

MICDS

THE MAGAZINE

VOLUME 36 NO. 2 | SUMMER 2026

Carrying It Forward The Class of 2026 passes on a legacy

p. 48



Features:

10

Making Waves

Gianna Fruhauf Minton '85
charts her own course

38

Rooted in Wonder

Science Teacher Laura Pupillo
cultivates curiosity

48

Sending off '26

A season of celebration
to launch our newest alumni

In this issue:

MISSION MATTERS

- 02 | A Message from Chelle Wabrek
- 03 | Headliners
- 14 | Academic Excellence
- 42 | Faculty Excellence
- 52 | Our Community
- 59 | The Arts
- 74 | #RamNation
- 79 | Impact & Inspiration

CLASS NOTES

- 87 | For the Record
- 103 | Alumni Accolades

20



22



56



70



74



MICDS

MARY INSTITUTE AND SAINT LOUIS COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

OUR MISSION

More than ever, our nation needs responsible men and women who can meet the challenges of this world with confidence and embrace all its people with compassion. The next generation must include those who think critically and resolve to stand for what is good and right.

Our School cherishes academic rigor, encourages and praises meaningful individual achievement, and fosters virtue. Our independent education prepares young people for higher learning and for lives of purpose and service.

ABOUT MICDS MAGAZINE

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MARY INSTITUTE &
SAINT LOUIS COUNTRY
DAY SCHOOL ALUMNI



MICDSSL



With Gratitude

Chelle Wabrek



Dear MICDS Community,

The day MICDS announced I would become its next Head of School, people from nearly every phase of my life began reaching out. Connections stretched back nearly 40 years (a grandmother at an Atlanta soccer game who had gone to Mary I) and were far more recent (a Lovett Class of 2024 graduate whose Georgetown roommate graduated from MICDS). They revealed the remarkable reach of this School across generations, geographies, and lives.

I began to understand the breadth and lasting impact of an MICDS education, extending far beyond the boundaries of campus and long beyond a student's years here. Those early stories were only the beginning; once I arrived, the stories became more immediate, textured, and personal.

Over the summer, 72 employees generously made time to talk. They spoke about their students and colleagues, the work they love, their hopes for the School, and descriptions of what education at MICDS is meant to make possible. One

said, "We want kids to be challenged and championed," capturing the balance at the heart of a strong school: students stretched by meaningful work and surrounded by adults who believe in them, support them, and cheer them on.

Another described the intellectual exchange at the heart of the classroom: "You think you know history, and then a student asks a question, and I think, 'Wow, I never thought about it like that.'" The best classrooms are not places where only students are learning. They are communities of inquiry, shaped by teachers who bring deep expertise while remaining curious enough to be surprised, challenged, and taught by young people.

Another employee offered a distinction that has stayed with me: "We aren't sending kids to the next thing; they are sending themselves." It's a larger aspiration than preparing students for the next grade or even college. It means helping young people develop the confidence to meet challenges, the judgment to think critically, the compassion to understand others, and the resolve to stand for what is good and right. Our work is not simply to move students forward, but to prepare them to move forward with purpose.

These observations illuminate what's essential about education at MICDS: helping generations of students develop the skills, habits of mind, confidence,

compassion, and judgment to meet the challenges before them and contribute meaningfully to the greater good.

These conversations offer a portrait of MICDS composed of many voices, experiences, aspirations, and acts of devotion. I hear pride without complacency, optimism paired with honesty, and a deep desire for students and adults to feel seen, known, challenged, and championed. I am grateful to everyone who has helped me understand more fully what makes MICDS so special and what we might continue building together.

With gratitude,

Chelle



34 MICDS Seniors Inducted into Cum Laude Society

Joining a legacy that spans 120 years, 34 members of the Class of 2026 were formally inducted into the MICDS Chapter of the Cum Laude Society.



Aiyla Ahmad '26
 Emma Allen '26
 Bella Anadkat '26
 Max Bierman '26
 Harper Carnahan '26
 Ava Casillas '26
 Isabelle Cox-Garleanu '26
 Alexa Davis '26
 Harrison Foster '26
 Avery Henriksen '26
 Olivia Hill '26
 Claire Hofer '26
 Sean Hogan '26
 Gigi Koster '26
 Alexa Kummant '26
 Georgia Lochhead '26
 Morgan Macam '26
 Dunnen McGaughey '26
 Cade-Michael Miller '26
 Laurion Nicholson '26
 Taylor Nuzum '26
 Evita Okohson-Reb '26
 Siboney Oviedo-Gray '26
 Shil Penilla '26
 Narya Phatak '26
 Rose Sabalvaro '26
 Nihaal Satwani '26
 Clyde Siow '26
 Celia Swiston '26
 Hannah Wang '26
 Isabelle Williams '26
 Ian Zar '26
 Yusuf Zayed '26
 Andy Zheng '26

Congratulations to all!

Lower Schoolers Venture Through the Show-Me State



Lower Schoolers adventured through the Show-Me State on various field trips to expand their knowledge and community bonds through history, literacy, science, music, and the great outdoors.

Exploring the Saint Louis Science Center

First graders broadened their horizons by exploring different aspects of engineering, natural history, and physics. They built a model of the Gateway Arch, studied trusses and bridges, ran in the Energizer ball machine, and viewed fossils and dinosaur bones. The visit closed with the perennial favorite: viewing the star-filled sky in the James S. McDonnell Planetarium.



Music Without Boundaries at Powell Hall

Third and fifth graders attended *Music Without Boundaries* at Powell Hall, the home of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. The concert took students on a musical journey around the world, where guest artists shared stories and performed a Hindustani vocal piece, Eastern European-influenced classical guitar, the expressive erhu, and lively accordion music. Through these performances, students experienced firsthand how music can carry stories, memories, and identity across cultures.



Visiting the Missouri State Capitol

Third-grade historians enjoyed a field trip to Missouri's state capitol in Jefferson City, touring the Capitol buildings, including the rotunda, Hall of Famous Missourians, the House lounge, and the House of Representatives itself. Students observed a live House session and visited State Senator Tracy McCreery's office. The day finished with a tour of the Governor's mansion, Jefferson's Landing, and a final stop at the Missouri State Supreme Court, with Central Dairy ice cream cups for the ride home.

Understanding Westward Expansion

To bring to life their recent studies on St. Louis landmarks and Westward Expansion, second graders traveled to the Gateway Arch and its museum. Students enjoyed a ranger-led tour where they explored six interactive galleries showcasing over 200 years of St. Louis and American history, including how and why the Arch was built and why it is known as the Gateway to the West.



Building Community at Shaw Nature Reserve

Fourth graders ventured into the wilderness with an overnight adventure at the Missouri Botanical Gardens' Shaw Nature Reserve. After touring their cabins and unpacking, they soon split off into groups to make and launch paper rockets and explore ecosystems. To build excitement around the recent Artemis II mission, the trip chaperones brought out light-up stomp rockets once it got dark. Students helped build a fire to roast marshmallows and stack delicious s'mores. The perennial favorite night hike, filled with fireflies, constellations, and a chorus of frogs, did not disappoint.



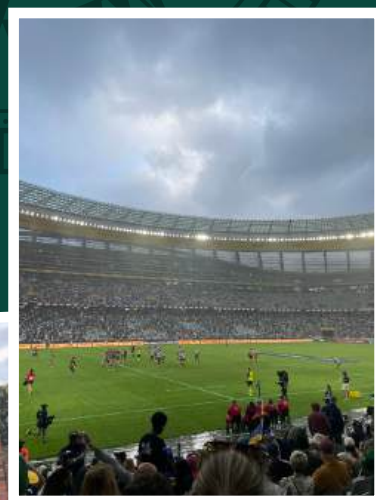
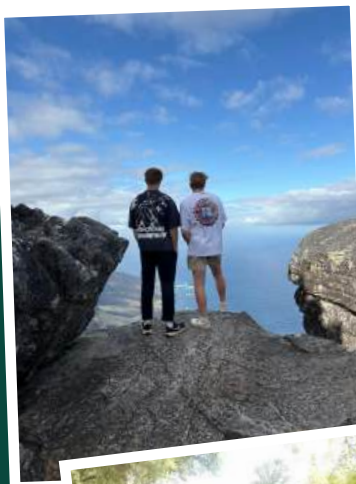
Winter Term Students Travel the Globe

Many Upper School students opt to travel to new destinations for their Winter Term experience, and this year, they hit South Africa, New York, Taiwan, and the Florida Keys.



South Africa

Twenty-two students and three intrepid chaperones explored South Africa during the two-week trip, starting in Johannesburg, where they took in Constitutional Hill, Soweto, and the Apartheid Museum. They then spent several days at the Seleti Game Reserve learning how to track animals. In Cape Town, they experienced drumming at dinner, a professional rugby match, a sunrise hike on Lion's Head, the Boulder Beach Penguin Colony, and Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for 18 years.



Key Largo, Florida

Eighteen Upper Schoolers traded their typical classroom setting for the coral reefs of Florida to dive into the field of marine biology. Students started in St. Louis, working through activities like shark dissections, ocean trash labs, and creating nameplates for the organisms on display in STEM. They learned about Florida ecosystems before engaging in immersive, hands-on learning while partnering with the MarineLab Environmental Education Center in Key Largo, Florida.

Students created plugs for outplants to help rebuild Florida's coral reefs by cutting pieces of coral and placing them on ceramic plugs, which are then taken to Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium for growth. They are then transplanted onto the coral reef in the ocean as outplants.

Our marine biologists enjoyed conversations around key habitats, seagrass ecology, coral reef ecology, and field identification of reef fish, and labs such as Cassiopeia culturing, invertebrate diversity, microplastics, sponge spicule, invertebrate behavior, and zooplankton identification.



New York, New York

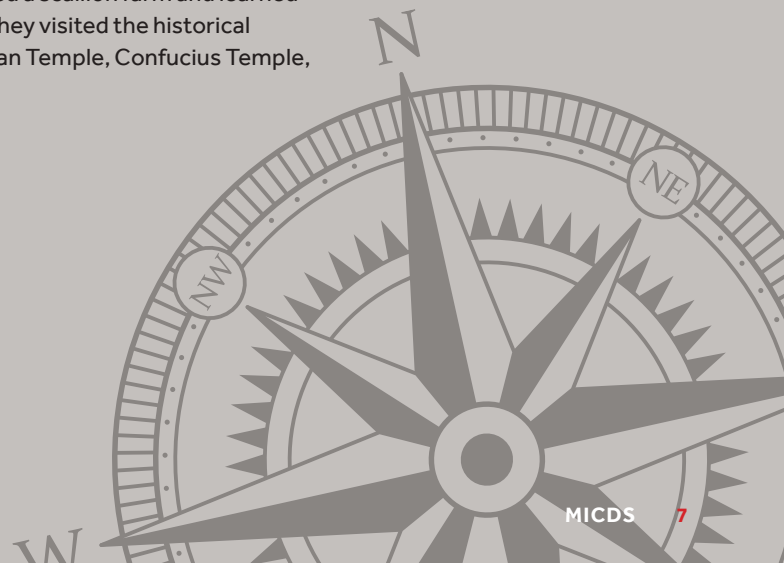
The bustling galleries of the Met and the neon-lined streets of Broadway became the primary classrooms for 17 MICDS Upper Schoolers. Days centered on long stretches of time dedicated to visual art across a wide range of museums, as well as behind-the-scenes experiences at artists' studios, galleries, and a graffiti workshop. Late afternoon and evenings were dedicated to theater. Performances featured top Broadway shows in historic theaters. Behind the scenes, students visited a prop shop and a scenic designer's studio, and participated in an improv workshop with a dynamic young Broadway professional. Each day included a mix of exploring historical and iconic spaces in New York and engaging with the arts, including visiting Little Island and the High Line, the Whitney Museum of Art, Koreatown, Grand Central Station, Central Park, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Oculus, the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas, SoHo, the Museum of Modern Art, the Manhattan School of Music, Times Square, a street-art workshop, and more.



Taiwan

Twenty Upper School students traveled to Taiwan, exploring a vibrant island rich in culture, history, and natural beauty. This trip provided a unique chance to be immersed in Taiwanese traditions and Mandarin language, taste authentic cuisine, visit breathtaking landmarks, and engage with local communities. Students even spent two nights with families from a school in Changua for a true cultural immersion experience.

They visited the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Museum, learned how to make bubble tea, visited the Feng Chia Night Market, toured the Goang Xing Paper Mill, and saw Sun Moon Lake, where they rented bikes and rode to the observation deck. They saw Wenwu Temple and used the high-speed rail to get to Taipei City, where they saw Shifen Falls and released lanterns painted with their wishes. They visited a scallion farm and learned how to make scallion cakes. Finally, they visited the historical Chiang Kai Shek Memorial Hall, Bao-an Temple, Confucius Temple, and the National Palace Museum.





Students Explore History and Peace Across Belgium and the Netherlands

Several Upper School students, along with three faculty chaperones, spent their spring break investigating how Belgium and the Netherlands shape our world. These two influential nations in Northwestern Europe function as Europe's central logistical, political, and economic hub. They drive trade through massive ports, host critical international institutions, and maintain high-value innovation in technology and agriculture.

Brussels, from its multi-ethnic origins and WWI battlegrounds, has emerged as the capital of the EU. The Hague in the Netherlands is the home of the International Criminal Court. These cities and institutions are shaped by the legacy of both world wars and the lessons learned from conflict.

From the hallowed ground of Flanders Fields in Belgium to the hidden annex where Anne Frank authored her diary in Amsterdam, students encountered stories of heroism and resilience at every turn. They also studied the beautiful canals that power the region and gained a deeper understanding of the ramifications of war and the future of peace.

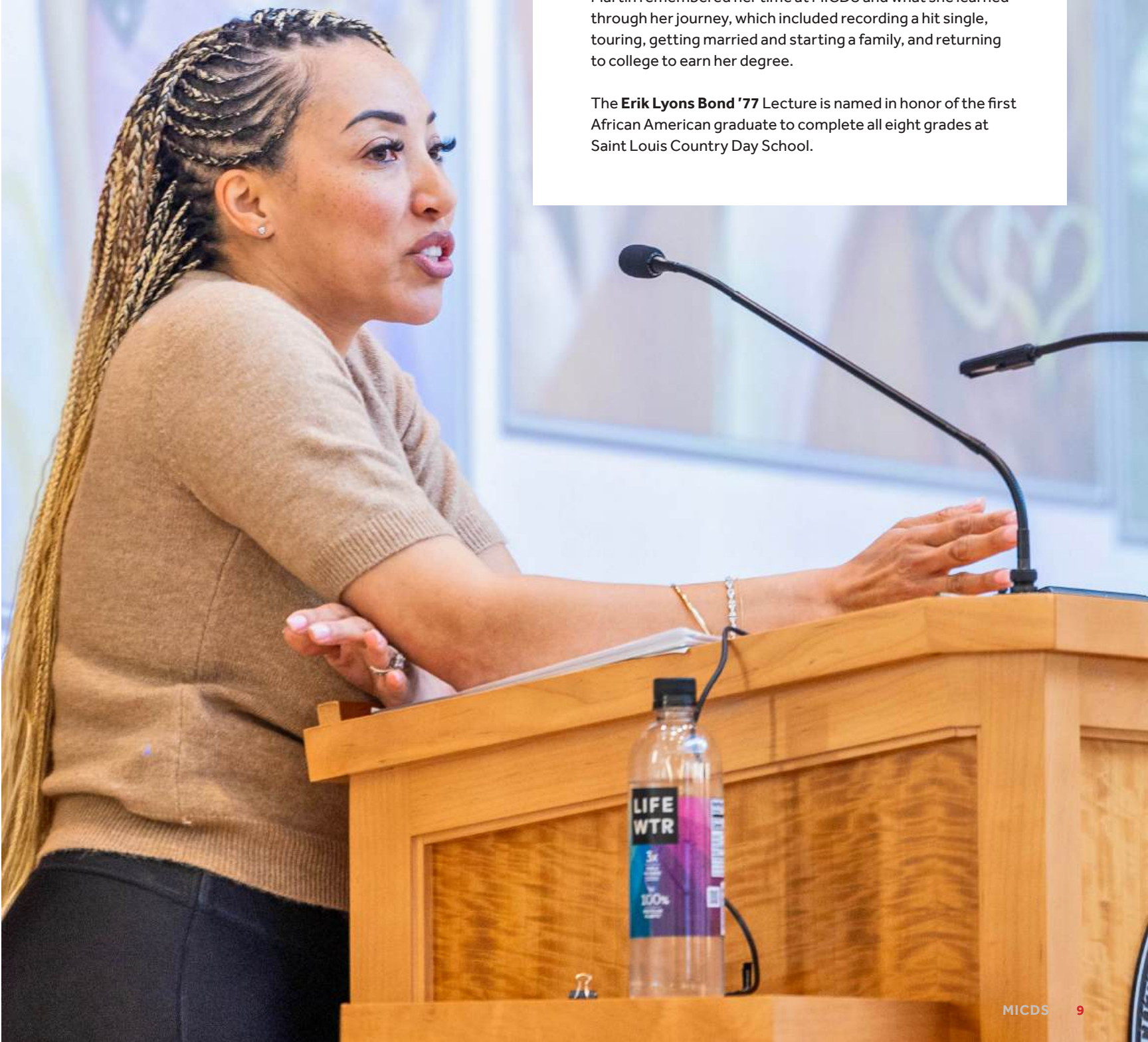


Bond Lecture: “Complete Your Mission”

On February 23, 2026, **LaToya Rodriguez Martin '99** returned to MICDS to share her life experience as a musician, wife, and mother with our Upper School students. Martin visited campus last summer for the first time since she graduated, and enjoyed seeing how the School has changed and evolved. She was asked to serve as this year's Bond Lecture speaker.

Martin remembered her time at MICDS and what she learned through her journey, which included recording a hit single, touring, getting married and starting a family, and returning to college to earn her degree.

The **Erik Lyons Bond '77** Lecture is named in honor of the first African American graduate to complete all eight grades at Saint Louis Country Day School.





The Patchwork Career: Gianna Fruhauf Minton '85 on Teaching, Transitions, and Tracking Whales



Gianna Fruhauf Minton '85 sailed into Mary Institute in 1984, just in time for her senior year. She was following her father's career path as he assumed the role of headmaster at MI, a position he held until 1993, and she turned what could have been an intimidating situation into an asset by developing transition skills that have served her well throughout her life and career. "I had to fit in quite quickly and learn a whole new academic and social setting," she said, including adjusting to a single-sex school for the first time. To this day, she remains thankful for the warm welcome she received from her new classmates and teachers.

"The teachers were all good," she reflected. "I enjoyed the drama productions I was involved in, field hockey, and the choir. I was grateful I could join all these activities having come in at a relatively late stage."

She leveraged the experience as the subject of her college application essays and notes that it contributed to her successful transition to college life at Stanford University. "I was one of those young people who was interested in everything. I loved biology, languages, anthropology, and when I went to Stanford, I still had access to a really broad range of subjects. When I had to choose a major, I chose one as broad as possible: an interdisciplinary major called Human Biology." The degree marries hard sciences, social sciences, and psychology. There were two sets of lectures. An A Side lecture might cover physical and biochemical changes during a child's development, whereas a B Side lecture might tackle the social and psychological development of young children. For every topic, there was always an A side and a B side, allowing students to see how topics interlinked. "I had a lot of core biology in that course, including cellular biology, evolution, and what little we knew about

DNA and genetics in the late '80s, but we also covered social sciences," she explained. Minton graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Human Biology and a Master of Arts in Education, with a focus on early childhood development. "Even though it seems like two disparate degrees, there was a logical progression," she said. "It was basically all early childhood development."

She nearly stayed at Stanford to pursue a Ph.D. but realized that she could use some classroom experience. "I didn't want to end up in a weird position where I was doing research and telling teachers what to do without ever having taught myself," she said. Because she hadn't completed a teaching qualification in the U.S., she taught at an international school in Spain. "That's how my dad started his career as well, so the apple didn't fall far from the tree," she smiled. After Spain, Minton moved to the Netherlands. "My mom was Dutch, and I had family here," she said. "I started working for an organization there that promoted international awareness in education." It was there she met and married Keith, who worked for Shell.

Keith's role eventually took the couple to Oman, where Minton couldn't continue working in the field of education policy. Alongside teaching at an international school, she was doing a lot of boating, diving, and snorkeling, rekindling an old passion for wildlife and biology. "I had the core biology background from undergrad, and I started taking distance courses in marine biology. I began working as a guide on dolphin-watching tours and decided I wanted to pursue another master's degree focused more on marine biology. After two years of collecting data on whales and dolphins in Oman, I realized I had enough data to convert to a Ph.D.; there was no turning back after that. I became a full-time marine biologist focused on dolphins and whales."

Inspired by Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford graduation address, Minton believes that successful careers are a patchwork, and every professional opportunity, job, or even personal experience is a square that contributes to how our lives come together. "That's very true for my career," she said. "I've done these things that seem disparate, like going from teaching to becoming a marine biologist, but my teaching background plays a vital role in my research and conservation work. Not all marine biologists are good communicators, writers, or teachers. When I get the opportunity to work with younger scientists, that's the nexus where my past teaching experience, my love of working with younger people, and my desire to share what I know

blend with the technical experience I've built up over the past 25 years of marine work. My education background is useful in writing grant proposals and giving presentations to potential funders and other conservation stakeholders."

She always encourages young people to "stay broad for a long time and get good training and experience in writing and communication as well as the more technical STEM subjects." Even her choice of languages to study in high school—AP Spanish and French—affects her career today. "I work a lot on the west coast of Africa. If I hadn't studied French to a very high level, this work would have been very difficult. Speaking other languages has opened up lots of possibilities for me that I wouldn't have otherwise."

Minton also stresses that it's vital to view change, especially when it involves loss, as an opportunity. Instead of blaming her husband's internationally mobile career for losing the job she had studied and was trained to do, she sought possibilities. "I thought to myself, 'What else can I do?'" she said. "As a child, I watched National Geographic every Sunday evening. I read all the James Herriot books. I was convinced I was going to be a vet or work with wild animals, but in college I ended up focusing on education. Turning to marine biology in Oman felt like coming back to my true self and my childhood dreams."

The survey work is the best part of her job, and her favorite place is off the coast of Oman. "We typically go for about three weeks at a time, setting up a whole camp with our team in a coastal location." The team works in a fairly remote area, near a fishing town, where they sleep in tents on the beach. They arise at 5:00 a.m., ready equipment, and launch the boat. "We'll spend 10 hours in the water, often staring at empty sea while navigating pre-programmed transects looking for the whales. When we finally find them, if we find them, it goes from long, boring hours to immediate action stations: suddenly everyone has to be ready to do everything to get the most out of the encounter. We might have a few minutes or an hour."

>> continued on page 12



>> continued from page 11

The team takes photos that allow them to identify individual whales against a long-term catalog they consult real-time on a tablet on the boat. Other specialists fly drones overhead, capturing footage that helps the team measure body condition and health. Some whales are tagged, which involves shooting a small implant into the whale with an antenna that communicates with satellites, allowing the team to track the whale for weeks or months. “We want to make sure we’re not tagging whales that have already been tagged, or might somehow be vulnerable,” Minton explains.

Each whale is assigned what Minton describes as a boring code based on the year it was identified, followed by sequential numbers, but they have nicknames. “Some have fun markings or characteristics,” she said. “One is called Butterfly because its tail flukes have a beautiful symmetrical pattern. Smooch has a mark on its dorsal fin that looks like a lipstick kiss. Chomp has a big semicircular bite on the trailing edge of its tail fluke.” She and the team carefully log all observations and now have 26 years’ worth of photos of that particular whale population. She knows many of the whales by heart, having spent decades exploring their habitat. The end of each survey day finds the team back on shore, lugging their equipment back to camp. Then it’s time to rig up a generator to power equipment for downloading their data, cooking, and taking showers. They work until about 10 p.m., then retire, only to get up at 5 the next morning and start all over. It’s exhausting, but Minton loves every moment.

Why is direct observation year after year important? She references the Arabian Sea humpback whale population, which was the focus of her Ph.D. “By conducting regular surveys, taking photographs that allow us to recognize individuals, collecting genetic samples, and mapping the whales’ distribution, we can estimate the population size, compare it to neighboring populations, and identify human activities that could pose a threat. Our work demonstrates that Arabian Sea humpback whales comprise a small, genetically isolated, and endangered population.”

Commercial fishing remains the number one threat to these whales as well as other whale and dolphin populations. “We work with different stakeholders—communities, fishing companies, and governments—to identify where pollution, underwater noise, or ship strikes can be mitigated.” Minton’s team partners with shipping companies, port authorities, fishing communities, and government agencies to design ways to reduce those risks and threats.



01. Minton presents about the need for regional collaboration in science and conservation efforts for the Critically Endangered Atlantic humpback dolphin at the ‘Streetwhale’ symposium in Cameroon in 2024.

02. Minton conducts a dolphin stranding response training workshop with scientists from the government marine research agency in Guinea.

03. Minton works with scientists from two NGOs in Cameroon to conduct coastal boat surveys with the hopes of documenting the elusive and Critically Endangered Atlantic humpback dolphin.



Minton also works with critically endangered Atlantic humpback dolphins on the west coast of Africa, where entanglement in fishing gear is the main threat. The species is found only in very shallow nearshore waters, where small-scale artisanal fisheries occur. “These are quite poor communities relying on subsistence fishing or selling at a fairly low profit margin, and asking them to stop fishing is not realistic or compassionate,” Minton noted. “So we need to work with communities to find alternative fishing gears or adaptations to render their fishing nets more detectable to dolphins, like attaching things to them so the dolphins can perceive them with echolocation and avoid getting tangled. We’re also partnering with local organizations that can help them find alternative livelihoods or sources of protein.”

Minton stresses that this is where her background in education comes into play. “If you came at this problem strictly from a STEM background, you wouldn’t be able to protect the dolphins because the threats that affect the dolphins aren’t biological or ecological; they are human-induced,” she explained. “You have to understand people, the economies, the drivers, and theories of behavior change. All these things are quite challenging for scientists who come from a more STEM-centric background.”

To learn more about Minton's work, explore these websites:

- > The IUCN SSC Global Cetacean Specialist Group: iucn-csg.org
- > The Arabian Sea Whale Network: arabianseawhalenetwork.org
- > The Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin: sousateuszii.org
- > Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch: seafoodwatch.org/recommendations



She also leverages her educational experience to train new scientists. "A big emphasis of our work in Oman and the different African countries where we work is to support the next generation of scientists from those countries," she says. "We shouldn't need a model where research and conservation expertise have to come from Europe and the U.S. There should be in-country scientists who do it all, but scholarships, training, and support are still urgently needed for those local scientists."

Although Minton most enjoys her time in the field, these days her roles with various international and regional organizations require her to spend 90% of her time behind her desk or at meetings and conferences. "Sadly, I don't do anywhere near as much fieldwork as I would like to. I go to Oman for three weeks or so every two or three years, to Senegal for two or three weeks at a time once a year, and have done one-off surveys of two weeks each in Guinea, Cameroon, and Congo. Most of the time, I am sitting at my computer in Zoom meetings, writing grant proposals, reviewing manuscripts, or writing manuscripts for submission to peer-reviewed journals... but mostly writing grant proposals! Funding is always so hard to come by and remains our number one challenge."

When asked what the general public can protect our oceans and the animals who live in them, Minton answered, "Of course, donating funds is the most direct way to help if you can afford it, but it is also important to be aware. While plastic pollution and climate change are huge issues that receive a lot of public attention, most people don't know that the number one cause of mortality for whales and dolphins around the world is bycatch." Bycatch occurs when a non-target marine species gets caught in fishing gear. "Every kind of nonselective fishing gear involves bycatch of some marine species," Minton explained. "Whether you're using gill nets, drift nets, or trawls, it's problematic because

they are all nonselective fishing gears. In addition to the target fish, they catch turtles, dolphins, porpoises, whales, and sea birds."

She recommends watching David Attenborough's 2025 movie, *Oceans*, which was one of the first large-scale public media pieces to draw attention to bycatch. "I'd love for the general public to understand that when they eat seafood of almost any kind, they should, if interested in conserving marine life, pay a lot of attention to the labels. Is it sustainably sourced?" Labels like the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification or tools like the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch can help us make informed choices that can directly help reduce the loss of life and biodiversity in our oceans. She also recommends reaching out to national representatives to express continued support for the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act, which serves as a global gold standard for reducing bycatch and protecting endangered populations.

When she's not looking out to sea, Minton looks toward the sky for inspiration. "The older I get, the more of a bird nerd I become, apparently," she laughs. "I really love going out with a camera and looking for birds, whether it's at home in the Netherlands or on holiday." She enjoys spending time with Keith and their daughters, Anna (22) and Sophie (20). She runs with a group of friends several times a week and enjoys a good swim, all of which keep her in shape for both her fieldwork and long days staring at a screen. And, of course, she stays in touch with several of her Mary Institute friends, mentioning how much it meant to her that two traveled to England for her wedding 30 years ago.

Minton has clearly excelled at leveraging every one of her life experiences to positively affect our world, beginning even before that pivotal transition to a new school for her senior year. Her life of purpose and service stands as a beacon to the younger generation of MICDS students.

2026 Prize Day Celebrates Student Achievement

Grades 9-11 Honored in Annual Tradition

While we recognize many accomplishments throughout the year in athletics, community service, and the arts, Prize Day is a celebration of academic growth and leadership, not only for the honorees but also for the hard work and determination shown by all MICDS students.

LIVING THE MISSION AWARDS

Leadership: **Sienna Snyder '27, Kevon Phillips '28, Caroline Foss '29**

Respect: **Elizabeth Wickham '27, Eva Crissman '28, Zion Perry '29**

Perseverance: **Caleb Otten '27, Reid Caruthers '28, Wilson Froehlich '29**

Service: **Sadie Keech '27, Sireen Tanoli '28, Soham Gadi '29**



DEPARTMENT GRADE-LEVEL ACADEMIC AWARDS

Mathematics & Computer Science: **Nathan Kura '27, Jeremy Wang '28, Nico Cox-Garleanu '29**

World Languages: **Jackson Hunter '27, Kristiana Rogan '28, Jen Estrada '29**

English: **Grant Krainik '27, Kennedy Newman '28, Sam Taylor '29**

Fine & Performing Arts: **Cam Cozad '27, Tess Thompson '28, Crystal Su '29**

History & Social Sciences: **Alexandra Smith '27, Devin Garner '28, Mia Matzsiw '29**

Science & Engineering: **Forest Gong '27, Sanjay Malhotra '28, Mrinali Kaswan '29**



CLASS AWARDS

R.S. Beasley Eleventh Grade Award: **Forest Gong '27**

J.E. Beasley Tenth Grade Award: **Shiv Prahalathan '28**

Wilma Jean Messing Ninth Grade Award: **Katherine Speckhals '29**

McKelvey Award for leadership in athletics: **Tyler Ray '27 and Justyce Sanders '27**

Ryan D. Seed '95 Leadership Award: **CeCe Mileusnic '29**

John E. Mackey Leadership Award: **Ellemieke Ferguson '27**





DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR AWARD

Maddie Karr '27

Anna Ko '28

Audri Willeman '29



COLLEGE BOOK AWARDS

Bowdoin College Book Award: **Kaviya Senthilkumar '27**

Brandeis Book Award: **Lola Compton '27**

Brown University Book Award: **Navya Reddy '27**

Dartmouth Book Award: **Katherine Schott '27**

Princeton University Book Award: **Myra Arain '27**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Medal: **Eric Zhang '27**

St. Lawrence College Book Award: **Grace Griffin '27**

Tulane Book Award: **Kaan Caliskan '27**

University of Pennsylvania Book Award: **Reina Banerjee '27**

The Xerox Award for Innovation and Information Technology:
Dhruv Avirneni '27

The Bausch & Lomb Honorary Science Award: **Daniel Haas '27**

Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony Award in Humanities
and Social Sciences: **Collin Walker '27**

The George Eastman Young Leaders Award: **Amey Parwal '27**

University of Virginia Jefferson Book Award:
Fatima Abosalem '27

Yale University Book Award: **Lilah Pronger '27**



Houston, We Have a Lesson

Artemis II-Inspired Learning

By Laura Pupillo, Lower School Science Teacher

In Lower School science, we thoroughly enjoyed following the Artemis II mission! Ahead of the launch, we registered for a virtual passenger ticket, which is listed along with thousands of others, and traveled through space on an SD card inside a stuffed toy named Rise. Each class enjoyed watching the April 1 launch while learning about the different parts of Artemis II—the rocket, the modules, and the Orion spacecraft. We studied the flight path and explored the purpose of the mission.

To bring Artemis II to life in Lower School science, each class dove into the theme of rockets and/or the moon:

Junior Kindergarten:

Students learned about the parts of a rocket and the Orion spacecraft. They designed their own paper rockets and launched them using air pressure.

Senior Kindergarten:

Students created straw rockets and tested whether applying more force (by blowing harder) caused their rockets to travel farther.

First Grade: Students also created straw rockets, but compared thin rockets to wider rockets to determine which traveled farther. They measured distances and recorded their results.





Second & Third Grade:

Students connected their understanding of chemical changes in matter to the three laws of motion. Using the testable question, "Will the amount of Alka-Seltzer change the launch distance?" they conducted experiments in the science courtyard with pop rockets.



Fourth Grade: Students focused on potential and kinetic energy through a moon collision experiment. They learned about craters on the moon and tested different objects dropped from varying

heights to determine which object and height created the largest crater.

Between the straw rockets and moon craters, as well as the pop rockets and paper rockets, our own Artemis II-inspired science lessons orbited plenty of high-flying discoveries for our Lower Schoolers on Earth. It was a fun couple of weeks of bringing the moon to the classroom for our future astronauts. What giant leaps in learning for our Beasley friends!

Mission accomplished, Lower Schoolers.



Thinking the Thoughts of Thinking

An Intro to Plato

Story and photos by Gabe Sedighi '26

Gabe Sedighi '26 interned with the MICDS Marketing and Communications Team for Winter Term 2026, serving as a student journalist documenting the two-week immersive experience. This is one article he researched, wrote, photographed, and published on the School's website.

For more than 2,000 years, one thinker has quietly shaped how humanity understands truth, knowledge, justice, and reality itself. Born in the fifth century BCE, Plato of Athens wrote dialogues that continue to influence philosophy, politics, science, and ethics to this day. As philosopher Alfred Whitehead famously observed, much of Western philosophy can be understood as a series of footnotes to Plato. In MICDS' Intro to Plato Winter Term course, students step back into ancient Greece to examine ideas that still resonate in the modern world.

Taught by **Upper School Classics Teacher David Armstrong**, the course invites students to engage directly with Plato's writings through translated dialogues, lively discussions, and close reading. Over the course of two weeks, students explore Plato's evolving worldview, the questions he poses about reality and morality, and the critiques his ideas have faced across centuries. "Plato is sort of the foundational thinker in Western culture," Mr. Armstrong explains. "It seemed like a good chance to spend two weeks reading some of his essential dialogues." While the course does not attempt to cover every aspect of Platonism, it aims to introduce students to Plato's method of inquiry. One grounded in conversation, debate, and intellectual humility.

Central to the class is Plato's use of dialectic, a form of dialogue that encourages questioning rather than simple answers. To do this, Mr. Armstrong says that, "Plato charts a middle path between absolute relativism and absolute dogmatism. He has ideas and believes them, but he arrives at them through conversation rather than assertion." This approach encourages students to think critically, articulate their perspectives, and challenge assumptions. Skills that extend far beyond philosophy.



Students have found the experience both intellectually stimulating and surprisingly entertaining. **Eric Zhang '27** shares that his interest in philosophy began at home. "My grandpa was very interested in philosophy, and he talks to me about it a lot," he says. Reading Plato has only deepened that curiosity. "You would think that reading ancient literature would be boring, but it's actually entertaining. Plato's writings are pretty funny at times, too." For Eric, the course has provided a clearer understanding of Plato's ideas and their lasting significance. Others were drawn by a broader interest in the ancient world. **Cella Held '28** explains, "I'm interested in the Greeks and ancient mythology and philosophy. I want more knowledge about how we can use it in modern-day society." One standout moment for her was reading Socrates' *Apology*, in which Socrates defends his beliefs without fear. "I found it really interesting how he isn't afraid of death or to speak out for what he believes in," she reflects.

By the end of the course, students leave with more than historical knowledge. They gain insight into why Plato remains essential reading and why, even today, nearly everyone is at least a little bit a Platonist.



“Plato charts a middle path between absolute relativism and absolute dogmatism. He has ideas and believes them, but he arrives at them through conversation rather than assertion.”

DAVID ARMSTRONG
UPPER SCHOOL CLASSICS TEACHER



Performing Down Sesame Street



The Middle School Talent Show

Each February, anticipation builds for one of the most exciting events of the Middle School year at MICDS: the annual Talent Show. For weeks leading up to the show, grade-level acts audition, vying for a top spot to share their talents with the full fifth-through eighth-grade Rams community. Only the top three to four acts per grade level make it to the final show held in Mary Eliot Chapel.

This year's Middle School Talent Show theme, Sesame Street, set a bright, colorful tone for a fun, upbeat showcase. Students and teachers alike were decked out in the bright primary colors of Big Bird, Cookie Monster, Elmo, and the rest of the Sesame Street characters. The decorations were just as colorful; the Community Leadership Committee (CLC) framed the entrance to the Middle School Dining Hall with balloons and decorated the chapel stage

and audience seating area. The entire day overflowed in a rainbow of talented possibilities.

Once the chapel was packed to the brim with excited students, faculty, staff, and parents and siblings of the performers, CLC members **Daphne Skemer '30, Fletcher Davis '30, Betsy Branca '31, Angela Yang '31, Quinn Estes '32, Genny Molamphy '32, Edie Spitzfaden '33, and Alice Sedgwick '33** enthusiastically emceed the afternoon's 2026 Middle School Talent Show. From tap dancing, singing, and piano to Rubik's Cube speed-solving, fun instrumentals, and a band, the performers blew the audience away. Congratulations to all of our student performers who shared their wonderful acts!

Four highly esteemed judges—**Middle School PE Teacher & Director of Aquatics Programs & Facilities Khannie Dastgah, Senior Associate Director of Middle School**

Admission Kerry Bryan, Middle School Counselor Erin Sutherlin, and Middle School English Teacher Andy Kay—were assigned the very challenging task of critiquing the performances and determining the winners.

Congratulations to the winners:

Best Variety Act: **FIISH (Terrence Saddler '33, Grant McGinness '33, and Matias Gomez '33)**

Best Instrumental: **Angela Yang '31**

Best Originality: **Owen Padratzik '31**

Best Vocal Performance: **Marie Corley '30**

Best Group: **Kaetlyn Smith '30, Laura Almeida '30, and Jemima Tzeng '30**

Best In Show: **Johanna Sanchez '30 and Aarushi Gokulakrishnan '30**



They judged on the level of difficulty, accuracy, audience appeal, and originality.

"For me, being in the talent show was about getting over my stage fright," shared **Aarushi Gokulakrishnan**. "At first, I was really scared to perform, but Johanna really boosted my confidence and helped me calm down. The talent show was an amazing experience. It was fun and helped me get over my fears." **Johanna Sanchez** appreciated the challenge of getting past stage fright with her friend as well. "The Talent Show was a fun experience to help with stage fright. My favorite part was practicing for it with Aarushi. We really bonded and were able to perform at our best because of that," she reflected.

The audience had an absolute blast on this MICDS version of Sesame Street, loving each fifth- through eighth-grade stop along the talent-filled road. "I was so blown away with the level of talent the students brought this year," said **Jason Roberts, Middle School Music & Director of ASAP**. "We had so many great performances. Johanna and Aarushi absolutely amazed me!"



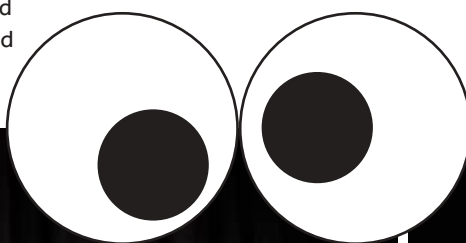
"This group of students blew me away with their bravery, vulnerability, and, of course, outstanding talent," echoed Sutherlin. "The eighth graders were stacked with incredible vocal and instrumental acts, leading to their spread of wins. However, the dark horse of this talent show was our fifth-grade rock band FIISH. These boys brought the spirit of rock 'n' roll and received a standing ovation! These kids give the judges a hard job, and it was so cool to see them all shine!"

"Every single year, I look forward to the talent show. It is hands down my favorite annual tradition at MICDS!" she shared. She remarked on how fun it is to watch the students onstage, some of them for multiple years in a row, while knowing each of their backstories. "We have seen them grow so much during their time in the Middle School, and seeing them shine onstage brings us so much joy," she said. "I also love the way our students cheer on their classmates; it really is a vibrant celebration of community!"



A Big Bird-sized thank you goes to all who helped make the talent show such a success! Our CLC members and their faculty moderators, Roberts and **Kelly Walsh, Middle School English Teacher**, did a phenomenal job in setting up and running the show. The performers dazzled the audience after all their hard work preparing. **Elika Coff '30** did a great job managing the lighting needs, and Walsh managed the sound and tech needs. The judges completed their impossible challenge of choosing the winners. There are also countless members behind the scenes to thank for prepping the chapel and encouraging each student who was part of this year's show. "There are many moving pieces to make a show like this happen, and the hard work behind the scenes by the CLC and Ms. Walsh is what made the show such a success," Roberts added. "I loved the theme, and it was such a fun day!"

What a wonderful, upbeat walk down Sesame Street for our Middle School Rams!



Plants Fight Back!

Student scientists study peptide-based biofungicides

Juniors and seniors in our Biological Design course, taught by **Laura Bradford, Upper School Science Teacher**, conducted a project-based lab that studied how plants fight back against fungal spores. Chemical fungicides pose considerable health and environmental risks, as fungi can develop resistance to these chemicals, and some can cause adverse effects on human health. In this lab, students studied peptide-based biofungicides as alternatives to chemical fungicides. One student shared, "Antifungal peptides can be more selective and sensitive to only impact a particular fungus, and they eventually degrade into the environment."

To prepare for their experiment testing the effectiveness of a plant-derived peptide (a protein) as a defense against fungal infections in plants, students first planted tomato seeds in several mini pots in our on-campus greenhouse. After placing the pots in an illumination incubator for two weeks, the seedlings began to germinate and were ready for the next step in the experiment: inoculation.

Students prepared the inoculating samples by removing one leaf from each young tomato plant, on which they delicately placed fungal spores. They treated the leaves with a peptide provided by the Danforth Plant Science Center, which they hoped would act as an antifungal agent. Their goal was to test which peptide concentration (3, 6, or 12 μM) provides the best protection.





There are two methods for applying fungal spores and antifungal peptides: a drop inoculation assay or a spray assay.

The drop inoculation assay involves placing the youngest leaves from a seedling on sterile petri dishes and then using a pipette to drop different concentrations of peptides onto each leaf. A pipette is used to apply the fungal spores to the leaves at exactly the same spot where the peptides were applied. Next, students made weather-shield boxes using Ziploc bags with wet paper towels to provide humidity. The boxes were incubated for 60 hours while students observed and collected data on the leaves. Lesions are visible to the naked eye after 24–36 hours, so students started collecting data after about two days of incubation.

When the students observed their samples for fungal lesions, they photographed their plants alongside a ruler. Once the photos were uploaded to a computer, the lesions could be measured in the data table using ImageJ, an open-source image-processing program that calculated the relative lesion size at varying peptide concentrations relative to the control.

Students learned that fungal infections of plants manifest in various forms and symptoms, such as lesions, necrotic spots, and black smuts. In this lab, students examined the antifungal defense mechanisms of antifungal peptides applied to tomato seedlings infected with *Botrytis cinerea*, an important fungal pathogen that causes grey mold disease in multiple crop plants. They hoped to determine the concentration of the antifungal peptide required to completely inhibit fungal lesion formation on tomato seedling leaves.

After collecting the data, students created graphs to see whether peptides can protect plant leaves from *Botrytis cinerea* infection. They shared the final data with the Shah Lab at the Danforth Plant Science Center. One student noted, “Interestingly, the best results came from the 3 μM (micromolar) concentrations of peptide or from 6 μM . Most students would have predicted that the stronger concentration, like 12 μM , would be the most effective, but that isn’t what any of the groups saw in their data.”



In conclusion, lower peptide concentrations did indeed protect plant leaves against *B. cinerea* infection. **Becca Frazier '26** summarized, “The average lesion size increased as the peptide concentration increased.” Some students found different results, but overall, their data supported the conclusion that the peptide reduces the size of fungal lesions.

Earlier in the semester, the class visited the Danforth Plant Science Center. Bradford shared, “What really struck us was that one of the researchers from the lab who is working on this very project, Dr. Godwin James, took time out of his schedule to meet our class after our tour. He was able to summarize what we were working on and answered student questions. He was impressed by the depth of the questions our students asked and by their understanding of the science behind their work. Dr. James was also able to supply us with a sample of both the fungal spores and the peptides that they work with, so my students were able to run a version of the experiments their lab has been doing.”

Great work, Ram scientists!



One Student's Reading Journey Ignites Poetry Slam

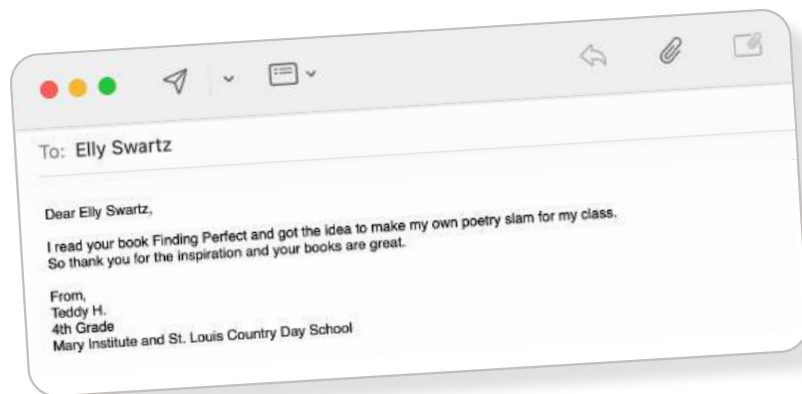
In a Lower School classroom this winter, a spark became a flame and, eventually, a warm campfire for young readers and writers.

The Spark

In his independent reading adventures, **Teddy H. '34** read the book *Finding Perfect* by Elly Swartz. *Finding Perfect* follows twelve-year-old Molly Nathans, a girl who finds comfort in order and perfection as she struggles with anxiety and growing obsessive thoughts. When her mom moves away for work, Molly becomes convinced that winning her middle school poetry slam will bring her back, and she pours everything into writing the "perfect" poem. Along the way, Molly begins to understand her obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and learns that asking for help and letting go of perfection are part of finding her way forward.

The Flame

What came next was an unexpected but aligned adventure in the fourth-grade classroom of **Allison Antolik**. In the midst of the poetry unit in the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum, Teddy proposed hosting a bracketed, tournament-style poetry slam in their classroom, inspired by the one in *Finding Perfect*. Ten students expressed their interest and put pencil to paper for their poems. Teddy was so excited by his classmates' enthusiastic participation that he emailed Swartz to let her know how the book inspired him.



The CKLA poetry unit focuses on everything from haikus to free verse, but Teddy wanted to take it a step further. Inspired by the performance-based nature of slam poetry, he invited his peers to step into the "tall poetry chair." Ten students began crafting their poems, and the competition was born.

Teddy said, "I read a lot of poetry and only write poems every now and then. I really like Shel Silverstein. He's probably my favorite poet. His poems are funny and rhyme a lot. When we got to our poetry unit in class, I remembered that part of the *Finding Perfect* book. So I decided to create my own [poetry slam], and it turned out pretty well. The first bracket went well. I asked who wanted to do it, and 10 out of 16 said they did. I picked three people to be judges, including myself. They all write poems, and we compete until one person wins. The winner received a Barnes and Noble gift card."

The three judges, Teddy, **Addie Z. '34**, and **Lucy K. '34**, set their own judging rubric, including parameters such as repetition, rhyme, rhythm, tone, and more. As the young poets advanced through the bracket over two weeks, the two finalists were ready for the challenge. After some non-judged warm-up poetry from two other classmates, **Ani V. '34** and **Sam D. '34** took to the tall poetry chair and read their pieces.

After the reading, snaps signaling applause filled the room, and the judges stepped into the hall to deliberate. The judges thoughtfully debated the merits of each piece before announcing the slam's winner. Sam took home the bragging rights for his expressive poem about ice cream. Ani took second place with his sensory-filled piece about carnivals.

Sam enjoyed the project's genesis. He said, "I've written poetry before, and I like Langston Hughes." Antolik noted that Sam is good at turning a not-serious topic into a poem, allowing everyone to connect with it in some way. "I was very surprised to win," he said, and he enjoyed listening to his classmates' poems, "...especially Ani's; the carnival one at the end."

Ani said, "I love poetry. I'm writing my thoughts down and expressing them. Also, my great-great-grandfather was a famous poet in India. I think he published books. I love all types of poems. I like Shel Silverstein because he's kind of funny. I read my poems to my parents, and I also illustrate them. I drew books with wings for my poem in week two, and in week three, I drew scenes from a carnival."

Rory N. '34, another Silverstein fan, made it to the final four. "I like writing things, and I thought it would be fun to write a poem, so I decided to volunteer. Not all of the poems have to rhyme, but I like to make mine rhyme."

Antolik shared, "I love how they took this unit and did a great job with its curriculum, and they went beyond the curriculum. They were inspired, made their own connections, and everyone participated in some way. In learning about poetry, they became poets."



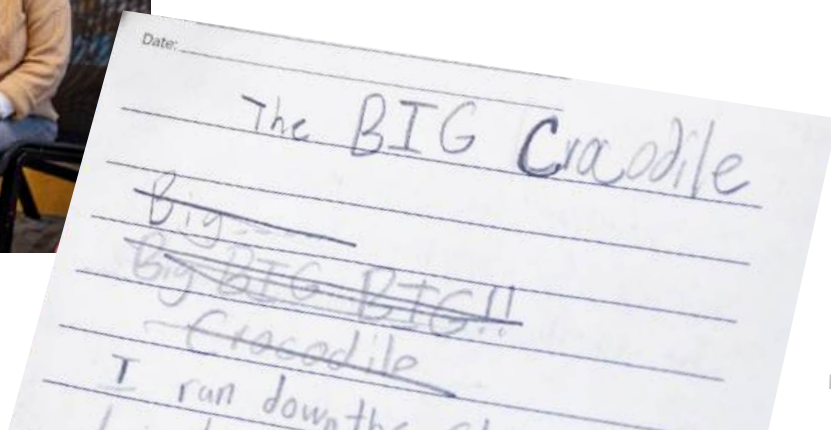
The Classroom Campfire

The excitement reached a fever pitch while the tournament was in full swing. Remember that email Teddy wrote to Ms. Swartz? It turned out the author was just as inspired by Teddy as he was by her. The flame of their project grew into a full campfire when Elly Swartz joined a Zoom call to celebrate the students' work and share her own writing journey.

During the Zoom visit, students dug deep into the life of an author. Here are the highlights from their conversation:

- **On Inspiration:** Swartz collects "beautiful things" like words, names, and ideas on her phone, letting them "cross-pollinate" like a garden until a story grows.
- **On Authenticity:** Her books are mirrors of her life; settings are based on places she has lived, and some characters often carry the names of her family members as a "nod" to them.
- **On Emotions:** While she isn't any one specific character, she has felt every emotion her characters experience. She spoke openly about her own anxiety, telling students that sharing those feelings is what makes us human, not "broken."
- **On Bravery:** She reminded the fourth graders that bravery isn't always loud. "You can be anxious, quiet, and like to eat in the library, and you can still be brave."

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"I am so honored to hear about Teddy's poetry slam and how *Finding Perfect* resonated," said Swartz. "It's a privilege to know that the book impacted him in that way. It makes me so happy that the students benefit from Ms. Antolik's enthusiasm and excitement, and that she is able to meet them where they are."

"Kids have taken my stories and turned them into a play, they've written fan fiction with different endings to my stories, they've organized slam poetry, and they do book challenges or allyship challenges to help change the world. When I set out to write a book, I didn't know all these wonderful gifts would come from it. When I write a story that is meaningful to me, it's scary to put it out into the world. When the reader meets the story, resonates with it, and brings their own perspective to the page, that's when the magic happens," she said.

Understanding emotions can be difficult at any age. Yet, Swartz manages to distill many emotions for younger readers. She said, "As adults, tough topics and difficult subjects are open for discussion. When kids are living [those emotions], they don't have the vocabulary to talk about them or an entry point to understand them. To create a story, I work with experts like pediatric specialists, anxiety and OCD specialists, and many doctors, talk to a lot of kids, adults, and parents, and draw on my own personal experiences. Then I'm able to create a story that has an access point for kids to have the conversations, gives them the language to understand what's happening with them, that gives them the space to say 'oh, it's not about me, it's about this or that character' before it becomes personal for them."



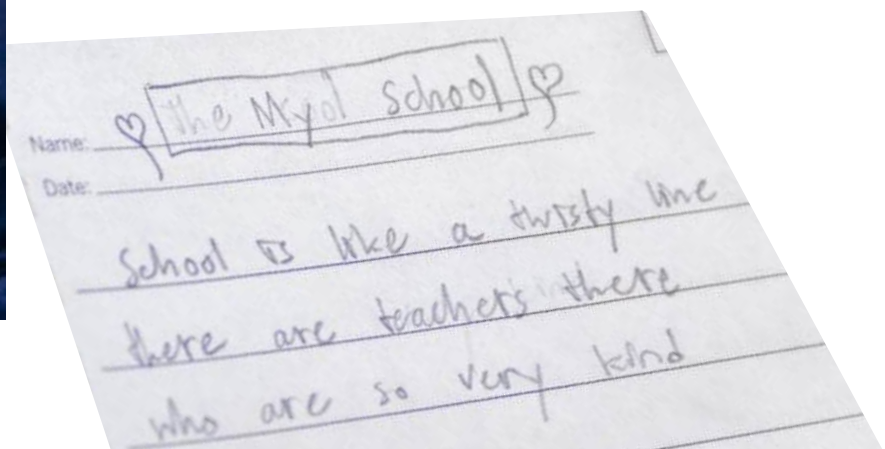
"I love how they took this unit and did a great job with its curriculum, and they went beyond the curriculum. They were inspired, made their own connections, and everyone participated in some way. In learning about poetry, they became poets."

**ALLISON ANTOLIK
LOWER SCHOOL TEACHER**

"[Readers] teach me to be present and the importance of being in the moment. They teach me what bravery looks like. You don't have to be the loudest, most confident person in the room to be brave. Bravery is for everybody. I've also learned forgiveness. It's not excusing someone's behavior, but forgiving in your own way and moving forward."

Swartz said, "There are a lot of people who read books and feel inspired to do something. Very few people act on it. I feel so proud that he [Teddy] took the initiative and grateful to Ms. Antolik for helping to make it happen."

Congratulations to everyone who helped build this poetic fire through your love of reading and writing!





"Always stay open to new dreams. As you learn more about yourself, your dreams can shift and change."

Always Stay Open to New Dreams

Author Joanna Ho Inspires Lower and Middle School Students

MICDS was pleased to welcome award-winning author Joanna Ho to campus on February 11, 2026, to speak with students in our Lower and Middle Schools. Ho is the *New York Times* bestselling author of many books for kids.

Ho shared her background and how she became a writer, including being inspired to pen books for her son that would reflect her family's experiences. "There is no one experience for everyone. We all have our own experiences," she said. "These books aren't only important for ourselves, they are important for everyone, so we can understand who our classmates, neighbors, and community members are. I wanted kids who are not like my son to be able to read books about kids like him." She also spoke about her process for writing books, and invited students to share their own wishes for the future.

"Always stay open to new dreams," she said. "As you learn more about yourself, your dreams can shift and change."

Science Students Present Research Symposium

This spring, students in **Upper School Science Teacher Stephanie Matteson's** Independent Lab Research: Institutional Research class shared the results of their semester of learning. This class is an independent study course in which students are mentored by an MICDS faculty member or a visiting scientist as they develop and test their own hypotheses under the umbrella of the School's research projects: biological corridors, soil fertility and plant production, yeast metabolism, and fruit fly genetics. Students use techniques learned in the Science Seminar course to conduct experiments agreed upon with their mentors. They are required to keep a detailed lab notebook to document their data, write a formal article to report their findings, and present their project in a public forum.

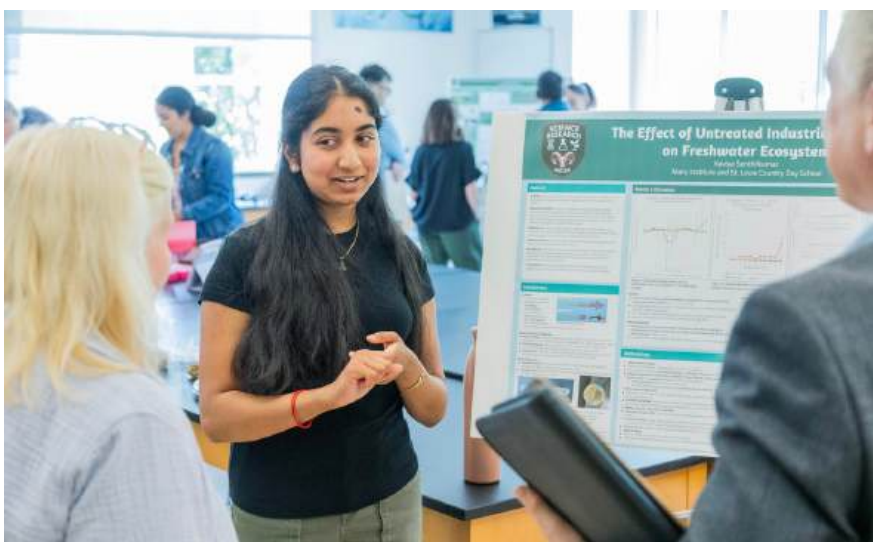
“Science Seminar and Research is designed to immerse students in authentic science. This course introduces necessary skills to read, conduct, and communicate science. By the end of this academic year, each student will have made contributions to the body of science and the efforts to propel the body of science forward.”

STEPHANIE MATTESON
UPPER SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHER

To finish their semester, the student-scientists proudly hosted a Seminar and Research Symposium, inviting their teachers, peers, parents, and outside scientists to view poster presentations, hear firsthand accounts of the experience, and even ask questions. Matteson's science lab was abuzz with excitement, and it was clear that her students were passionate about their work and findings.

“Science Seminar and Research is designed to immerse students in authentic science,” explained Matteson. “This course introduces necessary skills to read, conduct, and communicate science. By the end of this academic year, each student will have made contributions to the body of science and the efforts to propel the body of science forward.” Under her guidance, students develop skills in data literacy, literature review with critical analysis, and research methodology. They engage in experimental practices and communication as they experience the experimental design process.

Students learned how to read and sort primary scientific literature, conduct research, and collect, organize, analyze, compare, and communicate data. They worked closely with a mentor as they completed an independent research project of their choice, consisting of developing and testing their hypotheses.





Exhibits included:

- **Gwen Benson-Reschke '27**—*Addressing the Transitional Period: 3D Printed Hand as an Interim Solution*
- **Alana Chandler '26**—*Effects of Glyphosate-Based Herbicide on Early Reproductive Success in *Drosophila Melanogaster**
- **Nikhil Maniar '27**—*The Effect of Rising Stream Temperatures in the Saint Louis area on Benthic Macroinvertebrates*
- **Grace Powell '26**—*Improvement of Inpatient Pediatric Assistive Technology: Redesign of Ventilator Cart*
- **Ava Casillas '26**—*Determining Potential of TCE Exposure Around Valley Park TCE Superfund Site*
- **Hayden Ludwig '26**—*Increasing Comfortability, Flexibility, and Adaptability of CPAP Mask Straps for 2 and 4 Anchor Points*
- **Emerson Pook '26**—*The Impact of Various Environmental Factors on the Frequency in Which the Multifoliolate Mutation Occurs in White Clover Patches*
- **Kaviya Senthilkumar '27**—*The Effect of Untreated Industrial Effluent on Freshwater Ecosystems*

Our students presented their projects at both the St. Louis Science Fair and the MICDS Seminar and Research Symposium.

Matteson said that the off-campus judges—Laurie Free, Dr. Benjamin Harris, Dr. Angela Sutton, and Dr. Brian Esselman—offered positive comments about our student scientists, saying that they noticed excitement, that the talks were professional, and that the projects reflected genuine curiosity. All the judges were impressed with the students' ability to field questions. Dr. Esselman said of Pook's study, "Fascinating study that develops in personal interest...excited for future study!"

Benson-Reschke's project earned the MADE Makerspace "Make it at MADE" Award at the St. Louis Science Fair, and Casillas' project earned the American Association of University Women Award.

"I did a project examining the potential of human exposure to trichloroethylene (TCE), a carcinogenic chemical, around the Valley Park TCE Superfund Site," reports Casillas. "I've always been interested in environmental hazards, especially those in the St. Louis area, and being able to research into a Superfund Site only a few miles from my home was really eye-opening. Although my research was preliminary, I believe it's a step toward ensuring

agencies like the EPA continue to keep the public informed and updated about environmental issues that may impact human health."

Senthilkumar said, "My project investigated the effects of untreated industrial effluent composed of heavy metals, pharmaceuticals, or surfactants on freshwater ecosystems through a microcosm experiment, and highlighted the need for stronger environmental protection regulations. When I first moved into my neighborhood, there was this beautiful stream with lush plant growth and small fish. However, years of construction heavily polluted the stream, destroying local plant and animal life. Consequently, I became interested in the impact specific industrial effluent categories have on freshwater ecosystems, particularly when that waste is untreated.

"I enjoyed the research after experimentation the most since this was when I could use the data and sources I gathered to conclude what effect each industrial effluent category had on the bacteria and algae and support the need for stronger environmental protection regulations."

Hopefully, the work of our talented student researchers will indeed effect positive change.



Identity and Impact at

LEAD Summit

Seventh and eighth-grade students suspend the standard curriculum each winter for their annual LEAD Summit. This year's summit engaged students in activities to foster inquiry, empathy, introspection, compassion, and agency. Students gained a deeper understanding of their classmates through connecting the dots of their similarities and differences.

The Middle School motto LEAD stands for **L**earning with curiosity and joy, **E**mbracing challenge, **A**dvocating for self and others, and **D**emonstrating collaboration and teamwork.

The summit encourages faculty and students to show up with integrity and a willingness to generate greater self-awareness and nurture a community of kindness and connection.

After exploring the day's schedule and setting intentions in advisory, members of the Middle School Community Leadership Committee (CLC) welcomed their seventh- and eighth-grade classmates to Mary Eliot Chapel for the summit's opening. The CLC members shared their enthusiasm for a day of "celebrating learning about

ourselves and learning from each other to build community together." Then, they introduced the day's keynote speaker, author Joanna Ho.

Ho is a Chinese-American author of 13 books, best known for the *New York Times* bestseller, *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners*. Her award-winning writing centers on anti-bias, anti-racism, and equality. She shared her story of growing up all over the country as an Asian girl who wanted to be a teacher. She fulfilled that dream and became a high school English teacher, dean of students, and even vice-principal. How did she become a writer? When her son was born, she went looking for books to read to him that reflected the diversity of their family, and it wasn't easy.

She noted, "When we have limited or no representation, it affects our perception of ourselves and our worth. And those feelings can be internalized. When we see ourselves in books, we all have so many different experiences.

Doors, windows, and mirrors open so that we can better understand ourselves, classmates, neighbors, and the community."

Ho also shared that book bans leave publishers afraid to publish stories by diverse authors, and teachers and librarians might be afraid to bring books into their classrooms and libraries. "When we don't have access to these books, you can have a distorted sense of self." So she and a friend, Caroline Kusin Pritchard, wrote a book called *The Day the Books Disappeared*. Ho read the book aloud to the middle schoolers and said, "All of us stand on the shoulders of people who've spoken up to stand in their place in this world. You have tremendous power. There is so much for each of you to share that can create change in your own life and in your own world."

At the conclusion of her remarks, students set off for their activities.

"Everyone comes with their own experiences and stories, and it's important to learn how to be respectful of others around you, listen for understanding (not for debate), expect different opinions, and reflect on what you want to express. Everyone wants to feel seen, understood, and respected."

ERIN SUTHERLIN, MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

A group of students are sitting at desks in a classroom. A girl in the foreground is looking down at something in her hands, while others are looking towards the camera or each other.

ROADMAP TO IDENTITY

This reflective session offered middle schoolers an opportunity to trace the path of their lives so far. Whether learning to ride a bike or changing schools, students thoughtfully placed these events on their personal timelines. Favorite memories and vulnerable moments charted a visual timeline of their growth, and sharing highlights in small groups revealed commonalities with others.

A teacher and students are in a classroom. The teacher is sitting and talking to a group of students who are also sitting. One student is holding a piece of paper.

MICROAGGRESSIONS: INTENT VS. IMPACT

Microaggressions are subtle comments or actions that show implicit or explicit prejudice against historically marginalized groups. They might seem small, but when people experience them repeatedly, they can have a significant impact. Think of microaggressions as papercuts—one might not hurt too much but experiencing them over and over again can eventually cause real and lasting pain. Seventh graders examined common types of microaggressions related to race, gender, ability, family structure, and more. They then learned how to respond and to be an ally and role-played different scenarios. Eighth graders went straight to the scenarios, role-playing how they would respond as an individual, as an ally, and how to create lasting positive change.

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Three students are sitting at a table in a library. They are looking at a book or paper together. The student in the middle is smiling.

THE SNOWBALL EFFECT

In the Snowball activity, students took a serious look at their daily lives at school, rating their sense of belonging, voice, and empowerment on a scale of 1 to 5. After tossing their crumpled responses into a central “snowball” pile, students picked up a classmate’s perspective, reading aloud anonymous explanations that offered an honest window into the individual and collective middle school experience. This perspective-shifting exercise broke down social barriers and sparked a conversation about the power of collectively shaping a culture of inclusivity and growth.

>> continued from page 31

PLAYBACK THEATRE

In this activity, students in the audience prompt the students on stage with a story based on their own experiences, many of which are familiar to a middle school setting. Unlike traditional theatre, Playback is interactive and unscripted. The students on stage use improvisational techniques to enact audience members' stories as a "fluid sculpture." Playback fosters community and healing by allowing students to share experiences, from everyday moments to significant events. **Middle School Arts Teacher and Eighth Grade Dean Charlotte Dougherty** led the session and said, "Playback is an opportunity for kids to learn from kids through shared stories acted out on stage. It makes a big difference to hear other people's perspectives. Playback was performed by a group of eighth graders who really brought something special to the table because they remembered how impactful it was last year."

LIFT YOUR HEAD AND LOOK AROUND, YOU WILL BE FOUND

The 2025-2026 LEAD Summit wrapped up where it started, in Mary Eliot Chapel, where CLC members thanked the middle schoolers for showing up and asked that students "carry today's experience into how you treat people and how you show up in our community." The Middle School Concert Choir, led by **Middle School Choir Director Jason Roberts**, closed the day with a powerful performance of *You Will Be Found* from the musical *Dear Evan Hansen*.

Middle School Counselor Erin Sutherlin said, "Everyone comes with their own experiences and stories, and it's important to learn how to be respectful of others around you, listen for understanding (not for debate), expect different opinions, and reflect on what you want to express. Everyone wants to feel seen, understood, and respected."

Dougherty added, "The LEAD Summit every year is so impactful just for the camaraderie they share together."

CONNECTION GAMES IN THE MAC

In between sessions, students got their bodies moving with a dynamic round of games in the MAC. These included Ships & Sailors, Hula Hoop race, and Pool Noodle Racing. Wild laughter rang out while the students were equally focused on competition and having fun.

LEGACY: VOICES IN HARMONY

In a forward-thinking exercise, students shifted from past reflections to future aspirations. In small groups, seventh- and eighth-graders identified their personal goals for their time at MICDS and, as an additional layer, what they need from their peers to achieve them. By documenting these shared hopes on strips of paper and linking them together, the students created a physical "Legacy Chain" that was hung in the hallways as a visual reminder of what they can build together.



Graphic Storytelling with Raina Telgemeier

Raina Telgemeier, an American cartoonist and New York Times bestselling author, visited the classrooms of **Fourth Grade Teachers Allison Antolik and Donna Waters** simultaneously via Zoom as part of a special Scholastic Books program.

Telgemeier is the author/illustrator of the popular graphic novels *Smile*, *Drama*, *Sisters*, *Ghosts*, and *Guts*, as well as four graphic novels adapted from *The Baby-Sitters Club* stories by Ann M. Martin. Telgemeier's books explore feelings and emotions, with art that matches, showcasing expressive faces and a sense of movement within the characters' bodies.

For the drawing exercise, she noted that emotions are complicated, nuanced, and messy. "Sometimes they are internal, and no one else can know what we are feeling, thinking, and expressing unless we communicate it. Facial expression can give you a clue," she said. Telgemeier explained that her art relies on a "universal vocabulary." She shared how psychologists identify six core emotions: happiness, disgust, sadness, fear, anger, and surprise, before leading students through drawing specific facial expressions.



Sixth-Grade Mathematicians Found Businesses

By Dustin Delfin, Middle School Math Teacher

The Class of 2032 continued the tradition of working on a business project for their sixth-grade math class. In this real-world project, students used the mathematical skills they learned to run a business and track their profit. The project was introduced when we returned from spring break, and it lasted until the last week of school.



Phase 1

During the first half of the school year, students designed a fictional math city, and were tasked with managing their fictional bank accounts. To kick off this project, students split money in their MyKidsBank accounts into three different categories. They relied on finding a percent of a number to calculate these values. For example, students calculated 33% of their bank account to stay in their savings, 45% to the business project, and 22% to their stock market portfolio. From there, students withdrew these funds from their accounts and transferred them to the appropriate locations.

In the Math 6 stock market, students also took on roles as investors and purchased shares from various companies within their math city. Students monitored the stock market's constantly changing rates and made financial decisions to strengthen their portfolios. This served as a fun way for students to make real-life decisions using their fictitious finances.

Phase 2

Next, students found a business partner to consolidate their business project funds, which led them to establish a company start-up value. From there, they created a company name, designed a company logo, and were given a new shared bank account for their business finances.

Phase 3

Once students established their companies with their business partner(s), each company was asked to research a problem that currently exists and develop a "realistic" product or invention to help address it—no teleporting machines or magic wands. They were given a list of possible problems to explore, including (but not limited to):

- Everyday life problems
- School-based problems
- Environmental problems
- Home and family life
- Health and wellness
- Social and global issues



Caleb Trankler '32 tapped a passion he has in real life for his project. "My partners, **Sam McGinness '32** and **Braxton Lurk '32**, were looking for things that we have in common, and we all like to play football, so we made our company a football target system," he said.

"What inspired me to create my product is the amount of athlete injuries and the effect on the rest of their career," said **Eloise Morris '32**.

Genny Molamphy '32 and her team found inspiration in her school. "What inspired me to make my project was how teachers do so much for us, so we needed to do something for them."

Once teams selected a topic, they researched three facts/interesting information to enhance the motivation of their product idea. Next, they wrote a description explaining what their product is intended to do and created a sketch of what it might look like.

Phase 4A

Middle School Math Teacher Cameron Youngman was a great collaborator, and his idea to make this project more realistic was implemented in Phase 4. The class also partnered with **Middle School History Teacher and Makerspace Coordinator**

Blake Whitney to help bring student products to life, assigning dollar amounts to the tools, materials, and resources (paint, ink, filament, cardboard, etc.) available in the makerspace.

Students tracked which materials and resources they used, and this total represented the cost to produce one product. Using this information, they priced their product with a minimum 50% profit margin. In addition to production costs, students accounted for a one-time makerspace membership fee and a one-time advertising fee for a later phase. Morris said, "The most challenging part was calculating the prices of our items and making our items profitable."

>> continued on page 36



>> continued from page 35



From there, students created a linear relationship between the number of items sold (independent variable) and profit (dependent variable), which led them to write a linear equation. They used this equation to determine how many products needed to be sold to break even and recover their business expenses.

Phase 4B

Students visited Whitney's makerspace to build prototype models of their products. The students enjoyed their time creating physical examples of their ideas. Morris said, "My favorite part of this project was being able to create our model and make our ideas really come to life." The makerspace was also Trankler's and Molamphy's favorite part.

Phase 5

Since students paid an advertising fee, the next phase required them to design an advertisement to promote

their product. Each company's advertisement was compiled into a catalog, which students used in the next phase.

Phase 7

As we worked on the business project, students simultaneously worked on their circles and statistical units. Students were given class time to work on practice problems in preparation for an upcoming assessment. Every time students completed a checkpoint in that activity, they could select coupons for various businesses. These coupons gave students an advantage when it was time to move on to Phase 7. Due to time constraints, Phase 6 was skipped, and we moved on to Phase 7.

Using a compiled catalog of all the advertisements created in Phase 5, students participated in a shopping spree. In the MyKidsBank Marketplace, students made online purchases in which they were required to buy at least 16 different products from 16 different companies.

This created a mini economy in which goods were exchanged using funds from their bank accounts. The coupons in the activity mentioned above helped students financially complete this task while they documented their purchases in a graphic organizer.

Phase 8

After completing their purchases, each business logged in to its MyKidsBank account to document the sales. Students entered this



data to review their sales data and the total profit their company earned. "The most challenging part was calculating the total amount of money that people purchased," Trankler shared.

Phase 9

Students used their sales data to write another linear equation, with the independent variable the number of items sold and the dependent variable the amount of money in their bank account. Students used their company start-up value, factored in the fees for advertising and using the makerspace, and determined how many products their company must sell to reach \$1,000,000. They relied on a table of values to graph their linear projections on a coordinate plane.

With sales data recorded, it was time to attract investors. Students watched examples of Shark Tank pitches to understand how to present their ideas effectively. Each company evaluated its sales and profit performance to determine a projected company value.

Each business completed the statement:

"We are asking for \$_____ in exchange for _____% of our company!"

During the final week of school, students presented their products to "Sharks," who are sixth-grade advisors and other members of the community disguised as business investors. Each company completed a template with its own



business information. The goal is for each company to use the information calculated above and secure a deal with at least one investor, with many aiming to attract multiple offers.

Project Impact

This project is the highlight of sixth-grade math because it gave students the opportunity to connect real-life applications to the mathematical concepts explored in class. It also provided a fun and engaging

way for students to take ownership of their learning by creating something that solves a problem in everyday life. Getting to partner with Mr. Youngman and Mr. Whitney to make this project effective and work well for our students helped enhance its parameters. I also appreciate how we got the entire sixth-grade community involved with this project, with other sixth-grade advisors taking on the role of Sharks to listen to projects their students have developed.





Grounded in Wonder

Lower School Teacher Laura Pupillo cultivates curiosity, adaptability, and deep roots in young scientists

On spring evenings in Shaw Nature Reserve in Gray Summit, Missouri, the air is filled with the sound of croaking frogs, chirping crickets, rustling trees, and a babbling brook. On one particular night, **Lower School Science Teacher Laura Pupillo** looks up into the night sky, and she smiles. She is leading a handful of colleagues and more than 50 fourth graders on a night hike in the reserve, and the sounds of nature are accompanied by giggles, wandering flashlights, and the crunchy steps of little shoes on the path. As a teacher, this is her favorite time of the year. "It's so magical; one student told me it's like being at Disney World," she said. Like most magic, it can't be described, only felt.

The annual fourth-grade overnight at Shaw highlights Pupillo's core philosophy of teaching: Learning should be meaningful, hands-on, and filled with connections. She excels at carefully curated moments of wonder in the outdoor realms and in the natural chaos of the classroom. She said, "I really believe in place-based education, and I love to do citizen science projects with our students. It's so important to get them out into the environment and their community."

Pupillo is a strong advocate for ecology and the environment. She is certified by the Missouri Stream Team, has worked with the Conservation Department, and has friends who are botanists and foresters. Here at MICDS, she developed a campus stream team for third and fourth graders. They study ecosystems, conduct cleanup, and remove honeysuckle, among other activities. Several times a year, she takes students to the nearby Litzsinger Road Ecology Center, an outdoor laboratory for ecological education, research, and restoration.

Another equally important tradition for fourth-grade scientists is the annual Sustainability Fair, where students choose a topic that reduces a negative impact on the earth. Pupillo is amazed by the students' ideas. She said, "One student really loves soccer, so he created a soccer cleat that's sustainable and is supposed to help you save the bottoms of your shoes. Another student created a turbine that would go in a drain, so it can spin as you're washing your hands or doing dishes."

High-Tech Meets High-Touch

On campus, Pupillo makes great use of the Lower School courtyard just outside the science and art classrooms. "When I started, it had been sitting for a while, and it's such a perfect place to go with the kids. It can be a messy laboratory; we have tables, and now we have vegetable garden beds for the kids to explore. We've pulled the ornamental plants and planted native species. It's student-led, so it doesn't always look beautiful, but we now have milkweed, which will attract monarch caterpillars in the fall," she said.

Pupillo also pairs standard science lessons with technology. She said, "Although our lessons are rooted in the Next Generation Science Standards, if students seem really interested in something, I try to make time for those interests, which lends itself perfectly to lessons in the makerspace." The Lower School Makerspace is home to 3D printers, a Glowforge 3D laser printer, Cricut machines and ChompSaws, a green screen for video production, and endless amounts of robotics and maker materials. Students learn Tinkercad early so they can model their ideas for a research project before using hands-on tools. "It helps us ask questions like, 'How big is that going to be? Do you have enough space? Will this spin? If so, it needs a spot for the motor.' We are always using math to measure, collect, and analyze data. I tell the students all the time that math is science's best friend. You can't really do one without the other," she said.

Pupillo and **Robyn Williams, Lower School Coordinator of Instructional Technology**, often partner to incorporate robotics into the science curriculum. They've created several engaging lessons with Ozobots and Sphero Indi Cars, which students code to learn about animal migration patterns, pollinator paths, and hibernation sequences, to name a few. "One of my favorite tools I use with first through fourth graders has been LEGO Essentials. Fourth graders were learning about plate tectonics, and LEGO Essentials has a kit that serves as an earthquake-machine lab. So they built the machine using code, then built different LEGO structures and tested them with the machine to see which structure was stronger and could withstand higher magnitudes. They collected data along the way, and they loved it. It was so much fun. In first grade, students built pollination machines with a pollinator that rotates on a motor to demonstrate how it collects and distributes pollen to and from flowers. All of the projects involve a circuit, so they either have to light an LED or they have to spin a motor," she said.

With a master's in education focused on math and science, she has a firm belief that not all science should be in a silo and cross-curricular learning is beneficial to all subjects taught in school. Together with the JK-12

>> continued on page 40



>> continued from page 39

math and science department chairs, **Diane Broberg** and **Paul Zahller**, they have designed several theme weeks for Lower School students. From exploring (and exploding!) pumpkins and icy winter weeks to hot air balloons and pollinators, the team, along with homeroom teachers and art, Spanish, PE, and library specialists, designs a week filled with engaging activities across disciplines centered on a specific thematic unit. In a simple unit about craters on the moon, Pupillo added mini-themed lessons on rocketry following the Artemis II mission and collaborated with Zahller to launch rockets at the Shaw overnight, including lighted stomp rockets for the evening festivities. “Those times are important,” she notes. “We have to be able to break from curriculum to connect with those special once-in-a-lifetime moments.”

Adaptation in Action

The field of science is constantly changing, and Pupillo moves just as fast. She began teaching at MICDS in the fall of 2020. She said, “I met my students for the first time on a computer screen. I decided that everything we do needs to be hands-on and engaging. So I created simple labs and made all these little science kits for each student. I remember measuring out countless containers of baking soda. It was a lot of work.”

During the extensive renovations of the Beasley Lower School, employees had to keep flexibility at the forefront. Pupillo and other specialists experienced an additional transition from losing their dedicated classrooms to gaining rolling carts that traveled to each homeroom for their lessons in art, science, library, and Spanish. While it was challenging to cull science materials that once fit into a large classroom workspace down to a couple of rolling carts, the pivot spurred Pupillo to adjust former workflows to achieve greater efficiency.



For example, each spring the science classroom becomes home to several baby chicks. Before construction, students would have scheduled times to travel to science view, hold, and learn about the chicks. Pupillo quickly realized that carting the chicks around to the homerooms and hallways was much easier, as there are fewer chicks than students and they’re much smaller. “When they’re on the cart in the hall, even middle schoolers can see them and they get excited.”

Post-construction, the courtyard will retain its value as an outdoor classroom. “There are lessons I did in the courtyard [vs. a homeroom] just because of the mess factor. And I found myself asking, why did I ever do this inside? This is much better! I can just hose it off, and it’s done,” she said.

Deep Roots & Finding Grounding

Pupillo’s deep connection to teaching began long before she ever set foot in an MICDS classroom. As the oldest of six siblings in a military family, teaching came naturally to her. She recalls making worksheets for her siblings, and “having school” was just a natural part of her life. She took early childhood classes in her senior year of high school and worked at a lab school at Jefferson College, eventually getting hired there as a preschool teacher and a parent educator with Parents as Teachers. “We were constantly working with practicum students and student teachers, and it was a great way to learn about education,” she said.

Through her continued education and the jobs that followed at The Souldard School and Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School in St. Louis, she explored and tested instructional practices



“Getting kids outside and getting them involved in what matters is important. I want them to know that they don’t have to be a grown-up to make a difference and to change the world. They can work on that at any time.”

LAURA PUPILLO
LOWER SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHER

to meet the needs of all students while maintaining her own curiosity in advancing the teaching of science. "At Mirowitz, we chose interesting environmental topics to discuss with our state representatives in Jefferson City," she said. At Souland, she took students on field trips and most often rode public transportation to get there. "Getting kids outside and getting them involved in what matters is important. I want them to know that they don't have to be a grown-up to make a difference and to change the world. They can work on that at any time."

Understanding what young learners need was also shaped by her own experience navigating life as a military child. "When I was in second grade, I went to three different schools because my dad was in the military. By third grade, I had this teacher who, looking back, probably had experience working with military kids. We are constantly having to say goodbye to friends and homes and be the new kid everywhere we go. Mrs. Nordel was calm, organized, and patient. I appreciated her predictable schedule and the time she made for projects. She was a few years away from retirement and was like a grandmother teacher who loved us. We did some great projects, planted a garden, and did a class play. I cried on the last day of school. You're at that certain age of reasoning, and I'm so glad that she brought some stability and groundedness to me at that time," she said.

Pupillo grounds her current students in similar ways. "The early years in a person's life are foundational to the person they will become as an adult. I always start class the same way. We set the intention for what we're going to do. Students have science notebooks, and I think taking a little bit of time to reflect with pencil and paper really goes a long way. It's a great reflection piece for me also to see if they really are grasping a concept," she said. When the lab takes off, Pupillo becomes mobile, walking around, checking in with students, helping them tweak their experiments, asking questions, pointing out observations, and encouraging them to be curious. In Pupillo's classroom and in the makerspace, the technology is layered into the framework that everything is figureoutable. The science of caring about each student and where they are in the moment lays the groundwork for future discoveries.

Pupillo admits that one of the most challenging parts of her job is starting a project or getting really involved in something; she has a hard time turning it off. "There are really exciting projects out there in the world. And in the work of science, there's always something amazing. But sometimes you just have to choose what your focus is on, because there is only so much time," she said.

When Pupillo is not carting around baby chicks or building chemical reactions to explode pumpkins, she tends to the land, children, and animals on her hobby farm of 11 years, which has grown with the addition of more than 100 trees. It makes sense. Her first connection to science was with nature, from the catalpa tree in her grandmother's yard to the Eifel Forest in Germany, where her dad was once stationed. "I spent every day in the forest, which helped grow my interest in environmental science. Standing underneath something so big and giant really grounds you. When you think about its history, some are thousands of years old, and everything that tree has seen...it's just awe-inspiring."



Beyond the Lab

What's your favorite season of the school year and why?

Spring. We know the kids so well by then, and we have great momentum. Plus, the earth is coming back to life, which is great for field studies.

What's your favorite time of day? I'm a night owl. I enjoy the quiet after a busy day.

What's your top MICDS memory so far? Our night hike at Shaw. You walk down to the boardwalk, and the frogs and toads are all making noise. It's just my favorite.

What's your favorite campus lunch? I've loved the Middle School salad bar this year! I also love Indian food, so I'm thrilled whenever Flik makes anything with curry.

What would we be surprised to know about you? I used to be a wedding photographer.

What's been your biggest science experiment fail? At Souland School, we took public transportation to do stream team work at Forest Park. We lugged all our equipment and rain boots onto the bus. Right as we were finishing up, I fell into the creek. I was totally drenched and still had to haul all the gear on and off multiple buses with the students.

What's your biggest science experiment win? Teaching science on a cart last year. All the experiments went so well, but doing elephant toothpaste [an impressive peroxide, yeast, and soap chemical reaction] on a cart was a really big win. Normally, kids take their labs to the sink, but this time I just dumped their trays into a five-gallon bucket and washed it all later. It was so much less stressful.

What's your favorite science rabbit hole? Ecology. If there's news about plants or water, I'm reading it. I also love psychology and the study of human behavior. I love visual things, but I love data too.

What's your go-to hype song on your way to work? I listen to literally every genre. My all-time favorite is Tom Petty, but on any given day, it could be '90s country, the Flaming Lips, or Ozzy Osbourne.

MICDS Employees Honored for Years of Service

It is MICDS tradition to honor our milestone years of service employees at our final All-School Assembly of the year, and this year everyone rocked out in the McDonnell Athletic Center (MAC) to celebrate these dedicated faculty and staff members.

After the Upper School Choir sang the MICDS *Alma Mater*, then **Head of School Jay Rainey** announced each person and showed their photo on the screen. With each segment (10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 years), he played snippets of three pop songs from the year those employees began work at MICDS, challenging the crowd to guess which was the top song. Students sang along, and more than a few Lower Schoolers popped up and danced, even to classics such as the *Macarena*! Cheers went up for beloved teachers from all three divisions in addition to those for our hardworking (and often unseen) staff members from Athletics, Technology, Facilities, Grounds, Maintenance, and Housekeeping. It was quite a community celebration!

35
YEARS

Mark Sweeney, Grounds

30
YEARS

Bonita Berry, Athletics
Nicole Skaggs, Lower School

25
YEARS

Doug Greener, Grounds
Fatima Hamidovic, Housekeeping
Semir Hamidovic, Housekeeping
Senad Hadzisalihovic, Housekeeping

20
YEARS

Summer Beasley, Middle School
Jenn Gillis, Lower School
Brad Heinemann, Upper School
Del Hurst, Housekeeping
Jason Ulrich, Technology
Katie Voss, Upper School
Colleen Williamson, Upper School

15
YEARS

Zouwei Chang, Middle School
Dan Crockett Sr., Housekeeping
Chris Ludbrook, Upper School
Melanie Moody, Upper School
Dr. Tanya Roth, Upper School
Bridget Wallace, Lower School
Robyn Williams, Lower School

10
YEARS

Ali Aledani, Housekeeping
Torie Haltenhof, Maintenance
Mrinesa Hamidovic, Housekeeping
Daniel George, Upper School
Celeste Prince, Upper School
Tom Revie, Maintenance
Steve Thomas, Housekeeping
Paul Zahller, Upper School



Dr. Grace Lee Honored at Little Black Dress Brunch

MICDS Dean of Faculty Dr. Grace Lee was named as an honoree of the Little Black Dress Brunch, which was held in March by The Sophia Project (TSP). Honorees are selected “for their outstanding leadership, commitment to service, and meaningful impact. They are mentors, trailblazers, and change-makers who continue to open doors and inspire others to dream bigger—both professionally and personally.”

The Little Black Dress Brunch is a celebration, a moment of visibility, and affirmation. TSP states that “by honoring women who lead with purpose, we also show our youth what’s possible when they are supported, seen, and surrounded by role models who look like them.”

*Congratulations
to Dr. Grace Lee!*

Way to go, Jim!

Director of Facilities Earns NBOA Professional Achievement Award



Jim Barciszewski, Director of Facilities, was a recipient of the 2026 NBOA Professional Achievement Award. He was honored for his outstanding contributions as an independent school staff member for making exceptional strides in enhancing MICDS’ operations and financial health. Way to go, Jim!

Note: Barciszewski retired from MICDS in June 2026 after 44 years of service. His work will continue to impact our students for generations.

Sharing Skill Sets Teachers Trade AI Tools, Tips, and Tricks



On a cold, blustery winter day, our teachers once again became students during a late start morning and took full advantage of their peers' expertise. This professional development session, sponsored by our academic department chairs, tackled a thorny subject: artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom.

Diane Broberg, JK-12 Math and Computer Science Department Chair, explains, "In December, I attended the NAIS conference on AI and education. While there were many takeaways during the conference, there is one phrase that keeps playing over and over in my mind. One of the keynote speakers said, 'AI is no longer a tool; it is a skill set.' My response? 'I've got a lot to learn for it to be a skill set for me.'" She told her peers that the session was a time for each teacher to add to their own toolkit with the goal of making AI a skill set they can then pass on to our students. "If it's a must for us, then it's really a must for them," she said.

Ever resourceful, MICDS leveraged its outstanding internal resources and set up a robust program for teachers to help teachers. Each educator could choose two sessions to attend, and the topics were varied and appealing:

- Creating Visuals and Content with AI by Robyn Williams, **Lower School Coordinator of Instructional Technology**
- Administrative Writing Efficiency by **Dr. Jody Marberry, Middle School Math Teacher**, and **Olivia Halverson, Middle School English Teacher**
- The Art of Prompting by **Tex Tourais, Dean of Digital Learning and Upper School English Teacher**
- Lesson Material Creation by **Laura Pupillo, Lower School Science Teacher**

- Using AI to Evaluate Assessments by **Phil Rosen, Upper School Math Teacher**
- Building Rubrics Using AI by **Brian Purlee, Upper School Maker & Robotics Coordinator and Science Teacher**
- Understanding the Environmental Impact of AI by **Paul Zahler, JK-12 Science and Engineering Department Chair**
- AI Writing Voice by **Jenn Sellenriek, Upper School English Teacher**
- Show & Tell 1: How WE Use AI by **Blake Whitney, Middle School History Teacher**, **Cameron Youngman, Middle School Math Teacher**, and **Dustin Delfin, Middle School Math Teacher**
- Show & Tell 2: How WE Use AI by **Dr. Tanya Roth, Upper School History Teacher**, **Kelly Weidenmiller, Upper School World Languages and Culture Teacher**, **Dr. Nick Miller, Middle and Upper School English Teacher**, and **Stephanie Matteson, Upper School Science Teacher**
- How to Build a Flint Activity by **Lily Childs, Upper School World Languages and Cultures Teacher**, and **Patrick Huewe, JK-12 World Languages and Cultures Department Chair**
- Bias in AI by **Elizabeth Wells, Upper School History Teacher**
- Art, Humanness, and Robots by **Sarah Garner, Lower School Art Teacher**
- Differentiated Instruction and SPARK by Broberg and **Carol Dalton, Middle and Upper School World Languages and Cultures Teacher**

Garner's session questioned what art is, how AI creation has intersected with human creation, and different opinions on the matter. "I shared ideas that JK artists explored when painting with a robot and how fourth graders explored AI when creating packaging design, and decided that their creations were better than the designs that AI came up with," she

said. "The conversation explored some of the ideas on the MICDS AI scope and sequence, including understanding how empathy is a uniquely human attribute (grades three and four) and understanding the difference between humans and machines (JK-second grade). We also explored the differing opinions about AI and art."

Pupillo presented on how to use a chatbot to improve lessons and units. She reports, "We explored Flint's chat feature for creating content images, unit feedback, creating games, lesson creation using prompts, and creating graphic organizers. We also looked at examples of when an AI chatbot has gotten it wrong and how to fix errors with additional prompting. Participants logged into Flint at the end and got to try out a new idea."

Williams said, "My presentation focused on using Canva's AI tools to efficiently create content, presentations, images, videos, and more. Beyond using Canva as a time-saving one-stop shop, the goal was to spark classroom ideas while highlighting that AI can generate ideas quickly, but our expertise and judgment are essential for shaping and refining the final product to ensure accuracy."

Halverson and Marberry presented on using AI to assist faculty and staff with completing administrative tasks. "We investigated the platforms of Flint, NotebookLM, and ChatGPT, sharing how we've used all three for analytical and generative work," said Halverson. "I

found this topic relevant as I have used the various AI platforms as thought partners when writing parent emails, constructing progress reports, and managing large sets of student data and/or school data (such as the ISACS self-study reports for accreditation). It was invigorating to have several faculty come up to me afterward with huge smiles on their faces and share how they were able to overcome writer's block for progress reports, set up a reflection activity for students, and so much more!"

Tourais presented on drafting better prompts. "I went over a few ground rules for what the goal of prompting is; then, I gave the faculty sample prompts built for specific administrative tasks and had them play around with those," he explains. "We discussed what worked and why, and then I showed them how Flint could be used to develop a personal cookbook of prompt recipes for common tasks."

Rosen presented on how he's trying to use AI to help generate assessment questions and analyze assessment results. "The best possible version would let me create more comprehensive, creative, and better-designed assessments and more accurately adjust instruction to meet the needs of the students without sacrificing time for all the other things I need to do as a teacher," he said. "I got the impression that many teachers have been working on similar processes, and it was great to share insights and think about ways we might improve the idea going forward."

Zahller said, "In my session, I explored AI's environmental impact, which is real but often misunderstood, by having faculty compare its energy and water use to other everyday activities to put it in context. The focus is on helping students examine scale, tradeoffs, and system-level solutions so they can make informed decisions in a world where AI is here to stay."

This professional development opportunity was the first step in a four-part roadmap for AI integration and curriculum revision. The second step was for department chairs to gather feedback and reflection on the seminars. Later,

>> continued on page 46



"We are grateful to those who were willing to share with their colleagues. It is a big risk to share your thoughts about something so new. Additionally, it was rewarding to be in a JK-12 environment so we can all realize that we are learning about this ever-evolving topic together. I was excited to get concrete skills and innovative ideas from all of the sessions I attended."

LYNN MITTLER
JK-12 ENGLISH AND LANGUAGE ARTS DEPARTMENT CHAIR

>> continued from page 45

they worked to synthesize feedback and process curriculum data. Finally, the chairs defined the revision process and scheduled tasks for March and April. While the School currently has a full scope and sequence for the integration of AI, our teachers are always looking to refine and improve their pedagogical practices as they learn more and as systems evolve.

This first gathering was a resounding success! Here is what our teachers had to say:

Kelly Weidenmiller, Upper School Spanish Teacher, reports, "I participated in the Upper School Show & Tell and shared how I'm using AI in upper-level Spanish classes. I focused on how I'm using it to support preparation for writing and speaking assessments, literary analysis, and creative and analytical visual representations of authentic music that we study. This format was wonderful to be a part of because I find that seeing what other teachers are doing with AI is the most inspiring—it helps me to think outside of the box and consider things I never would have thought of on my own."

Dr. Tanya Roth, Upper School History Teacher, said, "It was great. I went to Phil Rosen's session on using AI to create/refine assessments, and it was so helpful to hear what has worked for him and what hasn't, and to get his handout summarizing everything. I've done a little work around this, but it has inspired me to try a couple of new things that will lead to even more improved 'best practices,' I think. I was also on a panel for show-and-tell and came away with ideas I began immediately implementing to benefit my students, like streamlining the look and feel of my Canvas pages, as well as brainstorming new ways to approach assignments based on ideas I heard from one of my science colleagues."

Callie Bambenek, Middle School Science Teacher, was effusive in her praise. "It really was a wonderfully reflective morning," she said. "February can be a challenging month in teaching for a variety of reasons. Being surrounded by teachers who are thoughtful, reflective, and excellent at what they do provides me with a sense of ease and possibility. One of our department chairs even shared that she still has much to learn in order for AI to become a true skill set for her—and hearing that immediately refreshed my excitement. It was a great reminder that

I, too, am always still learning. Engaging in this professional development with colleagues I trust and learn from made the experience feel both empowering and reassuring. It allowed me to lean into a professional challenge I genuinely crave and left me feeling re-energized and inspired as we move into the second semester of teaching our students. I'm really hoping for this type of professional development again."

Lynn Mittler, JK-12 English and Language Arts Department Chair, spoke on behalf of the department chairs. "We are grateful to those who were willing to share with their colleagues," she said. "It is a big risk to share your thoughts about something so new. Additionally, it was rewarding to be in a JK-12 environment so we can all realize that we are learning about this ever-evolving topic together. I was excited to get concrete skills and innovative ideas from all of the sessions I attended."

Broberg notes, "It resonates with me and is why I presented and is why I continue to explore, experiment, and play with AI." Our students are grateful, too, for teachers who continue to learn right alongside them!



Dr. Miller Presents at Modern Language Association



Dr. Nick Miller, Middle & Upper School English Teacher, joined an international panel of scholars at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association, where participants shared research on global musical adaptations. Miller's presentation focused on adaptations of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in contemporary K-pop, examining how the play's dream logic speaks to experiences of girlhood in a media-saturated world.

Miller noted, "In eighth grade, we work hard to help students identify and analyze allusions in literature in order to help them see how texts speak to one another across time and media. We even use allusions in music—from Taylor Swift to J. Cole—to show how this process works. Now, as I prepare to teach *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to our ninth-grade students, I am excited for them to engage with a text that is so frequently alluded to, helping them see how one of Shakespeare's great comedies continues to feel relevant today."

Miller's participation highlights the close relationship between classroom teaching and ongoing scholarly research, reinforcing the MICDS commitment to globally-engaged, interdisciplinary learning.

Patrick Huber Wins BroadwayWorld St. Louis Award

Patrick Huber, Arts Department – Upper School Visual Art Teacher, was announced by BroadwayWorld St. Louis as one of the winners of their 2025 BroadwayWorld St. Louis Awards. He won Best Scenic Design of a Play or Musical for his work with the St. Louis Actors' Studio on *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Bravo, Patrick!





The MICDS Class of 2026 is Ready for What's Next

Congratulations!

Senior Day

The very last day of April coincided with the final day of high school for our Class of 2026 seniors. Amid delicious food, college t-shirts, and a ceremonial walk through campus, seniors reflected on all that they achieved during their time at MICDS. They spent the day connecting with their peers and teachers (a.k.a. their Ram families) and looked to the future as they get ready to embark on their next journeys: college! What a milestone day it was to celebrate!

In the final hours of the day, seniors gathered on the front steps of Olson Hall for the senior class photo. Dressed in college gear, they waved their college pennants and smiled brightly.

Lastly, seniors embarked on the traditional campus walkthrough. Among happy tears and laughter, students paraded through cheering Lower, Middle, and Upper School students and faculty. At the end of the walkthrough, **Senior Class President Riley Crawford '26** passed the class flag off to representatives from the rising senior class.

Daniel George, Upper School Dean of Students for the Class of 2026, said, "The Class of 2026 did not just reach the finish line; they grew into it, carrying with them effort, resilience, and a deep sense of belonging. On their final day, pride gave way to joy, tears, and the feeling of stepping freely into what comes next. As their dean, I have never been more proud, and watching them cheered by our younger Rams offered a powerful reminder that as one class finishes, another steps forward."

Senior Night

The Class of 2026 gathered for the penultimate time on the Friday before graduation to celebrate each other through academic and athletic awards, performances, and peer recognition.

Head of Upper School Scott Small kicked off the evening by welcoming everyone to Brauer Auditorium. He expressed appreciation for the leadership demonstrated by the Class of 2026 over the past four years, saying, "You have set a wonderful mark for your younger peers to strive for next year and established so many meaningful relationships along the way."

>> continued on page 50



>> continued from page 48

Commencement

Candidates for graduation and their family and friends gathered in the MAC the evening of Monday, May 18, for Commencement.

Mr. Rainey welcomed everyone and opened by presenting the Dorothy Wray Roberts Class of 1917 Faculty Merit Award to three deserving educators: **Lower School Art Teacher Sarah Garner**, **Middle School Math Teacher Kristina Jones**, and **Upper School World Languages Teacher Robin Begley**. Later in the program, he honored **JK-12 History and Social Sciences Department Chair Carla Federman** with the Rivinus Award, as voted by the members of the Class of 2026.

Jason Brauer '94, Chair of the MICDS Board of Trustees, then took the microphone. He spoke about all the experiences of this particular class, from the pandemic to the rise of artificial intelligence. He mentioned how much their campus has changed, especially in the past year, and noted their compliance with the School's first-ever cell phone ban. And then he said that the extraordinary nature of this class meant that these students developed resilience while they thrived.

Valedictorian **Harrison Foster '26** addressed his peers, focusing on how easy it was to make friends with every member of his class, and how important those relationships are. He spoke about how his time at MICDS has been ephemeral: wonderfully short-lived. "Life is so wonderful because it is so short and because every moment counts," he said.

The Class of 2026 chose **Lynn Mittler, JK-12 English and Language Arts Department Chair**, as their faculty speaker. Through a vibrant and vulnerable story of her own experiences, Ms. Mittler beseeched these young people to remember that they are surrounded always by people who wish to help them, and that it's important for them to help others. "And now, you will need to go out and build new communities, ask for help from those whom you have not even met yet, and support people who will start out as strangers to you," she said. "You know that you do not need to climb that mountain alone."

Then Mr. Rainey announced that the candidates in the Class of 2026 were qualified to graduate, and Mr. Brauer, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, released their diplomas. **Class Dean Daniel George** read each graduate's name, and finally presented the graduating class to a standing ovation.

Now that the Class of 2026 were officially graduates, they heard from **Amanda "Muffy" Shoenberg Peters Brennan '96**, President of the MICDS Alumni Association. Mrs. Brennan welcomed them to our vibrant alumni body and told them, "The world will change. What you have built here will go with you."

Mr. Rainey took the stage one last time as Head of School to deliver closing remarks. He spoke about how the world of work has changed and continues to change, but that these young people are prepared for it. "Graduates, I wish for you a life of ease," he said. "By



this expression I do not mean a life of riches or a bubbled-wrapped, conflict-free existence. Indeed, I hope that you struggle, and through your struggles discover meaning. I hope that you fail, and through your failures discover perseverance and happy accidents. I hope that you are challenged, and through your challenges discover creativity, strength, and purpose."

Finally, members of the MICDS Upper School Chamber Choir gathered to perform the *Alma Mater*, and with that, Commencement was over for the Class of 2026. After the new graduates processed out, the MAC erupted in celebration. What a send-off for these incredible young people. Class of 2026, we can't wait to see what you do!

Awards

Valedictorian: **Harrison Foster '26**

Salutatorian: **Isabelle Cox-Garleanu '26**

Charger Award: **Dalton Costick '26**

Eagleton English Award:

Harrison Foster '26

Kalish History Award: **Aiyla Ahmad '26**

Excellence in the Arts Award:

Gigi Koster '26

Aurelian Prize: **Ava Casillas '26**

Morse Family 12th Grade Award:

Cade Miller '26

Nash Poetry Award: **Taylor Nuzum '26**

Ryan Guillams Creative Writing Award:

Zoe Gannon '26

Mitchell Science Award:

Isabelle Williams '26

Nadia Danett Foreign Language Prize:

Mia Brauer '26

Frederick Werremeyer Mathematics

Award: **Ian Zar '26**

Faculty Prize: **Riley Crawford '26**

Wood Humanitarian Award:

Dalton Costick '26

Mary Klein Eddy Spirit of Learning Award:

Alana Chandler '26

James A. Baur Award: **Gabe Weaver '26**

Mary Elizabeth Burlingame Award:

Georgia Lochhead '26

James Andrew Benecke Award:

Miles Coleman '26



HEAD OF SCHOOL AWARDS

Carrie Clennan '26

Sam Glasser '26

Sean Hogan '26

Amelia Mackin '26

Evita Okohson-Reb '26

Shil Penilla '26

Henry Rohan '26

PERFORMANCES

Ellie Chen '26, Siboney Oviedo-Gray '26, and Isabelle Williams '26 (*Nahoko, I Miss You*)

Harper Clark '26 (*Turning Tables*)

Carrie Clennan '26, Taylor Nuzum '26, and Lainie Zimmer '26 (*Landslide*)

Luke McGinness '26 (*Eruption*)

Isabelle Cox-Garleanu '26 (*Voila*)

SPORTS BOOSTERS ATHLETIC AWARDS

Aiyla Ahmad '26

Athreya Arvind '26

Mia Brauer '26

Reese Brinker '26

Ava Casillas '26

Alana Chandler '26

Miles Coleman '26

Dalton Costick '26

Riley Crawford '26

Drew Danforth '26

Alexa Davis '26

Catherine Dawson '26

Ash Falk '26

Addilyn Farmer '26

Graham Faust '26

Andrew Ford '26

Rebecca Frazier '26

Jacob Genin '26

Samuel Glasser '26

Thomas Goodman '26

Olivia Hill '26

Sean Hogan '26

Lillian Joe '26

Nolan Jones '26

Karthik Krishnaswamy '26

Georgia Lochhead '26

Amelia Mackin '26

Charlotte Medler '26

Cooper Myers '26

Laurion Nicholson '26

Peter O'Leary '26

Shil Penilla '26

Ben Petersen '26

Narya Phatak '26

Henry Rohan '26

Katherine Sheehan '26

James Snyder IV '26

Jason Stokes '26

Jack Tipton '26

Akira Washington '26

Gabe Weaver '26

Zachary Withington '26

Yusuf Zayed '26

Andy Zheng '26



A Picture-Perfect May Day

The Beloved Tradition Continues

This year's May Day was picture-perfect, with a gorgeous spring day as the backdrop for the brightly colored pink, orange, and yellow ribbons of the maypole on Lilly's Field.

The senior participants crowned **Georgia Lochhead '26** as the 2026 May Queen. **Ellemieke Ferguson '27** and **Kathleen Hammer '27** served as the coronation pages, and Student Council Co-Head **Riley Crawford '26** crowned Lochhead under the completed weaving of the maypole ribbons. A glowing smile and a few poses later, the rest of the 2026 senior girls rushed in to hug Lochhead, surrounding her with boundless love and laughter.

May Day would not be possible without **May Day Director Emily Huber '89**, **Director of Upper School Student Leadership & Dean of Students Nicole Trueman-Shaw**, **Associate Director of Events Sydney Brockman**, and our behind-the-scenes Grounds Crew members.





From Law to Art

Artist Christi Griffin Inspires our Youngest Artists

Christi Griffin, a native St. Louisan and former attorney, visited our Lower Schoolers to share her journey from the courtroom to the artist's table. After a long career in law and founding The Ethics Project, a nonprofit dedicated to social justice and youth support, Griffin discovered her passion for creating abstract and impressionist art.

"One day, I created a painting, but decided I didn't like it and crumpled it up," she said. "The result became a work of art in itself." She also shared a story of perspective. An early painting effort, once finished, was far from what she had in mind. She said, "I had painted on a sheet of inexpensive paper, and I was seconds from balling it up and tossing it in the trash—and then my eye fell on a small white [picture frame] mat. Maybe, just maybe, I could salvage a small part of the painting by placing the mat on various portions. The painting destined for the trash can just moments before suddenly became a beloved piece. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, or in other words, your perspective."

Griffin then led students through her process, so they could create their own beautiful works of art.



Blue Whale Cafe Hits a High Note

By day, McCulloch Library in the Upper School serves as a modernist brick-and-wood hub for students to study and hang out. But once a year, by night, it becomes a gathering place for artists of all varieties from the MICDS community, where tables and chairs give way to a stage, lights, a sound system, instruments, and more for the Blue Whale Cafe.

Blue Whale Cafe was founded in 1995 by the MICDS Environmental Club and Arts Council as a student-led fundraising event to inspire awareness of the importance of protecting ocean life. This year's event raised more than \$2,000 in proceeds to support Whale & Dolphin Conservation of North America, the leading global charity dedicated to the conservation and protection of all whales and dolphins.

Emerson Pook '26 held a significant leadership role as an Arts Council producer. She said, "I was very excited this year to have a part in planning our annual Blue Whale Cafe.

It's a great opportunity for us to celebrate our performing artists and have multiple art disciplines come together to create something amazing."

Fifty performers in 27 acts delivered nearly three hours of solid entertainment. From solo singers and faculty musical duos to full-scale bands and comedy acts, there was entertainment galore.

Carrie Clennan '26, who appeared in multiple acts as a performer and accompanist, said, "I love getting to see everyone perform, especially when it's students and teachers who I don't know as well. I think it's really cool to see everyone embracing their talents and passions, and Blue Whale is an intimate and supportive environment to take that opportunity."

As a veteran performer, **Cam Cozad '27** shared, "I was excited to show our band's growth in the form of three songs, and I think we performed really well."

It's especially entertaining to have faculty and staff take the stage. Students and colleagues alike get to see each other in a new light, and unknown talents are revealed. **Upper School English Teacher Gary Baumstark** is new to the MICDS community and appreciates the event's warm atmosphere. "I love performing and watching the other acts, as it is a new way





to connect with kids. I sang a song and played guitar. I also played guitar for a song sung by fellow English department member **Louise Hindle**. A few of my students performed, so it was great to see them in a new context. I was impressed not only with all the performers, but I was most impressed by how supportive the audience was for all of the performances. Being new to MICDS, I am thankful that everyone made me feel so welcome."

Hindle performed the old folk tune, *Wild Mountain Thyme* with Baumstark and said, "Fun facts: this was actually my first time attending Blue Whale and my first time singing in public for 'hundreds' of years. To say I was a bit nervous is an understatement; however, colleagues reassured me that it is always a welcoming and supportive audience, so I decided to try and be brave. After some rehearsing (big thanks to Gary!), I actually felt ready to enjoy the performance."

Hindle added, "It's always wonderful to witness the talents and stage confidence of our community. I was in awe—and that's without a massive shout-out to the tech crew, too, who were working away during sound check like real professionals. I loved how they transformed the library space too: it was just like being in a cozy cafe space! I have so much gratitude for the opportunity and the encouragement of fellow colleagues and students."

"Getting to take the stage in front of all my family and friends is such a rewarding



experience," said Clennan. "In most areas of my life, it can be difficult to showcase my passion for performance, so it really fills me with joy to have the experience. I like seeing people after the show and hearing that my music made an impact on them. Blue Whale is so inspiring, and I wish that I had done it all four years."

"I think everyone left with a warm, fuzzy feeling," said Baumstark. "The supportive atmosphere represents some of the best of MICDS. Overall, it was just a really fun night with such positive vibes."



Celebrating Global Traditions

2026 International Expo

Soon after the 2026 Winter Olympics concluded, the world (at least on the MICDS campus) came together again for the biennial International Expo. The Expo, for one night, serves as a local, global village that celebrates the cultural knowledge, history, and diversity of our students, parents, faculty, and staff. The event aims to inspire compassion, connection, and respect while strengthening bonds within the MICDS community.

Families and friends began the evening in Brauer Auditorium, where students in the beloved Parade of Cultures processed down both aisles. Students of all ages, wearing traditional cultural clothing from various countries, waved flags along the way and assembled on the stage for a vibrant display of our global community.

Several performances unfolded from around the world, including a Chinese lion dance, traditional Cuban dances, Indian Bhangra folk dance, a Spanish vocal performance, a French ballad, Mexican ballet, Irish step dancing, and an Indian Bollywood dance.



After the performances, guests strolled down a global flag-lined path to the Upper School McDonnell Gymnasium, where the Expo awaited. Long demonstration tables lined the gym, decorated with colors, cultural artifacts, and adornments from many countries. And then there was the food!

Milk chocolates from Brazil, beef and mushroom stew from Kenya, caramel meringues from Chile, traditional sweet corn beverages from Perú, chocolate drinks from Austria, and delicacies from Malaysia, Spain, Türkiye, China, Vietnam, and so much more.

Students and parents staffed the event, all eager to share their cultural heritage and customs. Guests wove in and out of the tables, getting their Expo “passports” stamped, learning about traditions, and sampling treats at nearly every stop. The



entertainment continued onstage in the gym with a Chinese Diabolo yo-yo workshop, Spanish Sevillanas dancing, and Indian Bhangra folk dancing.

Director of Global Learning Erin Hamill said, "The Expo is a long-standing tradition that beautifully showcases the many cultures that make our school community so special. We simply provide the space for our student ambassadors and performers to share their heritage, and they fill the event with vibrant colors, passion, and joy.

"The heart of the Expo lies in the connections made: families in traditional clothing sharing stories and traditions, students of all ages and from all backgrounds embracing new skills like the Chinese yo-yo and cultural dances, and our ambassadors

proudly teaching as children collect stamps in their passports. It is a powerful and heartwarming occasion to champion our school's diversity, deepen our understanding of one another, and strengthen the ties that bind us together."

Many thanks to Hamill and **Sydney Brockman, Associate Director of Events**, for their invaluable help in coordinating the International Expo. And of course, much gratitude to the wonderful performers and Expo booth volunteers for their impressive displays and interesting facts, as well as the many parent and student event volunteers who assisted with setup, cleanup, and support of all parts of the program. The MICDS community's enthusiasm is inspiring and encourages everyone to celebrate and share cultural knowledge and diversity, embracing all with compassion, respect, and dignity.



MICDS Hosts Diversity Leadership Conference



MICDS hosted its annual Diversity Leadership Conference, welcoming students from Nerinx Hall, McCluer North, Webster Groves, Clayton, and Miriam Academy to our Upper School campus. "We host this conference to fill a need not only at our own school but within the St. Louis community as a whole," says **Nicole Trueman-Shaw, Director of Upper School Student Leadership & Dean of Students**. "Students learn about the stories, experiences, perspectives, and needs of peers from around the area to promote knowledge, understanding, and informed leadership. The Diversity Leadership Conference is designed to allow students to share unique experiences from their communities and ponder how it shapes their perspectives of St. Louis and of the world. These interactions are important for the development of empathy, critical thinking, and creating genuinely inclusive school environments," says Trueman-Shaw.

The conference is organized and led by MICDS Upper School students. Eighty students, 40 from MICDS and 40 from the other schools, gathered in the Upper School Dining Hall before the group split, with half traveling to the Missouri History Museum and the other half remaining on campus. While at the museum, students explored the Mill Creek: Black Metropolis exhibit. Following lunch, the groups switched places.

The Diversity Leadership Conference challenges students to consider how unique experiences shape the way individuals live and operate in the world. Trueman-Shaw emphasizes that "after each breakout session or activity, we ask students, 'what story is this information telling us, and how does it interact with your own story?'"

The conference is planned by the MICDS iDentity Club Co-Heads, who include **Aiyla Ahmad '26**, **Akira Washington '26**, and **Andrew Li '28**. "Student leaders decide on the topics and activities that will take place," says Trueman-Shaw. No adults lead any of the lessons or activities. "The students run the show." Thank you to all those who planned, participated, and made the 2026 Student Diversity Leadership Conference possible!

MICDS Musicians Perform in All-State Ensembles

The Missouri Music Educators Association (MMEA) held its 88th annual in-service, workshop, and conference January 26-31, 2026, at Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, Missouri. The theme of the 2026 conference was "Harmonizing the Future. No Roads Needed. Just Music." The grand finale of the conference was the performances by the Missouri All-State Ensembles. Four MICDS musicians were selected by audition last fall to perform in the 2026 All-State ensembles: **Lucas Cheng '27**—All-State Orchestra (cello), **Anna Ko '28**—All-State Orchestra (viola), **Reina Banerjee '27**—All-State Choir (soprano), and **Forest Gong '27**—All-State Band (clarinet).

Cheng shared, "The schedule was intense—sectionals at 7 a.m. and rehearsals that ended near midnight—but we still found time to hang out, explore the resort, and enjoy being together. Getting to perform with some of the best high school musicians in Missouri was a huge honor and an experience I won't forget. What I will remember the most is how quickly music can turn strangers into a team."

Ko shared, "My favorite piece was Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol*. It was a joy to play because of the varied movements and the incredible solos. What made it extra special was being roommates with our concertmaster; I saw her dedication and nerves during her private practice, so watching her shine during her solo in the final performance was a huge highlight for me. An important lesson I learned was how to manage time and build meaningful relationships in a high-pressure, short-term environment."

Banerjee shared, "The first time I heard the choir sing, I was shocked because I could not have expected our very first rehearsal to sound so balanced and refined, and I was excited to see how our voices could add dynamics with the help of our conductor."

Gong was selected to the Missouri All-State Band in 2025 and 2026. He shared, "The music was both challenging and fun to play; I really enjoyed playing a piece called *Havana Nights: Fuego de la Noche* by Randall D. Standridge. The band



(l-r) Forest Gong '27, Lucas Cheng '27, Anna Ko '28, and Reina Banerjee '27

performed the world premiere of this piece, which was commissioned for the 2026 Missouri All-State Band."

Dana Self, MICDS Upper School Choir Director, said, "These four extraordinary musicians were outstanding representatives of the MICDS community, not only while at Tan-Tar-A for the conference and performances, but throughout the highly competitive audition process that ultimately lands them a highly coveted spot in an all-state ensemble."

The entire MICDS music faculty is so proud of their accomplishments and for the outstanding work, leadership, and musicianship that they bring into our classrooms each day."

Reina Banerjee sings in the Upper School Chamber Choir, directed by Dana Self. Forest Gong plays in the Upper School Wind Ensemble, directed by Bernard Berry. Lucas Cheng and Anna Ko play in the Upper School Virtuosi Orchestra, directed by Ken Kulosa.

"These four extraordinary musicians were outstanding representatives of the MICDS community, not only while at Tan-Tar-A for the conference and performances, but throughout the highly competitive audition process that ultimately lands them a highly coveted spot in an all-state ensemble."

DANA SELF
MICDS UPPER SCHOOL CHOIR DIRECTOR

Celebrating 100 Years of Troubadours

Two performances showcase student talent



Beetlejuice Jr.

Mounting a musical about the afterlife might seem like an unusual way to celebrate a milestone, but the MICDS theatre community brought energy, humor, and heart to its spring production of *Beetlejuice Jr.*, a show that also marked a major moment in school history.

The production celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Troubadours program, the long-standing theatre tradition that began at Saint Louis Country Day School in 1926. To honor the centennial, the department invited Troubadours alumni to a special viewing of the final dress rehearsal. The evening created a full-circle moment as past and present performers gathered together in Orthwein Theatre.

The celebration also included a special welcome home for **Emerita Theatre Director Carolyn Hood**, whose years of

leadership helped shape the program and generations of student performers.

On stage, students embraced the quirky, high-energy world of *Beetlejuice Jr.*, bringing the beloved characters to life through spirited performances, inventive staging, and the collaborative work of actors, musicians, and technical crew members.

"I had an absolute field day with this role; Beetlejuice has such theatrical showmanship that I love to experiment with, because it provides so much room for making fun choices in the spirit of his zaniness," said **Jace Felder '27**, who played one of the two Beetlejuices in the production, sharing the role with **Eli Meissner '26**. "When you have someone as out of his mind as Beetlejuice is, there are no 'wrong choices' or 'too much.' Because of that, I was able to infuse his

eccentricities with my own to create a character that has me and my style written all over it. That is why Eli and I were able to take the same role and give two totally distinguishable performances, each with their own mannerisms and quirks."

Gigi Koster '26 played Lydia Deetz. "I loved being able to study not just my character but how she interacts with new experiences," she said. "For my last show with the MICDS Troubadours, I loved working with Eli and Jace to find those little moments of connection and comedy."

The celebration highlighted not only the creativity of the current cast and crew, but also the enduring spirit of the Troubadours program. One hundred years after it began, the program continues to inspire students and bring the MICDS community together through theatre.



Little Women

The spring Upper School production of *Little Women*, held in the Vincent Price Theatre, brought a heartfelt and intimate interpretation of a beloved classic to the stage. Set during the Civil War era, the musical follows the lives of the four March sisters, Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy, as they navigate growing up, pursue their dreams, and define their identities in a changing world.

The production leaned into the strengths of a blackbox setting, using minimal yet purposeful staging to highlight character relationships and emotional storytelling. This close, immersive environment allowed the audience to feel deeply connected to the performers, especially during pivotal moments such as Jo's struggle with her ambitions and the family's shared hardships and joys.

At the center of the story is Jo March, whose determination to become a writer drives much of the narrative. Her journey includes rejection, self-discovery, and eventual success, and it anchors the performance. The

supporting characters each bring their own emotional arcs to life. Meg's desire for stability, Beth's quiet kindness, and Amy's growth into maturity create a well-rounded portrayal of sisterhood.

Cast members reflected positively on the experience. **Libby Hoffman '28**, who portrayed Meg, shared, "The process was taxing but enjoyable, and I really like spending time with my friends."

Musically, the show reflects the emotional highs and lows of the characters through songs that convey hope, loss, and perseverance. The cast's vocal performances and ensemble work emphasize the themes of love and resilience that define the story.

Overall, *Little Women* was a moving and thoughtfully executed performance that captured the enduring appeal of the March sisters' story. Through strong acting, expressive music, and an intimate staging style, the show highlights the importance of family, ambition, and staying true to oneself.



MICDS Celebrates Creativity at Arts Fest '26



Creativity and talent burst from the MAC, the South Gym, and the Shoenberg/Beasley hallways and studio at the fourth annual MICDS Arts Fest. This year's theme, "Creativity in Bloom: an MICDS Garden of Expression," included fan-favorite activities such as Scar Theater Makeup, Blue Man Jam Session, Chalk Art, and the Instrument Test Drive. Our stellar arts faculty and staff presented a variety of new explorations, including pinhole cameras, a Creation Station for makers of all kinds, a woven textile art installation called Scroll It, and more.

MICDS families enjoyed the various art activity stations and discovered beautiful works of 2D and 3D art by students in all three divisions, sprinkled throughout the halls and the MAC. It was a stunning showcase of our students' artistic expressions.

The din of the crowd was punctuated by an array of live performances, including scenes from the Middle School production

of *Lion King Jr.* and the Upper School musical *Beetlejuice Jr.* Talented student musicians of all ages offered short-form concerts in orchestra, band, and choir.

The Parents Association Arts Boosters volunteers staffed a very popular booth, spinning and dispensing cotton candy, helping guests decorate and personalize small flower pots, applying Arts Fest temporary tattoos, and inviting the masses to join the festive photo booth fun. Our food service partner, FLIK, offered their signature chocolate chip cookies and popcorn.

Many thanks to our students, faculty, staff, and parent volunteers for staffing various activity stations and supporting our performers. Our dedicated Facilities crew deserves a generous measure of thanks for working early and late over several days to set up and break down all the infrastructure required to produce such a large event, and to **Associate Director of Events Sydney Brockman** for her calm and creative presence in executing another sensational Arts Fest.



JK-12 Arts Department Chair Dr. Bonnie Carpenter noted that the day's vibrant energy was part of a much larger global context. "This year, we chose to celebrate and elevate the arts at MICDS through the theme 'A Garden of Expression,'" she said. "This theme aligns with UNESCO's World Art Day 2026, celebrated on Wednesday, April 15, which was chosen to honor Leonardo da Vinci and symbolize world peace, freedom of expression, and tolerance. This international day serves to promote global awareness of artistic expression, creativity, and cultural diversity." The spirit of connection was felt in every hallway and gym, turning our campus into a true garden of student creativity!

Thank you to our arts faculty for developing engaging opportunities for students to be creative in new ways. The mood was festive, and the gratitude for all forms of art and those who created them was evident.



A special highlight of the Arts Fest event was a farewell gathering for **Head of School Jay Rainey** and his wife, Ruth, in the Hermann Squash Courts lobby. Keying in on Mr. Rainey's fondness for the arts, Arts Fest provided the perfect opportunity to celebrate him before his time at MICDS concludes at the end of the current academic year. The Head of School portrait of Mr. Rainey was unveiled at the event, and we thank artist Yuka Imata for her skillful rendering. No event with Mr. Rainey would be complete without him playing a few notes on the piano. It was a lovely event for the Rainey family to share memories and receive well-wishes from many.



Middle Schoolers Learn Technical Theatre Design

New course sparks creativity

"We are the shadows who make the stars shine." This common phrase in theatre highlights the vital, often invisible, behind-the-scenes work that supports performers and a production as a whole.

In keeping with the MICDS mission, the arts program offers multiple avenues for students to explore theatre arts across all grades. The program takes a holistic approach: performers are coached to feel confident both solo and in an ensemble, and students also learn technical theatre skills, including lighting, set, and sound design.

This holistic focus on both performance and design is now expanding in the Middle School, where arts offerings, including musical, studio, and theatre arts, are available as year-long or semester-long course options.

This year, a new hands-on technical design class was rolled out for seventh- and eighth-graders. The course explores the history of modern theatre and the practical application of stagecraft techniques. From makeup and props to costume and lighting design, it offers a deep dive into the art of theatrical world-building.

Middle School Theatre Teacher Debra Mein is enthusiastic about the class, noting it stems from the department's reworking of some arts electives to offer a broader range. "Students want connection in the arts and otherwise; they want to feel essential. I think learning all the pieces of world-building and what goes into producing a show fills that need," she said.



JK-12 Arts Department Chair Dr. Bonnie Carpenter

shares this excitement, adding, "The technical theatre class in the Middle School is bringing to life the relationship between the arts and academic programming at MICDS." To that end, Mein and Carpenter have taught students the purpose of a catwalk in a theatre and how to use it; lighting design and function; makeup and costume; and building props.

One focus was on makeup and the art of creating bruises and scratches. Students explored the use of a Bruise Wheel, a makeup tool that only offers colors specific to all stages of a bruise. With five colors—bright red for fresh bruise, darker red and blue for an older bruise, and green and yellow for a healing bruise—students sponged and patted colors to see what they could create (and scare their parents with later!).

Another makeup exploration involved using a face plot, a technical document used in theatrical makeup design. It has an outlined face template that the makeup designer uses to sketch and plan a character's specific makeup application. Students searched online for images they wanted to replicate and noted what colors, brushes, stencils, textures, and shading would be needed to bring their designs to life. Mein said, "A face plot is like a sports playbook. And it's the most important thing because you can't just wing it every night, and you might not be the one doing the makeup each night either."

Students quickly embraced these technical skills. **Austin Jenkins '31** enjoys sculpture and 3D art and liked the unit on makeup, where you can make yourself look like someone else. "I like understanding different shapes and shades and how they work together. I loved learning how to use the bruise and scratch makeup," he said.

Betsy Branca '31 loves theatre but doesn't necessarily enjoy acting. "Technical design is a great opportunity to be in the theatre productions behind the scenes, so you get to know the actors and the people behind the production," she said. "I really like costumes and makeup so far. It's been fun learning how to create a good costume or makeup look. I didn't know that we had a costume vault or how many costumes we had! I also didn't know we have a tech design crew of students for productions. Tech design is super fun, I love the people in our class, and Ms. Mein is an awesome teacher."

For the props unit, Dr. Carpenter, with support from **Middle School History Teacher and Makerspace Coordinator Blake Whitney**, led students in a makerspace project to create the infamous "Krabby Patties" from the *SpongeBob SquarePants* cartoon. The project was based on a theoretical scenario: As the props department for *The SpongeBob Musical: Youth Edition* (which requires several Krabby Patties), students had to follow a template of having a top and bottom bun, patty, cheese, lettuce, and tomato, and to make them look as close to the cartoon's actual patties as possible.

Dr. Carpenter enjoyed teaching this unit, saying, "We often discuss the intersection between math and science and how that affects an artist's conceptualization and realization of artistic ideas. I've enjoyed partnering with Mr. Whitney on finding creative ways to use the space and provide students with hands-on opportunities to test their creative problem-solving in methods for creative expression."

"I like acting, and I thought it would be fun to work behind the scenes and help make the sets and design props," said **Evan Smith '31**. "I like coming to the makerspace. I didn't know that the props had to be so specific and detailed, and they take a while to make."



Quinn Carpenter '31 said, "I grew up in the theatre because of my parents, and it was always fun when I got to help out. I didn't know how many different parts there are that make a play what it is! We also did another project in the makerspace, where we made models of a dream park using random items."

"I've been in a couple of plays, and I've always really enjoyed it," said **Matthew Elliott '31**. "Plus, I enjoy making little models, so I thought it would be fun to make something. For the Krabby Patties, I painted and sculpted the top of the patty, which is made out of a blue sponge. Even though I painted it, it still looks a little moldy. You wouldn't think to make a patty out of a sponge, but it gives it texture and makes it look more real."

Mein emphasized the beauty of theatre technical design and said, "We are centering the same soft-skills that an arts education has always provided: the value of collaboration, risk-taking, perspective-taking, and public speaking."

Choir Students Shine at Spring Pops



Upper School Choir students rocked out at the annual Spring Pops concert in Orthwein Theatre, bringing a variety of songs and great rhythm to the stage. Each year, the show is produced entirely by the students; the singers themselves design all the choreography. The result is a unique and entertaining show that delights all ages.

"The Spring Pops Concert is a puzzle with lots of moving pieces," said **Upper School Performing Arts Teacher Dana Self**, popularly known as DSelf. "One of the most challenging pieces is the choreography. Every song performed

is choreographed by the students in the choir. They are given a few days of class time to teach the choreography for their song before we move on to the next song. And there are times when we learn two dances in the same day. Some days it's absolute mayhem; other days it's organized chaos, but somehow it works. The choreographers design movements that are accessible for all dancing abilities—those students who have absolutely no experience in dance, choreography for students who are terrified at the thought of dancing on stage, as well as for those students who might have years of dance experience.

While they don't receive a paycheck, they do get a good idea of what it's like to stand in front of a room full of high schoolers."

He continued, "What makes the pops concert stand out is that it's a student-driven production. In addition to learning the music and dance, they also stuff the programs, decorate the stage, sweep the stage, organize the props, run the lights and sound, write personal invitations to their teachers, and the list could go on and on. They take on a lot of responsibility in producing this show. Once 7:00 p.m. hits, the show is in their hands. They work together to fix any problems that arise throughout the program, and they do it beautifully."

The show of 17 songs included performances by the Tenor-Bass Choir, the Treble Choir, and the Chamber Choir, along with soloists. Each soloist had to audition before a committee. Each song was backed by the Spring Pops Band, which included DSelf on piano, Ron Roskowske on guitar, Ben Wheeler on bass, and Joe Pastor on drums.





"People think that pop concert music is easy. It's not!" DSelf exclaimed. "It challenges and stretches our students to learn complex rhythm patterns, different styles of vocal production, and in many cases, singing a style of music that they have never been exposed to before, such as disco, pop-country, or blue-eyed soul."

Songs included *Ghostbusters* (Ray Parker Jr.), *Please, Please, Please* (Sabrina Carpenter), *We Built This City* (Starship), *Drive* (Ed Sheeran), *You Make My Dreams*

(Hall & Oates), *Hey, Soul Sister* (Train), *Life is a Highway* (Rascal Flatts), *Die With a Smile* (Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars), *Africa* (Toto), *Old Time Rock and Roll* (Bob Seger), *I Will Survive* (Gloria Gaynor), *APT.* (ROSÉ & Bruno Mars), *Chapel of Love* (Dixie Cups), *Get Me To The Church On Time* (from *My Fair Lady*), and a tribute to Queen.

Bravo and brava to our talented singers! Well done on yet another great performance!



A Show Within a Show

“The Fourth-Grade Play”



Thirty-eight fourth graders, along with 11 Middle Schoolers, came together to produce the aptly named *The Fourth-Grade Play*, a “play within a play” about a group of students discussing the upcoming production during recess. They talked about their hopes for the play and whether or not they would be involved. Along the way, they dreamt up different scenarios from a *Hamilton*-inspired soldier song to a puppet feature, encouraging each other to be actors and members of the tech crew while trying something new.

The play was written by **Debra Mein, Middle School Theatre Teacher**, who was “inspired by students asking me throughout the year what the fourth-grade play was going to be about. I love that they feel invested!”

She continued, “I love thinking about the culture of the class as well as what kids are interested in or talking about, and including it in the script. And, because so many students asking about the play had siblings who would be participating, I thought it would be fun if it referenced previous fourth-grade plays.”

The fourth-grade play has a rich history, which Mein wanted to honor by creating a full-scale production experience for her students. She adds, “Because they don’t regularly experience drama or theatre in their daily curriculum, I layer in skill-building throughout the process.” Once Mein knows how many kids want to participate in the play, she adds roles so everyone has a special part in the production. She also works with **Roxane McWilliams ’87** on the music. Mein passes along song ideas and lyrics to McWilliams, who then arranges and records fun accompaniment for the music.



Any fourth grader can sign up to participate in the fourth-grade play. It's a commitment; students attend about a dozen hour-long rehearsals after school two times a week. Then, it's time to break a leg!

While Mein oversaw the work, the play was directed by **Audrey Moore '30**. "I love creating opportunities for students to lead and learn alongside younger and older students," Mein said. Moore has participated in after-school shows herself, and she assisted the director of last year's fourth-grade play. After showing an increased interest in gaining experience in all aspects of theatre, she applied to direct and was selected for the important position.

"I wanted to learn more about directing and see more of the technical side of the stage," said Moore. "I also wanted to help give the fourth graders a positive experience. Though the process was sometimes stressful, I had a lot of fun and learned about leadership and how to advocate for them and, at times, for myself."

One of Moore's highlights was seeing everything come to life as the stage was painted and the show was fully rehearsed for the first time. "One thing I remember really well was on Sunday, the whole Middle School team, plus a couple of other theater kids, came to paint the stage. It was really exciting to see all those ideas come together," she shared.

"Through the play, students learned to work with and value the opinions of students different from themselves," said Mein. "They also led, collaborated, and refined their public speaking skills." Her favorite part of any production is watching students collaborate and strive toward a common goal.

Joseph M. '34 was a techie who oversaw the lights. "One of my favorite parts was when I got to go up on the catwalk and see and patch the lights," he said. Another techie, **Eston C. '34**, was responsible for the costumes. "We set up the colors for the performers to wear," he explained. Eston's work on the play went beyond costumes, though. "The coolest thing I learned was how to put on people's makeup for the first time."

"I liked handing out the swords behind the stage," said **Xander C. '34**, who served as a techie for props. He also mastered some foundational play principles. "I learned you have to be quiet backstage so nobody can hear you."

The actors and actresses had fun, too. "My favorite thing about being in the play was the singing and dancing," exclaimed **Merit O. '34**, who held the role of Student J. **Samuel K. '34**, Student D, mentioned, "I really liked laughing at the funny parts and doing the songs." He also learned an important theatre lesson: "Acting



isn't all about being the main character; it's about diving deeper into your character and really acting like you're the character," he said.

Dottie C. '34 had one of the main roles as Student A. The best part for her was being in the spotlight. "I really love to talk out to the audience, and I loved being the main character," she said. "You get really nervous before you go onstage, but then after, you're really relaxed and calm because you're like, 'I did it!' It gets better and better each time. I hope to do it again!"

Beasley Musicians Delight in Seasonal Performances

WINTER DREAMS

Mary Eliot Chapel was aglow with stars, moons, and Beasley musicians for the annual Lower School Winter Program. The theme was Winter Dreams, and the songs focused on nighttime celebrations of winter and winter holidays. The speaking roles before each song consisted of poetry with a theme of dreams and nighttime, including classics such as Jane Taylor's *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, a condensed version of *T'was the Night Before Christmas*, *Chanukah Dreams* by Judith Ish-Kishor, and *The Dream Keeper* by Langston Hughes. The program was directed by **Dr. Katy Nichols, Lower School Music Teacher**, and accompanied by Kathleen Baker, **Upper School Arts Teacher Patrick Huber** and **Elika Coff '30** assisted with sound and lighting.

The oldest Lower School students took the stage for a gorgeous rendition of a mashup of *A Sky Full of Stars/Golden Hour* (Coldplay/JVKE, Arr. Brad Stephenson). Students sang in two parts while doing choreography with small, bright finger lights, which looked like shooting stars in the darkened auditorium. The effect was moving, and many in the audience teared up with the beauty of the children's voices accompanied by the lighting effects.

Junior and Senior Kindergarten students came onto the stage sporting wearable art stars that lit up, created under the direction of **Lower School Art Teacher Sarah Garner**. The children sang *Stars Are Shining Bright Tonight*, accompanied by the third graders on barred instruments, followed by *Silent Night* which they performed vocally and in sign language.

Next up were the second graders singing *Aeyaya Balano Sakkad* in honor of Diwali. This year, a second-grader who plays the tabla, an Indian drum set, was featured in the piece. He practiced under the direction of his tabla teacher and provided authenticity to the sound of the piece.

First graders joined the second grade to celebrate Kwanzaa, in *Light the Kinara for Kwanzaa*. Students sang in two parts, and second graders accompanied the singing on tubanos and djembes.



“Our students worked incredibly hard to bring this program to life. Every child memorized music and choreography, some learned speaking parts, and a few bravely stepped in for friends who were sick at home. All of our students learned how to perform as ensembles, singing in unison, and our first through fourth graders even leveled up to singing in two parts. They also took on some impressive instrumental challenges.”

DR. KATY NICHOLS, LOWER SCHOOL MUSIC TEACHER

(Everybody's Waitin' for) *The Man With the Bag* featured an MICDS Middle School upright bass player, **Prashanti Mamileti '30**, and a Middle School percussionist, **Brandon Jewett '31**. This holiday classic also had a surprise guest, Santa Claus, played by **First-Grade Teaching Associate Tanner Amell**. The first- and second-graders were in on the surprise and had much anticipation for this special moment in the song.

Next, the fourth grade followed up with their own feature piece, *Shalom Chaverim*, a Hebrew folk song they arranged, meaning the students themselves decided which instruments to play and when. There was a variety of instrumentation from barred instruments to ukuleles and violin.

Third- and fourth-grade students had a final feature piece together, *Lunar Lullaby*, composed by Kansas City-area composer Jacob Narverud. This was a slower, quieter piece that featured paper lanterns and flashlights with the children singing, "You are my radiant, my celestial child."

Finally, it was time for the last song, a Beasley tradition that involves all Lower School students. They sang *Circle the Earth (with Peace)*, accompanied by special guest **Head of School Jay Rainey** on piano.

Special changes this year included adding student instrumentalists during transitions of students on and off the stage. It was a wonderful way to feature our talented students while students are changing places.

"Our students worked incredibly hard to bring this program to life," said Dr. Nichols. "Every child memorized music and choreography, some learned speaking parts, and a few bravely stepped in for friends who were sick at home. All of our students learned how to perform as ensembles, singing in unison, and our first through fourth graders even leveled up to singing in two parts. They also took on some impressive instrumental challenges.

What a wonderful evening for our Lower School students, their teachers, and their parents, grandparents, and other guests!

>> continued on page 72



>> continued from page 71

COMMUNITY IN RHYTHM

In April, Lower School students and their families gathered in Mary Eliot Chapel for the annual spring concert, and the evening was full of wonderful music and proud performers. Nichols created the program, titled *Community in Rhythm: Songs From and About Africa*. The children presented 10 songs, each one a vibrant reflection of our world and the hard work of these students.

"I wanted the kids to have opportunities to sing songs from different countries in Africa and in different languages," explains Dr. Nichols. "They played beautifully for all the songs."

She notes that the children were committed to offering a professional musical experience for their families, learning over months what appropriate expectations are for musicians. She relied on our fourth graders to be good leaders and role models for their younger schoolmates. "I was so proud of them," she said. "They set the tone for our rehearsals and our concert."

In addition to singing and leading, every fourth-grade student played an instrument for the concert. Dr. Nichols notes that it's important that younger students witness the fourth graders working hard. "Our fourth graders were phenomenal leaders. I felt so uplifted because of how professional they were," she said. "As musicians, we've always done a good job, but adding the extra layer that made them come across as polished was the difference, and the fact that they understood that part."

Students provided beautiful introductions to both the whole program and to each song. "Tonight we are taking you on a musical trip!" said **Nash B.** '34. Other students continued, "You don't need a passport or a suitcase, just your ear and a sense of rhythm." The first song, *Funga Alafia* from West Africa, is a song of greeting and



"Our fourth graders were phenomenal leaders. I felt so uplifted because of how professional they were. As musicians, we've always done a good job, but adding the extra layer that made them come across as polished was the difference, and the fact that they understood that part."

DR. KATY NICHOLS, LOWER SCHOOL MUSIC TEACHER





peace and was presented by all Lower School students. Next, they moved to *Jamba*, which is a Swahili greeting that means “Hello!” and is a joyful way to greet friends and neighbors.

Younger students left the stage, leaving third- and fourth-graders to present *Waka Waka*, which became famous during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. Junior and Senior Kindergarten students then returned to sing *Kye, Kye Kule*, a Ghanaian call-and-response song pronounced “chay, chay, kool-ay.” The song’s format invites audience participation, and the students were delighted to get an enthusiastic reaction from their families. *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*, a crowd favorite, is inspired by a Zulu song about a lion. “This song reminds us of the animals and beautiful landscapes of Africa,” said **Juliette M. '38**.

First and second graders presented *Wavin' Flag*, written by a Somali about hope, freedom, and a brighter future. Then they offered a popular song from *The Lion King*: *Hakuna Matata*. “Hakuna Matata” is a phrase from the Swahili language that means “no worries.”

Third and fourth graders offered a rousing three-part round of *Banaha*, a simple song from the Democratic Republic of the Congo that helped people keep a steady rhythm while they worked. “It reminds us that music can make hard work feel lighter and more joyful,” said **Susie S. '35**. After *Banaha*, they sang *Sisi Ni Moja*, which means “We are one.” **Lucy K. '34** explained, “Even though we come from different places and cultures, music connects us.”



Boys Basketball Takes State

By Travis Wallace, Head Coach



Photos by Morgan Macam '26

The 2026 season will go down as one of the most memorable in program history for the MICDS Rams. Finishing with an outstanding 27–4 overall record, the Rams established themselves as one of the top teams in Missouri from start to finish. From the opening tip to winning the Don Mauer Invitational, MICDS consistently displayed toughness, discipline, and team chemistry. The Rams dominated District play, earning a first-place finish in Class 5 District 3.

The season reached its peak in March, when MICDS made an impressive postseason run culminating in a Class 5 State Championship. The Rams delivered a dominant performance in the title game, defeating Sikeston 55–38 at Mizzou Arena and securing the program's first state championship since 2002, cementing their legacy as champions.

This year's success was fueled by a strong senior core led by **Brandon Clemens '26**, **Keshon Mims '26**, **Jason Stokes '26**, and **Gabe Weaver '26**, whose leadership and experience set the tone all season long. Clemens and **Tyler Ray '27** earned Class 5 All-State First Team honors, along with All-District and All-Metro League Conference recognition, highlighting their impact as two of the top players in the state. Stokes was also recognized for his outstanding season, earning All-District honors and Second Team All-Metro League Conference.



A 14th Title for Boys Lacrosse

By Andy Kay, Head Coach

Led by senior captains **Steele Crissman Jr. '26**, **Graham Faust '26**, **Mikey Gutchewsky '26**, and **Ben Williams '26**, the MICDS Boys Lacrosse team capped an undefeated in-state season with an impressive 11–7 victory over Chaminade in the State Championship game. The title marks the Rams' 11th State Championship in the past 12 seasons and the 14th overall championship in program history.

The postseason brought numerous individual honors. Crissman, Williams, Gutchewsky, **Ben Petersen '26**, **Justin Bishop '28**, and **Wyatt Giles '29** were all recognized with All-State selections. Crissman, Williams, and Bishop also earned the distinction of being named All-Americans.

The Rams finished the season ranked 7th in the Midwest, returning to the regional Top 10 for the first time since 2019 and further cementing their place among the premier programs in the region.

Thank you to all of the families, alumni, and supporters whose dedication and commitment continue to make MICDS Lacrosse one of the nation's most respected programs. Congratulations to our players and coaches on an outstanding season!



Photos by Morgan Macam '26

Travis Wallace Named Coach of the Year

A huge congratulations to **MICDS Varsity Boys Basketball Head Coach Travis Wallace** on being named the Class 5 Missouri Basketball Coaches Association (MBCA) Coach of the Year! The MBCA Richard Fairchild Coach of the Year awards honor top coaches across Missouri. The individuals represent the Association's outstanding coaches in each of the MSHSAA's five classifications. The MICDS Boys' 2026 season will go down as one of the most memorable in program history for the Rams. Finishing with an outstanding 27–4 overall record under the leadership of Coach Wallace, the Rams established themselves as one of the top teams in Missouri from start to finish.





A Home Run for the Renovated Baseball Facility

On Wednesday, April 29, 2026, a sunny and breezy afternoon welcomed the dedication of Werner Stadium as part of the Drew Baur Ballpark & William O. DeWitt Field baseball complex on the MICDS campus. The facility, originally dedicated in 2012, underwent a large-scale renovation over the past year thanks to the generosity of **Chrissie and Brad Werner '86 P'28**.

The renovations include a complete overhaul of the infield turf, sunken dugouts, a team room, enhanced spectator seating with improved sightlines, a press box and sound system, and a batter's eye to enhance safety and hitting success for all players.

Director of Athletics Josh Smith offered remarks about the impact of this gift and facility. "Today is a special day for our baseball program," he said. "Facilities like this are the result of vision, generosity, and deep belief in what this place stands for, and what it can provide for our students. At MICDS, athletics are an extension of our classrooms. They're about growth, resilience, and the relationships that shape our students into confident, capable young people. The field behind me will provide a place for just those lessons to occur."

Werner offered additional remarks, sharing notes about the construction process and the brotherhood of baseball. "You may have noticed that this is the most remote part of campus," he said. "It's also the highest, and there's no question that to the boys, it's the most aspirational. However we describe it, it'll always be known as William O. DeWitt Field and Drew Baur Ballpark. These tributes are not only a link to baseball history at Country Day, but more importantly, a nod to great men who left a lasting legacy



of leadership and camaraderie both on and off the field. This new addition is meant to add to their legacy and to enhance the baseball experience for both players and spectators alike."

Thank you to the Werner family for your generosity, for your belief in our mission, and for your investments in the future of our students.

Fore!

The Rams Golf Teams Dedicate a New Resource

On March 3, 2026, MICDS was pleased to dedicate a brand new athletics asset: the Weiss Golf Practice Greens! This putting and chipping resource is located behind the head of school residence and provides a valuable resource for our girls and boys golf teams. The greens are a gift from **David Weiss '81 P'27** and Bobby Sanderson, who attended the dedication with their son, **Jonathan '27**. The greens are marked with a plaque honoring David's father, **Sanford Weiss '50**. Several of Weiss' classmates from the Class of '81 also came to celebrate the generous gift.

Changa Bey, Varsity Boys Golf Coach, was happy to express appreciation on behalf of the team. "We are so grateful for the Weiss family, and it's awesome that Jonathan is on the team and will be able to use these greens to practice. We're going to put it to great use as we make a run for State this year!" **Diane Gioia, Varsity Girls Golf Coach**, and several of her players were also on hand to express their gratitude to the Weiss family.

The greens complement a golf simulator in the fitness room and solve a number of logistical problems. "It allows

us to have meaningful golf practice right on campus, improving our game without having to leave," said Bey. "We have wonderful resources on campus and amazing facilities, and this just adds on to that. I'm grateful that we have alumni and families willing to contribute to help our students."

Many thanks to David Weiss '81 and Bobby Sanderson for their generous gift. Our golf program will benefit for years thanks to your thoughtful donation.



Rams Rewind

WINTER AND SPRING 2026 SPORTS SEASON RECAPS

Want to catch up on the latest sports recaps? Check out what our coaches had to say about the Winter and Spring 2026 seasons, and read about our incredible student-athletes.



Winter 2026



Spring 2026

21 Student Athletes Commit to Colleges

At our annual National College Signing Day assembly, 21 student-athletes were celebrated for committing to play their chosen sport at the collegiate level.

Director of Athletics Josh Smith said, "We are proud to have 21 students from the Class of 2026 representing 11 athletic programs, taking their game to the collegiate level. It takes countless hours of work, drive, and passion, and they have all served as great ambassadors for the school and its athletic programs."

"These students have shown extraordinary dedication to their academics and their chosen sports, yielding excellent opportunities ahead," said **Matt Essman, Director of College Counseling**. "We thank the students for their many contributions to MICDS. We have enjoyed watching them compete over the past four years."

The student-athletes put pen to paper and donned their respective college hats, which the MICDS Parents Association Sports Boosters provided.

Congratulations to our Class of 2026 student-athletes!

Maddy Brooks '26—Texas Christian University—Equestrian

Brandon Clemens '26—Missouri Southern State University—Basketball

Miles Coleman '26—United States Military Academy, West Point—Football

Luke Condrin '26—Notre Dame—Baseball

Steele Crissman '26—University of Denver—Lacrosse

Graham Faust '26—University of Missouri—Football

Jacob Genin '26—Brandeis University—Baseball

Layla Gilbert '26—Gonzaga University—Rowing

Sam Glasser '26—Rhodes College—Football

Mikey Gutchewsky '26—Merrimack College—Lacrosse

Owen Kizer '26—Bates College—Tennis

Georgia Lochhead '26—Colgate University—Field Hockey

Amelia Mackin '26—Trinity College—Lacrosse

Morgan Macam '26—DePauw University—Softball

Dunnen McGaughey '26—Grinnell College—Baseball

Keshon Mims '26—Concordia University Irvine—Basketball

Henry Rohan '26—United States Military Academy, West Point—Football & Track

Katie Sheehan '26—Trinity College—Field Hockey

Ian Spakowski '26—Bryant University—Lacrosse

LJ Triplett '26—Southern University and A&M College—Baseball

Gabe Weaver '26—University of Minnesota—Football

Go, Rams!



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Why I Give:

Kent Rapp '76

Focuses on the Future

Kent Rapp '76 doesn't do anything halfway. He's "all in" at everything he does. This commitment to seizing every opportunity began, perhaps, when he was a student at St. Louis Country Day School. With hair bleached blond by chlorine and sunshine, the young man threw himself into as much as he could at his beloved school. He captained the state championship water polo and swimming teams, for sure, but he also sang in the Men's Glee Club and played General Bullmoose in the Troubadours production of *Li'l Abner*, belting out *Progress is the Root of All Evil*. He moonlighted as a sports journalist for the *Country Day News*, submitting articles about the swim and water polo teams, served as a co-head of the Signet Society, and participated in many committees.

"I took advantage of everything there was to do at CDS, athletically, academically, extracurricularly, and everything in between," Rapp said. "I wanted to get as much out of my Country Day experience as I possibly could, and that meant throwing my hat into everything. I liked being a generalist at a school where there was so much to do." He grinned, "I had a high rate of return on my parents' tuition investment."

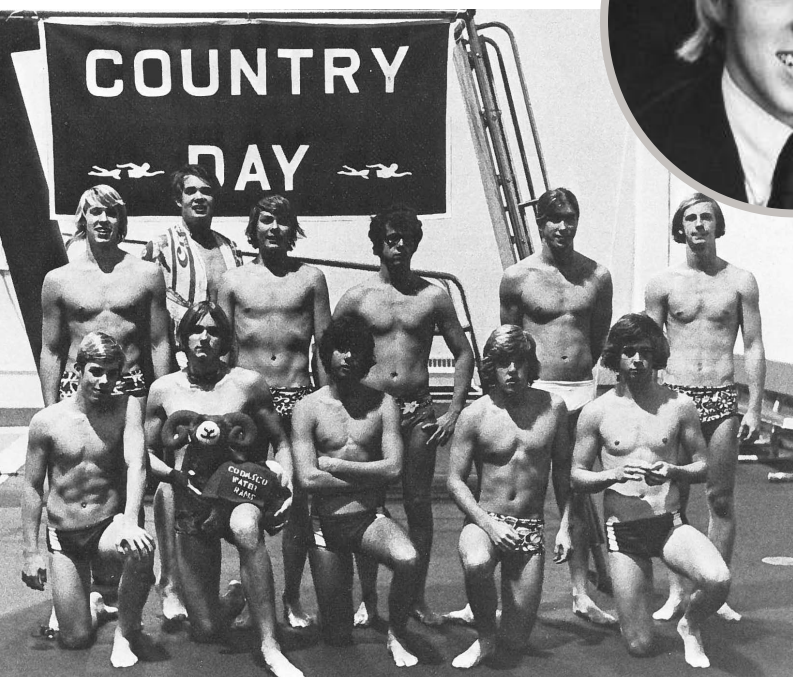
Rapp credits his teachers and coaches for harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of boys to create good people. "I think all teachers back then, just like MICDS teachers now, were focused on developing the whole person," he said. He cites **Math Teacher Tommy Duncan** as an important motivator to teach not only the fundamentals of mathematics but also manners. "He taught us the importance of being a gentleman, looking people in the eye, and standing up when an adult walks into the room. If you didn't stand up, you probably had an eraser tossed at your head," he laughed.

Rapp believes that **Headmaster Chard Smith** set a tone for CDS that fostered community.

Water Polo Coach Don Casey, though, changed the trajectory of Rapp's life forever. "Water polo was my thing. It's what drove me to Brown University—to get the best education and also to play water polo at the collegiate highest level. I would not have gotten there without Don Casey. If I hadn't gone to Brown, I would not have met my wife, and I wouldn't have my two sons. You don't always know where life is taking you, but when you look back, you can usually point to a few key people who influenced your direction in life beyond your parents and family." Once again, Rapp appreciated Coach Casey's insistence on mastering the basics. "He focused on the fundamentals and doing things the right way. It was not the easy way, but if you worked hard and learned the right way, you were much more likely to be successful."

Years later, after returning to St. Louis with a family, Rapp once again found himself involved with his beloved school. It had changed, of course, becoming MICDS with the merger of Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School, and he was always supportive of the school's evolution. He immediately began volunteering, participating in phone-a-thons and helping raise

Kent Rapp '76 with his wife, Jenny; on his senior yearbook page; and with his Varsity Water Polo team (back row, far left).



Rapp starred as General Bullmoose in the Troubadours production of *Li'l Abner*; with his wife, Jenny, and their two sons, Andrew '08 and Alex '05.



funds for the School. "It was a great way to stay connected, and it led me to become involved with the MICDS Alumni Association. Before I knew it, I was President of the Alumni Association, which gave me the opportunity to serve on the Board of Trustees."

He and his wife, Jenny, knew they wanted their two boys to attend MICDS, "because the things that were important when I was a student are just as important now." He stresses the importance of developing the whole student again. "There's an opportunity to help kids grow in every way—socially and academically—and that sense of community that I felt as a student and then as a parent; we could see how clear and true that was." He is pleased that **Alex '05** and **Andrew '08** also formed lasting friendships through their experience.

He remembers the call to discuss possible board service beyond his role with the Alumni Association, and was excited about the opportunity. "I loved my involvement with MICDS, and being able to serve the school as a board member felt right to me. Then, I wasn't looking to become board chair, but it came my way and I was proud to step up and to assume that responsibility. I was very happy to have that opportunity and work with such a great, committed group of people who cared about the school so much. My tenure as board chair was with Jay Rainey, right through the teeth of COVID. It was hard work and not always the most fun during that time, but it was at a critical time in the School's history, and it wound up being a very important growth experience for me. I felt very proud of what we were able to accomplish in helping families and teachers get through a very difficult time in our history. We made an important difference for the MICDS community."

"The caliber of people who want to be involved in the school is incredible. We are so fortunate to have so many phenomenal people connected to our school, who are willing to come onto the board and to help the school become even better. That's pretty powerful stuff. To be in that boardroom with these special people was humbling."



Rapp continues to stress the need to support the School as alumni and as parents. "A big enterprise like MICDS has a lot of needs," he said. "There are so many ways to help the school financially, and it's important for donors to give where it makes them feel best, whether it's to the arts, academics, athletics, tuition assistance, or to the MICDS Fund (the School's annual fund). Increasingly, I think that people understand the need for tuition assistance at a school like ours, where the tuition is so significant. There is something very compelling about helping make an MICDS experience possible for students who otherwise could not attend."

He enjoys reaching out to fellow alumni to try to motivate them to pay it forward. "It goes back to wanting to help young people experience what we had by making possible an MICDS education. If you're not in it for all kids, then you're really not in it at all."

"All gifts make a difference at MICDS, both large and small. Sometimes people give money to very worthy, large national organizations, but the donation might be a drop in the bucket. The same drop will make a much larger ripple at MICDS."

"I believe in the mission of the School. Teaching kids and modeling how to serve others is very important, and I don't think any school or organization does that any better than we do at MICDS."

Rapp encourages alumni to visit campus. "Walk around, take a look, and see what's going on at MICDS today. It will help you understand why philanthropy is so important to the School." He noted that when his classmates came back to campus for their 50th reunion this past spring, what they saw inspired them to support their class gift. "MICDS is a living, growing organization. We have to be forward-thinking; we are not a museum. Our history and traditions are both wonderful and important, but we have to continue to evolve and change with the times. The School is for students and families today and in the future. It's been great to be part of the past, but we can't take our eyes off the horizon."

He paused and then spoke to the core of the work being done every day at MICDS. "Every student has an opportunity to shine. Teachers and coaches are intentional about helping each and every student to step out, experience something meaningful, and to discover strengths and talents they may not have seen in themselves before."

To make a gift, visit micds.org/give or call (314) 995-7380.



01

**UPDATE YOUR
CONTACT INFORMATION**

We'd love to stay in touch!

02

**ATTEND A
CAMPUS EVENT**

including lectures, concerts,
athletic competitions, or
theater performances.

03

**SHOW YOUR
SCHOOL PRIDE**

Head to
campusstore.micds.org
and shop MICDS, Mary I,
and CODASCO gear.

21 WAYS

08

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Share your time and talents
with the MICDS community.
Contact the Alumni Relations
& Development Office
to learn about volunteer
opportunities.

09

VISIT THE CAMPUS

Stop by your favorite place on
campus, see what's changed
and what's stayed the same.

10

**NOMINATE A CLASSMATE
AS A DISTINGUISHED
ALUM OR FOR THE
ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME**

Help recognize alumni
who make the MICDS
community proud.

15

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

Share your latest news, from
career moves and weddings
to growing your family and
other life updates.

16

**COME BACK TO CAMPUS
FOR REUNION WEEKEND**

May 7-8, 2027
Reconnect with your
classmates!

17

**LIST MICDS AS YOUR HIGH
SCHOOL ON LINKEDIN**

... and join the
MICDS Alumni Group.





04

SERVE AS A CLASS AGENT

Be the link that keeps your class connected to MICDS.

05

MAKE A GIFT TO THE SCHOOL

Support the MICDS Fund, Endowment or a Capital Project. micds.org/give

06

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FAVORITE MICDS EDUCATORS

Browse the Directory and reconnect with a favorite faculty or staff member—they'd love to hear from you.

07

FOLLOW MICDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Like, share, and celebrate our community online.

TO STAY CONNECTED TO MICDS

Connect anytime by emailing alumni@micds.org

11

HELP PLAN YOUR CLASS REUNION

Bring your classmates together for a reunion worth remembering.

12

BE A MENTOR OR HIRE A STUDENT INTERN

Share your experience or workplace connections—including Winter Term internship opportunities—to open doors for the next generations of Rams.

13

SEND YOUR KIDS TO MICDS

Continue your family's MICDS legacy.

14

PARTICIPATE IN ONE DAY FOR MICDS

Join the entire MICDS community for our annual day of giving on March 3, 2027.

18

ATTEND OR HOST AN ALUMNI EVENT IN YOUR AREA

Meet up with fellow alumni nearby or host a gathering in your own community.

19

SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE

Join a career panel, classroom discussion, or be a guest speaker on campus and support student learning.

20

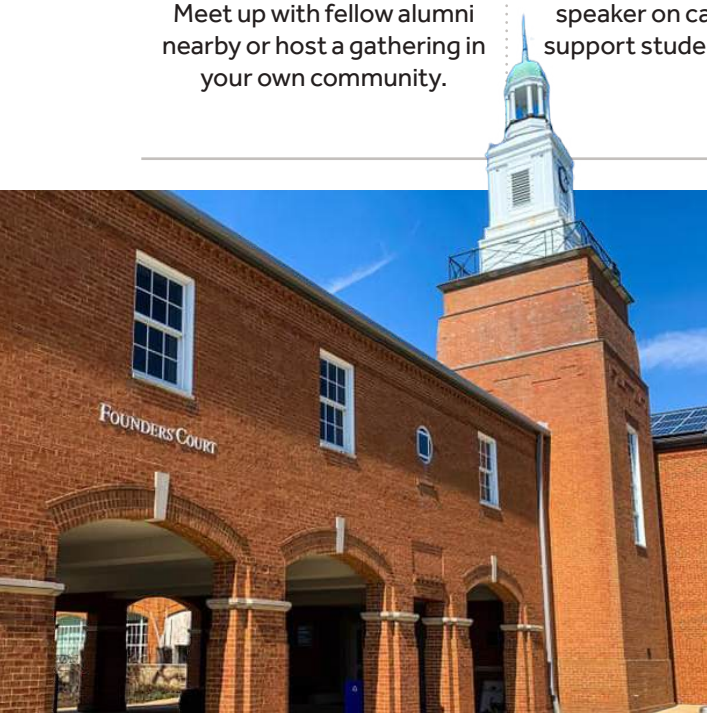
ATTEND HOMECOMING

Reconnect with classmates, cheer on the Rams, and show your school spirit. September 25-26, 2026.

21

INCLUDE MICDS IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS

Update your estate plans and join the Eliot & Thompson Society.



From the Heart, For the School

Rams Rally on ONE DAY for MICDS

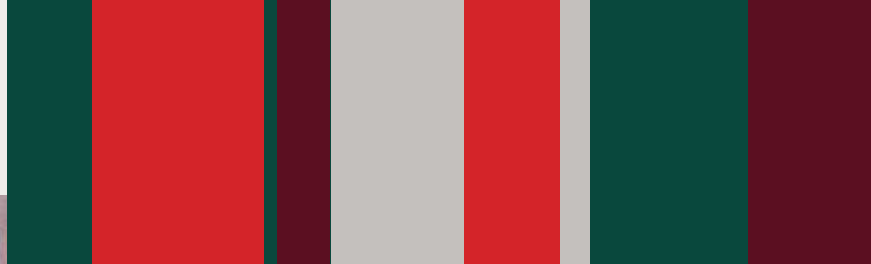


ONE DAY for MICDS, our annual giving challenge that benefits the MICDS Fund, was a spectacular success thanks to the generosity of our wonderful community. In fact, it was the most successful MICDS giving challenge ever, setting new records for both dollars raised and donor participation. In the blink of an eye, 641 donors gave more than \$300,000 to our School, supporting academic engagement, athletics, faculty excellence, fine and performing arts, student financial assistance, and more. Every gift helps ensure that MICDS students continue to learn, grow, and thrive through exceptional teachers, outstanding resources, and opportunities across campus.

This year, MICDS rolled a long-standing "March Madness" style young alumni campaign into ONE DAY, partnering recent graduates with current grades and inspiring support for the generations following in their footsteps. Robust donation challenges and matches garnered more support, multiplying every gift to a higher magnitude. One of the many generous challenges was a trustee sponsoring the "100 Parent Challenge," unlocking \$15,000 when the 100th current parent made a gift on ONE DAY. Two parents sponsored the "Rams Rally Challenge," offering \$20,000 once we reached 400 donors. Other community members stepped forward with creative challenges designed to inspire giving. These connections, symbolic of the many personal relationships that make MICDS so strong, brought together our entire Rams family.

Thank You!





Save the date and please join us

Reunion Weekend

May 6-8, 2027

ONE DAY

By the numbers:

- Five engaged members of our community stepped up with Challenge and Match opportunities, allowing donors to double (or triple) their impact.
- An anonymous member of the 25th reunion class matched 3-for-1: all class of 2001 donations up to \$25,000.
- ONE DAY provided motivated parent participation numbers with spirited competitions among classes. The challenge boosted the third-grade parents to almost 100% total participation.
- Alumni from *all generations* stepped up and participated.
- Even our dining partners, FLIK, got into the spirit by preparing a special, favorite meal beloved by our students: chicken tenders and tater tots!

ONE DAY was a true community-wide challenge, with parents, alumni, grandparents, parents of alumni, and friends joining in the fun. We are so grateful to everyone who all came together in support of MICDS.

Join your classmates and share fun memories

1947–80th

1987–40th

1952–75th

1992–35th

1957–70th

1997–30th

1962–65th

2002–25th

1967–60th

2007–20th

1972–55th

2012–15th

1977–50th

2017–10th

1982–45th

2022–5th

To help organize your class activities,
call 314-995-7312 or email Louise Jones
at ljones@micds.org.

Class Notes

NEWS FOR MARY INSTITUTE
AND SAINT LOUIS COUNTRY DAY
SCHOOL ALUMNAE AND ALUMNI

The following pages reflect
notes submitted through

June 1, 2026

Submit your news for the next issue to:
classnotes@micds.org

Births and Adoptions

WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING CHILDREN TO OUR MICDS FAMILY.

01. Caroline Maples Moore '11 and McPherson Dorsett Moore Jr. '10, Richard Louis "Rick" Moore and John Hartwell "Hart" Moore, March 18, 2026



Weddings

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING ALUMNI ON THEIR RECENT NUPTIALS.

02. Meryl Fiore '15 and Leland Detmer, December 13, 2025



GETTING MARRIED? EXPECTING?

We'd like to help you celebrate, but we can't print news about future weddings or babies. When your plans become reality, please let the Alumni Office know and we'll gladly print your news after the fact, and all share in the excitement!

Alumni/ae Deaths

THROUGH JULY 30, 2026

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES TO THE
FAMILIES OF ALUMNI/AE WE HAVE LOST.

Georgie Williams Lewis '40, February 26, 2026
 Harriet Wells Bailey '41, June 18, 2021
 Ann Miller Bragg '41, May 25, 2015
 Joan Farrell Flint '41, October 28, 2013
 Susan Kobusch Gardner '41, February 10, 2017
 Mary Drabelle Luke '41, January 18, 2023
 Mary Peters Meyer '41, June 11, 2003
 Owen H. "Pete" Mitchell Jr. '41, May 20, 2015
 Norma Brownell Fuller '45, July 15, 2025
 Patricia Thomson Rahn '46, December 2, 2021
 Joan Fischer Meyer '48, November 27, 2025
 Jean Drummond Crane '49, August 20, 2025
 John S. Eddy '50, December 31, 2025
 John P. MacCarthy '50, July 19, 2026
 Roger Browne Clark '51, August 12, 2026
 Caroline Bush Cole '51, November 11, 2019
 Benjamin E. Fisher '51, February 25, 2017
 Marjorie Kramer Kenny '51, June 20, 2024
 James B. Martin '51, September 3, 2023
 Donald H. Streett '52, June 7, 2026
 Carol Clarkson Coffin '54, March 31, 2026
 Walter E. Diggs Jr. '54, April 27, 2026
 Mariella Cartwright Coe Morrin '54, April 16, 2026
 Willard Bartlett III '55, February 2, 2026
 Caryl Green Simon '55, May 22, 2026
 Henry H. Stern Jr. '55, April 25, 2026
 Warren Michael Gooding '56, September 1, 2022
 Duncan I. Meier III '56, April 2, 2026
 William A. Bowersox '57, May 10, 2026
 John E. Curby Jr. '57, April 4, 2026
 Bonnie Barton Summers Wolfarth '57, July 30, 2026
 Edward W. Fordyce Jr. '59, January 28, 2026
 Janet Beeler Nesin '59, February 7, 2026

Carl Bauer "CB" Gebhard '62, March 8, 2026
 David W. Gardner '63, December 30, 2025
 Joan Schneithorst Fick '64, May 6, 2025
 Edwin B. "Pete" Meissner III '66, December 6, 2026
 Cristina de Albuquerque Possas '67, April 2026
 John B. Kennard II '69, April 18, 2026
 William Randall "Randy" McDonnell '70, February 19, 2026
 Marian "Tina" Ewing Smith '70, January 15, 2026
 George R. Albin III '71, February 23, 2026
 John H. Ferring IV '71, March 2, 2026
 Roger W. Ball '72, January 5, 2026
 Lucy McDonald McCown '73, January 15, 2026
 Jackson J. Shinkle Jr. '73, May 6, 2026
 Leah Gay Goessling '75, April 2, 2026
 Steven P. Shomaker '75, September 26, 2025
 Christy Hereford Garesché '76, June 12, 2026
 Louise Green O'Farrell '82, June 6, 2026
 T. Scott Franc '84, May 18, 2026
 Georgey Killgore Herron '89, March 14, 2026
 John V. LaBeaume '92, May 5, 2026
 Huma Chaudhery '94, November 17, 2022
 Lauren Hasak Gillentine '03, January 10, 2026
 Andrew T. Schaberg '13, May 29, 2026
 Rabia Shinawi '15, March 18, 2026
 Shreya Gowducheruvu '22, February 15, 2026

Faculty Deaths

Sue Blue, Former MI Theater Teacher, *January 4, 2026*
 William "Bill" Merello, Former MICDS Soccer Coach, *January 5, 2026*
 Frances R. Ramsey, Former CDS Staff and Faculty, *June 11, 2026*

1954 MI

Jeannie D'Oench Field writes: Greetings to all. In February, we enjoyed a visit from my sister, **Gloria D'Oench James '49**. She is active as ever and an inspiration to all. On a sad note, it was hard to hear about the loss of our two classmates, **Mariella Cartwright Coe Morrin** and **Carol Clarkson Coffin**. That, however, reminded me how important it is to stay in touch. I hope that everyone will send some news. Even little things that mean something to you now, or a fond memory, will help to keep us connected. One important activity for me is working for the Tropical Audubon Society. At their annual meeting in May, I received a plaque thanking me for my "dedicated conservation advocacy and outreach as a Tropical Audubon Ambassador." It was a nice surprise! When I am not advocating, I am gardening for birds. I am grateful for that, family, of course, and my beautiful dog, Flora.

1957 MI



MARGOT MARITZ MARTIN

margomm@swbell.net

We are sad to report the loss of **Bonnie Barton Wolfarth** in July. In her last report to Class Notes, she wrote that her grandchildren "are all growing up. Attorney Catlin is in Milwaukee; Meade IV is in the Army reserves and is getting an MBA at Columbia; Lambert is working in NYC; Alexandra is working in Atlanta; Hollis is working in Chicago; Campbell is working in St. Louis; Avery is starting junior year at Villanova; and Piper is starting junior year at MICDS. Proud grandmother!"

I had a delightful conversation with **Louise Bartlett Franklin**, who lives in a retirement community in Atlanta, Georgia. Louise reports she had some medical issues that slowed her down, but she's happy. "I play bridge, exercise, take advantage of the variety of activities provided, and appreciate not having to cook all the time or maintain a house." Although

physical therapy is grueling at times, she is grateful that it helps keep her going. Louise feels well cared for by her two sons.

Julie Meier Schmitt writes, "It is with sadness that I share with you the death of my brother, **Duncan I. Meier III '56**, on April 2, 2026." He is survived by his wife of 63 years, **Suzy Murray Meier '58**, his daughter, and three grandchildren. Otherwise, I am doing as well as one can at our age and enjoying life in my retirement community. All four of my grandchildren are in college now and scattered around from up North to down South."

Another loss this year was Bill Bergfeld, the husband of **Marge Drum Bergfeld**. Bonnie and I were able to attend the lovely memorial service along with numerous family and friends of the family.

I send our condolences to Julie, Suzy, Marge, and others who are mourning the inevitable losses that come with age.

I had a nice conversation with **Pat Doughton Anderson**, who reports, "We are now living in a retirement community in Sarasota, Florida. The building is located on Sarasota Bay with fabulous views of the Bay and the Gulf of Mexico! I was the head of the IT Committee for three years. This year, I am the head of the Wellness Committee and on the IT and Health committees. Our next-door neighbor is **Chuck Eckert '56!**"

It appears that **Suzanne Chapman Stolar** and Henry have maintained much of their youthful energy, enabling them to travel extensively. "At the end of January, Henry and I flew to Sri Lanka, India, and Cairo." She and Henry are in good health, "but bones are showing signs of wear and tear." Suzi ends with a long-forgotten but familiar chant and hopes we are still chanting "We are the girls from the Institute. We don't smoke, and we don't chew, and we don't go with the boys who do."

Ann Lortz Brightman reports, "I am fortunate to be well and spent the winter in a warm climate. My friends there are of a similar age, and we refer to our state as one of 'managed decline.'" Ann saw **DeDe DeWitt Lambert's** daughter-in-law, **Middy Wolfarth Perkins '88**, and her husband, Peter. Middy

was the co-chairman of an Art in Bloom fundraiser event at the Vero Beach Museum. "**Julie Levy Plax** visited me, and she met with **Judith Richman Saidel '60**, Joan's sister, for coffee one morning." Ann presented our Class of '57 Award at the Faculty Awards Ceremony to **MICDS Latin Teacher Natalie Griffin**, who has been at the School for 24 years. She will spend 11 days this summer at Dartmouth at a workshop for Spanish educators. Ann shared the exciting news that she has a great-grandchild named **Walter Crockett Pettit**, who was born on April 1, 2025. He and his parents live in Washington D.C., and his mother is **Kate Pflager Pettit '11**.

As for me (Margot), I am doing ok, but it's more difficult to keep up with the house/yard. Entertaining is a chore. Names do not come quickly, and I have to use the dictionary more often. I have lived in Frontenac for 60 years, so I have lots of memories and acquaintances here. I walk daily and care for a neighbor's dog while they work. I read a lot. My children are well; two live in St. Louis and one in California.

Keep in mind that we will be celebrating our 70th Class Reunion next year. Best wishes to all for a peaceful and meaningful year ahead.

1958 MI

MARY KOENIGSBERG LANG

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LIBBY HALL MCDONNELL

elizabeth@mcdstl.com

The class of 1958 wishes to extend our deepest condolences to **Carol Kent Diggs** upon the death of her husband, **Walter Diggs '54**, in April 2026. They were married for 64 years.

We also send our sympathy to **Suzan Murray Meier** for the death of her husband, **Duncan Meier '56**, in April 2026.

On a happy note, we learned that our actress extraordinaire, **Marnie Crossen Bell**, was featured in a commercial aired during the Super Bowl! She was just great. If you want to watch it, just click on YouTube and search for Tom

Brady's new Pizza Hut commercial for the Super Bowl. Marnie is in pink.

Not much news from everyone this time ("no news is good news"), but we really love hearing from everyone just to keep in touch.

Sally Spoeherer Lemkemeier, Alice Blanke Boeschstein, and Libby Hall McDonnell attended a hymn service during reunion weekend (for all classes). We sang *Jerusalem (And Did Those Feet)* and our *Alma Mater*, and said the prayer for the graduates, truly taking us back to our Chapel days.

Laura Orthwein keeps in touch from San Francisco and touches on important happenings in St. Louis.

We would love to hear more from **Kay Wilson Post, Sue Morris Glasscock, Judy Brining Thorpe, Marcia Neubeiser Lambeth, and Susan Shampaine Hopper**, to name a few.

We hope you all will pass along any news about you or any classmates. Best wishes to all at 85+ years!

1958 CDS

DANIEL FEINBERG

dbfeinberg@sbcglobal.net

When **Hugh Bartlett** and Jane were on vacation on Pawley's Island in March, Hugh fell and fractured his left hip. It was fixed in Brownsville at a very good hospital. Jane then drove them home, where he has been doing physical therapy. Hugh says he is coming along fine and hopes to resume workouts at the gym.

Frank Elliott and Karen attended their granddaughter's graduation from The College of Wooster in Ohio, where she majored in French. Her next step is medical school. Frank and Karen are taking their daughters, granddaughters, and sons-in-law on a trip to Europe to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary, starting in Switzerland, finishing with a Rhine cruise, and then heading home.

Bud Hirsch had an exhibition of his photography at the gallery of B'nai Amoona Congregation in St. Louis. Eighteen works were on display, a sampling of his images from his photography travels over the last decade. His images have been invited to juried exhibitions over the year. Most recently, an image from Puglia, Italy, hung at the Angad Arts Hotel for six months. Along with his daughter, Robin Hirsch-Steinhoff, he is on an Adriatic cruise this Fall.

Bill Kelley and Judy had their sixth great-grandchild. They have three children, seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Bill said, "Wow, time flies."

Bob Meier and Katie moved to The Gatesworth last year. Bob says they very much enjoy living there.

Charlie Valier and Patsy attended his granddaughter's graduation; Marin Creamer earned a degree in mathematics on May 16, 2026, from the University of Virginia (UVA). They stayed with **Warren Boeschstein** and Karen in Boesch's new studio addition to their house in Charlottesville while there. They had a three-day visit and a great time reminiscing about their time at CDS.

1959 MI

SHEILA MORRIN HUMPHREYS

shumphreys@berkeley.edu

From **Carol Wenthe Palmer**: I am still upright and feeling great despite these big birthday numbers! My life is family, an adorable dog, many wonderful friends, mostly from church, the Assistance League (where I have volunteered, including as past president, for 15 years), and several small social groups. My son and three grandchildren are in San Diego and Denver, and my daughter is in Austin.

From **Carol Bodenheimer Loeb**: In November, I took my daughter on a polar bear safari to Seal River Lodge north of Churchill, Canada, with the Zoo group, including

fellow alumna **Amy McFarland Dove '85**. In January and February, I taught three Sunday ACT math prep classes for MICDS juniors. I enjoyed spring break in Florida and a trip to the Galapagos, again with Amy Dove and my daughter.

Carol Jacobs Montag: My son and two grandsons came to Chicago from their home in East Hampton, New York, for a long weekend. I am cutting back on many activities; The Friday Club and the Women's Board of the Alliance Française are two organizations I have actively served for a long time. I have enjoyed my volunteer work, but I want to give my husband more time as his Parkinson's continues to steal his ability to move comfortably.

From **Sally Curby Johnston**: I had two theater trips to New York City in November and met Jonathan Groff backstage after seeing *Just in Time*. I took my family and plus ones to Puerto Rico for spring break. I doubt we'll ever get all seven grandchildren and their parents together on a trip like that again. At our home in North Carolina, I played more golf. Summer is busy with trips to North Carolina and being with the family I have in town.

Lucie Palmer Garnett continues to volunteer at the St. Louis Opera Theater regularly after many years on the staff. Lucie's house was damaged in the tornado in May 2025, and she is still dealing with the damage. She lost thirty trees and now has a new roof. Lucie and Anthony plan to spend three months this summer at their family house in Rye Beach, New Hampshire, as usual.

Margaret Cardwell Higonnet writes that she "has been contacting assisted living locations in the Boston area, as well as a contractor, about making our house more accessible as we lose our mobility. We find daily pleasure in videos of our grandson and little great granddaughter, who at seventeen months started counting her pieces of broccoli."

Jane Simmons Bickford reported a happy family get-together “to celebrate my 85th birthday. Three of my grandsons were there, along with my one-year-old granddaughter, Aurora, my son, daughter-in-law, and daughter. I still live in New Orleans and would love to see anyone visiting. Amazed I’m 85, but life is wonderful. Sending best wishes to all my sister classmates.”

Josephine Christian Weil enjoys a daily one-mile walk in Forest Park. Last winter, she spent a month in Clearwater Beach, Florida, with Richard, and returned for two weeks in March. “The beach is quite the restorer of health, mental as well as physical.” Like Lucie, Josephine lost scores of trees from her beautiful garden during the tornado. Josephine is happily involved with her eleven-year-old grandson, Sammy, who is quite an artist, and with Deegan, age five, “who is adorable.”

Sheila Morrin Humphreys: My focus is on our family, but I still enjoy my office at UC Berkeley and interactions with colleagues and students. Our only granddaughter, Wendy, graduated with a double major in computer science and math from the University of Rochester. **Mike ’56** and I attended his 70th high school reunion at Groton School and then visited our daughter, Eliza, and her family in Wenham, Massachusetts. I am editing my essays on early Berkeley women doctoral recipients in STEM for a book.



Sheila Morrin Humphreys '59 and Michael Humphreys '56 at the 70th Groton School Reunion, May 8, 2026, in Groton, Massachusetts.

Anne Scherck Morrison: Granddaughter Anya completed her first year at Wesleyan. Younger daughter Becky continues to be active in New Jersey politics. Her son Caleb finished his first year at The Pennington School. Alan, a dean at George Washington Law School for 17 years, relinquished the deanship to spend more time litigating anti-Trump cases. I continue to work on homelessness issues, take courses at OLLI, and working to elect Democratic candidates in critical races.

1959 CDS

ARTHUR LUEKING

arthurl@msn.com

As you probably know by this point, members of the great Codasco Class of 1959 will be gathering for an unofficial 67½ year reunion beginning on September 18, 2026. If you’ve been living under a rock, are NOT aware of this event, and would like to attend, please contact me (arthurl@msn.com) or **Butch Welsch** (bwelsch@welsch-heatcool.com) and we’ll send you a schedule of activities and arrange for your attendance. Those of us who are already signed up are excited about the prospect of hanging out with our classmates once again.

We were lucky to have **R.K. Barton** and **Nat Griffin** at the weekly lunch meeting at the same time. Both look great! R.K. was spending part of the spring (as he usually does) at the family farm in Festus, and Nat was making his annual pilgrimage from his ranch in Texas to his place in Michigan.

Also, the monthly Zoom meetings continue courtesy of Butch’s generosity. I won’t report on their content because, if you haven’t been attending, you should be. Butch sends out a reminder and a link on the Monday before the first Friday of the month and on the day of the meeting.

Otherwise, things have been fairly quiet with our class (which is a good thing). If you’re in St. Louis at any time, we continue to gather for lunch every Monday at Lester’s on Clayton Road, 11:30 sharp. You never know who’s going to show up.

1961 MI

CHARLOTTE MASTIN ELLIS

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Charlotte Mastin Ellis shares, “It’s hard to believe it’s been 65 years since we graduated, but we celebrated our 65th reunion this year. **Ellen Schmitz Livingston, Sudie Black Shinkle, Leigh Friedman Pratter, and Ginny Russell Rowe** planned a schedule of activities. Thirteen of us participated in at least one activity, including the MICDS-provided lunch at the St. Louis Country Club, dinner at Dominic’s Trattoria in Clayton, visiting the St. Louis Art Museum, the London Tea Room, and Brasserie in the Central West End. On Saturday afternoon, **Andy Love ’61** held a party at his lovely home for his class and graciously invited our class as well. Attending the reunion from out of town were **Pam Mesker White, Beverley Sharp Amberg, and Claudia Geyer Thompson**. We wish more of you could have been with us.

1963 CDS

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We all know that time goes by at the same rate every day, month, year; it just seems to go faster now. We had our 60th Reunion three years ago, and the stories gathered by **John Allman** and **Mark Webber** were a perfect setup. The plan afterward was unclear until the idea of periodic Zoom calls was rediscovered. Under the skillful and methodical leadership of **Neil Senturia**, we are in the third year with over 20 Zoom calls in the books.

We have email addresses for nearly 50 class members who are invited every time; around 10 or 12 put it on their schedules. Neil observes that “it is fascinating, delightful and remarkable that our gang bats the ball around tough topics like family, wellness, aging, money, legacy, and politics.”

Getting together is the best. We encourage mini-reunions; number 65 is coming up. Every class should consider this option.

The point of all this is that we are reluctantly moving into the digital age. Don't wait for *MICDS Magazine*. Just call a classmate, or join the next Zoom call.

1964 MI

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ANNE STUPP MCALPIN

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Ladies,

As always, we'll start with words from our class president, **Barbara Baur Dunlap**—“I am slightly handicapped with a broken wrist—cutting roses in the garden can be dangerous! Looking forward to celebrating all our 80th birthdays this year. A yearly highlight for Charlie and me is having **Josie Pettus Wiseman** come visit us in the spring. Twenty-five Dunlaps are headed to Michigan this summer to introduce our grandkids to how glorious Michigan summers can be. The once-weekly Bible study I facilitate has grown to over 200 ladies.”

Mentioning Barbara reminds us that her niece, the daughter of our own **Kitty Shelton Bollinger**, is **McKay Baur Mills '92**, who became chair of the Board of MICDS on July 1. Interestingly, McKay succeeds **Jason Brauer '94**, whose term as board chair ended June 30. Jason is the son of our **Marie Campagna Brauer**. Speaking of Jason gives us the opportunity to note that **Kimmy Thompson**

Brauer, his aunt, celebrated her big birthday in upstate New York with her husband, **Steve Brauer '63**, and all their family.

Four people responded to our request for class news. The first was Barbara, followed by **Becky Jones Fouke**, who said, “MICDS will now have not one but two Foukes attending. **Boardie Fouke '32** will be in seventh grade in the fall, joining his sister **Emma '30**, who just completed the eighth grade. They join numerous aunts, cousins, a grandmother, a great-grandmother, and a great-great-grandmother who have been part of the Mary Institute, Country Day, and now the MICDS community.

Carter Simpson Miller sent a great letter about her family. “**Ben '58** and I are doing well, and our children and grandchildren are also doing well. My daughter, **Caroline Noel Cooper '92**, decided to attend law school at age 51 this past fall. She retired from being Dan Rather's producer in DC when he retired and is attending Catholic University School of Law. Caroline and George's daughter is attending Hamilton College, which she loves! Her brother Teddy is a junior and is looking at colleges. My son Teddy and **Lauren Carroll Noel '99's** children are Maggie (7) and Chase (5). Ben's daughter, **Jamey Miller Maune '87**, lives in St. Louis, so we see her all the time, and his daughter **Leigh Miller Poole '83** and son **Kim Miller '81** are in Boston and New Hampshire. Life is good!”

Marianne Schultz Galt reports, “Since this is the year of 80th birthdays, I report that I stayed in Florida for mine. Our son **Scott Galt '90**, daughter **Farrell Galt Crowley '93**, and granddaughter **Marianne Crowley '30** flew down to celebrate with **Sandy '60** and me. We were missing granddaughter **Margot Crowley '27**, who was taking the SAT, and grandson **Penn Galt '30**, who was in a basketball tournament in Kansas. Sandy and I are hanging in there, living an active lifestyle, exercising, playing golf, and walking with and caring for our Vizsla pup. In February, I visited Shellie Baur, widow of **Tee '64**, along with **Barbara Macdonald Stamper** and Carter Miller. There's nothing like 'old' friends, or should I say 'long-term' friends. I send my best to all of you.”

Jane Cox was in touch with several classmates and gleaned the following:

Patsy Clark Ball has had surgery recently and is not enjoying her “don't do this” and “don't do that” phase of recovery. She is awaiting the arrival of fiber-optic internet in the ruralest of rural areas—their place in the country.

Susan Kahn Bromberg, our class Harlem Renaissance expert, is teaching at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. She is also taking classes but warned those instructors that her attendance might be spotty because of her course load. She continues to be up-to-date with politics.

Ann Kroeger is actually the youngest person in the class. She jump-started her education by attending Rossman School at an earlier age than usual. Poor Ann will not enjoy turning 80 this year but will be a mere 79.

Susie Primm Thel continues to make her contribution in Boston, driving children home from school for parents who can't.

I was able to speak with **Linn Upthegrove Wells**. She, her husband Davey, and their daughters, **Elizabeth '99** and **Jean '02**, are taking a cruise to Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, and Southampton this summer. Linn is particularly excited to have her second new knee, which should make travel easier. She mentioned an article in the *Ladue News* and said that our classmate **Patty Fance Croughan** was on the cover.

I reached into the Deep South and spoke with **Debbie Roulhac Poitevent** in New Orleans. She planned an exciting summer with a birthday celebration in Monteagle, Tennessee, this July with family and friends, and will follow with a trip to walk the Cotswolds with her sister, **Muffy Roulhac Sewall '74**. She spends time with her two adorable grandchildren and at the gym, and continues her counseling career, dedicating much of her time to supporting caregivers who seek her advice.

Happy summer, all, and congratulations to our newly discovered class baby, Ann Kroeger.

Best,

Jane and Anne

1967 CDS

**JAMES MORGAN**

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Dink Frazier: I'm still living in Galway, Ireland. Despite hearing aids and a lot of nerve pain in my back, hips, and knees, fishing is still pleasant. I fish smallmouth bass in northern Ontario, where I built a cottage on an island. I published another biography: *John Montague: A Poet's Life*, about a late friend of mine. I have a collection of essays about the Irish writer George Moore coming out in the autumn. I'm writing poems, mostly for my own entertainment and that of friends. I keep track of the activities of **Don Love** down in the Ozarks; he's spending more time on his property near Akers Ferry.

Boyd Ostroff: I remember our senior year, when we had "projects." Mr. Durgin started a little theatre company, and we developed a couple of one-act plays. We then "toured" them to several parks in the city, and I was the "techie." I remember sketchy electrical hookups for the lights, with long cables running into a bar or whatever we could access. It was a great experience and arguably a step up from the "church basement" fare of my younger years.

Don Love: Definitely cutting edge. One of them was Beckett's *A Mime for Two Players*, which starts with two bulky bags on a stage. A person crawls out of one, grooms, drags the other bag a few feet, and climbs back in his bag. It was perfect for our acting skills. After college, Dink, Russell, and I experimented with drama in Christ Church Cathedral. Russell, it turned out, was even more inept than Dink and me.

Bob Ellis and **Connie** recently took a river cruise in Europe from Switzerland to Amsterdam through Germany, France, and the Netherlands. They live in Carmel Valley, fighting the good fight for a small community of conservatives.

Scott Schirmer continues to golf daily. Way to go! Mr. Lutz must have been a great inspiration.

We enjoy Zoom calls bimonthly to keep us in touch and to plan our 60th reunion. Time flies.

1968 MI

CAROL SHEPLEY

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KAREN HEMPSTEAD

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Greetings, classmates! Here's the latest news:

From **Bonnie Black Taylor**, "Like many families, Lydia and I divide our time among several locations. Ours include St. Louis, Taos, and San Diego, where our two grandchildren live. I enjoy keeping in touch with my friends from the Class of '68—those are special relationships."

Nancy Fisse Davis sends the following news, "Ben just spent a week with me; we did a lot of hiking! All is well out at the Olympic Peninsula. I am down to one horse, Raven, and have turned my yard into a food forest! My daughter, Carol, lives here in Sequim, and Ben and his kids live in St. Louis. I make frequent trips there to be with them."



Helen French Graves shares this wonderful picture of her classmates at a Cardinals Game. She calls it "Cardinals at the Crossroads." Meeting up in May at Busch Stadium were **Holly Bobe Erker** and **Charlie '68**, driving north-south from Florida to Wisconsin; **Helen French Graves**, driving west-east from Colorado to Massachusetts; and St. Louisans **Jenny Ross Manganaro**, **Jan Howell Wisland**, and **Dave**. Despite the Cardinals' loss, going to the game was great fun!

Lou Horan Noland shared this update: "Last spring, our oldest grandson, Turner Tarrasch, son of **Laura Noland Tarrasch '98**, graduated from high school! We had a great summer in and out of St. Louis. We traveled to Highland, North Carolina, and drove to Ludington, Michigan, where we played lots of golf. At the end of September, we traveled to Paris, London, and Ireland. Later, we headed south to Vero Beach, Florida."

Julie Arnold reports: "I continue to train and show my standard poodles in obedience, interrupted by trips to visit my grandsons (ages 2 3/4 and 11 months). I am currently recovering from total knee replacement surgery and anxious to get back to normal activities."

According to our class wit, **Becky Wells Mattison**, "Not much new here in New Hampshire! Spring brought ticks and all their joy. One of the little buggers gave me anaplasmosis, which caused my kidneys to fail and put me in the hospital. I got sprung in time for our 51st anniversary but am allowed only tons of water (flushes out the kidneys) instead of the champagne we had counted on! So much for those fairy tales about 'golden years!'"

Jodie Brodhead Moore posits, “How about bullet points?”

- Still vertical, which at our age is a blessing!
- Come to St. Louis a couple of times a year, where I look forward to seeing classmates and friends from rival schools!
- Went to Morocco in the fall of 2025. Truly an exotic experience.
- Most fun trip of 2026: took my granddaughter (9) on an adventure in NYC. The best!”

Marmee Williams Lyon says: “This past fall, Frank and I went on a backroads biking trip to the Pyrenees, Figueres (Salvador Dali museum), down to the Costa Brava, and then spent a few days in Barcelona; a terrific trip! This winter, we spent three months in Vero Beach and saw **Melissa Morris Schroll** and Lou Noland with their spouses. We’ve also kept busy seeing our 13 grandkids and went to Cincinnati to see one of Frank’s grandsons graduate from high school.”

News from **Jannie Jones Ramatici**: “The highlight of last year was a safari in Tanzania. My joy is being near my two grandchildren, Conor (5) and Harper (2), and watching my daughter Sophie blossom into an awesome mother and wife. Mary is thriving in Denver as a therapist. She is licensed in California and Hawaii. I continue to spend time at our home on Kauai’s north shore and work at an olive oil ranch near Petaluma.

Karen Smith Hempstead reports: “Ed and I traveled to Panama and Costa Rica last winter. In Panama, we went to islands off the coast. We sailed through the canal. In Costa Rica, we spent time in the rainforest and saw wildlife. In San José, we visited the beautiful Teatro Nacional Costa Rica. We also spent lots of time in Dallas, San Luis Obispo, and St. Louis with our children and grandchildren.”

Carol Ferring Shepley says, “Jake and I are grateful that he is recovering well after a cardiac event. We’ve had a breathless travel year. We joined family in Bath, Maine, for our grandson Jack’s high school graduation and are visiting

friends in Key West, Palm Springs, Pinehurst, North Carolina, and Telluride, Colorado. We celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary in Greece and Turkey.”

Victoria Schofield Willis writes from London: “I am grateful for the career I developed as a historian and writer. My latest publication has been revising and expanding a book my father published on the amazing bravery of the British Merchant Navy, whose sailors picked up survivors from the convoys crossing the North Atlantic and the Arctic during World War II. On a personal note, I am grateful for good health, my husband, my adult children, and my four grandchildren!”

We extend our sympathy to **Bo Singer Pratter** on the death of her husband, Jerry, and her sister Joan Schiele, and to Carol on the death of her brother **John Ferring** ’71.

1969 CDS

ED HALL

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Sad to report the passing of our classmate **John Kennard**.

John Hohlt reports he and Eileen just got back from Italy, visiting Rome, Florence, and Venice. Daughter Anne graduates from medical school in May and begins her residency at Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston. Daughter Mary is the capital project coordinator for The Menil Collection, also in Houston. Son John is EVP-Surety at CAC. Five grandchildren, all aged five or under. Life is good.

1970 MI

TINA RUTLEDGE VERALDI

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Our news starts with **Sunie Lasky**, who invited me (**Tina Rutledge Veraldi**) to join her on a trip to visit her cousin near the city of Kona on the Island of Hawaii. Wonderful

moments included relaxing with her family, visiting Pu’uhonua o Honaunau National Park, going to beaches and other island spots, and driving through miles of ancient lava fields. She’s thrilled to live in Palm Desert, California, near her daughter’s family—especially her new grandson, Oren!

Cathy Trauernicht has reported that “Dun and I had our own antiques roadshow when we transported our household goods from McLean to Williamsburg, Virginia, last November. Come visit. Dun and I became first-time grandparents (also known as “bonus parents”) this month! Our daughter and her husband are proud parents of a beautiful baby girl.

Lawrie Conant Chiaro is excited to announce that her play, *Let’s Write a Musical*, ran at Theatre Off Jackson in Seattle after two successful runs in Los Angeles. Lawrie modestly shares that all performances have received standing ovations. It’s the true story about Lawrie and her husband, Ben, writing a musical together when he was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. Lawrie teaches music at a local elementary school in Los Angeles. She also takes a music program to the local assisted living centers.

Nathalie Pettus has written: “I’m moving in a different direction with my projects at Overlook Farm in Clarksville. I’m planning to focus on the needs of the people of Clarksville, but fun activities are definitely called for, too, like the Antiques Roadshow adventure that Tina took me on last year. It was a delight to learn the provenance of some family jewelry!”

I (Tina) must share that going to Antiques Roadshow (Season 30) was such fun and educational, too! I brought a letter from George Washington to Edward Rutledge, and the appraiser supported its probable authenticity. I’m not related. My branch of Rutledges (buried at Bellefontaine Cemetery since 1849) is different from the Edward & John Rutledge brothers with Revolutionary fame from 250 years ago.

1971_{MI}**LAURIE JACOBSON PROVOST**

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Our 55th reunion is in the books. As they say, Elvis has left the building, but the glow of the celebration still lingers. Our 55th was an intimate affair: smaller turnout (still more than a third of us), private homes, but joyful and feel-good. It doesn't matter where we meet or what the activities are, the most important thing—the best thing—is being together again.

The weekend started with the MICDS luncheon at SLCC with: **Sally Braxton Schnuck, Biz Ellison Marks, Noel Goding, Ann Hardy Aschauer, Debbie Smith Fitzgerald, Dana McBride, Babs Claggett Wagner, Judy Griesedieck, Gloria Niedringhaus Jarvis, Abbie Carlin, Beth Trueblood, Jeanie Roy,**

Lisa Culver, Cammi Fettè Mock, Laurie Wolff Miller, and me, Laurie Jacobson Provost.

We excitedly welcomed the rarely seen **Tori King** back into the fold for an all-too-brief appearance. Her mare delivered a foal just three days earlier, and Tori returned to Colorado immediately after lunch to tend to their needs. Of course, we also loved seeing our buddies from CDS '71.

On Friday, many of us joined the hundreds of others who came to Forest Park to celebrate the life of **John Ferring '71**, whom we lost suddenly two months earlier. From there, we headed to the school dinner, where we added **Sue Thomasson Wienstroer** and **Lucy Ferriss** to the festivities. The memorabilia display was so entertaining, and it was great fun to see friends in other classes.

Saturday, a group of us attended a lovely "chapel" service at Saint Peter's, organized

by **Laurie Garesche Haffenreffer '72**. Singing those familiar hymns together again and reciting the Prayer for the Graduates was unexpectedly emotional. Chapel was always a wonderful way to start the school day. It's only in hindsight that I have grown to appreciate the experience. Tears flowed at Saint Peter's and not just mine.

Saturday evening, some of us crashed the Boys Night at the SLCC pickleball courts, then headed to the event we'd waited for, Girls Night at Sally's, where four more joined the party: **Bartow Lammert Molloy, Marika Csapo-Sweet, Peggy Gross Crawford, and Julia Webb**; and where the boys would meet us later. Sally treated us to a spectacular dinner and priceless decorations. And thanks to Laurie Wolff Miller, my very dependable boots on the ground. Judy's Oscar-worthy slideshow was prefaced by a moment of remembrance for those we've lost, serenaded beautifully by Ann on the harp. It's such a special touchstone. And once again, I am reminded that we remain the best.



01



02



03



04

01. Dr. Tori King '71.

02. Gloria Jarvis, Laurie Provost, Jean Roy, and Biz Marks of the Class of 1971 at the school dinner.

03. Hands up at the dinner from the Class of 1971, back row (l-r): Sue Thomasson Wienstroer, Laurie Jacobson Provost, Laurie Wolff Miller, Sally Braxton Schnuck, Lucy Ferriss, Lisa Culver, Cammi Fettè Mock, and Gloria Niedringhaus Jarvis. Front row (l-r): Babs Claggett Wagner, Judy Griesedieck, Jeanie Roy, Biz Ellison Marks, Ann Hardy Aschauer, and Dana McBride.

04. Class of 1971 Girls Night gathering (from top): Noel Goding, Cammi Fettè Mock, Sue Thomasson Wienstroer, Lisa Culver, Gloria Niedringhaus Jarvis, Judy Griesedieck, Dana McBride, Beth Trueblood, Lucy Ferriss, Laurie Jacobson Provost, Abbie Carlin, Ann Hardy Aschauer, Marika Csapo-Sweet, Debbie Smith Fitzgerald, Laurie Wolff Miller, Biz Ellison Marks, Babs Claggett Wagner, Peggy Gross Crawford, Jeanie Roy, Bartow Lammert Molloy, and Sally Braxton Schnuck.

1975_{MI}**LISA DENNIG COULTER**

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KATHERINE SCHNEIDER-CLARK

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Dear Classmates,

Unfortunately, we have to start with very sad news. Our dear friend **Gay Goessling** passed away on April 2, 2026. As her classmates, we remember her creativity, warmth, and deep appreciation for the beauty of the natural world. She found inspiration in nature and devoted her life to exploring the connection between humanity and the world around us. Gay built a distinguished career as an award-winning landscape architect and founder of Goessling Design.

As a reminder, for our 50th Reunion gift, our class donations were directed to the redesign of the MI 1975 Beasley Landscaped Teaching Garden. We are especially grateful that Gay had the opportunity to meet with the school to share her designs and vision for this project.

We are deeply sorry to share that **Liza Schlafly Forshaw** lost her husband, Joe Forshaw, on November 11, 2025. Joe was a well-known figure in the St. Louis business community. Friends and family remember him as intelligent and engaging with a quick wit and a sense of humor. Most importantly, he was a devoted husband to Liza for 44 years, a loving father, and a proud grandfather.

We are also saddened to share that our classmate **Cindy Shillington Gillentine**'s son, Andrew Gillentine, lost his wife, **Lauren Hasak Gillentine** '03, on January 10, 2026, at the age of 41. Lauren was deeply loved for her warmth, kindness, and the way she made others feel welcomed and valued. A beautiful celebration of her life was held at Defiance Ridge Winery.



On a happy note, **Louise DuVivier Alsing** shared, "I'm sorry that I wasn't able to get to the 50th reunion. My husband Bill and I still live a quiet life in Godfrey, Illinois. Because I'm the only one in my family still living anywhere close to home, I stay in touch with my family through video chats, texts, emails, and my favorite method, handmade cards. I hope all my classmates are finding beauty in their lives."

Kim Lilly Wyllie shared that she is loving being fully retired and hanging out with her 12 grandchildren. She and Jim went skiing with their Texas contingent over New Year's and decided they still love the sport. They are busy planning Cousin Camp for 2026 with Wyllie Olympic Games and a live Clue game for her super sleuths.

For my news, I (Lisa) welcomed two more grandchildren in 2026, my fifth and sixth! **Elizabeth Coulter Lilly** '03 and her husband Trip welcomed Frederick Vivian Lilly IV ("Ford") in February, and my son **Chris** '05 and daughter-in-law **Elizabeth Moore Coulter** '08 had their third baby, Charles Louis Coulter ("Charlie"), in May. I love being a grandmother and am really looking forward to a full house of children and grandchildren in Michigan this summer!

As always, we are grateful for the continued connection and shared memories of our class, and we wish everyone continued joy in life's milestones, both big and small!

1976_{MI}**DIDI NOELKER**

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The reunion was fantastic! What a great weekend for all who were able to attend. We reconnected, reminisced, laughed, and enjoyed each other's company. For those unable to attend, we missed you very much! Many thanks to the reunion committee and to Louise Jones and her team who were tremendously helpful in making the weekend a great success.

Ann Mellow Fleckenstein writes: I was so sorry to miss the reunion, but it was nice to FaceTime with many of you at the girls' party! Scot and I were able to go to Australia in January to check off two bucket list items: seeing the Australian Open and scuba diving on the Great Barrier Reef. We are still living in Grant Park in Atlanta and loving it.

There is undoubtedly still much news to share, especially by those who were unable to attend the reunion. I will be sending out more regular reminders, so please don't be shy!

1979_{MI}

After almost 40 years with Carnival Cruise Line, most recently as their vice president of charter, corporate & incentive sales, **Ann Sedgwick Kloppenburg** settled into retirement in early June 2026. She's looking forward to spending more time with family and friends, enjoying her three grandchildren, and traveling to new destinations for leisure.

1980_{MI}**FIFI LUGO**

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Barbi Cady Macon reports: I loved hosting my sister, **Georgia Cady '76**, and several of her classmates when they were in town for their 50th reunion. I'm trying to stay busy and out of trouble with my camera when loving on our Nashville grandbabies, playing pickleball with several MI alums, or traveling with **Bill '77**. I have also loved reconnecting and singing with Mary I alums once a month at **Mary Lemkemeier's** house.

1981_{MI}**JEANNIE ROBB HUBERT**

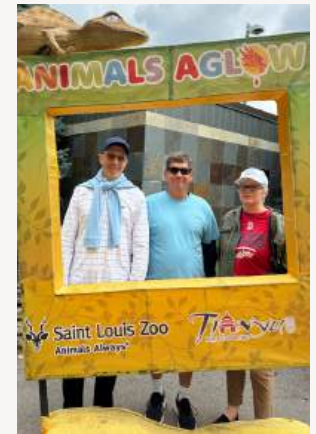
jeannie@huberts.us

Linda Tschudy Werner: Our son, **Kevin '12**, and his wife, Lindsay, had a beautiful baby boy in August! We are so thrilled to be grandparents! Now we know what all the fuss is about! I loved seeing everyone at our 45th reunion! Looking forward to the 50th—yikes!

1994_{MICDS}

Ashley Amos Clennan reports: My oldest, **Bridget '24**, is a rising Junior at Syracuse University, majoring in International Relations. **Carrie '26** graduated this spring and is attending Belmont University as a biology major, and **Bruce '30** will hold down the fort at MICDS as a freshman. I enjoy volunteering in the MI/MICDS Archives and running into classmates at MICDS and around town.

The MI and CDS Class of 1981 enjoyed reconnecting with each other on reunion weekend, both at the School's events and at their own off campus.





2006 MICDS

< **Tim Brunt '06**, while vacationing on a seventh-generation cattle ranch in the Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming and Montana with his wife, Stephanie, made an MICDS connection through the matriarch of the ranch family, Alice Kerns. Mrs. Kerns' mother, **Norma Brownell Fuller**, graduated from Mary Institute in 1945. Mrs. Fuller passed away last summer, but the Brunts enjoyed spending time with her family.

2015 MICDS

Meryl Fiore met her husband, Leland Detmer, at Wake Forest University during their freshman year. They were married at the Gasparilla Inn in Boca Grande, Florida, this past December. They currently reside in Washington, DC.

Recent MICDS graduates and Air Force Academy cadets Jacob Daus '25, Matlynn Hardy-Lyles '23, and Bowen Zhao '25 met up at the All Academies Ball hosted at the Missouri Athletic Club.



Reunion Weekend

April 30 – May 2, 2026



Reunion Weekend

April 30 – May 2, 2026





Reunion Weekend

April 30 – May 2, 2026



2001
25th
REUNION



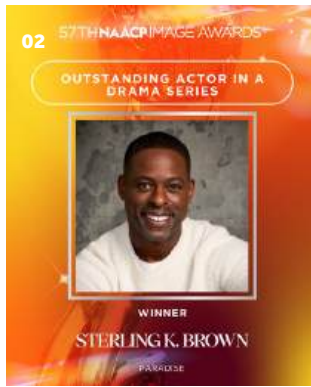
2006
20th
REUNION



2011
15th
REUNION



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02



03



04



05



06



07



08

01. Stacy Bourne '85, FAIA, NOMA, is the founding principal of The Bourne Group, a practice that uses hurricane-resilient design to catalyze social change through community-engaged work. Bourne won the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts Alumni Award for Distinction in Architecture for her work.

02. Sterling K. Brown '94 won Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series at the NAACP Image Awards. He plays Secret Service Agent Xavier Collins on the ABC/Hulu show *Paradise*. The Emmy-award-winning actor was also named one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2026. Fellow alums **Jeff Rush '92** and **Ndidi Oteh '00 (03)** were delighted to be in attendance, cheering on their classmate at the award ceremony held in Pasadena, California.

04. Will Kacmarek '21 was recruited by the Miami Dolphins in the third round (87th overall) of the 2026 NFL Draft. After graduating from MICDS, Kacmarek, a tight end, played first for Ohio and then for Ohio State.

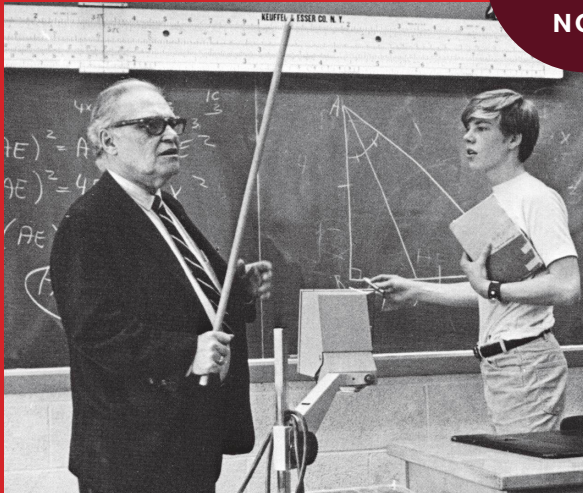
05. Trevon Bobo '21 is a communications intern with the Los Angeles Rams, who finished the 2025 season with a 12-5 record and a second-place finish in the NFC West.

06. Peter Herzog '23 has amassed over 750 thousand followers across four social media platforms with his show, *Film Watchers*. Herzog watches, analyzes, and shares his thoughts about films from National Football League games. His work caught the attention of ESPN's NFL social media team, which reached out to share his film breakdowns for their Monday Night Football coverage.

07. Tristan Williams '24 was part of the Distance Medley Relay (400m runner) that broke a Kansas Jayhawks school record on February 22, 2026, at the Saucony Battle for Boston 2026. The last record was set in 2006. Williams has four records that still stand at MICDS today.

08. Andrew Ford '26 received the Brightman Award from City Academy in recognition of exceptional community leadership, civic service, and a strong commitment to giving back to others. He received a scholarship in honor of his impact. This fall, Ford is attending DePauw University.

THEN
— & —
NOW



Fred Werremeyer taught math to Country Day students from 1930 to 1971, and he used a large demonstration slide rule. When his son, Bill, began teaching math in 1970, the oversized implement graced his classroom. Seven feet long and made of wood, the Keuffel & Esser Co. demonstration slide rule was likely manufactured in the 1930s and helped decades of CDS math students with their calculations. Today, the slide rule hangs in the CDS Archives, and MICDS Middle School students in Dr. Jody Marberry's math class use Texas Instruments TI-Nspire graphing calculators. They learn Python commands, understand that syntax is important, and realize that programming requires simply trying things out until they find success. Beyond math calculations, we're teaching students how to explore, create, test, and iterate, helping them become comfortable sitting in the unknown and preparing them for a lifetime of curiosity.