

2023

HARMONY

CHARLOTTESVILLE DAY SCHOOL MAGAZINE



The Legacy of
Lance Weisend

Where We've Been,
Where We're Going



PLUS: *Chopped* • Curriculum Project • Where Are They Now? • Student Art



HARMONY

CHARLOTTESVILLE DAY SCHOOL MAGAZINE

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CHARLOTTESVILLE DAY SCHOOL

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THE POWER OF POSSIBILITY

As the school year draws to a close, I want to reflect on the central theme that has guided and inspired us this year at CDS: “Let’s see what’s possible.” This edition of *Harmony* magazine is full of examples of the ways that this theme has resonated within our school community.

In a world that often magnifies negativity, we choose to focus on opportunities rather than dwell on what’s wrong. We understand that mistakes and struggles are not roadblocks but steppingstones for growth. Seeing what’s possible means shifting our perspective when faced with challenges and approaching them as catalysts for innovation and progress.

This mindset has inspired our teachers and students to initiate remarkable projects, many of which you’ll read about in the pages of this magazine. In a similar vein, I also applaud our students who worked with English teacher Luke Ritter to create a special section of feature articles in this issue.

As I walk through our school, I am moved by the conversations I hear between our teachers and students. I witnessed a preschooler frustrated by an art project not turning out as

expected, only to be encouraged by their teacher with the words, “Let’s see what’s possible.” During basketball practice, when a play doesn’t unfold as intended, our coaches help our students find new possibilities within that moment. This theme has become an integral part of our DNA, reminding us that there is always room for growth and exploration.

At CDS, we believe that our children learn best when they are curious, happy and engaged. The innate inclination to explore what is possible resides within each of them, and we have a responsibility to foster and cultivate this mindset. Our students have the power to create something extraordinary when they work together and embrace the spirit of possibility.

In these times, it’s crucial to double down on our commitment to ensuring that our community remains focused on the opportunities that lie ahead. Rather than be distracted by the noise of negativity, we can instead direct our energy toward unveiling the potential that lies within each of our students, creating an environment where curiosity, happiness and the pursuit of possibilities flourish.



Stacey Bruns
Head of School

I am honored to be a part of a school community that values the power of “Let’s see what’s possible.” Together, we can continue to inspire and nurture our students, helping them build a foundation for a future filled with joy and opportunity.

In Harmony,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey Bruns".

Stacey Bruns
Head of School



BONDING OVER BOOKS

The Bear Buddies program pairs older students with their younger counterparts to read books together. By fostering a love for reading and cultivating meaningful connections, Bear Buddies creates bonds between students of all ages. Older students have a chance to serve as role models for their younger peers, inspiring their buddies on their reading adventures. Younger students gain confidence through their interactions with their older mentors, developing reading skills and expanding their imaginations.



SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Teachers and students thrive in science classrooms specifically designed for hands-on learning and collaboration. These expanded academic facilities will include outdoor lab spaces that facilitate explorations of the environment and the natural world.

MATH CLASSROOM

This spacious new classroom and covered outdoor learning terrace are dedicated to middle school math. The new classroom is home for lessons in fifth-grade math, sixth-grade math, algebra and geometry.

THE CASTLE

This three-story building expands the CDS campus, providing a new facility dedicated to science, technology, engineering and math.

REST OF CAMPUS

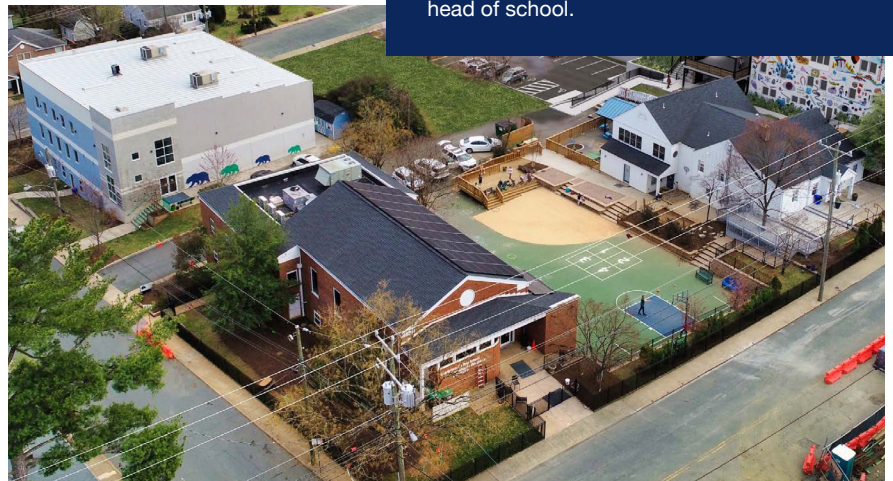
The Castle's expanded academic facilities free up space in the main building, providing more room for enrichment programs, after-school activities, meetings and more. "We do a lot of things outside of core homeroom classrooms, and it's nice now to have more space for that," says Stacey Bruns, CDS head of school.

IT ALL ADDS UP

Recent Campaign Transforms Campus

The successful completion of the Art of Science Campaign ensures that students and teachers at CDS will have an ideal environment for learning and teaching math and science for many years to come. The addition of the Castle elevates the STEM program in an era when math and science are more important than ever, and it creates ripple effects that benefit the entire school.

Charlottesville Day is grateful for the generosity of the 224 individuals and 19 organizations who contributed more than \$1.6 million to the campaign. This



total exceeded the initial campaign goal of \$1.2 million to offset project costs of more than \$2.4 million.

"It has been inspiring to see so many members of the community contributing to the campaign, along with a number outside foundations seeing that this is a worthy project,"

says Dave Bruns, CDS executive director. "Acquiring and renovating the Castle accomplishes several things: It brings our physical campus together, adds 1,700 square feet of premium classroom space for math and science instruction, and creates more room for student activities in all grade levels."

THE CHOPPED PROJECT

Exploring Possibilities through Cooking



CHEF'S CORNER

Seventh- and eighth-grade students enjoyed a creative — and tasty — way to explore this year's theme of "Let's see what's possible." The students participated in a project inspired by the popular Food Network show *Chopped*, which challenged students to think creatively within the limitations of the assigned ingredients.

Chopped kicked off with an appetizer theme, in which students were challenged to incorporate cherry tomatoes, Himalayan sea salt and other assigned ingredients into their culinary creations. Each dish was then presented to the judges, who evaluated them based on a comprehensive rubric that assessed creativity, presentation and taste. Ivan Rekosh of Zocalo restaurant and Matthew Hart and Melissa Close-Hart

of Mockingbird restaurant served as judges for the competition, offering tips and guidance to the budding chefs.

Later in the year, a second round of *Chopped* challenged students to create Thanksgiving side dishes using a list of specific ingredients.

"Last year, the students planted seeds and practiced the skill of making and savoring food, paying close attention to flavors and discovering the memories they evoked," says Clare Brown, who organized the project with help from fellow teachers Lance Weisend and Jaime Hawkins. "We wanted to take those past experiences one step further and see what's possible with a small variety of ingredients — encouraging them to push their boundaries and really get creative within those limitations."

"It was really fun because we could be creative with different ingredients. We didn't have to follow a strict recipe and we could do our own research to make up recipes."

— Liam Little, seventh grade

"I liked Chopped because we didn't have a lot of rules, so we could make what we wanted to and work together. It was fun to be able to be creative."

— Nathan Goldberg, seventh grade

"I like the competition and seeing what the professional chefs thought about our meals. They said our omelet was a little heavy on butter and olive oil — we put in about two sticks of butter."

— Sebbly Horne, seventh grade

CULTIVATING CREATIVITY AND COLLABORATION

The CDS Curriculum Project

Charlottesville Day School has always taken an innovative approach to the teaching process. The recently completed CDS curriculum project is the culmination of years of work by the faculty. It details existing practices while also providing a broader framework for teachers to collaborate and identify opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning.

"One of the things that appeals to me about CDS is the philosophy of making sure that we are challenging every learner and meeting the individual needs of children, while also giving teachers autonomy and room for creativity in their classrooms," says Assistant Head of School Mira Williams. "There's always been a focus on the interdisciplinary and cross-curricular components — making those connections, bringing in real-world experiences, and weaving the arts and physical activity into all of the academics."

Rather than imposing strict guidelines or fixed timelines, the curriculum encourages creativity, flexibility and responsiveness to students' interests and current events. Teachers have the freedom to adapt and expand the curriculum as needed, allowing for organic and student-led learning experiences. The project fosters intentional collaboration among teachers, creating chances for them to

explore cross-pollination of ideas and connect different subject areas.

"This project also encourages students to be critical thinkers versus thinking that there's only one correct answer," says Williams. "It helps train our students' brains to think about open-ended questions, to be critical thinkers and to make connections between things that they are learning about."

Although the project is being published for teachers, parents and students to access, it will continue to evolve. "This should always be a living, breathing document that's a guide for us and for students," says Jaime Hawkins, CDS's diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging specialist. "We need to respond to our ever-changing world because the goal is for our students to leave Charlottesville Day School as well-rounded, positively contributing citizens to their next community and beyond. Our curriculum empowers and inspires them to do that."

ALL CLASS

New Faculty Positions Bolster CDS

This year, Charlottesville Day School created two new staff positions to help improve the curriculum and meet the emotional needs of teachers and students in a post-pandemic world.



ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

MIRA COLE WILLIAMS first taught at CDS from 2006 through 2010. She supported CDS part-time while working on her doctorate at UVA, then became a full professor at JMU in 2014. Williams returns to CDS with significant expertise in curriculum development and student support, and works closely with teachers to continue creating an environment where all students are supported and encouraged to grow. “Connecting with young minds every day and seeing the world through their eyes is incredibly rewarding,” says Williams. “Our teachers go above and beyond, making education fun and finding creative ways to engage students, which is a true testament to their passion and enthusiasm.”



GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

RACHEL WHITE provides individual counseling and leads social-emotional lessons in classrooms from kindergarten to eighth grade, ensuring that students receive the support and guidance they need to succeed. White works closely with teachers to foster a holistic approach to students’ social, emotional and academic development. “By working together, we can provide tailored material for each child’s needs and recognize their unique strengths,” says White. “It’s important to have different outlets and spaces where students can thrive and feel supported during difficult moments.”

WALKING TO REMEMBER

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



CIVIL RIGHTS SAMPLER

Selections from music teacher Angela Kelly’s MLK Day playlist

- *Inner City Blues* – Marvin Gaye
- *Redemption Song* – Bob Marley and the Wailers
- *Blowin’ in the Wind* – Bob Dylan
- *A Change Is Gonna Come* – Otis Redding
- *Lift Every Voice and Sing* – Kim Weston

The annual MLK Walk at CDS was initiated in 2018 by Jaime Hawkins, an English teacher and diversity, equity and belonging specialist at CDS. The event pays tribute to Dr. King’s legacy and engages students of all ages and their families.

Eighth grader Lena Oppenheimer, who co-lead the event’s planning with Hawkins, remarks that “the MLK Walk means a lot to our school. It fosters a sense of community and promotes learning about and honoring our shared history.”

In the weeks leading up to the walk, older students participate in a bracketology project in which they paint portraits of activists and debate who made the most significant impact (Josephine Baker and Mary Church Terrell emerged as the winners). Hawkins visits younger students’ classrooms to read storybooks about the Civil Rights Movement. The eighth-grade class also chooses local organizations to support — recent beneficiaries include The Haven shelter and Loaves & Fishes food pantry.

On MLK Day, the CDS community comes together in the gym for activities before embarking on a mile-long walk around the neighborhood. “The walk symbolizes the civil rights marches and the countless individuals who walked for change,” says Hawkins.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

In 2017, the inaugural issue of this magazine featured a photo of Jane Bruns, Ania Cafferillo and Phoebe Giordano when they were eighth graders. Now, all three have started college. As for music, Ania played the viola through high school and Jane and Phoebe still play guitar. We caught up with each of these alumnae to find out what they are up to and how their experiences at CDS have had a lasting impact on their lives.



2017



JANE

Vanderbilt University
Major: Special Education



ANIA

Cornell University
Major: Industrial & Labor Relations (Pre-business/Pre-law)



PHOEBE

Ohio University
Major: Environmental Studies

What's the most important thing you learned at CDS?

CDS instilled in me the importance of finding passion and purpose in everything I do. This has had a lasting impact on how I approach new opportunities. I aim to use this approach in all aspects of my life and hope CDS students and alumni embrace the ways in which CDS fosters finding passion and purpose, whether through academics, relationships or other interests.

Try your best to enjoy and make the most of every situation you are in. Find ways to make school fun, make the most of your friendships with all the people around you, and try to make even the most basic things a game and enjoyable. Staying optimistic is definitely one of the traits I acquired from my time at CDS and probably one of the most beneficial in my life since!

Always be true to yourself! Learning to be an advocate for yourself and becoming the person you want to be is a lifelong process, so don't worry if you don't know exactly what that looks like right now — you have time!

How did your experience at CDS set you up for success in high school and college?

I learned how to find joy in my learning experiences. CDS taught me that a challenging education is an enjoyable and meaningful experience that should not be taken for granted.

It made me value relationships and initiative with my teachers immensely. This was helpful to me in high school and continues to be so in college because, unlike a lot of my peers, I was not afraid to approach my teachers/professors and ask them for help when I needed it.

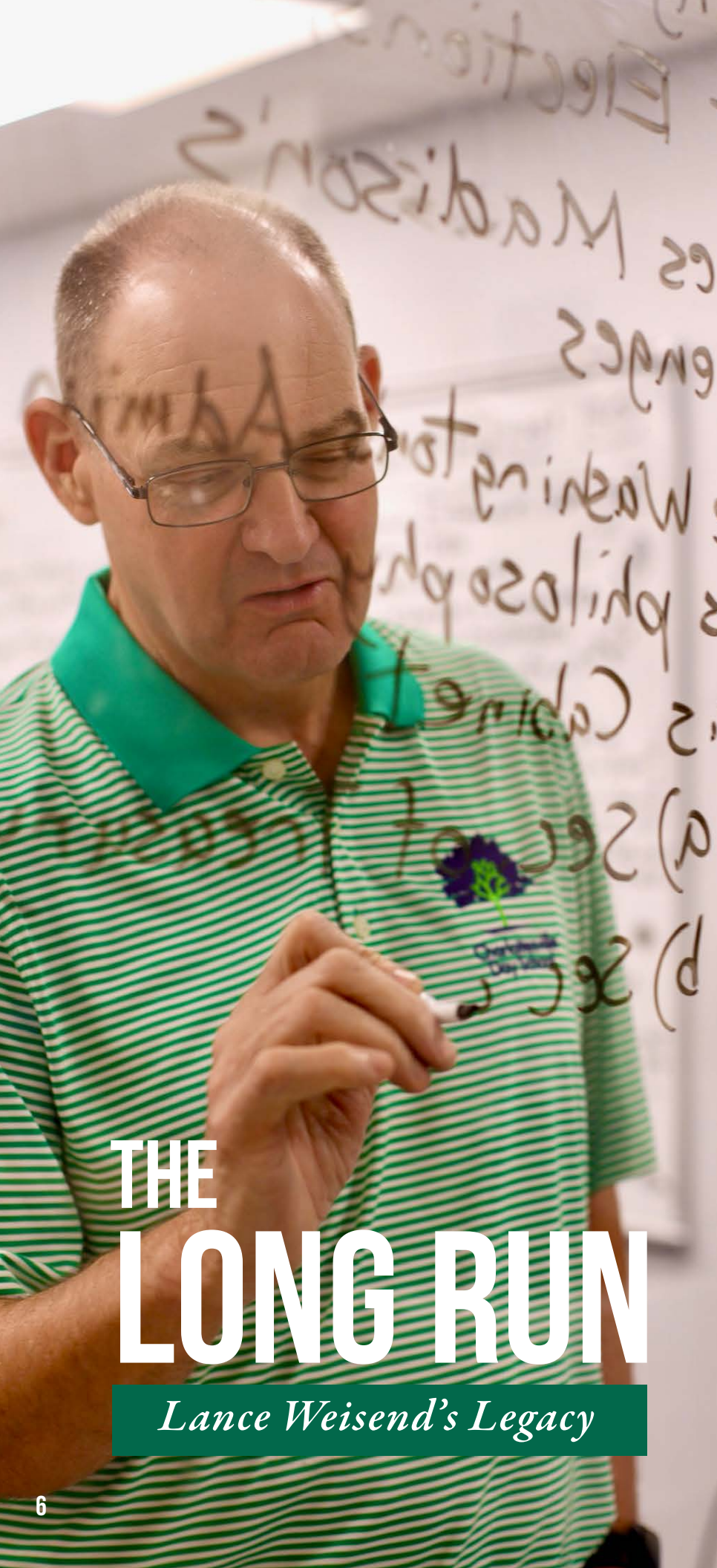
Exploring beyond the expected English curriculum with Ms. O'Brien is something I look back on with great fondness. Whether that was coming in early to read *Great Expectations* or discovering the meaning behind *A Christmas Carol*, delving more deeply into every book required skills I still make use of today!

What advice would you give a current CDS student?

Enjoy the experience that their teachers are giving and be grateful. Your teachers care and love you, and the connections you create with your teachers and peers can last into your later educational experiences.

Keep yourself involved with as many activities post-CDS as you were involved in at CDS! Keep playing instruments, keep joining your friends to play sports — it's a fun way to meet all kinds of different people and keep yourself growing and out of your comfort zone!

Traveling to Costa Rica as an eighth grader is still something I look back on with so much gratitude and wonder. So, I would say to never take for granted all the opportunities that CDS provides — you'll cherish those memories for a long time.



THE LONG RUN

Lance Weisend's Legacy

After 35 years at Albemarle High School as a beloved history teacher and a successful track and cross-country coach, Lance Weisend had seen just about everything during his distinguished career. But after all those years in the classroom, this veteran educator was still scared of one thing — middle schoolers.

Meanwhile, a middle school faculty position had unexpectedly become available at Charlottesville Day School and Executive Director Dave Bruns saw an opportunity to hire the best history teacher in town. But when he and CDS Head of School Stacey Bruns talked to Weisend one midsummer afternoon in 2018 about the prospect of teaching history and coaching a cross-country team at CDS, he was — to put it mildly — resistant to the idea. “It was the craziest interview I’ve ever been in because I was literally arguing for 45 minutes why I should not be here,” says Weisend. “My greatest apprehension was about the fifth graders. I had this fear of the younger students, and with the idea of teaching middle school, I thought, ‘Wow, I don’t think I have the skill set for this.’”

The Bruns duo eventually prevailed (“Stacey and Dave spent a little bit longer arguing why I should be here,” says Weisend). But their ability to make a good argument wasn’t the only factor on their side. Weisend’s connections to the school stretched back decades. He was on Charlottesville Day School’s first advisory board, his daughters had attended CDS, and he had been Stacey Bruns’ cross-country and track coach in high school. While she attended UVA, she was Weisend’s assistant track coach at Albemarle High School.

After spending the first months at CDS “trying to figure out what my place was and what I was doing,” Weisend found his footing with the once-dreaded middle schoolers. As he gained an understanding of what his students were able to handle, he adapted his high school curriculum to appropriately challenge younger learners. Learning how to support the social-emotional growth of middle schoolers and balance it with their academic growth was another key lesson.



While coaching at Albemarle High School from 1983 to 2009, Weisend established a tradition of taking his teams to cross-country camp at Graves Mountain Lodge.

“Lance loved teaching high school and was intimidated by fifth graders when he first got here,” says Bruns. “Since then, he’s fallen in love with this idea that he gets kids in fifth grade and continues to teach them all the way through eighth. Having multiyear relationships with his students is really important to him.”

Fitness, play and physical activity are integral to the CDS experience, and Bruns also convinced Weisend to take the reins of the CDS cross-country program, even though he’d retired from coaching in 2009. “I told Stacey that I teach for me, and I coach for her,” says Weisend. “I coached Stacey, and she’s one of the most intense and formidable competitors that I ever coached in all my years.”

Weisend does not demand that same kind of competitive intensity at CDS, but for very good reasons. With younger, quickly developing bodies, running injuries related to overuse are common. He has been careful to create a fun experience and not put too much strain on his athletes. “I’m much more relaxed with coaching and I’m good with meeting the kids at the levels they are comfortable with,” he says.

Wes Swanson, a CDS alumnus and junior at Charlottesville High School, is one of the many students who have

benefitted from Weisend’s guidance both in the classroom and on the track. “Mr. Weisend encouraged us to research things that we were interested in from history, and that made the class really engaging,” says Swanson. “It has made me very interested in history and current events. All the essay-writing skills he taught me have been especially useful over the past few years.”

Now a member of the varsity track team, Swanson began his running career while a student at CDS and still applies some of the lessons learned in middle school to his high school sport. “Mr. Weisend challenged me to run outside of school and supported me in my goals for running local races,” Swanson says. “He gave me a lot of great advice about running, and I’m really glad he spent time explaining how to stay healthy and not get injured while running.”

Weisend’s deep well of knowledge about competitive running is rooted in his own experiences. A Blacksburg native, Weisend ran cross-country for Virginia Tech and once recorded a 4:12 time in the mile. It’s not surprising that one of the first places this lifelong runner visited when he moved to Charlottesville in the early 80s was the newly opened Ragged Mountain Running Shop, where he

met store owner Mark Lorenzoni. The two have been great friends ever since. Lorenzoni enjoys his friend’s dry sense of humor, but he particularly admires his ability to relate to and inspire teenagers.

“Lance never forgets what it’s like to be that age — that’s a sign of a really good teacher,” says Lorenzoni. “I think he appreciated having people like that in his life when he was younger, people who help you discover and reach your fullest potential. Lance’s goal is to help students become independent adults who like themselves and are achieving the highest level of their ability, whether it’s in athletics or academics. He sets a bar and says, ‘Let’s get to that bar and I’m going to help you get there.’”

Along with his students and friends, his colleagues in the educational field have also been inspired by their connections with Weisend. One such admirer is Stephanie van Hover, the chair of the Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education Department at UVA’s education school. Over the years, she has worked frequently with Weisend as he mentored student teachers from UVA in his high school history classes.

“Lance is an extraordinary history teacher because he holds students to high expectations and teaches them to read



Lance Weisend and his first CDS cross-country team

“Despite the fact Lance claims to be ‘traditional,’ eschewing ‘education school approaches,’ he is an extraordinarily reflective teacher who critically interrogates his own identity and — through the use of textbooks, lectures, close reading of primary and secondary sources, and discussions — pushes his students to think deeply about difficult historical content and the relevance of the past to the present.”

— Stephanie van Hover



closely, engage in discussion and support ideas with evidence,” says van Hover. “He helps students unpack arguments, understand the nature of historical evidence and analyze interpretations without telling them what to think, but by teaching them how to think. He’s an awesome coach, a great teacher and an awesome human. I learn from him every time I hang out with him.”

When the editors of a book about how to teach “difficult history” approached van Hover about contributing an article, she immediately thought of Weisend. Together with another professor, Weisend and van Hover co-authored an article titled “If You’re Not Talking About Those Things, You’re Not Talking About History.”

“To be honest, I didn’t even realize until Stephanie approached me that I was teaching difficult history,” says Weisend. “In my classes, I’ve never shied away from teaching about racism. I never shied away from slavery, the treatment of Native Americans the treatment of women, or issues around sexuality — those things are

all part of history. It’s what I’ve taught, and if you’re not teaching that, you might as well be working for Disney.”

During his five years at CDS, Weisend has been an integral part of the development of the CDS curriculum project (see page 3) and has relished the chance to work with other teachers to optimize the learning experience. Bruns says that if she could carve four hours out of every day for Weisend to collaborate with teachers, he’d happily use every second of it. “Lance is a curriculum junkie — he loves thinking about why kids need to study things and the purpose and the connection from his subject to other subjects,” says Bruns. “He’s a scholar of history and it’s truly his passion, but he also really, really understands kids.”

At the end of this school year, Lance Weisend marked the 40th year of his legendary teaching and coaching career. As his long run continues, he’s cheered on by the legions of students, educators and friends who have learned from and been inspired by this extraordinary educator during the past four decades. ■



TAKING STOCK

Charlottesville Day School recently concluded its ambitious five-year strategic plan, spanning from 2017 to 2022. This comprehensive road map included goals in five priority areas, all of which were completed despite the unforeseen challenges presented by the global pandemic. These accomplishments reflect our core values of sustaining a school where teachers challenge and inspire our students to learn and play in a joyful, supportive environment that embraces the arts and the pursuit of physical and mental well-being.



INVEST IN GREAT EDUCATORS

Retain and recruit excellent teachers through competitive salaries and benefits with satisfaction and happiness as core objectives. (Related article, page 4)



PROMOTE AND CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

Grow and sustain a diverse, inclusive community of faculty and students that embraces differences in race, socioeconomic status, heritage and learning styles. (Related story, page 4)



PUBLISH SCHOOL-WIDE CURRICULUM

Maintain teacher autonomy and flexibility while establishing objectives for stages in a CDS education that prioritize individual student growth rather than arbitrary benchmarks. (Related story, page 3)



IMPROVE THE CAMPUS

Put finishing touches on campus expansion and improvements, including better outdoor play spaces, additional classrooms and the reduction of energy consumption. (Related story, page 2)



MAINTAIN SIZE OF STUDENT BODY

Continue offering one classroom per grade level with a total enrollment of approximately 200 to 210 children, while fostering an atmosphere that embraces kindness, joyfulness and respect.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

As Charlottesville Day School looks to the future, it recognizes the need to address two critical challenges facing educators and students nationwide: the influence of social media and phones on young minds and the looming threat of a teacher shortage.

SOLVING THE SCREEN PROBLEM

The U.S. surgeon general recently issued a warning, writing, "There are ample indicators that social media can ... have a profound risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents." Tackling the negative effects of excessive screen time is becoming an increasingly urgent priority at CDS. By collaborating with experts specializing in adolescent psychology and seeking feedback from students, alumni and parents, we are developing strategies to create a healthier balance among technology, social and emotional development, and education.



THE TEACHING CRISIS

A looming teacher shortage presents a significant threat for the education system. Teacher pay has remained stagnant, while the cost of a four-year degree has almost doubled. This is one of several factors contributing to declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs during the past decade. Great teachers are the heart of CDS, and we are fully committed to maintaining its track record of attracting and retaining talented educators. We will continue to enhance the ways that we support our faculty, including competitive salaries, health insurance, retirement plans, and resources for physical and mental well-being.



THE MAKING OF MATILDA

*How this year's musical
came together*



Every year students and teachers at Charlottesville Day School work on a play together. This year's play is the musical *Matilda*, based on a book by Roald Dahl.

It tells the story of a very intelligent nine-year-old girl named Matilda Wormwood who uses her special powers against a mean school principal.

"We wanted to do something brand new that we've never done before," says Jenn Thomas, a teacher who was the acting coach for the play. "It's the biggest show we've ever done — it's a huge undertaking."

This story goes behind the scenes to show how this musical came together. We talked to some of the teachers and students who made it happen.

🎵 THE MUSIC

By Charlie Zahl (sixth grade)

Matilda has various styles of music — Angela Kelly says, "It has a little bit of everything."

She says the music is challenging, but that is also what makes it fun.

"The songs are actually really hard," says Mrs. Kelly, who is

the play's music director. "There are so many fast-spoken words. Because we're playing with a background track that has a set tempo, we do not have flexibility to change it to slower if we need to. We have to go to the fast tempo that the show is giving us, so that is super challenging. The other part that's challenging and exciting is that the dance moves that we have are really intricate, advanced and involved. And so it's hard to get all that right. But

that's the most fun and most challenging part."

Mrs. Kelly is very proud of how hard all of the students have worked to put on a good show. "I think the audience will see how clearly invested each kid is because they have worked so hard and you're going to see really high energy, passion and enthusiasm in this play," she says. "You are going to be blown away by what these kids can do."



✂ MAKING COSTUMES

By Lucas Cao (sixth grade)

Making costumes for plays at CDS is usually something that students and teachers do together as part of an enrichment class. Teachers Karin Reed,

Theresa Surry and Katie Hickson get creative ideas from the kids and look for inspiration online.

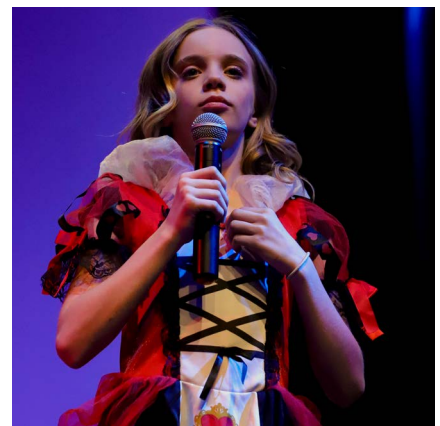
“The most-fun costumes we ever made were for the *Lion King*,” says Mrs. Reed. “We painted and we ripped fabric to make them. We usually go to Goodwill and get a whole bunch of used clothes and then we repurpose them. We cut, re sew and use the hot glue gun a lot.”

According to Mrs. Reed, it takes a very long time to make the costumes, but she has a lot of fun making them with other teachers and students. They even work at night and on weekends. She says making the costumes has been a little bit different for *Matilda* than for some of the other plays. “The costumes are really for the kids school uniforms,” she says. “So you can’t be highly creative with school uniforms. They just are what they are.”

Mrs. Reed says that making costumes for *Matilda* has still been fun. “Our limited budget makes us very creative,” she says. “And we like to take our own creative bent.”



Joel Rekosh



Sanders Miller



Maizie Hawkins



Aksel Miller and Felix Giordano



BUILDING THE SETS

By Lucas Cao (sixth grade)

Sets are the scenery for a play. Making them takes a long time, but Theresa Sury says that it is a labor of love and she really likes it when students help paint the sets.

“One of the things that’s interesting about *Matilda* is the backdrop isn’t so specific to location,” says Ms. Theresa. “It’s more of a whimsical background that reflects things about *Matilda* — like the fact that she loves to read, so expect to see a lot of books on bookshelves and then giant alphabet blocks. We’re planning on building the Chokey (a device in the play used to punish students), which will be kind of fun and a little bit scary, perhaps.”

One of the best things about making the sets is seeing all the work come together at the end. “We spend a lot of time thinking about what they’re going to look like,” Ms. Theresa says. “We use ideas from the kids in the

cast. There are a lot of hours put in outside of school but it’s so worth it. It’s so much fun to just see it all up there at the end of the day. We have the play at Piedmont Virginia Community College and it’s lit up with the lights from the theater. It’s just really rewarding and I feel very fortunate to be a part of it.”



Ciaran Little and Will Darby



Sunny McFadden and Elizabeth Gartland

TEACHING ACTING

By Sanders Miller (fifth grade)

Jenn Thomas is a second-grade teacher and the acting coach for all CDS productions. She knows a lot about acting because she was in her first play when she was 10 and later she went to acting school.

“As the acting coach, I have found the way I serve the rehearsals is to work on the story, because we always do musicals,” Ms. Jenn says.

“It’s my job to make sure we’re crystal clear on the story, and that we’re telling the story that we set out to tell. To me, acting is telling a story truthfully, under the imaginary circumstances. And that’s what I try to impart to my actors here at CDS.”

★ THE ACTORS

Matilda

The role of Matilda is played by fourth grader Elizabeth Gartland. “The things that I like about the character of Matilda are that she really likes the books and she doesn’t let anyone get to her,” Elizabeth says.

Elizabeth liked the challenges of having a big role, and she learned a lot about acting. “When you’re the main role in a musical, you have to speak really loud — basically scream,” she says. “You have to bring out your inner Matilda, or whatever character you’re playing. I think learning and memorizing all the lines is the most challenging thing because I have a line on almost every page. You also have to know when to say them.”

Watching Netflix was another way she learned more about the play and the characters. “The *Matilda* musical that Netflix came out with in December helped me memorize the Acrobat and the Escapologist story because I could see what they were doing.”

Ms. Trunchbull

Ms. Trunchbull is the mean and harsh headmistress at Matilda’s school. Eighth grader Alex Zimmerman played the role of Trunchbull and worked hard to create the unlikeable character. “I think the character is designed to

be really disliked because it’s the main evil character, so obviously I’m not going to like the character either. Memorizing your lines is really difficult. Luckily, I’m not doing any dancing parts because I’m not a great dancer. If I did, then that would probably be the hardest part.”

Because Trunchbull is nothing like him, he thought that “the character would be way harder to adapt to than it actually is.” But Alex says he fit into the character faster than he thought he would.

Alex also learned a lot and has a piece of advice for people who are going to act in future plays at CDS. “Get off script as fast as you can,” he says. “Because once you’re off script, you can use your hands when you’re acting and move around, and you’re not staring down at your script the whole time. It just frees you up.”



Alex Zimmerman

THE TEACHERS BEHIND THE SCENES



Jenn Thomas: Acting



Karin Reed: Costumes



Katie Hickson: Sets & Costumes



Angela Kelly: Music



Theresa Sury: Sets & Costumes



HAVING A BALL

New Volleyball Team Has Fun Learning Skills and Teamwork

By Edith MacDonald (seventh grade), Atticus McFadden (sixth grade) and Charlie Zahl (sixth grade)

Volleyball is the newest sport at CDS. It started because the eighth graders asked if PE teacher Tori Goodloe would coach a volleyball team. The volleyball team started in the fall of 2022. It was the first time that most of the people on the team had played volleyball at a competitive level. Coach Goodloe says she wanted the team to learn new skills and she loves that volleyball is a sport that requires a lot of communication and that it has team harmony. So it turns out that it was a major success.

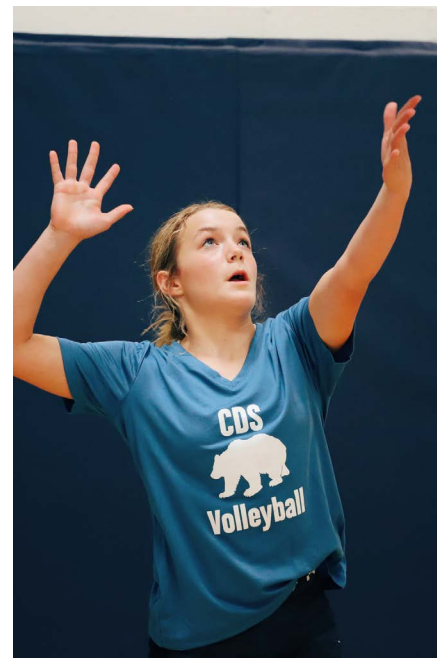
“Coaching this team has been such a joy,” says Goodloe. “It was great to see all the kids at the school who had never touched a volleyball before getting so interested in the sport and learning the skills so quickly. Our team didn’t really have any experience, so the growth was really incredible and fun to watch. The growth in their confidence and leadership was exactly what I hoped it would be.”

Along with Coach Goodloe, the team was led by its three captains: Lena Oppenheimer, Halsey Wilcox and Sunny McFadden.

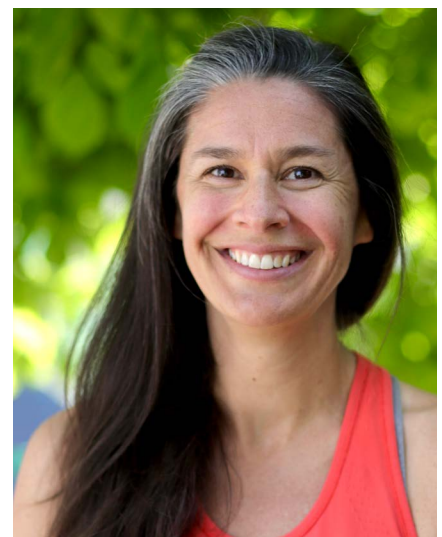
“The best part of playing volleyball was our teamwork and getting better as a team,” says Lena. “Ms. Goodloe made it fun because of her love for the game and her love for helping other people become better volleyball players.”

Halsey wants to play volleyball in high school also. “It’s a really good setup for that because of what it’s taught me in a short amount of time,” she says. “Ms. Goodloe was a very good coach because she played before, so she had a lot of skill and she taught us really well.”

Sunny likes the way the team learned how to find the good in mistakes or bounce back when things didn’t go their way. “We always supported each other,” she says. “It was a learning experience, and we won a lot of our games. Even if we were struggling, we would always hype each other back up.”



Halsey Wilcox



Coach Tori Goodloe



“Even if we were struggling, we would always hype each other back up.”

- Sunny McFadden



Inset and Main: Lena Oppenheimer and Sunny McFadden

DEFINING THE GAME

SET: A set is when you push the ball high up in front of someone so they can hit it down into the other side.

- Lena

DOWN BALL: Hitting the ball over the net and not necessarily spiking it down.

- Sunny

SPIKE: A spike is when you jump up and then hit the ball down over the net to try to catch the other team off guard.

- Lena

BLOCK: When you go up at the net to block a spike.

- Sunny



Coach Goodloe huddles with the volleyball team



ANIMALS

IN THE CLASSROOM

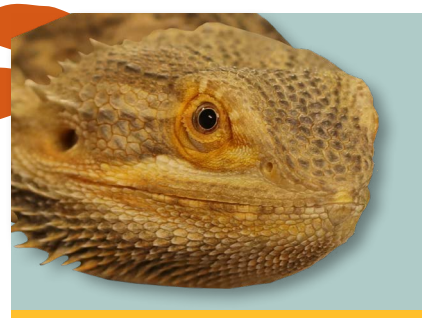
*By Emmy Yowell (fifth grade)
and Easton Kostelnik (sixth grade)*

Students and teachers aren't the only ones you'll find in our classrooms. There are also many animals around the school that make classes more fun and educational.



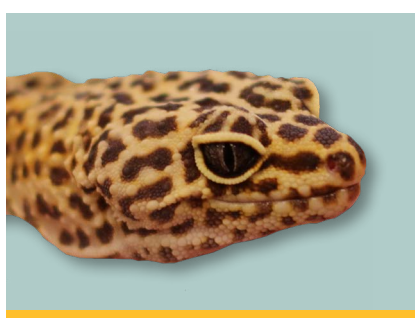
TROUT

The trout are a group of small fish in Michelle Lockwood's class. In the spring, Ms. Lockwood and all the middle school students release the trout in Sugar Hollow Reservoir near Charlottesville. "When we release them into Sugar Hollow, they'll be about finger-size," she says. "And then as they get older in the Mormon River, they get somewhere between 10 and 16 inches maybe." (See facing page for more about the trout release.)



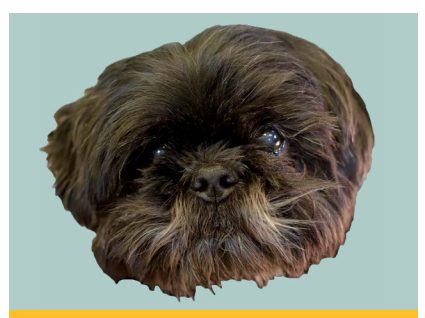
REX

Rex is a 4-year-old bearded dragon who likes to eat blueberries, arugula and mealworms. He also eats crickets, but he prefers mealworms. This is Rex's first year at CDS, and the Polar Bears are happy to add him to the classroom community. Until this year, Rex has lived at Assistant Head of School Mira Williams' home, where he could sometimes be found hiding in the family's Christmas tree. "My son Kai really wanted an iguana," says Ms. Williams. "But we did a lot of research, and we read that bearded dragons were the best reptile for younger kids because they're really social."



AUSSIE

Aussie is a leopard gecko in Michelle Lockwood's science class. "This is my 15th year, and I got her as my first classroom pet," says Ms. Lockwood. "She was a hatchling when I got her from the pet store, so I'm guessing she was a few months old. So she's going on 16 years." Aussie's many years at CDS have made her a very memorable part of science class.



BEAR BEAR

Bear Bear is a 12-year-old black Shih Tzu, which is a rare color for a Shih Tzu. Here are some of his favorite things: He loves to be around people. He also loves to lay on the pillows in the classroom. The pillows are his habitat. He eats dog food, but he likes people food better. He eats lots of people food like pepperoni, popcorn, pizza and bagels. Oh, he loves bagels. That's why Bagel Friday is his favorite day.

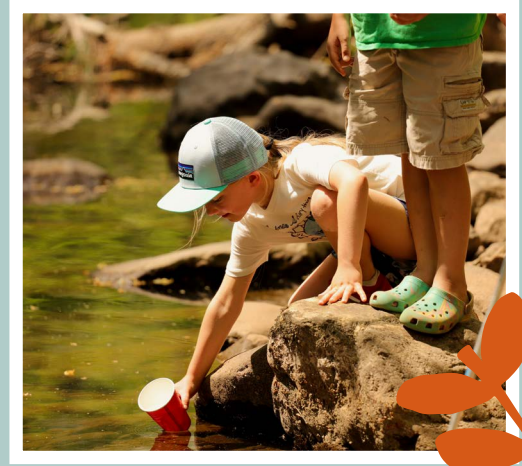
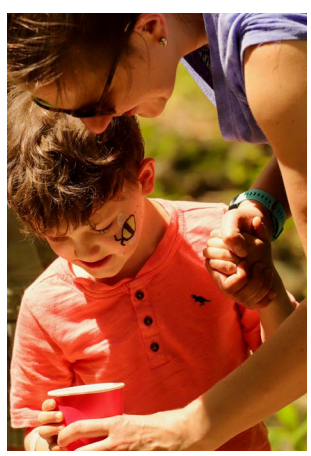


GONE FISHIN'



Every year, Michelle Lockwood's middle science class raises brook trout in their classroom.

The release of the trout into the Sugar Hollow Reservoir is an annual rite of spring, bringing teachers, students and families together for an afternoon of fun that also benefits the environment.





TAKING SHAPE

Each year during their Constructions unit, eighth-grade geometry students practice and apply the skills they've learned using their geometric constructions tools: a compass and a straightedge. The students re-create given designs and generate original designs using these two tools. They truly embody the "Let's See What's Possible" spirit when creating their own designs — their creativity shines through even with limited materials!

THE ARTISTS

Row 1: Lila Castleman, Leo Caferillo, Ellie Kupcis
 Row 2: Sidney Schulman, George Aten, Liam Frazier
 Row 3: Sophia Lipinski, Felix Giordano, Sunny McFadden
 Row 4: Halsey Wilcox, June Williams