

PAGES

The Magazine of Far Hills



The Frustaci Freeway Trike Track makes its debut on campus!

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Why PAGES?

In 1987, the very first issue of PAGES was published. The title, a play on words that recalled the old Page estate from which the Far Hills Country Day School property was purchased, was created by then headmaster Mr. Charles Scranton. Mr. Scranton served as the twelfth Head of Far Hills Country Day School from 1979 to 1992.

The Page estate was purchased by William H. Page in 1902. However, ownership of the property can be traced back to the arrival of the British on its soil. In 1496, John Cabot, for the Crown of England, staked claim to the land. Almost two centuries later, in 1664, Charles II granted it to James, the Duke of York, and others. Before long, William Penn arrived on the scene and had ownership of the land until it fell into the hands of the Whitaker Family, who built the original Page House. After forty years of Whitaker-Voorhees ownership, in 1902, Blanche and William Page purchased the property. After Page's death, his heirs sold 17.9 acres of the estate, then known as Mine Brook Farm, to Mt. Kemble School, while Page's son remained in a cottage across the road.

Seizing the Stars: The First 75 Years
Brooke Hyde Goode '66

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PAGES is published for the alumni, parents, and friends of Far Hills Country Day School
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HEADLINES

A Letter from The Head of School

In Pages last year, Director of Teaching & Learning, Jennifer Phillips, provided an overview of the decennial reaccreditation process that Far Hills completed in early November. I am pleased to report that Far Hills, as expected, has been reaccredited. In their few days on campus, the Visiting Team gleaned what makes Far Hills so special; they commended Far Hills for:

- A warm and caring community
- A beautiful physical space
- Dedicated faculty and staff who serve our rigorous program well
- A Board of Trustees who exemplify good governance
- An expert and committed School Leadership Team
- Families and students who sing the praises of Far Hills Country Day School

Much of what the Visiting Team praised is evident in this edition of Pages. Our warm community, dedicated faculty, proud students, and rigorous program are evident in such articles as A Look Inside Third Grade, My Day as an Eighth Grade Student, Focus On: Smart Fun Camps, and Little Robots, Major Returns. Our committed School Leadership Team shines through in the Trike Track dedication to Diane Frustaci during the Lower School's 10th Birthday Celebration (recap on page 30) and the interview with Secondary School Counselor, Ed Thompson. The profile on Yvonne and Paul Rust, III and the Alumni Notes highlight the passion

our students and families have for Far Hills, and how it stays with them as alumni.

We embraced reaccreditation as a process for critical self reflection and school improvement. We will respond to the following major recommendations made by the Visiting Team in an Action Plan, as required by the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools:

- Prioritize the school's many ongoing initiatives
- Seek creative solutions to market ourselves to a broader population of families
- Create a school community that better reflects the world in which Far Hills Country Day School students will work and live

We have already incorporated our responses to these recommendations in our Strategic Vision (see page 2), which looks at the challenges and opportunities facing Far Hills as we plan forward. I invite your comments and thoughts about the Strategic Vision via email, phone, or web.

Enjoy this edition of Pages, which captures the essence of Far Hills, where we develop strength of mind and strength of character and prepare students to GO FAR, in secondary school and life beyond.



LOOKING FORWARD

GO FAR: The Strategic Vision for Far Hills

GO FAR: The Far Hills Country Day School Strategic Vision emanates from our mission and pillars. It focuses on Far Hills' program, people, and place with the goal of developing students who personify our mission as detailed in our "Portrait of a Graduate" (see the Spring 2016 edition of PAGES or fhcds.org/portrait) and are prepared to meet the emerging needs of 21st century learners. Our goal is no less than to develop Far Hills into a national exemplar of a mission-driven school that prioritizes and holds itself accountable for the balance and intersection of academic excellence and character development so that students Go Far during their journey at Far Hills, in high school and college, and are prepared for success in the modern world.



Above / Mrs. Jen Wagar teaches science to third grade students.

Challenges & Opportunities that Call for Change

During the strategic planning process, we identified powerful external forces that we must respond to in order to keep a Far Hills education relevant and excellent:

Demographics

All demographics are local: counties in New Jersey closest to New York continue to grow, while smaller counties and those further west are experiencing slower or even negative growth. Over the past six

“The Far Hills program must provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for this complex, changing world.”

years, the number of households with school-aged children in Morris and Somerset counties has declined and is forecasted to grow only modestly. Over the next five years, there is a projected decline in the caucasian proportion of school-age children, while Asian and Latino populations will grow steadily. Far Hills must respond to changing demographics proactively by looking at the optimal size of the school and the way it attracts new families from all backgrounds.

In light of changing demographics, what is the optimal size of the school to ensure that we attract and retain the best students for our mission and program in a financially sustainable way?

Globalization

The increasingly interconnected global community presents the next generation with numerous opportunities and challenges, from a rapidly changing global economy to wide-ranging social and environmental challenges calling for innovative solutions. The Far Hills program must provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for this complex, changing world.

How can we best prepare our students to understand, respond, serve, and lead effectively in this changing global environment?

How can we best keep our teachers knowledgeable about the skills and knowledge that students need for the changing global community?



Above / Ms. Rachel DeMaster, Associate Director of Admission, helps a student into his harness on the Far Hills Ropes Course.

Technology

Technology is changing the way we access, process, and share information, transforming the way students and professionals learn and create, and redefining the nature of work. The most successful professionals of tomorrow will be creative, design-oriented problem solvers who capitalize on the power of technology. Far Hills must teach our students to use technology skillfully in an ethical, responsible, and safe way.

How can we best equip our students to harness the increasingly powerful technologies that are redefining learning and work environments?

Are our students developing the ethical values necessary for digital citizenship?

How can we best equip our teachers to enhance learning by using these technologies?

Mind, Brain, and Education (MBE) Research

Current research in neuroscience and organizational psychology provides new insights into how we learn and

“Through ongoing professional development, our talented faculty must stay current with the latest research and methodologies that enhance students’ abilities to learn and understand.”

work effectively, informing more effective teaching and assessment methods. Through ongoing professional development, our talented faculty must stay current with the latest research and methodologies that enhance students’ abilities to learn and understand.

How can we ensure that our teachers master new and more effective methods for helping students learn and understand in deep, enduring ways?

Are the school's schedules, organizational structures, and spaces aligned with the research about optimal learning environments?

Strategic Response

Far Hills will respond to these challenges with a comprehensive and unified strategic plan, with intentional, coherent goals and priorities that address our program, people, and place.

During the 2015–2016 school year, faculty and trustees engaged in a comprehensive self study process for reaccreditation by the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools (NJ AIS), a process that culminated with an on-site review by a visiting team of peer educators from November 1–4, 2016. The research done for the Self Study and recommendations made by the Visiting Team inform our strategic response. Also, in the spring of 2016, several working groups of trustees, parents, and school leadership team members started framing key questions and identifying potential goals and priorities for our strategic plan. This work, combined with ongoing research, surveys of the parent community and secondary schools, and initiatives already underway, pinpointed areas where Far Hills can and should further develop as a school.

Program

We will review and refine the curriculum and co-curriculum so that our program consistently develops our students into the alumni painted in the Portrait of a Graduate and prepares them for a rapidly changing world. We will focus on strengthening core academic skills, including reading, writing, taking notes, researching, quantitative reasoning, and studying with the goal of developing students who think critically and creatively, problem solve effectively and collaborate and communicate successfully. In a developmentally appropriate and balanced way, we will stretch our students to reach their full potential and to be prepared to excel in secondary school. We will also review the co-curriculum, from social-emotional learning and advising to the cafe and physical education, to improve the development of character skills. In support of curriculum and co-curriculum and as part of our commitment to preparing students for the modern world, we will develop curricula and programming that intentionally engages the different backgrounds, perspectives and ideas of our local and global communities, thereby expanding our classrooms outside of our walls.

How we teach shapes learning as much as what we teach. We will develop our coherent, intentional approach to teaching and learning, which is animated by the Far Hills Ethos (fostering an ethic of excellence, creating a moral contract with students, sustaining

academic tenacity, and building a collegial culture) and characterized by the following distinct, yet related tenets: growth mindset; personalization, differentiation and individualization; thinking skills (e.g., critical thinking, analytical and quantitative reasoning, etc.); project approach; and performance tasks. Technologies are enhancing, accelerating, and transforming teaching and learning, so we will develop a comprehensive, forward-thinking technology plan that spans from infrastructure to professional development to support our program and operations.

Developing the faculty's capacities in each of these areas requires ongoing, systematic professional development, time for reflection and collaboration, and accountability. We will focus and prioritize professional development on readings, training, and conferences that deepen the faculty's understanding of the science of learning, social-emotional learning, tenets of the Far Hills Ethos, and the use of technology.

We will seek to endow and thus preserve in perpetuity signature and mission-critical features of our program, from the ropes course and adventure trips to the Matthew C. Baumeister Academic Learning Lab and faculty professional development programs.

People

Far Hills is a community of students, faculty, staff, and parents, and this community, the lifeblood of the school, must be nurtured and sustained.

Recent demographic and economic changes present an opportunity to set a strategic goal for the enrollment of the school. Building a diverse student body remains a core goal as the school achieves its optimal size. Ensuring access to economically and culturally diverse students builds a vibrant learning environment for all students, faculty, and the community, helps all to solve problems collaboratively, to develop cultural literacy, and to work with those from different backgrounds. A diverse student body is both a gift and a goal. The optimal size of the school must be considered through the lenses of diversity, enrolling the best students for our mission, and financial sustainability. Our business model will address marketing, recruitment, accessibility, and affordability.

Far Hills will attract and retain the best faculty and staff for its mission by reviewing the competitiveness of faculty and staff salaries and benefits, defining goals for faculty and staff diversity and recruitment, and creating and supporting opportunities to learn and grow via robust professional development.

Far Hills will continue to develop and provide educational opportunities for parents that mirror the developmental arc of their child as they journey from Prekindergarten



Above / Aakriti Caprihan, Marissa Mikosh, Taylor Repollet, Skylar Reale, and Morgan Kanengiser '19 during Upper School recess.

through Grade 8. By maintaining an open door policy, we will remain responsive to parental questions and concerns. We will work diligently to sustain our partnership with parents so that our students thrive.

Place

Our buildings and grounds convey our values and serve as teaching and learning spaces as much as any dedicated classroom. As such, they must support and further the Far Hills Ethos and teaching philosophy, our pillars, and our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We will undertake our next campus master plan with the goals of:

- Reinforcing Far Hills' commitment to strengthening core academic skills, project-based learning, critical thinking, character development, and the goal to use our campus as a classroom
- Creating interdisciplinary, flexible learning spaces
- Improving the campus ecosystem
- Upgrading our technology infrastructure and improving operational efficiency
- Enhancing the campus identity

Goals

The core goals and priorities of GO FAR: The Far Hills Strategic Vision are:

- Transition to the optimal size of the school while considering our mission, commitment to diversity

and inclusion, and financial sustainability.

- Attract and retain the best students, faculty, and staff for an optimally-sized school.
- Review, refine and, as necessary, redesign the Far Hills' curriculum and co-curriculum to produce graduates who exhibit strength of mind and strength of character and are prepared for this rapidly changing, pluralistic, modern world.
- Support professional development programs for faculty and staff that promote the Far Hills Ethos and teaching philosophy, deepen understanding of MBE research and practices, and facilitate the use and integration of advanced technologies in the classroom.
- Improve the campus ecosystem by designing flexible learning spaces, upgrading the technology infrastructure, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing school identity.
- Endow signature and mission-critical programs, including financial aid.

Next Steps

Members of our community are invited to comment on GO FAR: The Far Hills Country Day School Strategic Vision 2017 by emailing twoelper@fhcds.org or by attending one of our Listening Tour events in the coming months. Based on that feedback, the Strategic Vision will be refined and the goals will be prioritized to form our next Strategic Plan.



Wonder Wall / Questioning is a key component of how inquiry is integrated in third grade. Students “relearn” the art of questioning and explore the concept of opening their minds to their own curiosity. They ask questions such as of “how?” and “why?” and help to “train their brains” to gain more knowledge in all that they read, research, and learn. “Reverse Questioning” is a skill often used to start the day in third grade. Through this, the students receive an answer and must allow their minds to go through backwards thinking to arrive at a question that would produce a given answer.

Allowing students to channel their “Fierce Wonders” and add them to the Wonder Wall has become an exciting, daily activity. The students explore their “deepest wonders” from our Wonder Wall, which they have kept all year, in our Fierce Wondering writing unit. These are their big, open-ended questions that may not have researchable answers. The students explore their wonders in their writing, sharing why it is a particularly “fierce wondering” for them and try to answer this wonder through their own imaginings. The result is always a unique piece of writing, sometimes humorous, sometimes surprisingly deep.

Growth Mindset
 year, students
 put it in motion
 and work with
 above, through
 words from
 their minds

Through the
 students be
 to change t

class·room

'klas rōom, 'klas rüm

noun

noun: classroom; plural noun: classrooms; a room, typically in a school, in which a class of students is taught.

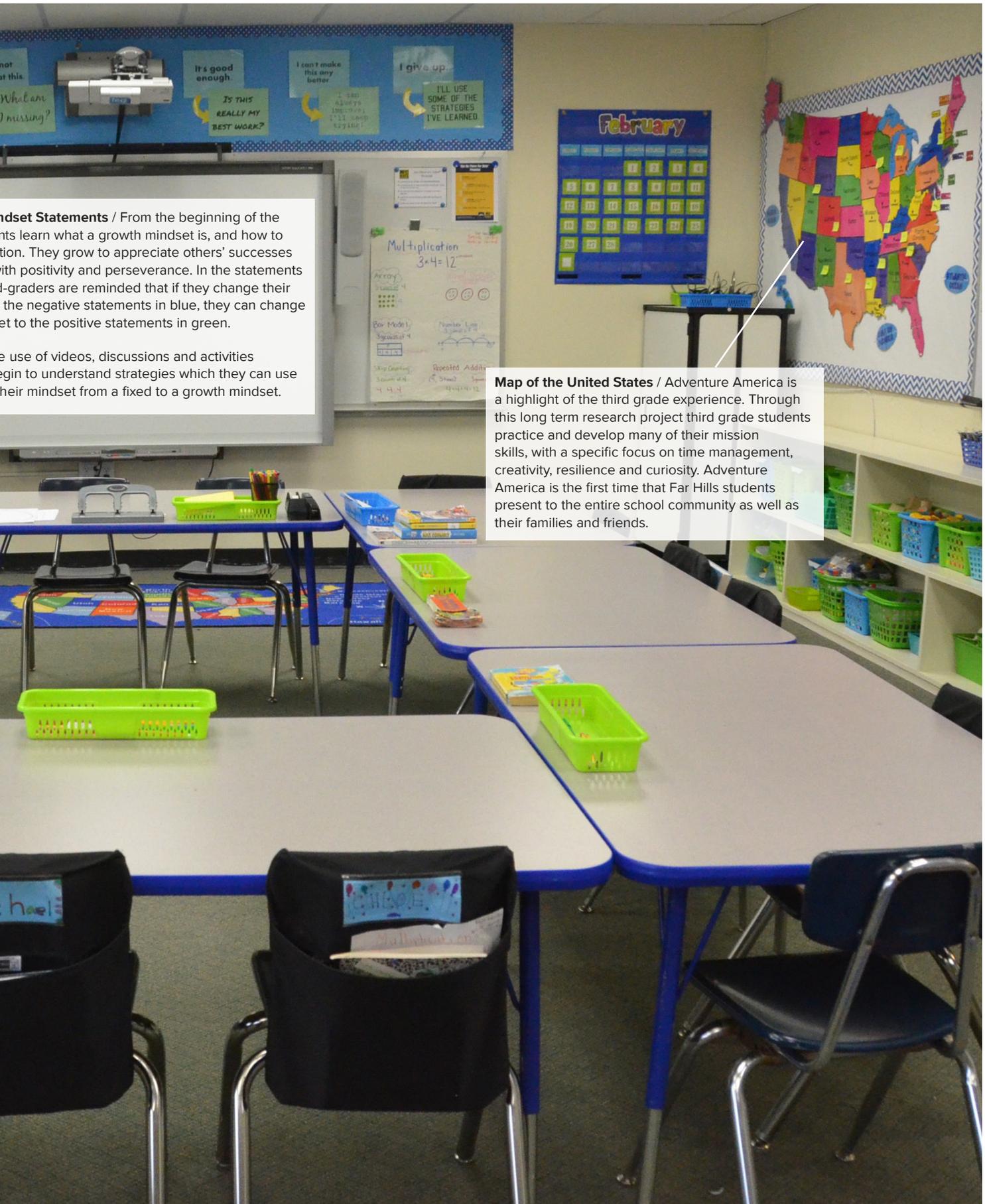
by the Third Grade Faculty

In this edition of PAGES, we continue our series of exploring Far Hills’ classrooms. This year, we’ll take a look at our third grade classrooms, which provide beautiful and engaging learning spaces for our Grade 3 learners. Children at this level continue to expand upon their Mission Skills and learn about employing a growth mindset.

Growth Mindset Statements / From the beginning of the year, students learn what a growth mindset is, and how to develop it. They grow to appreciate others' successes and celebrate them with positivity and perseverance. In the statements below, 3rd-graders are reminded that if they change their mindset, the negative statements in blue, they can change them to the positive statements in green.

The use of videos, discussions and activities help students begin to understand strategies which they can use to change their mindset from a fixed to a growth mindset.

Map of the United States / Adventure America is a highlight of the third grade experience. Through this long term research project third grade students practice and develop many of their mission skills, with a specific focus on time management, creativity, resilience and curiosity. Adventure America is the first time that Far Hills students present to the entire school community as well as their families and friends.



THIRD GRADE IS A YEAR OF GROWTH. As teachers, we strive to create an environment where students are encouraged to take the lead in their learning, ask questions, discover who they are as students, and grow as individuals. We aim to foster each child's sense of curiosity and introduce experiences into our curriculum that inspire a love of learning and promote self confidence. We also help students gain a stronger sense of independence, organization, time management, and ownership of their work. The curriculum supports the development of a growth mindset as students work on persevering through tasks and growing as resilient problem-solvers.

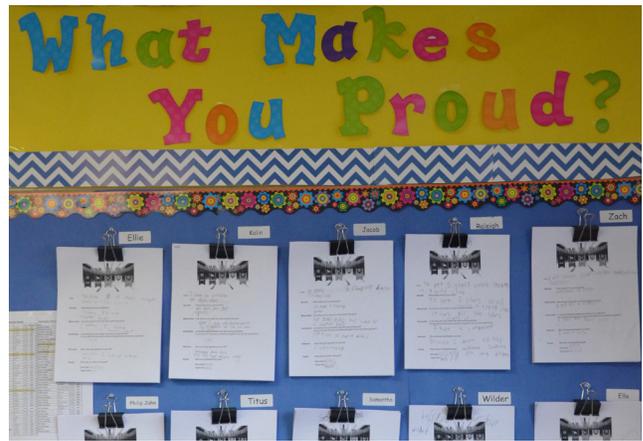
SOCIAL STUDIES focuses on Project and Inquiry Based Learning as well as the development of research skills. Students employ the research skills they have developed of previous years and begin to take true ownership in not only what they are going to research, but how they are going to research, and in what way they are going to construct final projects.

In **LANGUAGE ARTS** students are given the tools to become successful lifelong readers and writers. They learn that reading is a tremendous way to gain knowledge and that writing is a cornerstone for effective communication throughout their lifetimes.

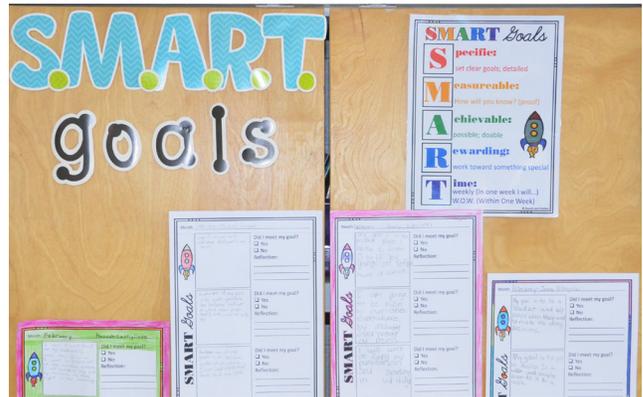
In **MATH**, students build the foundations for concepts that they will use in fourth grade and beyond. We focus on multiplication and division, and a key focus is placed on groupings related to multiplying and dividing. Students also begin to understand the role of fractions—they learn that a fraction is a part of a whole, identify numerators and denominators, and begin to understand that two fractions can be equivalent.

Brain research has shown that when children are engaged in the act of handwriting, various parts of their brains are activated including regions associated with thinking, language, and working memory. **CURSIVE HANDWRITING** is taught several times a week. Spelling assessments, and other writing assignments, are sometimes required to be completed using cursive.

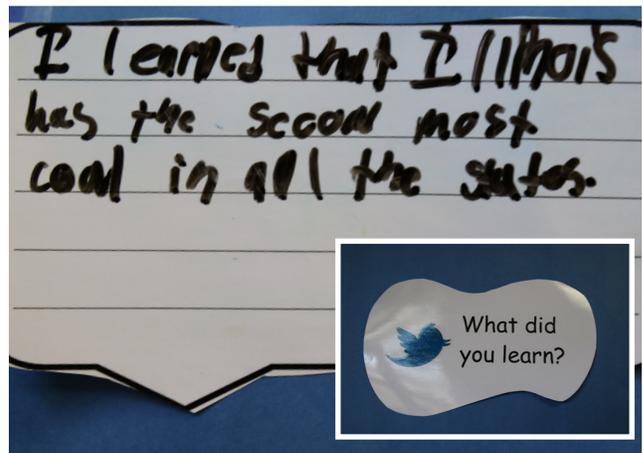
In **SCIENCE**, students learn to make observations, find patterns, investigate cause and effect, and engage in argument from evidence. They observe and care for monarch butterfly caterpillars that are then released to migrate to Mexico. Through this study, in conjunction with caring for a native plant butterfly garden, students understand that all plants and animals have diverse and unique lifecycles, that insects change in form as they grow, and that as citizens of the earth, we have a responsibility to care for one another. Other themes of study throughout the year include climate and landforms, and the physics of sound and hearing.



When students are invested in their work, then we truly see what they are capable of. Throughout the year, students chose different pieces of work to hang on their individual clip. This is a completely personalized activity, with some students choosing to work because it shows success, while others choose their work because it demonstrates their growth in a particular curricular area.



Creating goals is an important activity for students because it teaches them how to achieve success. However, a goal without a plan is just a dream. Students are taught to set goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and rewarding and that can be done in a timely manner. These five factors are always considered when creating short, medium or long term goals.



One hundred forty character "tweets" are used on a regular basis to help students reinforce their understanding. The twitter format can be used at the end of a unit, lesson or to give a final thought on the day's learning. The "tweets" allow students to show their thinking, and also encourage concise explanation.



Above / Connected Learning occurs when students are able to “travel” outside of their classroom walls through Skype video conferencing, live webinars, and by receiving special deliveries from places too far away to physically visit. Connecting with the creators of Seesaw in San Francisco in a live webinar allowed for third-graders to experience Design Thinking in action. Furthermore, through Adventure America, students connect their learning in various states across the country. For example, this year, students connected with Nathan Doer, Curator of Education, at the Wyoming State Museum for a live virtual tour of the museum as well as a read-aloud of Wyoming Firsts written by Carol Mead, First Lady of Wyoming.

Below / Third grade students are given many opportunities daily to engage in reading. Some of these experiences include guided reading in small groups with a teacher, independent reading during D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything and Read) time or free time, and reading associated with other parts of the curriculum. They spend time at the beginning of the year discussing the various genres and provide opportunities for students to explore literature from each. Guided Reading groups are geared specifically to a child’s “instructional reading level,” a level that is a challenge to the child in terms of vocabulary, writing style, or content. However, they always have teacher and peer support in order to be successful. For independent reading experiences, the children choose books that they are able to enjoy without support.



A DAY IN THE LIFE

My Day as an Eighth Grade Student

by Ryan Davi, Grade 8

8:00–8:15 a.m.

I step out of my mom’s car and walk to the school’s main entrance. Each day, I am greeted with a firm handshake and kind smile from our Head of School, Mr. Woelper. I make my way toward my locker on the second floor of the Upper School and am serenaded by a series of welcoming remarks along the way. Upstairs at my locker, I meet my friends and we laugh and chat until we all go to our homerooms.

8:15–8:40 a.m.

During homeroom, we catch up with our advisors and finish any work we need to complete before the day ahead. It is one of the many opportunities we are given throughout the day to socialize and decompress as our own cohesive and happy community. Each Monday, however, homeroom is replaced by a community meeting. This meeting includes the entire Upper School and is led by Mrs. Zaiser, Director of the US. We discuss upcoming events and address different student matters. This weekly ritual never fails to unite our community.

8:40–9:30 a.m.

It’s a Green Week, and my first class this Monday morning is geometry with Mrs. Iuliano. This year, I have loved math because Mrs. Iuliano is a fantastic teacher and so much fun to be with in and out of class. Throughout the year, our accelerated math class has been writing geometrical proofs and solving complex proportions, and we will soon begin Algebra 2. A vital element of my new found interest in math is Mrs. Iuliano because she is such an inspiring person and so easy to talk to when I need help.

9:33–10:23 a.m.

Next, I walk a few doors down to Spanish with Señora Golding, where we have been learning the language and exploring the culture in depth for years. Each day the curriculum differs, but Sra. Golding always knows the best ways for us to learn effectively and efficiently.

10:25–10:40 a.m.

After my first two classes each day, we have a break. It is the perfect time to grab a snack—Goldfish, Sun chips, or popcorn—and reconvene with our friends or quickly meet with a teacher. The fifteen minute period of relaxation is the perfect way to reenergize after the morning’s work and prepare for our next classes.

10:42–12:25 p.m.

Following break, I have art, which lasts for two periods instead of just one today. This year, we’ve made our own jewelry using glass powder, created paper mache animals, and even sewn our own ugly dolls.

“Each day, I am greeted by a firm handshake and a kind smile from our Head of School, Mr. Woelper.”

12:25 - 12:55 p.m.

Recess begins promptly after fourth period, when we’re often able to go outside and enjoy the fresh air. We seldom use computers or do work during recess at FH, because it is our time to unwind and have fun with our friends. Recess always provides the perfect environment to forget any stress or worries and simply enjoy our time.

12:55–1:30 p.m.

Following recess, we head to the cafe for lunch. Chef Howard and the Flik staff always provide a vast array of lunch options ranging from salad and sandwiches to a fresh hot lunch, to a fruit and yogurt bar every day. There is always something good to eat at lunch. Not only are we fortunate enough to have such a varying and delicious lunch menu, but it is also consistently nutritious. Personally, lunch is always a time I look forward to everyday.



Above / Author, Ryan Davi '17; Latin Teacher, Mr. Scott Freeman; and Ada Rose Wagar '17

1:33–2:20 p.m.

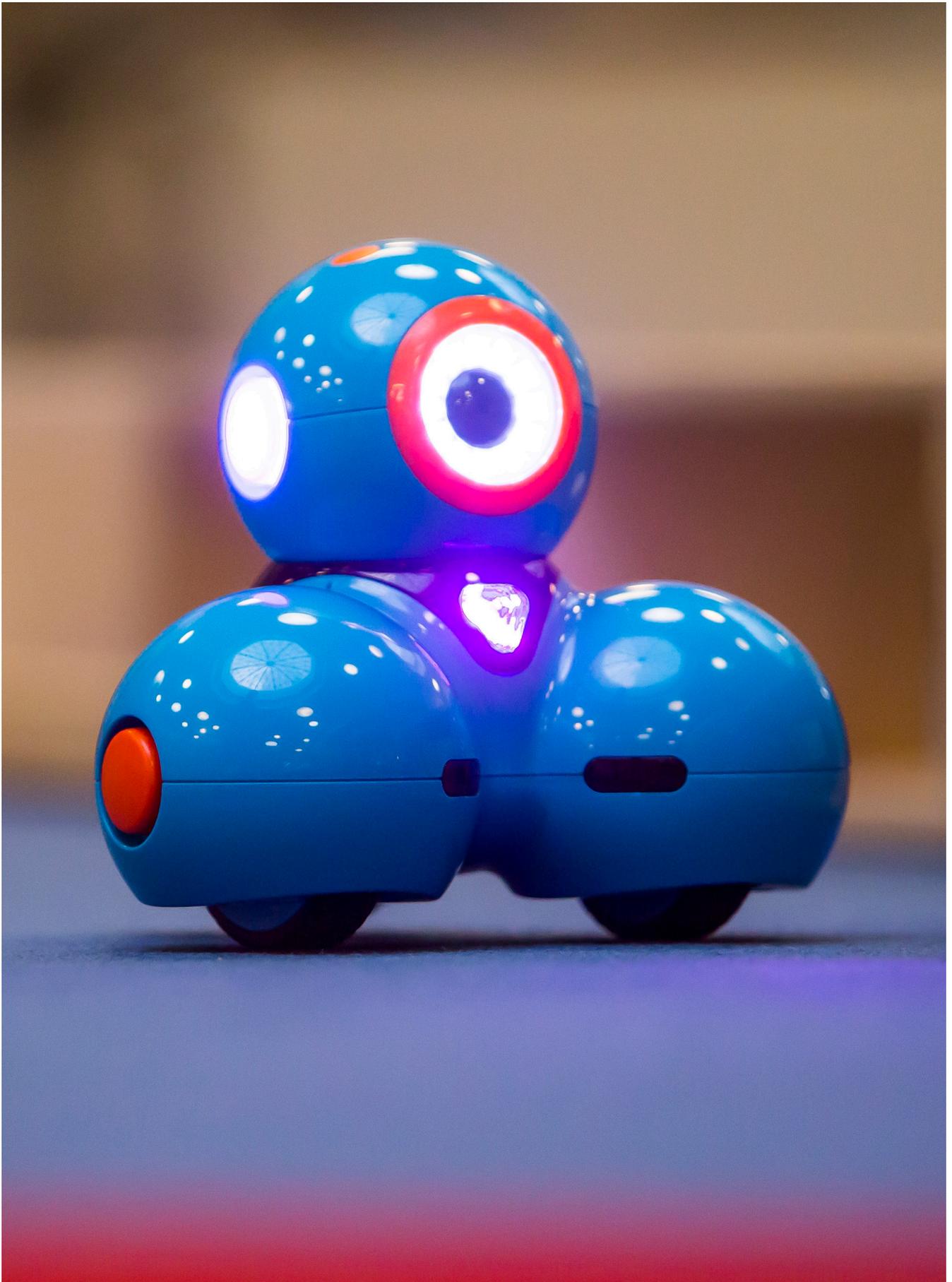
Once our appetites are satisfied, we have our final period of the day—science with Mrs. Cirotti. This year's science curriculum has been largely surrounding chemistry and interesting experiments, and has been one of my favorite classes of my eighth grade year. Mrs. Cirotti is an incredible educator and she thoroughly explains the material. I can understand everything by the time an assessment is given. Her lesson plans are carefully crafted to instill the best possible way of learning in her students, and I feel so fortunate to have her as a teacher. Our science department is particularly strong and has taught me so much in my time at FH.

2:20–2:45 p.m.

Once we are dismissed from our final class, we return to our homeroom and conference period commences. We have this time to complete homework during the school day and meet with teachers when necessary. Time management is crucial to the twenty-five minute period, because concentration and diligence lead to finishing large portions of work.

2:45–3:40 p.m.

At the very end of our day, we have Athletics. Each student is required to play a competitive sport or join Crossfit all year. Our athletic seasons offer three varieties of sports choices. In the fall, cross country, boys' soccer, girls' tennis, and field hockey are offered. In the winter, the choices include basketball, fencing, and volleyball. The spring season offers lacrosse, track and field, and boys' tennis. Crossfit is available for every season if a student has an extracurricular conflict or wishes not to play competitively. Our versatile coaches provide effective training and our student athletes are always excited and willing to play to the best of their ability. Whether it is on the track, the basketball court, or the soccer field, the Far Hills etiquette and sportsmanship is always found.



SPOTLIGHT

Little Robots, Major Returns

by Cathy Varga, Director of Technology

So...you're a parent of an iGeneration student. One who has grown up expecting and using complex technology from birth. And now, your child's school tells you that your child needs to be able to code...robots, no less. Although this seems exciting, you are very concerned that all the focus on science fiction might result in your child having fewer real academic skills, and even worse, have fewer real social-emotional skills than prior generations.

“How do we help our students to attain all of the academic and interpersonal skills they will need in the world they will be inhabiting in the not so distant future?”

These are really valid concerns, but the answer isn't intuitive. How do we help our students to attain all of the academic and interpersonal skills they will need in the world they will be inhabiting in the not so distant future? At Far Hills, it is part of our mission to “provide each student with brilliant beginnings for success in the modern world.”

How can a little robot accomplish such a daunting task? Let's view a “Day in the Life of a Dot and Dash Robot” at Far Hills:

8:15 a.m. | PreKindergarten: I Am the Robot.

Our youngest students are welcomed to school by discovering how to “code” their fellow students. They learn about creating, testing, and adjusting their code as they give commands to their fellow students - who become real world robots in response. Once the idea is mastered, it is an easy transition to the GO app, a pre-reading coding app, which allows young students to command the Dash robot around the room. Coding without reading allows students at any age to think



Above / Jenny Villagra '22 holds the Dot robot.

logically (move forward two, turn right) without having to read the words.

8:30 a.m. | Kindergarten: Cause and Effect

It is just an average day at Far Hills—students are arriving, unpacking and getting ready for the day. In the Kindergarten science class, students are asked to observe the world around them. They are doing a lesson on cause and effect. Our smallest robot, Dot, who is really just a computer brain attached to motors, sensors, lights and sounds, makes his first appearance. By turning on the Dot robot and handling him, students can see how he reacts to sound, objects, being held upside-down, and having buttons pushed. All this



Above / Students help Dash to navigate through a “race track” built from building blocks.

occurs as part of the “autonomous life” type programs that have been pre-programmed to run on a robot as a default. These robots are cute, interactive and reactive to their environments. It is impossible to be around them without wanting to be friends. Students are learning without having to make an effort to do so. And, they are learning about science, robotics, cause-and-effect, and technology all at once.

9:20 a.m. | Grades 1–2: Story Elements

In the next classroom, in Grade 2, students are discussing story elements—plot, climax, beginning, middle and end. Students use Dot to record their plot points and retell the sequential story. They code instructions using an app called Blockly, connect to Dot via bluetooth, and have him retell the sequential story elements using sequential coding constructs. Students are reinforcing language arts concepts, while using coding and robotics as the access to learning. Because they are working in groups, it also reinforces collaboration and fair play.

10:45 a.m. | Grades 3–4: Dash as the Tour Guide

Dot’s big brother visits a geography and history lesson about the State of New Jersey on a huge NJ Map covering much of the Arcadium floor. Each coding team gets a Dash robot, an iPad with the Blockly coding app and some prepared research facts about NJ locations. They are given a location on the map and it is their challenge to navigate to the specific spot and then have Dash describe that location. Coding includes sequences and looping. Math estimation is an important element. Geographic research becomes the script. Partners continue to try and then re-try their code until they are able to easily reach their destination. Partners are given multiple destinations on their tour. Troubleshooting becomes a necessary skill for success.

11:20 a.m. | Grade 6: Fractions in the Real World

Because the robots exist in the real world - students can see the immediate effects of their coding play out in real life. Students discuss numerators and denominators by becoming slices of a live pizza pie. Unrolling their pie into a number line - coding pairs now enlist Dash to help them travel the distances of their numerators

and denominators. For example, a number line with 12 parts (denominator) and 3 pieces (numerator) requires students to estimate and have Dash create a 12 part number line. Then, using looping, travel the equivalent of each $\frac{1}{12}$ forward by stopping at the numbers. $\frac{1}{12}$, $\frac{2}{12}$, $\frac{3}{12}$. Once each coding pair masters this fraction, a new numerator and denominator are given. The coding, testing, math concepts and fun continue at a fast pace - allowing students to own the core content, while honing their estimation, and coding skills.

12:05 p.m. | Grade 5: S'il Vous Code?

Students enlist the Dot robot to help them refine and practice their French dialogue skills. Students record their own voices onto Dot so that he can respond to their inquiries based on their commands in French!

“Coding includes sequences and looping. Math estimation is an important element.”

1:10 p.m. | Music: Strike Up the Band

Have you ever seen students write and then perform their own music, band music, in unison and with choreography? How about students writing band music for a Dash Marching Band? That's what our students can do. They use the XYLOPHONE app to create their own compositions with measures, rhythms and pitches. Then, they use the Dash robots, with their xylophones, to play and dance the choreography. The big finale is to connect multiple Dash robots to one song via bluetooth and watch them perform! Coding, collaboration, creativity, robotics, technology and excitement are all a big part of the robotics wave.

2:20 p.m. | Grade 6: Navigating a Polygon

Dash robots, math smarts, along with coding constructs for sequential code and loops, help students design a path which will allow the Dash robot to navigate the circumference of an irregular polygon. Geometry concepts take shape in the real world when students need to estimate lengths of sides and degrees of angles to allow their robot to successfully make the trip. They even have the robots celebrate, sing and dance when they make it!

3:00 p.m. | Grades 7–8: Event Driven Coding

Students who have had some exposure to coding via the Mindstorm Robots, #HourofCode, and Scratch block programming get an immersive computer science class including sequential coding, loops (counting,

forever, until), If-then-else decision paths and event-driven coding. They learn the logic and flow charts and then instruct their robots to execute the concepts they have created. Coding for events like Center button is pushed, Dot is tossed, Dot hears a clap, Dot sees Dash etc. brings the event code to life and mimics the type of programming needed to create iPhone apps and tackle real world problems. Creating code logic alone is never as meaningful as seeing it come alive on the robots.

Time for dismissal....unless you are part of the Dot and Dash Experience Enrichment Class for Grades 2-5 which turns on their creativity and asks students to turn their robots into dogs learning tricks, road racers, dance party animals, magic eight balls and much, much more.

Dash and Dot need to be plugged back in and get ready for a new day. Students go home having used collaboration, fair play, problem solving, design thinking, logic, computer science, oh, and of course math, science, history, French, music, geography, geology and more.

Yes, they will need to rely on logic, coding and robotics in the future. But, they will also need to rely on themselves and each other. And that is the real strength of robotics in the classroom—to encourage collaboration, inspire creative thinking, reward problem solving, and put students in charge of their own learning. That's a great job for such small robots!

Great Coding Resources for Kids

CODE.ORG: Lessons and activities for all levels of introductory coding, game design (code.org/student)

KODABLE: Help your student learn the language of the 21st century, as they are learning to read. iPad compatible. (kodable.com/parents)

WONDER WORKSHOP: Coding resources for the Dot and Dash Robots (makewonder.com)

SCRATCH, JR.: Programming lessons/platform to help students create their own games and activities. Drag and Drop format. (scratchjr.org)

CODE MONKEY: Learn coding and language syntax in a fun and easy format. (playcodemonkey.com)

TYNKER: Everything your child needs to become a Minecraft modeler, digital storyteller or game designer. (tynker.com)

IN THE COMMUNITY

Focus On: Smart Fun Camps

by Brian Junger

What does summer mean to you? For me, it's a combination of fun, adventure, and challenge. I love the idea of children having the opportunity to build their confidence, sense of self, and problem solving skills while taking part in a lively summer community.

During the summer, children have the benefit of forging new friendships that may not occur during the school year. Whether they participate in camp for just one, or several weeks, the relationships they make have the potential to become priceless lifelong bonds. At camp there is a fostering of curiosity, wonder and creative potential that is encouraged each day.

Engineer Name	Trap Type	Toad Stand-in	Test #1	Test #2	Test #3	Test #4	Test #5	Showcase
Tyler	Box	Black Squirmy	X	X	X	X	✓	
Mia	Box	Pink Parrot	X	X	✓			
Sammi	Pen	Blue Beetle	X	✓	X	✓		
Jayden	Box	Blue Beetle	X	✓	X	✓		

Above / Amazing Engineering Adventures focuses on STEAM-based learning and projects.

Smart Fun Camps @ Far Hills sets high standards in wholeheartedly cherishing all of these values for the betterment of each and every camper. As an extension of the Far Hills mission, we pride ourselves on providing the freedom and creative inspiration necessary for campers to acquire essential life skills and further develop their imaginations.

We are lucky to have professional instructors serve our campers—all are teachers in our school during the academic school year. Our instructors are committed and caring, and they love to share their energy and expertise with our young campers.

Last year, our inaugural summer of Smart Fun Camps, we offered **Summer in the Studio** for students entering PreK–Grade 1. The camp was six individual weeks of theme-based sessions that focused on nature, water, building structures, and much more. These activities were student-directed explorations using a variety of hands-on materials. Each of the weeks also included cooking, game play and music and movement fun. Due to its overwhelming success, we're delighted to offer Summer in the Studio for eight weeks this summer.

“We were especially happy to learn that a Summer Camp was being offered at Far Hills with a variety of activities and with familiar teachers, which gave us an added level of comfort. Emily really enjoyed Summer in the Studio and is already looking forward to camp this year!”

Stacey and Stephen Barat, P '26

Another feature of Smart Fun Camps is our Awesome and Amazing Engineering Adventures STEAM-based program. This summer we will offer **Liftoff!: Engineering Rovers and Rockets**. Aerospace engineers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory design technologies that can explore inside and outside of the Earth's atmosphere. Rockets and rovers are two examples of aerospace technology kids will engineer to “explore” several planets and moons in our solar system. Kids will ultimately launch rockets using stomp-rocket launchers. During the second week of camp, campers will participate in, **A Slippery Slope: Engineering an**



Above / Caroline Donnelly '25 takes a slide during the water activities period of Summer in the Studio camp.

Avalanche Protection System. Avalanche engineering is the design of technologies that stop or direct the flow of avalanches. Many communities in the Andes Mountains are in danger of potential avalanches. Campers will use what they learn from designing barriers and catches to engineer an avalanche protection system for a Peruvian town. Avalanche engineers strategically place these technologies on mountains to protect structures and people who use the area for shelter and/or recreation.

These camps are just two examples of the types of unique activities and experiences we offer our campers. We also will continue to offer our “fan favorites.” For nearly twenty years, Far Hills has offered the **Summer Theater Workshop**. This two-week long camp for Grades 2–8, encourages campers to act, sing, dance, choreograph, stage and direct a production. This year, the production will be “Annie, Jr.”

Sport Camps are also offered. We run these camps in partnership with **Olde School Lacrosse** and **Fundamentals Sports Camps**. Olde School campers learn the fundamentals of lacrosse: shooting, passing,

“I enjoyed learning new techniques about theater and meeting new students outside of my school.”

Karina Miocivich, Community Camper

dodging, offensive and defensive principles, and face-offs. The class is for both seasoned lacrosse players and those who are new to the sport.

New this year, we will offer a week long, half-day cooking class with Far Hills’ own, Chef Howard, for campers entering Grades 3–5. Campers will participate in a fun-filled week of preparing and eating delicious foods, themed by day.

Another brand new addition to our summer program is Blended Learning. Blended learning involves the use of online platforms to deliver instruction, whether at home or within the confines of the school building. An important benefit of blended learning for students is

Olde School Lacrosse players with Coach Derek Sansone '13.





Above / Summer in the Studio campers show their silly sides with counselors Ms. Carol Stinson, Ms. Zoe Petit and Ms. Stephanie Santos.

“Summer camp provides a great opportunity to grow together through fun, safe and meaningful experiences. We look forward to sharing in the successes of each of our campers.”

Brian Junger, Director of Auxiliary and Summer Programs

the ability to control the place, path, and pace of their studies. With this in mind, students will have the choice of when and where they complete the tasks which have been set for them.

After signing up to participate in this class, the students

will meet with their teacher once prior to end of the school year. Then throughout the five-week course the children will work at their own pace to complete their assignments. Office hours will be set up for students to interact with their teacher from their home.

At the end of the summer, we will once again offer our Standardized Test Prep and Essay Writing Workshop. This is a great class for rising seventh- and eighth-grade campers. This prep camp is a great way for students to get a jump start on understanding standardized test questions, customized test-taking strategies, answer analysis, and review of key skills. During the essay writing portion, students carefully craft a personal narrative, along with essays, to use for secondary school applications.

As you can see, careful consideration is involved to provide the best programs for our community. They are fun, challenging offerings, and allow students to go on their own summer adventure. As the Director of Summer Programs, I am hopeful that we will see many familiar faces in our programs this summer and for years to come.

PREKINDERGARTEN STUDIO

The PreK Castle Project

by Stephanie Santos

Super Princesses

by Ellie DeAngelo, Emily Barat and
Sydney Goldstein

We live together in a castle. We save people that are locked in a tower. We go inside and get them out. We save the day!

We go to the royal balls. We dance and we eat cupcakes and cake. We wear dresses, crowns, and capes. When we are wearing capes we are ready to Save The Day!

After writing and sharing the story, of “Super Princesses” with their class, Ellie, Emily and Sydney took their ideas into the Studio with plans to build their own castle.

They drew castles from memory and compared notes, noticing common elements from their drawings—windows, doors, the pointed design at the top, a kitchen, etc. Castle books were brought in from the library. Children were immediately drawn to the pages, searching for information that might help them bring their castle to life! They considered all of these ideas and began to construct their ideas with cardboard.

Some children helped by measuring the size for the door, some drew windows. Each child had a focal



Above / Ellie DeAngelo '25 constructs a horse fit for a princess.

point. The more research that was done, the more the children wanted to add to the castle.

The children noticed that the castles they saw in books had flags, so they to began researching flags. They even created their own!

Before long, castle play became more complex and the children’s imaginations began to expand. This inspired the students to create helmets and princess hats. Once again, the children referred to their castle books for ideas. Helmets were made from cardboard with an opening for the face, and were later painted for personalization. Princess hats were curled from construction paper and adorned with ribbons.

During castle play, two students worked extensively on the drawbridge feature of the castle. They were especially interested in making the door of the castle match the drawbridge. Then, they discussed how the apparatus should work based on their research:

- “A rope. A chain!” – (Suggesting that this would be the best tool for the drawbridge to function). – William Ehmann
- “The chain pulls the wheel so it can go up and down.” – Justin Vollero

Working together, they were able to make the castle door and drawbridge match their vision.

The children soon discovered that the castle would need rules. Each rule arose from a scenario during play. Here is the final list:

PreK’s Castle Rules

- No scissors in the castle
- No pointy stuff in the castle
- No paint in the castle
- No dumping materials in the castle
- No monsters in the castle
- No running in the castle



Above / Amanda Meyer '27 and Emily Barat '26 paint the exterior of the castle in the Prekindergarten Studio.

- No yelling in the castle
- No craziness in the castle

And the ideas kept coming! Shortly after the helmets and hats, came the horses! Based on their research, students decided that they would need horses to increase transportation availability and speed! They perused the Animal Encyclopedia to find an accurate drawing of a horse and from there came up with a plan. Focusing on the head of the horse, the children chose different colors of felt to make a horse head. Then they sewed their horses to life. Personal touches were later added—a feed box with food, etc. The horses even went for a ride through the Piazza!

Throughout the project, students applied a number of thinking and decision making skills in order to build and play in the castle effectively, such as, but not limited to, proposing new plans of operation, drawing inferences from factual materials and identifying situations in which decision is required. They recognized problems and were not afraid to tackle them. It took numerous group discussions to make sure everyone was content with each idea that was proposed, but the exchange

of ideas seemed effortless. There was a true sense of citizenship, community and respect throughout the construction of the castle project. The children were happy to work and learn together to make their visions come to life!

The Castle Project is an exemplary example of what student-directed learning looks like at Far Hills. In this case, the project emerged from a story created by a group of children and instantly caught the attention of others. Students were eager to do research and learn more about castles. They touched on crucial components of each of the following subjects—math, language arts, science, social studies, music and art—all while pursuing this self-directed learning.

The students were whole-heartedly involved and engaged in this project and were committed to finding answers every step of the way. They truly problem-solved their way through their work, a core focus of the curriculum at Far Hills. The result? An incredibly impressive project created by our smallest Falcons! We can't wait to see what they come up with next.

INTERVIEW

Ed Thompson, Director of Secondary School Placement

by Didi Ross, Grade 8

How long have you been involved in the secondary school admission process at Far Hills?

I have been the Director Secondary School Counseling at Far Hills for the last five years.

What made you interested in this profession?

Certainly, it is one of the more unique roles that one can have at an independent school. I have always considered myself an educator and wanted to work with middle school students and have always been interested in admissions.



Above / Student Interviewer, Didi Ross '17

Have you seen any major changes in secondary school admissions from the time you came to Far Hills to where you are now?

I think Far Hills has always had a boarding school strand in the DNA so I wouldn't say there's been a major shift. My job is interesting because our students have wonderful local options, as well as enticing boarding school options.

How do you guide a family and a student in finding the best school fit for their child?

I like to consider it as a three-way partnership. The

whole time, from beginning to end, we are working to bring three visions together. We mold those visions into one that all parties can agree upon and we work together to come up with a realistic school list [to apply to]. I'm here as a timekeeper, too—there are moments when we just need to slow down and relax. I know that this can be a stressful process, but there are moments when we just need to take our time and be patient. Alternatively, there are moments when we need to get to work. I am here to provide a healthy chivvying to make sure that deadlines are met and that we are doing the things we need to do.

What helps make you a great secondary school counselor?

I think one has to be an optimist and see both students and secondary schools when they're at their best. From beginning to end, this process is a twelve to eighteen month endeavor. There are certainly moments when we do not have all the facts and so it is difficult to make decisions. Those are moments when we need to be patient. Patience is key.

How did you get the background and training to become a secondary school counselor?

I worked at Delbarton for four years as a member of their admission team, a teacher, and a coach. I also previously served as a college admissions officer for foreign exchange students.

What made you interested in becoming the Secondary School Counselor at Far Hills?

Far Hills has always had a reputation for being one of the best PreK–Grade 8 day schools, so when the opportunity to move back to NJ from Washington D.C. presented itself, I couldn't pass it up. I knew I would be lucky to work in a premier school, in a premier job, with great kids and great families.

What is the hardest part of your job? What is the easiest part of your job?

The hardest part of the job is not being able to make



Above / Didi Ross interviews Mr. Ed Thompson about his role as Director of Secondary School Placement.

the decisions—admissions committees make decisions. There are moments when I want to have the final say and I want to win, but that doesn't always happen.

The easiest part of the job is certainly that we have bright, motivated students, great student-athletes, and kids with so many individual talents. I do say that for the most part, I am dealing with a loaded deck. Again, at a premier school like Far Hills, having fantastic kids to work with, I have high expectations. When everybody's happy, I'm happy.

What is the most interesting part of your job?

I get to work with families and students about a very exciting, positive, and happy moment in their lives. Because it's a very reflective process, it's neat to be able to share wonderful stories and experiences with families. I get to see everyone at their best.

How many secondary schools have you visited and how often?

I think I have visited 72 individual boarding schools. I also certainly visit, with regularity, our local NJ day schools. I make visiting schools a priority.

What else do you do at Far Hills?

I am the Director of the Peregrine House and I coach the tennis team.

“Our greatest achievement is connecting great families from Far Hills to great secondary schools.”

What has been your greatest achievement pertaining to placing your students at secondary schools?

Our achievements have included expanding the secondary school education and counseling process to now include a spring boarding school showcase and a mock interview day for students applying out, which is fun and interesting for the whole community. We also have the largest secondary school fair on the East Coast. Our greatest achievement is connecting great families from Far Hills to great secondary schools.



IN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Yvonne and Paul Rust III

by Gretchen Hilton

Throughout Far Hills' rich history, we have prided ourselves on teaching more than just book smarts—our longstanding mission focuses both on academic excellence and character education. We know that this helps to build remarkable people. During their lives, Yvonne and Paul Rust III, whose five children attended Far Hills from 1957-1977, embodied the qualities we strive to instill in our students: humility, compassion and civic mindedness. They were the consummate volunteers at Far Hills and multiple other organizations. While Paul and Yvonne have sadly passed away, their recent bequest to Far Hills means that they will continue to make a difference in our community. We are honored to welcome the Rust Family into our prestigious Mt. Kemble Society, which recognizes individuals who have included Far Hills in their estate plans.

“Far Hills was such a loving community and provided a foundation for who we are today. We are still good friends with my first grade teacher, Jessie Browne, whose own three children attended Far Hills.”

(Emlyn) Sarah Rust MacKenzie

The Rust Family was led by Paul Rust III and his wife Yvonne, known as Vonnie to her friends. Married for 58 years, they met as teenagers during World War II in Bay Head, New Jersey, where Paul was a lifeguard and Vonnie was visiting for the summer. Vonnie graduated from Marjorie Webster College in 1949 and married Paul while he attended Yale for his undergraduate degree.

The young couple moved to Pottersville, New Jersey in 1953 after Paul earned his Masters in Education from New Haven State and later a Masters in Library Science from Rutgers University. He entered a near 30-year career in the children's publishing and educational services industry that included a role as a major shareholder and executive of E.M. Hale & Company.

In Pottersville, Paul and Vonnie's growing family of five children began attending Far Hills in 1957. Children Paul IV ("P.D.") '67, Holladay ("Day") '69, Bonner '70, David '72 and Emlyn ("Sarah") '77 attended

We are proud of our alumni!

Paul "PD" Rust IV, '67: Attended Brooks School and Washington College. He and his wife Kathryn own Riverside Studio in Pottersville, NJ, where the Rust family grew up. They currently live in Stockton, NJ.

Holladay "Day" Rust Bank, '69: Attended Concord Academy and Vassar College. She and her husband Ray live in Butler, MD and have three children who live in Maryland, California and London, and two grandchildren.

Bonner Rust, '70: Attended St. Margaret's School and The Southborough School and graduated from Colorado State University. She lives in Tampa, Florida near her daughter and son-in-law.

David Rust, '72: Attended Holderness School, Colorado State University and Rutgers University. His two children live in Colorado and Wyoming and he has one grandchild. He lives in Santa Rosa, CA with his wife Shelley.

Emlyn Sarah Rust MacKenzie '77: Attended St. Marks, Ohio Wesleyan University and the Culinary School of Washington DC. Currently lives in Easton, MD with her husband Paul. She has three children who live in Florida and South Carolina.

from Kindergarten through Grade 9 (with only P.D. departing after Grade 8).

“Education was very important to my parents, especially to my dad. We were very blessed with the opportunities we received, beginning with Far Hills,” explained Bonner Rust '70.



Above / The Rust Family, 2008

The Rusts were heavily involved with the school, a trait that would be repeated throughout their lives across multiple organizations. Paul served on the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees from 1969–71, during which time the Locke House was built in memory of board president Robert Locke. Vonnie took numerous roles, ranging from Room Parent, to Chairman of the Parents' Committee in 1971–72, to chaperone on all of Mrs. Betty Noling's New York City trips to attend Broadway shows.

“Paul was driven by this volunteerism. He was giving back to the community with all his heart.”

Rust's nephew, John Beattie P, '07, '09

“Mrs. Rust was very kind and loving and very supportive of her children,” remembers John Kean '72. “Field Day was a big deal when we were in school, and was held on the weekends, so all the parents came and cheered. I will always remember her cheering on her kids during the competitions.”

Vonnie also volunteered significantly at The Matheny School in Peapack, New Jersey, a school that provides comprehensive services for complex developmental

disabilities. Far Hills has had a long standing partnership with The Matheny School, and today still hosts an annual special event for our Grade 5 students. The partnership encourages our students to learn about, and have compassion for, those living and learning with disabilities.

For several years in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, Paul and Vonnie participated in the “Fresh Air” program and opened their home for several summer weeks to children from Newark, New Jersey. “They had a beautiful farm house in Pottersville with animals and a great pond with tons of geese. I remember going over to their house and being amazed that they had the time, and quite frankly the energy, to welcome six to eight additional kids into their world for those weeks,” reminisced their nephew John Beattie (P '07 and '09), who was very close to the Rusts growing up and adored his extended family.

“The Rusts were just a wonderful family, and so close,” recalls Jessie Browne, a Grade 1 teacher at Far Hills from 1965-1971 and a close family friend for many decades. “Vonnice was so aware of what was really important. She wanted each of her children to know the importance of philanthropy and putting others before yourself.”

A Tradition of Giving

Yvonne and Paul Rust III spent their lives dedicated to helping others through various volunteer organizations. When planning their estate with daughter Sarah Rust MacKenzie, they wanted to give back to Far Hills, which had provided a wonderful education and friendships for all five of their children.

“This donation is a reflection of our parents' thoughtfulness and generosity and we are proud to honor them with this gift,” wrote their daughter, Sarah Rust MacKenzie '77.

“It doesn't matter if you give \$10 or \$10,000. You're not competing for donation amounts. It's all about giving back to something that's important to you. If people have the ability or capacity, you can make a tremendous difference and create opportunities for kids who don't have these options,” said daughter Bonner Rust '70 when asked about estate planning.

For additional information about including Far Hills in your estate planning, contact Kathleen DeSantis, Director of Development at kdesantis@fhcds.org or visit www.fhcds.org/support-far-hills/planned-giving for an overview of how to coordinate a bequest with your financial planner.



Above / The Rust Children, 1969

After their daughter Sarah graduated from Far Hills, Paul and Vonnie moved to Easton, Maryland in 1980 to be closer to the water and their love of sailing. While there, Vonnie dedicated herself to several local organizations and charities, including the Easton Day Care Center and the Talbot Hospice Foundation.

**“All of the Rusts are
compassionate, giving, and
always willing to help others.”**

Lita Kean Haak '70

Vonnie’s most lasting impact may have been the co-founding of the Talbot Special Riders program in 1981. Partnering with former Far Hills teacher Jessie Browne and others, they launched the program as a way to provide physical and emotional therapy for special needs individuals through horses. Vonnie was a horse side-walker around the ring, hosted the annual Christmas party for 60-70 volunteers and served on the program’s Board for the rest of her life. Today the Special Riders is a year-round program, servicing hundreds of children annually.

“Vonnie didn’t know anything about horses, but she loved children,” said Jessie Browne. She still remembers Vonnie in her later years, side-walking the horses and children around the ring, wearing her

oxygen tank on her back.

Sarah said that her parents taught her the lasting lessons of always staying positive, always giving back to the community and conducting ourselves properly.

Once Paul retired in 1985, he dedicated himself to assisting addicts through the Talbots Addiction Center. “He was their champion,” recalled his daughter Sarah. “He was an inspiring example and dedicated to helping others.”

“He was driven by this volunteerism. He was giving back to the community with all his heart,” said his nephew John.

Sadly, Vonnie passed away in 2008 and Paul in early 2016. However, their ties to the Far Hills community remain strong. When planning their estate, the Rusts arranged for a generous bequest to the school. “Far Hills provided a phenomenal education and friendships—the foundation for everything we had later. My parents wanted to recognize the role that Far Hills played in our lives,” explained Sarah.

Both Paul and Vonnie made significant contributions to their community, impacting thousands of families and individuals through their dedicated service. We are honored by their thoughtful generosity and know their legacy will make a lasting impact on Far Hills for many years to come.

ALUMNI NOTES

Good News from our Alumni

1991

Jodi Miciak and her husband Andy Kostialik welcomed a son, Andrew Joseph, on January 29, 2016. Congratulations to the happy family!

2000

Michael Frustaci and his wife Evie welcomed their first child, daughter Emmi Mae, on January 6, 2017. Grandma **Diane Frustaci**, Director of Lower School, is thrilled with her future Falcon!

2005

After graduating from Bennington College in 2013, **Alexandra Scott** put her dual majors of Japanese and Elementary Education to excellent use. She spent two years in Japan working for the JET Program, and taught Japanese students English as a Second Language at two schools. Some highlights included coaching her students for the yearly English speech competition and playing karuta, a traditional New Year's card game with the whole school. Today, she is finishing her MAT in Public Elementary Education at Brandeis University and will graduate in July. In the short term, she hopes to find a teaching job in Massachusetts, but one day Alex would love to return to a permanent teaching position in Japan at an international school.

2006

Alexander Kronfeld graduated from Washington University in St. Louis in 2014 with a B.S. in Engineering. Today he is living and working in New York City as a Front End Designer at FactSet, which provides financial information and analytic software to investment professionals.

2008

For the last year, **Olivia Wolff** has been on the cutting edge of the kombucha health trend—the “super tea” that brews tea and sugar with healthy bacteria, enzymes, and acids. The result? A fermented drink flavored with fruit. Leveraging her B.S. degree in Health and Exercise Sciences from Wake Forest University, Olivia and her partner launched UpDog Kombucha on the Wake Forest campus in early 2016 by brewing small batches for on-campus shops, restaurants, and friends. Since graduating in the Spring of 2016, Olivia has remained in Winston-Salem, NC to further expand the business beyond the campus. Today, UpDog has moved into a commercial kitchen and is now sold in 15 different locations across the Piedmont Triad region. Visit updogkombucha.com for more information.

Harry Kronfeld graduated from Washington University in St. Louis in 2016 with a B.A. in both Performing Arts and Biology. He lives and works in New York City as Head Researcher for the Endometriosis Foundation of America at Lenox Hill Hospital.

2013

Andrew Papantonis, a Delbarton senior, has committed to the University of Virginia's baseball team.

Hunter Waldis, a Delbarton senior, will join the baseball team at Seton Hall University in the this fall.

Harrison Brown, a senior at Morristown High School, has committed to Wagner College for lacrosse.

We love to hear from our alumni.

Whether it's new babies, new schools, or new jobs, we want to celebrate your accomplishments by sharing them with the entire Far Hills community. Please keep us up-to-date on all of your news by sending an email to alumni@fhcds.org.



facebook.com/fhcds



Far Hills Country Day
School Alumni



Above Left / Andrew Joseph Kostialik



Above Right / Emmi Mae Frustaci



Alexandra Scott '05



Above / Harrison Brown '13 signs a letter of intent to Wagner



Above / Brothers Alexander '06 (L) and Harry Kronfeld '08 (R)



Hunter Waldis '13 and his parents



Above / Andrew Papantonis '13 and his parents



Above / Olivia Wolff '08 poses with a bottle of UpDog Kombucha



EVENT RECAP

Lower School 10th Birthday Celebration

by Kathleen DeSantis

On a beautiful fall afternoon, Far Hills students were bustling with excitement! After spending the week making decorations for our ten-foot birthday cake, decorating a grand float for a parade, and practicing special songs, they were eager to see the Lower School's 10th Birthday Celebration come to life.

This was a party not to be missed! Far Hills community members—past, present, and future—came from near and far to join the fun. Over 500 alumni, parents of alumni, former staff and administrators, grandparents and current families came together to pay tribute to those who made the “new” Lower School possible ten years ago.

They also came to witness a special surprise. Lower School Division Director, Diane Frustaci, was honored for her 25 years of service with the dedication of “Frustaci Freeway,” a long awaited trike track in the newly renovated primary school playground.

After a wonderful parade, complete with a bag piper, old fashioned cars, costumes, floats, flags and balloons, guests enjoyed remarks from Board President, Henry Guy, Head of School, Tom Woelper, and former Head of School, Jayne Geiger, as they paid tribute to the past and spoke with great hope for the future.

The Faculty Choir performed a special “Frustaci” rendition of Bruce Springstein’s “Glory Days” to celebrate Mrs. Frustaci and thank her for her loving care of many students and parents over the past 25 years.

Following the ceremony, The Grandparent Steering Committee, Falcon Dads’ Club, Parents’ Committee and the Student Government all manned carnival booths. Chef Howard assisted our Falcon Dads in preparing a feast for all to enjoy! Guests were encouraged to commemorate this day with a special birthday wish for the future, by writing their wishes on pieces of paper and inserting those wishes into our time capsule.

As one parent expressed so eloquently following the event, “I knew Far Hills was a special place, but knowing that what we have today was made possible by people



Above / The “Frustaci Freeway” road sign that adorns the Prekindergarten Trike Track.

who walked in our footsteps only ten years ago, it is truly remarkable. I am inspired to continue their legacy for the next generation.”

Many thanks to the 215 families and alumni who purchased commemorative birthday candles and for the underwriters who made the day possible and fun for all.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Alex Payne

by Gretchen Hilton

With all eyes on our capital city for the last several months, we touched base with one of our own in Washington, DC—Far Hills alumnus Alex Payne '01—to learn more about his role as an Education Policy Advisor for the US House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce. As the lead negotiator on a few issues for the ranking member of the committee and other committee democrats, Alex crafts policy positions on early childhood education and safety, as well as career and technical education.

We caught up with Alex to learn more about how he got involved with education and public policy, and what he has been doing since graduating from Far Hills in 2001.



Above / Alex Payne '01, Delbarton '05, Cornell '09, Syracuse's Maxwell School '12

Q. How did you get interested in public policy?

I became interested in public policy in high school when we had debates in my AP European History class. That was also around the time of the 2004 elections when several major policy issues, such as the war in Iraq and liberty vs. security, were at the forefront of the debate, but my interest in politics started with my parents and was cultivated by Mrs. (Georgia) Zaiser at Far Hills. I was in eighth grade during the 2000 election—I remember learning about the electoral college and scouring through *The New York Times* in her class to complete

various assignments. The learning experiences I had during that time never left me, and I eventually decided that the intersection of politics and policy is where I wanted to be.

Q: Why did you decide to focus on education?

After college I taught at a North Carolina public school through Teach for America. Roughly 90 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, which is a measure of how many students are living in or just above the poverty line. That experience greatly impacted which field of public policy I wanted to work within.

Q: What is a typical day like for you at the Committee?

It depends on the day and the issue getting the most attention. A day's tasks could include writing talking points for the Ranking Member; drafting legislation; briefing and advising the Ranking Member or other Members of the Committee; working with other offices to organize a letter, press conference or briefing; negotiating with staff from the other party; meeting with advocacy groups and other stakeholders; researching or reading various policy issues and reports; or lots of little things like figuring out why Outlook isn't working.

Q: What other Far Hills experiences prepared you for secondary school, college and life beyond?

Mrs. (Jennifer) Phillips taught me to love to write and to take pride in writing style and correct grammar. I still remember writing a personal essay that was the best product I had produced up to that point in my life. Her feedback supported that, but I had misused commas in two places and got a lower grade. I've never forgotten this through high school and beyond. Now, whenever I write/read passive sentences, I think of Mrs. Phillips penalizing me four points for each mistake.

Q: Do you have any advice for our eighth-graders regarding secondary school and beyond?

My advice is to view high school (and post-secondary education) as opportunities to discover who you are and



Above / The Capitol Building in Washington, DC

better understand your identity in safe environments. Use those years to explore what is foreign to you and travel outside of your comfort zone. On my first day of graduate school, a professor told me that we construct a “safe space” sandbox based on all our past work and educational experiences. Grad school was now that “safe space,” and we needed to step outside of our sandbox and gain skills and experiences to expand what we already know. I’ve been using that advice ever since, and wish I had approached my development this way before graduate school. You’ll come away with a deeper educational experience, a more empathetic perspective, and a stronger network of close, diverse friendships.

Q: You are a loyal donor to Far Hills and have been for more than ten years. Why do you feel it is important to continue to support Far Hills?

The school gave me a quality education while also providing a safe and affirming environment that can be very difficult to find in both private and public schools, especially at the middle school age. I appreciate that opportunity and the effort it takes to create the environment. I donate to help ensure that {environment} remains for Far Hills’ current and future students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Q: How can Far Hills alumni get involved with a political issue in which they feel passionate? Do letters to Congressmen really have an impact?

Contacting your elected official certainly has an impact even though you might not think it does. Many offices keep a tally on constituents’ support or opposition to various issues. It certainly impacts discussions amongst staff in the Member’s office at the least, and impacts a vote or the legislative process at the best. It’s especially important if you believe in the opposite stance with which your member identifies.

Some of the best ways to get involved are at a local level. You may have more influence and more impact in your community. Some local organizations lobby at the state level, which gives them a bigger impact on policy proposals and votes.

Q: Volunteerism plays a huge part in your life. What are you currently doing in the DC area?

My volunteer work helps me to avoid getting tied up in the “inside-the-beltway” issues that only people in DC care about. I’m really fortunate to have a job that allows me to volunteer in many different ways. I’m a tutor for an elementary school student through DC nonprofit, Horton’s Kids, I mentor first-generation high school students through the Arlington, Virginia based nonprofit, Edu-Futuro, and I volunteer with my church’s program for day laborers.

Mommy and Me Music Class with Mrs. Amy Burns



Have You Heard?
Join Us for the Following Events!

Mark your calendars for these exciting events
at Far Hills Country Day School.

Mommy and Me Music Classes

Monday, June 5, 2017 / 9–9:45 a.m.
Far Hills Music and Movement Room
...and more dates in the fall!

Led by Music Teacher and Director of the Far Hills Conservatory, Mrs. Amy Burns, Mommy and Me Music Class is a FREE 45-minute music and movement session for little ones and a caregiver, ages six months–three years. The class features singing and moving to songs, playing instruments, and more!

No musical ability is necessary. These sessions are always free and open to the public. No advance registration is necessary. For questions, please call the Front Office at 908-766-0622.

Upper School Showcase

Wednesday, May 31, 2017 / 8:30 a.m.
Far Hills Teacher Center & Cafe

Are you, or is someone you know, interested in learning more about the Far Hills Upper School? Join us for a light breakfast and overview of the Upper School program, where our graduates matriculate to, and an optional tour.

After the breakfast, we invite you to visit the Eighth Grade Expo, where our eighth-graders will present their culminating year-long research projects.

Want to learn more about Upper School but can't attend the Showcase? Our Admission Office is always available to give personalized private tours. Please contact Kevin Donnelly, Director of Admission & Enrollment Management at kdonnelly@fhcds.org or 908-766-0622 to schedule a time to visit.

Far Hills Community Fun Run

Sunday, October 29, 2017 / 8:30-11:30 a.m.
Far Hills Campus

Looking for a fun family event and an opportunity to connect with old and new friends alike? If so, mark your calendar for the Far Hills Country Day School Community Fun Run to benefit our students and teachers. A 5K race will kick-off the morning, followed by a family fun run and carnival. There will be contests, prizes and much, much, more!

Watch your mail this fall for your invitation to register and join the fun. For additional information, please contact, Amanda Burton, Special Events Coordinator & Parent Liaison at 908-766-0622, ext. 1401.

Connect With Us on Social!

For a glimpse of daily life at Far Hills, or to view a list of current events, please visit us on our social media channels.



CLASSROOM SPOTLIGHT

Music to Our Ears: The MIDI-Keyboard Lab

by Emma Kramer

In 1998, music teacher Michelle Quereshi, put Far Hills on the map as the only elementary school in NJ to have a complete MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface)-Keyboard lab. Designed by Soundtree, the leading company for designing and installing keyboard labs and a subdivision of Korg, our MIDI-Lab consists of 18 Korg X-50 keyboards, MIDI interface boxes, headphones and a Group Educator Controller. The keyboards feature five different banks with over 400 digitized sound samples that students use to create and perform music. From the novice to the highly accomplished pianist, the lab is a resource utilized by every student at Far Hills. The lab is located in the Upper School Music classroom of Mrs. Maedean Kramer, who teaches students in Grades 5–8.



Above / Mrs. Maedean Kramer helps student, Anthony Reale '19, practice keyboarding techniques in the Far Hills Midi-Lab.

“Every student in Grades 4–8 utilizes the lab on a regular basis. There is also an after-school enrichment class led by Ms. Rosalyn McClure, one of our Conservatory teachers, for our youngest PreK and Kindergarten students,” said Mrs. Kramer.

The lab has also been used by other music teachers for Professional Development Workshops led by Mrs. Amy Burns.

Mrs. Kramer noted the the MIDI-Lab is an integral part of Far Hills’ general music curriculum. She uses the

keyboards throughout the year, and teaches a unit where students learn to play the piano. She also uses it for creating compositions, and teaching improvisation and playing the blues during the study of jazz. Students are free to use it during free time at the beginning or end of class, and Mrs. Burns uses it as a Music Creation Station with her fourth-graders.

Mrs. Kramer noted, “It’s an awesome classroom resource for my students. They love the keyboards! Students who know how to play the piano love it and students who are just learning to play the piano love it. It’s a vehicle that allows them to create without fear of failure and they find success at every level of experience.”

So how exactly does the lab work? The Group Educator Controller allows the teacher to listen to each keyboard individually, or it has the ability to allow everyone to hear that one keyboard. Beginners, for example, may not feel comfortable playing in front of the class, but knowing that only the teacher can hear is far less intimidating. The microphones on the headsets allow the student and teacher to have a dialogue.

The Lab assists students with a deeper understanding of musical composition and performance, as well. The keyboard synthesizer is accessible to all students regardless of their proficiency, since it’s easy to play and students feel successful almost immediately. When asked to create an original composition, they have hundreds of sounds to choose from. Some have a preprogrammed synthesized beat (ARP) while others have a bass and drums effect so students can play the melody and chords.

And what exactly are students’ favorite parts of the lab? “Without a doubt, being able to connect with each other on the keyboards while collaborating is their favorite part of using the lab. They love to be ‘hooked’ up with each other and talk to each other on the headsets. They also love the sounds that have the ARP (synthesized drum beat) and the percussion kits and sound effects kit. So it’s not just all music notes, they can create totally different and unique songs with just the touch of their hands,” said Mrs. Kramer.



IN MEMORIAM
Far Hills Friends and Family

The Far Hills community is saddened by the loss of many of our own this school year.
Their absences are felt daily. We hold their memories close to our hearts.

Sidney Appleman

January 9, 2017

Father of Callie Shafto, FH Teacher, and Grandfather of alumni Juliet '05 and Robin,
and Emilie Shafto Smith, FH Teacher

Jean H. Brown

December 30, 2016

Parent of alumnus Tim Brown '80, Grandmother of Porter '19 and Augusta Brown

Elizabeth "Betsy" Dillon Cowperthwaite '57

February 17, 2017

Alumna and parent of Libby Schmittiel '81 and John "Sean" Cowperthwaite '84

Vincent "Jimmy" DiDomenico, Sr.

December 30, 2016

Grandfather of Martine '13, Jacqueline '16 and Vincent III '19 DiDomenico

Carol Kimmelman

January 6, 2017

Mother of alumni Annie, Robert '09, Tommy '11 and Scottie

Joan Koether

December 12, 2016

Parent of alumnus Tim Koether '78, Grandmother of Anna '14 and James '17 Koether

Nancy Plumeri

January 24, 2017

Grandmother of alumna E.B. Plumeri '16

Dr. Aletha Ramseur

December 10, 2016

Grandmother of Paul Ramseur '18

Clive Ramsey

July 24, 2016

Father of alumnus Peter Ramsey '87, Grandfather of Scott '13, Annie '15 and Kate '16 Thomas

John "Jack" Redmond, Jr.

Father of alumni John '01, Matty '02 and Kate '04 Redmond

Dabney Wilschut

October 2, 2016

Mother of Tyler Wilschut '17

Suzanne "Sue" Woods

February 15, 2017

Parent of alumna Lauren Schreiner '73

Far Hills Country Day School

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Through academic excellence and character development, Far Hills Country Day School provides each child brilliant beginnings for success in the modern world.