic frameworks, and simulating a compelling time and place—strive to create this very sense of student membership, ownership, and belonging. We see students who might be struggling in other classes soar in the club setting—

making connections, pondering big ideas, and expressing themselves through hands-on projects."

Teaching virtually, Mr. Bicknell understands that encouraging his student to be active learners can be more challenging than in person. "At Lab, we are given the opportunity, the freedom to experiment to see what works best with our students. That is still the case with virtual learning," he says. Recently, his Industrial Club designed a board game to study the first humans who came to North America 20,000 years ago. "Creating the game was a shared process, establishing and analyzing the rules and the details as a group. Students created maps and some of the steps along the way including the crossing of the Bering Land Bridge, recent research on coastal migration routes, or explaining how a dugout canoe can increase survival," says Mr. Bicknell. "Engaging in the creation and playing of the game serves to make the content stick. Most importantly, I want my students to focus on ways they can contribute."

One of the many reasons why Mr. Bicknell has stayed at Lab is that fact that he, like many of the teachers at Lab, is a teaching artist. He continues to expand his own interest in the arts by turning to resources like Glenn



Echo Pottery to learn ceramics or the Blacksmith Guild of the Potomac to learn iron forging. His current exploration of watercolor painting is the latest interest he has brought to the classroom. Mr. Bicknell has also kayaked most of the British Columbia coastline as well as the waters of Alaska and Baja. "I believe in learning expeditions whether kayaking or throwing pots. There is something powerful about saying out loud, 'I am going to do this,' and then doing it. I try to share that mindset with my students. Academic Clubs are the perfect opportunities for 'learning expeditions,'" he says.

"The Lab School is aptly named; we need to remember that in a 'lab' we can experiment, fail, explore different methods, innovate," he says. "This goes for all of us — teachers, students, the whole community. That is the beauty of The Lab School."

Alumni News

ALUM PROFILE: MIA VAN ALLEN '16

While many of us were baking sourdough bread and trying to figure out how best to balance work, school, and family life during the pandemic, **Mia**

Van Allen '16 founded a not-for-profit—the Color of Music Collective—to amplify the voices of people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals in the music industry. She started the initiative with a website and concert series in response to the lack of diversity she experienced in her own music business trajectory. She now runs the organization with a partner and more than 80 volunteers, who also organize free panels to tackle issues of representation within the industry.

Mia graduated from American University in 2020 with a major in Public Relations and a minor in Business and Entertainment. When her long-time interest in feminist rights fell flat in classes, she needed to fill her minor requirement so she randomly chose Entertainment 101 in the Business School. “I fell in love with it . . . with concerts, live music, and the mechanics behind the whole business. Who knew I could make a career of it along with my major in PR?” says Mia who was always the “kid with the headphones on.”

Mia loved American. “If not for Ms. Fleisher [College Advisor **Trudy Fleisher**], I would never have found and applied to the Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) Program. The classes were small, like at Lab, and the fact that it was required to talk to your professors at the beginning of each class where you could say, ‘This is my issue, this is how you

can help me, and here’s what I can do . . .’ helped me soar in my classes. And I wouldn’t be where I am now if I hadn’t learned

so many ways to get around my LD at Lab.”

After three years of hard work and a semester in London, Mia was excited to revel in every scrap of her senior year. She says, “I really wanted to make more of an effort to do what I wanted to do—spending time with friends, going to more concerts, and learning more about the music business by going to conferences and networking all over the world. I had plans to make senior year MY YEAR. I was able to accomplish a lot of that, but sadly COVID got in my way. Seniors couldn’t say goodbye to their lifelong friends, favorite professors, and the worst part . . . not walking across the stage of Bender Arena. The economic climate has made a turn for the worse, but that didn’t stop me. I used my free time to start my own company; I’m proud to say we’re going places.”

Mia is now in Los Angeles, working at The Village Recording Studios and, despite the fire and smoke, enjoying California life. Recently, she was included in *Washington Business Journal*’s 25

under 25 for Innovation, a recognition for founding Color of Music Collective.

Mia oozes enthusiasm and gratitude. She praises the network of friends and colleagues she continues to build, her college professors, Lab teachers, friends, and family. Oh, and by the way, if you want to join her, she is borrowing a friend’s guitar and taking advantage of free online lessons offered by Fender during the pandemic.



“THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE HAS MADE A TURN FOR THE WORSE, BUT THAT DIDN’T STOP ME. I USED MY FREE TIME TO START MY OWN COMPANY; I’M PROUD TO SAY WE’RE GOING PLACES.”

In some instances, alumni graduated from a high school other than The Lab School. They are listed by their high school graduation year.

CLASS NOTES

CLASS OF 2005

In Spring 2020, **Maxine Katz**, received a Master of Science in Management from the University of Maryland.

CLASS OF 2006

Daniel Wolk started at Lab at age 5 and attended through Junior High. He graduated from the Field School and went on to attend Ithaca College, in New York, where he played on the Varsity Tennis team. He graduated *magna cum laude*, with a Bachelor of Science in Sports Media and a minor in Journalism. After college, he spent the next seven years working in the media relations and communications departments of five different NBA organizations—the Washington Wizards, Utah Jazz, Brooklyn Nets, Chicago Bulls, and the

Atlanta Hawks. In 2018, he moved back to Washington, DC, where he became the external media relations manager for Giant Food. He is second in command for all external communications and media relations for Giant Food, which has 164 stores in Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware, and some of his responsibilities include leading the media relations efforts for new store openings, the Giant National Capital Barbecue Battle, the Pediatric Cancer Campaign, and the Hunger Drive Campaign. “I am a proud alumnus of The Lab School and know that I would not be where I am today if it were not for my parents and this remarkable school,” he writes. Danny’s mother, **Susie Wolk**, is a longtime Junior High English teacher.

CLASS OF 2010

Sarah Mishkin, who recently received her Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, now works as a co-head teacher at Lab’s Learning Hub—an on-campus learning space for children of faculty and staff working on campus, ages 5–11 (pre-K-4th grade).



CLASS OF 2013

In June 2020, **Tyler Hartz** graduated from Longwood University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, with a concentration in Global Politics.



Jack Orloff graduated from the Blue Ridge School in Charlottesville, Virginia, then majored in Communications at the University of Mississippi. He now lives in Austin, Texas and works for the director of Communications for the Austin City School District.

CLASS OF 2014

Ava Blakeslee-Carter is a recent graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education and Kinetic Imaging (video, animation, sound, and emerging media). She is a multi-discipline, mixed-media artist and art educator. She specializes in stop-motion animation, motion graphics, and can teach all k-12 grades. Living in Richmond, Virginia, Ava is the editor-in-chief of *PWA-TEM*, a student-led literary and art journal of VCU.

Eli Livezey graduated from Evergreen State College in June 2020. He is now working on a trail maintenance team in Sequoia National Park. Eli was part of the Leadership Program for the Student Conservation Corps, and spent his post-Lab grad year in AmeriCorps, working in parks and forests. He then came home and took courses at Montgomery College and also worked on an organic farm, then finished out his undergraduate work at Evergreen.

CLASS OF 2015

Michael Bryant graduated from Ursinus College and, in January, began a new position in Human Resources at Amazon.

Josef Klausner received his degree from Ursinus College and now works as a veterinary tech assistant at the Palisades Vet Clinic.



CLASS OF 2016

A Sociology major at Curry College, **Sophie Barrett** made the Dean's List and was inducted into the Alexander Graham Bell Honor Society as well as the Alpha Kappa Delta Honor Society.

Madeline Boundy transferred from Goucher College in 2017 to New York University, where she graduated *cum laude* with a degree in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. She is now working as a teacher's aide in a special ed class for 4-5 year olds, and plans to apply to masters programs in Teaching.

Sarah Boundy graduated from Simmons College, *cum laude*. While currently working retail, she's looking for a government job in Massachusetts that requires local travel.

CLASS OF 2017

Cooper Macklin is a senior at Ithaca College and has been captain of the basketball team as a junior and senior. Last year, the team won their conference and made it to Division-3 nationals. He is thriving at college—doing well academically and majoring in Business and Sports Management. Cooper says he had a great experience at Lab, and that the faculty, staff, and coaches were very instrumental in his success.

Jacob Brody-Ogborn is at New College of Florida, attending classes virtually from New Mexico where he and his family recently located from Washington, DC. Jacob is thinking of joining the Foreign Service . . . or something in International Development.

Charlie Pellegrino is thriving at the University of Arizona, Eller Business School.

CLASS OF 2018

Halle Greenblatt is majoring in Criminal Justice at Adelphi University and made the Dean's List.

A Criminal Justice major at Adelphi University, **Charles Herman** made the Dean's List.

CLASS OF 2019

Trey Armstrong, is an EMT with DC Fire and EMS.



Nathaniel Hutton was named to the 2020 Dean's List at Union College. He is majoring in Political Science.

Nola James says she's certain she picked the right school with Goucher College. "I'm working very hard but finding the work engaging. The classes are small and my professors, especially during virtual learning, have gone out of their way to get to know the students as individuals, and a spirit of kindness infuses everyone's teaching style," she writes. Nola says she'd be happy to talk to any Lab kids who want first-hand info about Goucher.

CLASS OF 2020

Cole Rice was recently admitted to The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.

SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 22, 2021

Unmasking Brilliance

36th Annual Lab School Gala Goes Virtual

GALA CO-CHAIRS: LORI AND BEN SOTO

Invitations will be sent by email.

Contact Director of Development Dia Ruocco
at dia.ruocco@labschool.org to share your email
or answer any questions.

CELEBRATING AARON BOOSE



Lauren Clark '20

THE LAB SCHOOL LOST ONE OF ITS GREATS IN OCTOBER 2020: CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER AARON BOOSE

The world is definitely less vivid without our beloved **Aaron Boose**—Lab School colleague, friend, teacher, social worker, artist, activist, leader, and bright light of hope. He made an indelible mark on all of our lives that will live with us forever.

Aaron had an infectious smile and the sound of his ebullient “good morning!” and “hello!” echo in our hearts. Through his poetry and rap music, he shared his experiences and challenges as well as his irrepressible and ever-positive spirit.

In a video interview—done early in fall 2020—about social justice with students in Junior High English Teacher and Teaching Artist **Adam Toal**’s Videography class, Aaron explained that he started writing poetry and rapping to cope with his emotions. “At first, it was therapeutic, and then it became fun, too,” he said. “Music brings me joy and I receive joy by sharing it with other people. For me, music is a weapon. Weapons can be used to harm, or weapons can be used to help. Music is a straight definition of a weapon to battle oppression, a weapon to battle depression. For people who can’t speak, I try to provide a voice . . .”

“Aaron made me a better person just by being around him. He did that for all of us; he inspired us, he lifted us up. He had a way of seeing beauty in people that we weren’t able to see in ourselves. For me, he was a partner, a confidant, and a teacher, someone I could count on. Aaron could transform whatever he encountered—words, music, people ... into something more beautiful. Art, compassion, vision, all wrapped up in this incredible spirit—that is Aaron.”

—**Doug Fagen, PhD**

Director of Reservoir Psychology Group

Aaron loved the fact that as a social worker, he worked with students and colleagues in all four divisions. When heading to Foxhall from Reservoir, he would joyfully say that he was off to see the “four footers.” While working on his amazing

I Am U—an event which celebrated the many identities at Lab, unifying them through the arts—held in February 2020, Aaron said, “I am lucky in my position as a social worker at Lab because I work with all four divisions and have the opportunity to be a witness and a participant to the growth of students at all levels of their development.

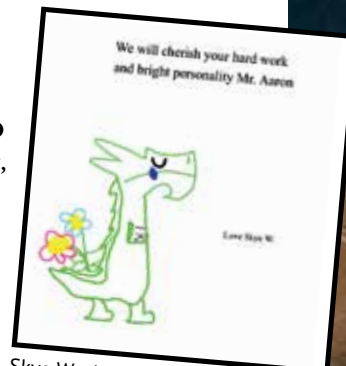
“I wanted to share my enviable position with our whole community. Everyone is so busy and committed at Lab but I believe that it’s important to take the time to share with each other—in a deep way—what we are doing in and beyond the classroom; that sharing expands us as individuals and as a community.”

“Aaron was a mirror that I held up to keep myself accountable. However, and more importantly, he was a Black man with hopes, dreams, fears, aspirations, and, to quote my grandma, with “a whole lotta life left to live.” His passing has broken me. In this role, I looked forward to the work that he and I would do to make not only Lab, but this world more equitable and inclusive for people who look like us and those that don’t. I can still see the sparkle in his eyes when he talked about his plans to become Dr. Boose. This work undoubtedly will be harder without him. As a Black man here at Lab, I looked forward to the continued human connection with another Black man. I looked forward to our moments of unfettered Black joy!”

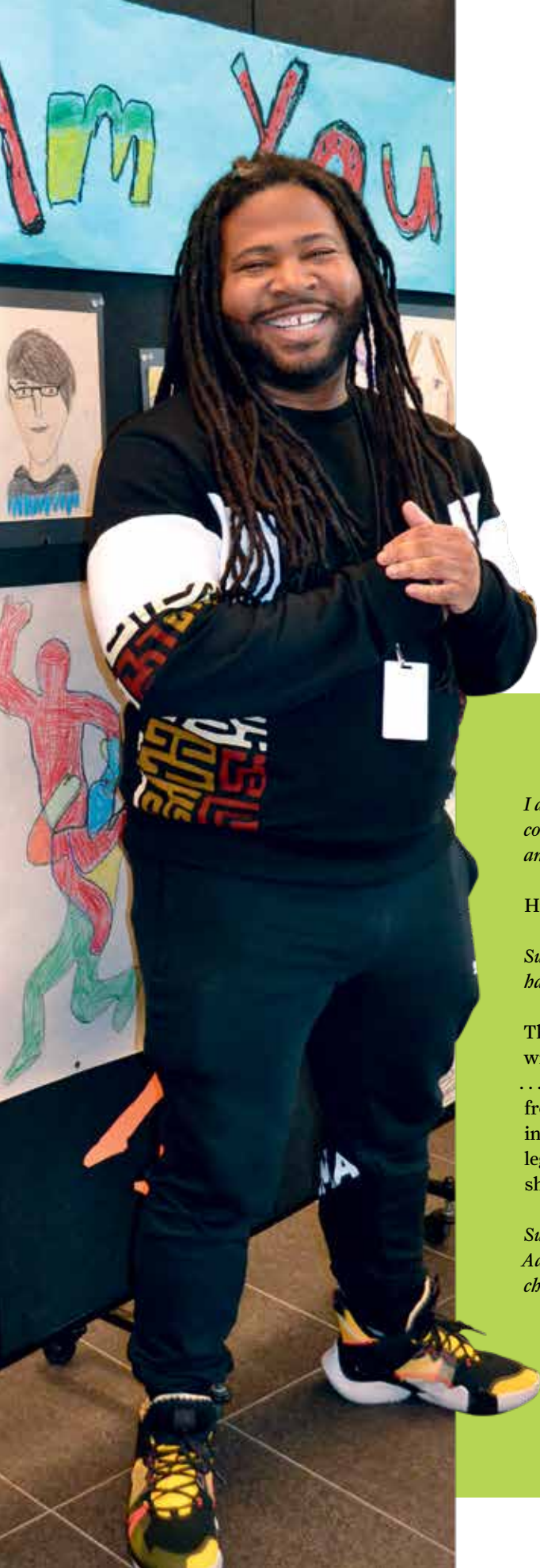
— **Anthony Perry, PhD**

Director of Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion

Those of us who knew Aaron were given a great gift, a great privilege; he will always be in our heads and hearts.



Skylar Skye '22



INTRODUCING THE AARON BOOSE MEMORIAL FUND

Aaron Marques Boose, MSW, LICSW, was acutely aware of the need to work as a community to support our young people. “Mr. Aaron,” as he was known at Lab, was a Black man, a Black artist, and a Black educator, who keenly and profoundly understood the need for an equitable and inclusive Lab. During his tenure at Lab, he fought for those students and families who have been historically underrepresented in the independent school community. To that end, The Aaron Boose Memorial Fund will continue to support Mr. Aaron’s efforts to ensure equity and access for those students. To make a gift, go to: labschool.org/giving or contact dia.ruocco@labschool.org. Your gift to The Aaron Boose Memorial Fund will also be recognized as a contribution to The Lab School Fund.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE MANY REACTIONS TO LOSING AARON FROM FACULTY, STAFF, AND PARENTS.

I am so devastated. Aaron was a beautiful person, a beloved member of our community, a super positive and accepting person and a brilliant social worker and poet. Everyone felt cherished and understood by Aaron!

His infectious laugh and endless smile will stay with us.

Such a big heart. I am sure he is going to burst through my door any minute. So hard to fathom.

There are no words . . . except that the world will shine a little less without Aaron in it. How truly lucky we were to have worked with him . . . how truly lucky our students were to have known him and learned from him. I feel honored to have called him a friend and will find comfort in the tremendous impact Aaron had in our community and the I Am U legacy he left us. I will find solace in the incredible amount of memories shared by us all. It is truly a testament to who Aaron was.

Such an amazing human. His life was cut short too soon. Thank you, Mr. Aaron for being a light for us all and particularly for our Black and Brown children at Lab. You impacted more kids than you know! And grown-ups.

A beautiful human, teacher, and friend. This is a devastating loss for our community.

He was the most generous-hearted and joyful soul I think I’ve ever met. He lit up the hallways and classrooms.

THE LAB SCHOOL

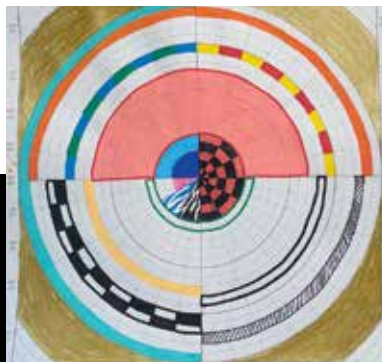
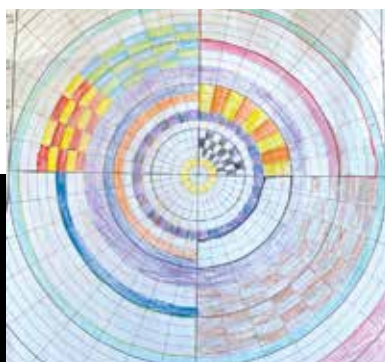
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Full Circle.

“Each person draws a line differently and each person understands words differently.” So wrote Conceptual Artist **Sol LeWitt**, upon whose wisdom and design methods students in Junior High Teaching Visual Artist **Laurie Herrmann**’s class created these representations of circular art. “My 8th grade artists started their work with the exact same list of instructions and identical grids. While the finished works resemble each other; no two are alike. The interpretations, placements, and executions are all uniquely different and the final results are colorful and captivating,” she says. “They are especially eye-catching when they are grouped together.”