

# *the* CURRENT

SUMMER 2021

THE MAGAZINE OF CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL

[WWW.CHARLESRIVERSCHOOL.ORG](http://WWW.CHARLESRIVERSCHOOL.ORG)

**A Focus on Fun**  
**When we needed it the most**



CHARLES RIVER  
SCHOOL

DEEPER UNDERSTANDING, HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT.

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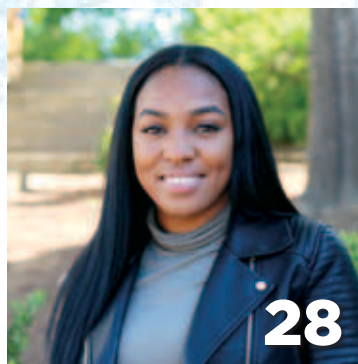
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### CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL MISSION

Charles River School honors the pursuit of academic excellence and the joy of childhood. We nurture each child by igniting curiosity, encouraging creativity, and cultivating intellectual engagement. Our graduates know themselves, understand others, and shape the future of our diverse world with confidence and compassion.

### CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL DIVERSITY STATEMENT

*We commit ourselves to:*

- **Cultivating** cultural competency and diversity throughout our curriculum, our student body, and our faculty and staff
- **Deepening** our knowledge and appreciation of the many aspects of cultural identities, in ourselves, our local communities, and globally
- **Providing** an environment and an education that equips children and adults to become successful, contributing members of a global society
- **Understanding** both historical and current implications of diversity, power, and privilege
- **Engaging** in this complex work with careful thought and enduring dedication.

And most of all, we commit ourselves to fostering a school community in which each of us is welcomed, recognized, and valued as an individual and as a member of the Charles River School family.

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**CHARLES RIVER**  
SCHOOL

## PHOTO BREAK



# SNAPSHOTS

A GLIMPSE OF OUR YEAR TOGETHER



- 1 Camilla Rosenfeldt '29 (left) and Saya Shah '27 use one of the playground rocks as the perfect canvas for chalk art.
- 2 Only in PreK/K PE Class can pool noodles, balls, and hula hoops turn into a rowdy game of Spaghetti and Meatballs.
- 3 Sixth grader Cole Fosbroke focuses on learning the ukulele in music class.
- 4 Fifth grader Alex Yang enjoys a steaming cup of cocoa this winter.
- 5 Seventh graders (from left) Olivia Colas, Emery Nordahl, and Lara Do Rosario play the fun word game, Quiddler, in English class.
- 6 Third-grade student Devin Kennedy works with Cuisenaire Rods, a math manipulative, to solve a set of problems in class.
- 7 After a long wait due to the pandemic, we were thrilled to bring back our Buddy Program this year.



# Redefining Productivity

**TAKING INSPIRATION FROM** Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, author, and productivity expert Charles Duhigg, I have always believed that it takes thoughtfulness and quite a bit of advanced planning to be productive. Duhigg's advice to make focused choices to avoid reactivity resonates with me and, despite the busyness of life, I've tried to practice it over the years. To my surprise, when the circumstances of the pandemic forced us to work so counter to this notion, we didn't lose productivity. We simply redefined it.

Last year, we did not have time to ponder; we had to react and respond quickly due to the ever-changing landscape of COVID. We sacrificed our familiar day-to-day experience for the health and well-being of our greater community and lost some of CRS's "special sauce" in the process. Those serendipitous interactions that forge relationships and create memories could not occur in the same manner due to protocols, policies, and procedures.

But, all was not lost and out of the challenges emerged new experiences and new ways to be productive. In true CRS fashion, we incorporated what Duhigg refers to as "innovation on demand." We couldn't rely on spontaneity in our siloed-by-design day, so we found ways to bring back the "fun" and "joy" that are so core to the CRS experience. With no time for advanced planning, a team of faculty and administrators (dubbed the "Fun Factory") pulled a little magic out of their hats to create cheerful moments that celebrated childhood. It was a new kind of productivity and it made a big difference in the morale on campus.

As you will see in the pages of this issue of *The Current*, our faculty created academic and community-based opportunities for children despite the challenges and obstacles presented due to COVID. I could not be more proud of all that we achieved and I look forward to the upcoming year with confidence in our ability to both plan ahead and react to whatever lies ahead.

*Gettchen Jenkins*



## Canta y Baila Con Señora Welch



▲  
PreK-2 Spanish and Music  
Teacher Maddie Welch

**FOR MORE THAN A DECADE**, PreK-2 Spanish and Music Teacher Maddie Welch has been developing, teaching, and training other educators in *Canta y Baila Conmigo*, an early childhood music and Spanish immersion curriculum. The program—which she founded in 2008 before arriving at CRS—for children ages 0-5 and their caregivers, features beautifully arranged and recorded music for language beginners and native Spanish speakers alike. Our youngest students love learning Spanish through music, movement, and song with Señora Welch.

In 2019, Welch received a call from the Colorado Symphony Orchestra (CSO). They were interested in hosting concerts and family events to introduce kids to classical music and came across Maddie's curriculum. They thought her program would be a great way to reach local Spanish-speaking families and, during the pandemic, rolled out remote classes for more than 120 preschool students in the Denver area. "It's a great way to bring music, language, and cultural connection to parents," explains Welch, who taught weekly classes along with other master teachers via Zoom.

"It has been an awesome experience. Music is inclusive in so many ways, but this project allows non-English-speaking families to feel represented within their children's curriculum," says Welch.

## CRS 21 Day Equity Challenge

**"OUR GRADUATES KNOW THEMSELVES**, understand others, and shape the future of our diverse world with confidence and compassion."

This spring, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of the Board of Trustees challenged the community to live out the school's mission by participating in a 21-day habit-building exercise. "The tragedies and life-altering events we have lived through have highlighted fundamental inequities and systemic issues that have been shouldered by communities of color and other marginalized communities for far too long," wrote the committee. "Now that we have seen it, we cannot unsee it, and we, as a community, must come together to use our power, talent, skill, and passion to make our community, our country, and our world more equitable and inclusive spaces. Even the recent guilty conviction in the George Floyd murder case doesn't bring full restoration; we must continue to fight for justice. A daunting task? We need only to turn inward to start this journey."

The committee created a Padlet page that directed community members to myriad online resources, including articles, podcasts, videos, reflections, and ways to take action. The goal was for all CRS community members to further their understanding of power, privilege, supremacy, oppression, and equity and to make social justice a guiding principle of their lives.



## Harvard MEDscience Program: Grades 7/8 Experience Life as an ER Doctor



**THIS SPRING**, all 7/8 students participated in a virtual version of the Harvard Medical School's MEDscience program. The innovative biology class lets students experience an emergency room setting, while they work as a team and develop critical thinking skills to assess different situations. Eighth grader Elizabeth Lapidés explains, "Over the course of three weeks, each cohort virtually met with two medical professionals from Harvard Medical School. In this program, we learned how to gather a patient's medical history and come up with a diagnosis for their condition. In the last two classes, one of the medical professionals simulated an ER patient. As a cohort, we collected their medical history, ran necessary tests, and used that information to come up with a diagnosis for the patient."

Although in-person sessions weren't an option this year, our students still enjoyed participating in the virtual program. "I loved the Harvard MEDscience program! It was an opportunity to learn about things that I didn't know before and I was really able to see the process that doctors do to evaluate a patient," says Gabby Wood '21. "It was very fun and engaging and I would definitely do it again."

▲  
Seventh graders hear about a patient's vital signs from a MEDscience instructor.

## From Virtual Visit Days and Tours to In-Person Campus Visits



▲  
Third grader Kenze Westerling gives encouragement to accepted students, who Zoomed into the classroom for an admissions visit day.

**DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS**, for much of this year, the Admissions Office couldn't welcome parents and guests to campus for classroom visits, shares, assemblies, or performances. Thanks to technology they found creative ways to bring our CRS campus to prospective families.

CRS parent Matt Murphy P'25 '25 '30 and his team at Boston Virtual Imaging created an amazing 360 Virtual Tour to allow people to take a peek into classrooms and campus spaces. We are so grateful to Matt for his work—we know both current and prospective parents enjoyed the view. To see the tour, visit [www.charlesriversschool.org/admissions](http://www.charlesriversschool.org/admissions).

Visiting Days for admissions applicants also looked different this year, but they were a huge hit nonetheless. The Admissions Office offered 22 (yes, 22!) virtual sessions so students of all ages could participate in classes with CRS students and faculty. In true Otter fashion, our students welcomed the new faces and were excited to learn something new together.

As restrictions eased, our Admissions Team was able to offer limited in-person tours to prospective parents and students, and at the start of the summer they welcomed all newly enrolled families to campus. We can't wait to see our new students again later this summer and in the fall!

Admissions season for the 2022-2023 school year is already underway. If you know a family who might be interested in learning more about CRS, encourage them to visit our website, [www.charlesriversschool.org](http://www.charlesriversschool.org), or call Director of Admissions Kat Whitten at (508) 785-8213.

## “Teaching” the Election and Understanding Current Events

**OUR FACULTY HELP STUDENTS** make connections with the world around them. While older students may closely follow current events and political issues, there are great opportunities for all students to learn about civil discourse, history, and real-world themes, especially during an election year. During the recent election year, there were additional topics and issues that came up that teachers addressed in age- and grade-appropriate ways in the classroom.

“Students in my PreK/K cohort brainstormed to define the word ‘vote,’ and we got them familiar with some vocabulary words such as president, White House, election, voting, and informed decision. We talked about what it takes to be president—the job and responsibilities—and we completed an activity so students could vote for things in the classroom.” —*Ayan Osman, PreKindergarten/Kindergarten Co-Teacher*

“In third grade, we’ve discussed and addressed the debates generally by using the sign-in question, ‘What is a debate?’ the morning after the first debate. We didn’t talk specifically about political parties but tied it into why we work on taking turns, backing up our ideas, and listening to one another.” —*Lizz Albany, Grade 3 Co-Teacher*

“There had already been some organic conversations among students, which, of course, we encourage. We incorporated the topic of democracy into our studies of Ancient Greece and we did a voting simulation. Students voted on the next class prize, although only some of them were allowed to cast a ballot. In the debrief, we talked about how only male citizens in Ancient Greece got to vote. Only certain voices were heard, leaving others disenfranchised and we related this back to what’s happening in the country today.”

—*Laura Mutch and Sandra Annisette, Grade 4 Co-Teachers*

“We wanted to inspire students to civic participation through a nuanced comprehension of the history of the electoral process, locally and nationally, as well as encourage daily inquiry into the current news cycle. They not only learned how to form an argument but also how to comprehend the other side’s viewpoint, working towards respecting others’ views as well as the importance of discourse. Last fall, students presented both sides of the Massachusetts ballot questions, examined arguments for and against the Electoral College, and recorded podcasts predicting, through lengthy research, how a battleground state of the 2020 election would vote.” —*Tessa Steinert-Evov, Grades 7/8 Social Studies Teacher*



Anya Shah wears a mask with a message during the fourth-grade voting simulation.

## A Hands-On Lesson Using Multiple Senses

**ONE PREK/K STUDENT** fills a glass to its brim and taps the side with a pencil to hear the sound it makes. Across the room, another student eyeballs his water level before emptying a small amount of liquid and pinging the side with a plastic ruler. The two create different sounds, but, why?

The students' senses are hard at work—looking and listening—when their teachers ask them what they notice. How does the pitch change when you add more liquid or use a different utensil to tap the glass? Which sound is higher? What do you notice about the water level when you hear a lower tone? Why do you think that happens? As students discovered for themselves, they were able to draw conclusions about what was happening before their eyes. As they uncovered the what, they started to understand the why.

PreK/K students Ollie Gallinaro (right) and London Parkes (top) observe, hypothesize, and investigate. ▶



## Math Olympiads Add Up

**REMOTE LEARNING FACILITATOR MARA WEITZMAN** ran a Math Olympiads group for fourth and fifth graders. New this year, the popular club met virtually every week to practice strategies for attacking challenging math and logic problems they've never seen before. "The overarching theme was, 'What do you do when you don't know what to do?'," says Weitzman. The curriculum was provided by the Math Olympiads for Elementary and Middle School students (MOEMS) organization, a non-profit corporation "which provides opportunities for children to engage in creative problem-solving activities while developing a child's ability to reason, to be logical, to be resourceful, and occasionally to be ingenious." CRS students worked in small groups using Zoom breakout rooms and Jamboards to write notes and looked at the vocabulary that is typically used in math contest questions. Throughout the year, they participated in math tournaments and quizzes, and at the end of this year won a trophy for their work!

Weitzman, who will return to in-person teaching in her role as Grade 4 Co-Teacher next year, plans to keep the group going. The Math Olympiads group is a precursor to Math Counts, which is offered in middle school as either a competition team or elective option.

# Together or Apart, CRS Has Our Heart

**THE SCHOOL DEBUTED** a new community banner that hung on the front of the Middle School Building this year. The banner was a community art project organized by faculty members Aaron Dana, Mica Moellering, and Gretchen Larkin; every CRS student contributed words, drawings, or a combination of both to share what they love about CRS. Mr. Dana then compiled the submissions and digitized them to create the banner.



▲ The Parent Association made Teacher Appreciation Week special for faculty and staff.

## Faculty and Staff Appreciate the Love

**THE PARENT ASSOCIATION** outdid themselves to show their appreciation for the CRS faculty and staff this year. From surprise goody bags to visits from a full-service coffee and espresso cart, the PA organized fun touchpoints and tokens of thanks throughout the year. In May, in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week, members of the PA organized something each day for the full week. There were personalized notes and gifts for each member of the faculty and staff, as well as plenty of delicious treats and other special surprises. During such a challenging year, the endless support, love, and thanks meant the world to us all. Thank you, PA!



▲ A to-go coffee cart gave teachers an extra boost, thanks to the PA.

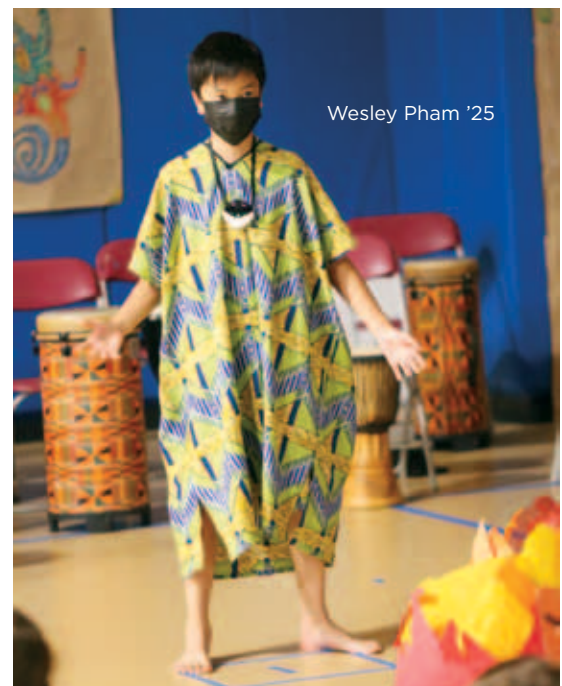
## The Return of the Griot Gala

**AT THE END OF THIS YEAR,** Grade 4 performed the annual Griot Gala in front of a small, in-person audience of parents and family members. In West Africa, a Griot is a respected professional who keeps the oral traditions alive by performing poems, music, dance, and storytelling. For the CRS performance, small groups of fourth-grade students memorized a folktale and retold it around a “fire” using drums, dance, rattles, and shakers. This culminating piece of the fourth-grade unit on West Africa is always a highlight. In addition, with parents there to attend, the students performed an encore of their West African Drumming and Dance, which they shared with students and faculty weeks before.

From left, fourth graders Silas Williams, Rosie Sass, Lauren McElligott, and Lorraine Colas ▶



Kayla Itzkovits '25



Wesley Pham '25

# An Impactful Majority Experience for Faculty and Students of Color



**THIS YEAR'S VIRTUAL PEOPLE OF COLOR CONFERENCE** (POCC), hosted by NAIS, was aptly called: New Decade, New Destinies: Challenging Self, Changing Systems, and Choosing Justice. POCC provides a majority experience for people of color working in predominantly white independent schools like CRS. It offers a variety of programming that allows people of color and allies to come together, reflect on their individual experiences, and learn from each other.

Each year, CRS commits to sending any faculty and staff members of color who wish to attend the conference. Most of our faculty of color attended POCC this year and experienced a wide range of programs, from seminars and workshops to masterclasses and wellness activities. "While always a herculean effort to plan, design, and present at a national level, this year's efforts are especially complicated given the virtual nature of the conference which draws thousands of educators," says Head of School Gretchen Larkin. "Grade 5 Co-Teacher Elena Pereira presented a workshop with four colleagues from around the country about trans-racial adoption. We are so proud of Elena and the time and thought she put into such a complex and emotional topic."

In February, CRS middle school students participated in the AISNE-sponsored Middle School Students of Color Conference, hosted this year at Rivers School. The conference featured workshops, performances, affinity group gatherings, dancing, trivia, and more. Psychologist, performer, and poet Mykee Fowlin was the keynote speaker.

## Exploring Family Trees and Understanding Identity in Grade 6

**AFTER STUDENTS IN GRADE 6** read the book *Jefferson's Sons*, which tells the story of Thomas Jefferson's children with Sally Hemings, who was enslaved by him, they investigated the Hemings/Jefferson family tree. Then students were asked to create their own visual family tree, with a few universal goals and a lot of opportunity for extensions. Grade 6 Co-Teacher Sarah Thomas says, "This was the second year I've done the project, and a few kids both years really dove in and went above and beyond, doing extra research with their family and learning a ton about their history that they didn't know before."

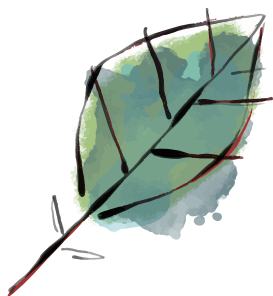
Students presented their family tree to the class and answered questions about unique names they came across, the research process, and any surprises they learned along the way. Because of the nature of the project, parents and other family members were encouraged to help build the tree together.



▲ Akira Baruni shares her sixth-grade family tree project.

## Mindfulness Matters

**WITH SO MUCH GOING ON** in the world, it's no doubt that anxiety ran high for families and households this year. To that end, this winter, School Counselor Hannah Sokol offered students, teachers, and parents a few simple mindfulness activities to practice. "Mindfulness can be a supportive tool to keep students and adults grounded and engaged during times of stress," says Sokol. "Mindfulness is not about shutting out intense feelings or emotions; rather it helps us to anchor and to observe non-judgmentally what we are experiencing, helping us to stay present and build resiliency for difficult times." Sokol also led mindfulness sessions with different cohorts throughout the year. Here are a few activities to try:



### ZEN DOODLING

Put on some music (try some of the "focusing" or "calm" Spotify playlists or instrumental music on YouTube). Use a coloring page or just doodle without lines! Focus on the here and now: "I am coloring this leaf green, I can feel the heat of my hand on the pencil."



### RAINBOW WALK

Take time outside to go on a fresh air walk and notice colors around you. Try to find objects that are red, yellow, orange, green, blue, and purple. It's like a scavenger hunt but brings mindful attention to the task while getting fresh air and sunlight.



### GROUNDING 5 SENSES

After a few moments of quiet breathing, attune to your surroundings and try to identify: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste.

## Calling All Aru Fans: Award-Winning Author Connects with Grade 3

**WHEN A GROUP OF THIRD GRADERS** heard about "Dress Up Day" during Spirit Week this spring, they drew inspiration from their favorite book. All year, the entire class had been reading (and loving!) the Aru Shah books, written by *New York Times* bestselling author Roshani Chokshi. Several students dressed as characters from the Hindu-inspired series and a social media post of the students in costume caught Chokshi's eye. Just like a plot twist in one of the books, Grade 3 couldn't believe what happened next!

Co-Teachers Lizz Albany and Kelsey Lees arranged for each of their students to receive a signed copy of the latest book, "Aru Shah and the City of Gold," as an end-of-year gift. Chokshi also took time to create a personalized video for our CRS readers, thanking them for their support and telling them that their costumes "made my year." She went on to wish students a happy summer, filled with "fantastical adventures."



▲ Third-graders (from left) Lilah Branton, C.J. Pardo, Devin Kennedy, Weston Beehr, and (not pictured) Mickie Laguerre dressed as characters from the Aru Shah book series by Roshani Chokshi.

## A Year of Virtual Success for CRS MUNers



▲ The 2020-21 CRS MUN Team

**THE 2020-2021 MODEL UN SEASON** was one we'll never forget! CRS students attended eight conferences (a record for our MUNers), all of which were held virtually due to the pandemic. While everyone missed the excitement and intensity of in-person negotiations, the upside was that students from all over the country and the world attended these virtual conferences. Topics covered a wide range of issues, including the climate crisis, Punic Wars, sustainable development goals, freedom and safety of the press, and protecting the rights of asylum seekers. Preparing for conferences was more challenging because, for middle school MUN conferences, students typically work with a partner but had to work solo this year. Also, because the club couldn't hold weekly in-person meetings, students were researching and writing position papers independently.

Model UN is an activity that encourages a win-win approach to international problem-solving, and it helps students build research, writing, public speaking, problem-solving, and negotiation skills. At the end of each conference, awards are given to students who have excelled in one of these areas: Best Position Paper, Best Public Speaker, Best Negotiator, and the highly coveted Best Delegate. This year, CRS students earned 23 awards (the most ever), including six Position Paper awards, and eight Best Delegate awards.

In addition to the formal conferences, a small group of MUNers led an evening event for CRS families in February. This "Zombie Pandemic" simulation gave attendees a taste of Model UN. In June, eighth-grade MUNers helped with the inaugural Grade 5 "Save the Whales" MUN conference.

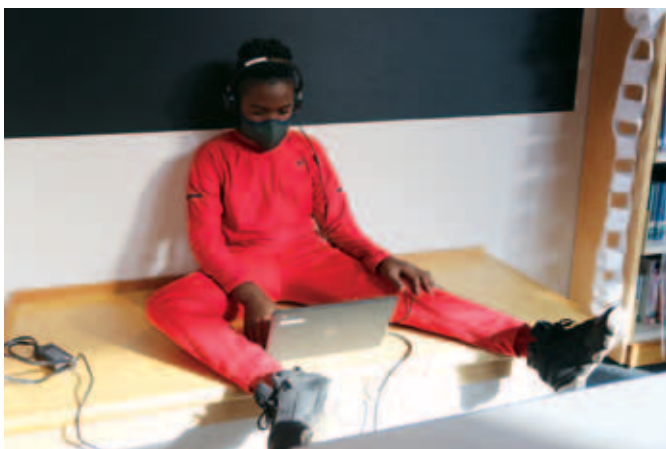
This year, MUN advisors Karen Pratt and Chris Raskin welcomed 7/8 Social Studies Teacher Tessa Steinert-Evoy to the advising team. Next year, Tessa will take the reins as Chris Raskin steps back from her advising role. "I have loved every minute of my time with the CRS MUN Club," says Chris. "When I started the club 13 years ago, I never imagined it would become such a mainstay in the CRS middle school. It has been an incredible way to help students learn about the world while helping them also learn the skills needed to be compassionate, creative, inclusive leaders. I never tire of watching wide-eyed sixth-graders grow into polished eighth-grade speakers, negotiators, and collaborators. It has been a joy."

### Model UN Awards: By the Numbers

Congratulations to award winners  
Priya DuBois, Elizabeth Lapidés, Brooke Travis, Ben Fogler (all Class of 2021),  
Lara Do Rosario, Emery Nordahl,  
Mira Haber, Siena Pedder, Olivia Colas  
(all Class of 2022), Cole Miranda, and  
Caleb Stokes (both Class of 2023).

**11** CRS students won a total of 23 awards during this year's Model UN season.

**8** Best Delegate  
**2** Most Improved  
**4** Best Negotiator  
**6** Best Position Paper  
**3** Best Public Speaker



▲ Dom Culbreath '24 focuses during an MLK Action Day workshop



▲ Third graders Henry Rico (left) and Shah Kazmirski discuss how to create an inclusive calendar for their classroom.



▲ Jill Ramos-Starmer '22 makes a protest sign during an MLK Action Day activity.

## MLK Action Day & Assembly

**IN JANUARY**, all grades participated in workshops, discussions, and activities centered on taking action and seeking justice in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Most classes continued the work in the weeks that followed, as the projects were well integrated with the curriculum. The following month, students organized and led an all-school assembly in honor of Black History Month. Middle school students Olivia Colas, Gabby Wood, Lara Do Rosario, and Zelia Rodriguez planned and created every aspect of the assembly, from the profiles they shared of Black Americans who have made great contributions to our country to trivia questions that all grades could answer live during the Zoom.

## CRS Teacher Presents at National Conference

**THIS SPRING**, Literacy Specialist Amy Lisbon Branton '95 presented at the Academy of Orton Gillingham Annual Conference with a colleague from the Carroll School. Their session, "Building Oral Reading Fluency," was attended by more than 400 people. It took a close look at the characteristics of oral reading fluency and how to build fluency in a multisensory way starting at the sound-symbol level, moving to the single word level, then phrases and sentences, and finally connected text.

# Sports Day Returns

While so many CRS traditions were reimagined or put on hold altogether this year, we were thrilled to welcome Sports Day back as an in-person event. Teams donned their best blue or gold gear—everything from game-day face paint to colorful tutus, hats, and headbands—and engaged in some friendly competition on the fields. The day included fun Buddy activities, a rotation of games and events for grades 4-8, and, of course, the annual relay races. When it came to the final points tally, the Blue Team edged out Gold, but as always, all Otters had fun!



Gabby Wood '21



Ayda Zisfein-Shea '27



Lila Scanlon (left) and Brennan Judge, both '26



Beni Robledo (left) and Sam Murphy, both '25



Noemi Li '27



Caroline Webb (left) and Sydney Townsend, both '23



◀ Casey Grimm '23



PreK/K students wanted to cross the finish line just like our older relay runners! ▲



Garion Trust '27 ▲

## Spring Sports

This spring, the Athletics Department offered after school sports for Grades 5-8. Students rotated through several sports during the course of the shortened season. Although we couldn't compete against other schools, it was great to see some action on the fields again! We're looking forward to bringing back the full intramural sports program next fall.



Sienna Marino '22 ▲



Cole Miranda '23 ▲

THE ARTS

**THROUGH ART, MUSIC, AND PERFORMING ARTS,** students use creativity to build problem-solving skills while learning important concepts and techniques. In line with the school’s hands-on, thematic approach, the arts are often integrated with the classroom themes and subjects.

Visual Arts

From the unique challenges of remote teaching to adapting to outdoor, tented studio spaces, our visual arts faculty did whatever it took to help students express themselves and make beautiful art this year.



▲ Ronan Lyman '23 is all smiles as he sketches.



◀ PreK/K self-portraits captured this year’s masked “look” perfectly.

This collaborative piece by Grade 6 lined the hallways in the front lobby.





▲ Throwback Art: A third-grade Asian brush painting sequence, done by this year's fifth-grade class. During a year when giving parents insight into students' time at school was paramount, most artwork was sent home immediately. So, teachers revisited their favorite student pieces for display.



▲ Cash Stokes '28 and his Grades 1/2 classmates loved print-making with Ms. Oliveira.



▲ Brook Byrnes '28 discovers the many shades of purple.



▲ This piece by Katherine Plunkett '24 captures all the color contrasts.

# Performing Arts

While singing was curtailed for much of the year, our students still made music and treated us all to heartfelt performances. From music class to the virtual assembly “stage,” watching our students perform brought a lot of joy.

Scenes from “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” this year’s eighth-grade play. Our students gave a brilliant performance in front of an in-person audience (the first of the year.)



Grade 7 students perform a hip-hop dance they learned in MultiArts class.





Tad Dow '30 and his PreK/K classmates find their beat with Senora Welch.



Katherine Plunkett '24 celebrates the right chord in music class.



Pianist Brianna Cardoza and drummer Noelle Piecuch, both '24, perform in Foster Hall during a virtual assembly.

We were so happy to watch the fourth grade's annual West African drumming and dance performance.



Third grader Weston Beehr and his classmates learn notes on the xylophone.



# From CRS to the Senator's Desk

▲ Co-Teacher Theresa Leone listens to second grader Ayda Zisfein-Shea's presentation to Senator Rausch.

► Co-Teacher Jen Worthington helps first grader Joaquin Rodriguez present what he learned about symbols on the flag.



**As our first and second graders explored the idea of community through thematic curriculum this year, they discovered narratives that excluded or diminished certain groups of people. So, they used practical skills, confidence, and creativity to do something about it.**

## ONE OF THE THINGS THAT SETS CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL APART IS ITS

interdisciplinary approach to education through thematic study. This year, the theme for Grades One/Two was “community,” with skill-building activities integrated throughout language arts, social studies, science, mathematics, and the arts.

Teachers introduced the theme broadly at first, asking students what defines a community. They also posed a question that they’d return to throughout the year: “How do communities thrive?” Additionally, as a framework for class discussions, the team folded in the concept of “identity” from the Learning For Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance) social justice teaching standards. As students examined different kinds of communities, including social groups, families, school, and geographic communities, they did so through this lens of justice, identity, and inclusivity.

Throughout the fall and winter, Grades One/Two thought deeply about what it means to be from Massachusetts. From the land itself to the many things that our state’s citizens have contributed to the world, students explored the shared experiences of all Bay State community members. “We didn’t leave many stones unturned,” explains Grades One/Two Co-Teacher Jordy Hertzberg. “We studied maps of different cities and towns here, and researched the state’s history. When we returned from winter break, we started studying the state flag.”

Students became experts on the Massachusetts flag by drawing it and learning about all its symbols and their meanings. They compared it to other state flags in New England as well as to the flags of the Wampanoag and Mohawk Nations. With this groundwork, teachers asked students what they noticed about the flag and encouraged them to consider other people’s perspectives. “Students began making observations and asking questions about why certain things were what they were,” says Hertzberg. “That’s how true learning happens —by having kids ask big questions and then letting them dig deeper for the answers themselves.”

Students discussed what Native Americans might think about the Massachusetts flag. “Being on the flag shows that [Native Americans] are important, but the sword above the head could mean that they’re killing them or threatening to kill them,” said second-grader Saya Shah. Another student, first-grader Emma Bagchi, started sketching during the discussion and wrote a powerful message: “Change Needs to Happen.” Students’ questions and concerns were confirmed after they watched a WGBH news interview where a member of the Wampanoag Nation discussed his views of the flag. Students agreed that parts of our state flag are unjust towards Native Americans, and that it needs to be changed. So, CRS Grades One/Two got to work.

On January 15, 2021, during a school-wide “Action Day,” in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., teachers unveiled a project for our first and second graders to each design a new state flag. The students reflected on their lessons and conversations about what matters most to them about Massachusetts and drew on their understanding of symbols to represent ideas and beliefs. Again, they asked, “How can this community thrive?” With this knowledge, students either kept aspects of the current flag while changing other elements, or totally reimagined the flag. Some students honored our temperate seasons and beautiful coastline, while others wove in state history and drawings of wildlife.

The following week, the teaching team learned that our state government had recently approved legislation to form a committee to change the flag. It seemed other members of our Massachusetts community agreed with our first and second graders’ assessments. Grades One/Two connected via Zoom with local State Senator Rebecca Rausch of Needham (a co-sponsor of this bill) to present their ideas to her and ask questions about what it’s like to be a leader in the community. From peace and unity to kindness and chocolate chip cookies (which were invented here in Massachusetts), Senator Rausch left with lots of ideas from CRS students.

The conversation with Senator Rausch taught students that knowledge can inform much-needed action—in our own community and beyond—to ensure that everyone thrives. 🍪



▲ Students in Jordy Hertzberg’s class talk with Senator Rebecca Rausch about the bill to amend the Massachusetts flag.



▲ Students in Grades One/Two redesigned the state flag.

*CRS found ways to  
alleviate the stress and  
strain of learning during  
the pandemic by doing  
what it always has—  
taking care of the  
whole child.*

# A Focus on Fun

## WHY IT'S VITAL FOR LEARNING



**WHEN CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL REOPENED** for in-person learning in fall 2020, it came with a wide range of emotions from all corners of our community. After months of remote learning the previous spring, there was a lot of excitement to be back together. But, there was anxiety, uncertainty, and real fear to grapple with as well. Parents, while relieved that their children could finally spend time with classmates after isolating for so long, questioned the effects that physical distancing and mask-wearing would have on social-emotional health and academic progress. Faculty members who were eager to return to the classroom simultaneously worried about potential risks to their personal health. Students who wanted nothing more than to return to the CRS campus they loved and missed, struggled to navigate new health and safety rules and the limitations that came with them.

It quickly became clear that, while it was amazing to be back, it was simply a lot. The demanding daily schedule and adherence to safety protocols took a toll. “Children are incredibly resilient, but the pandemic challenged all of us in ways that we had never experienced before,” says Head of School Gretchen Larkin. “There might be any number of things happening at home: separation from extended family, financial struggles related to the pandemic, health concerns, or even grieving the loss of a loved one. For many children, school has always served as a safe place to navigate stress in their lives. But this year, children came to school and it all looked and felt wholly different. We knew that we needed to address it head-on and to find balance in our program.”

While national headlines seemed to focus solely on closing the “learning gap” that occurred last spring, the Charles River School faculty, led by Larkin, knew that making up for lost time by powering through curriculum was not the answer. “Our faculty have always been masterful at meeting students where they are and understanding how children learn best,” says Larkin. “This year, that meant considering and ultimately caring for students’ emotional health first so that they would be ready to learn in the classroom. We needed to give students opportunities to feel hopeful and happy.”

One of the first “fun” announcements that Larkin made involved a childhood staple and, let’s be honest, an overall CRS fan favorite—freshly baked cookies. Health protocols and safety measures meant snacks and meals needed an overhaul. With the dining room and buffet stations closed, the school worked closely with Flik, its dining service provider, to create a new system. It meant limited food options, and strict rules around where, when, and how students could eat. It was an early source of stress for all, so, while she worked with Flik in the opening weeks to iron out the details, Larkin promised the return and reliability of Chef Christian Straussberger’s famous cookies each week. “It was an easy win,” she laughs. “And a delicious one! It was a small, simple way to lift spirits.”

Child psychologist and Charles River School alumna Molly Plummer Cook ’95 couldn’t agree more about the importance of providing students with the right environment in which they can thrive. “As the parent of young kids myself, I have a great appreciation for the ‘burnout’ parents have felt during the pandemic. It’s completely justified and means that school has become more of a refuge than ever before,” explains Cook. “Keeping schools open this year and staying on pace with curriculum



was, simply and honestly, the bare minimum. The key element in the social-emotional health of children is finding ways to spark joy.”

Cook also explains that children learn best when they’re happy. “CRS is still a pioneer in the social-emotional underpinnings of successful learning. When children feel joyful, they thrive,” she says.

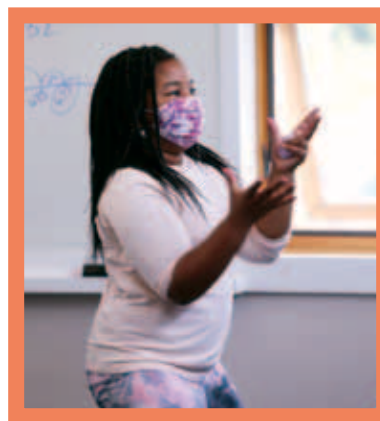
Charles River School has always been committed to supporting children’s social-emotional learning. For the past several years, administrators and teachers have trained with Yale University’s Center for Emotional Intelligence through their RULER program. The acclaimed program relies on core tools that teachers can use to address five skills of emotional intelligence: recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating. Many faculty members use “mood meters” in their classrooms to help children identify feelings so that they can address them appropriately. This allows students to deal with their emotions so that they can be fully present to learn.

Faculty, staff, and administration also knew they needed to infuse fun into school days, this year more than ever. “CRS has always believed in the power of play,” says Larkin. “We wanted to find ways within our health and safety protocols to let children be children.” From special snacks like cider donuts in the fall and hot chocolate in the winter, to pop-up surprises like a giant inflatable slide and campus-wide snow painting, faculty and staff found ways to break up the long, socially-distanced days. Several members of the faculty and administration even formed a “Fun Committee,” and loved to leave new toys for students of all ages to enjoy during recess.

“One day there were surprise stomp rockets at recess,” said third grader C.J. Pardo. “It was the best day ever.” Pool noodles were also a fan favorite at recess and in PE classes. Students in all grades used them to play different games, with an occasional epic jousting battle, too. And, although the school put field trips on hold this year, we did make one exception of sorts: this winter Director of Athletics Paul Rupprecht took students across the street to go sledding at Dover Town Hall.

Finding fun fostered student agency and leadership as well. Middle school members of the Student Activities Council were responsible for planning games and activities during Spirit Week, which culminated in an all-school Spring Festival. We were also able to bring back the Buddy Program, which has always been a way for older students to serve as role models for younger students.

As restrictions continue to ease and we head back to normal, celebrating childhood and all of its joys will remain—as it always has—at CRS. 🐼







# The Art of Amplifying Others

**Trisha Nicolas '05, a Content Executive for Snap Inc.'s Snapchat app, is working to give new generations the tools and forum they need to have their voices heard.**

**AS A YOUNG NEWS REPORTER** working in New York City, Trisha Nicolas looked around at the scene she was assigned to cover and noticed something about herself and the small crowd that had gathered. She was the only Black journalist there and most of the people of color had made their way over to where she was reporting. They wanted to listen to what she had to say. “In that moment, I remember thinking: the lens of the storyteller is important,” says Nicolas. “Soon after, I realized that general news reporting wasn’t what I was meant to do. I wanted to connect people through my work and uplift others’ voices. I want to amplify their stories.”

With this new framework for content, Nicolas transitioned out of TV news in 2017, and entered the digital space. At the time, digital storytelling and strategic content creation were fairly new and her coworkers, friends, and family questioned how it could possibly pay off. But, Nicolas already had a vision to create change through this medium. She moved to Los Angeles, not knowing anyone, and accepted a job at Snap Inc., one of the world’s fastest-growing companies, in December 2017. She worked for their groundbreaking multimedia app, Snapchat, in the Syndicated Show division. After more than three years, Nicolas switched to developing content and programming for Snapchat’s Unscripted Originals department this past January.

“Younger generations are invested in social justice,” says Nicolas. “They soak up content about the issues that matter to them—the environment, women’s issues, racial equality, and justice. And, they also want a platform where they can share their own voices and opinions. That’s what social media and, in particular, Snapchat, provides. We contribute to human progress by empowering people to express themselves, live in the moment, learn about the world, and have fun together.”

With more than 280 million active users, Snapchat’s audience spans every group of people, and the company is committed to ensuring users feel represented on the app. Although Nicolas was one of very few Black women in her division when she started, the company has since recruited top talented creators from the Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian Pacific Islander communities. It’s also important to Snapchat that all employees feel supported at their place of work; Nicolas leads the Black affinity group, SnapNoir, and is involved in advancing other diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives for the company.

The importance of representation and the idea that “you need to see success in order to know you can achieve it, too,” as Nicolas puts it, is something she learned through experience, starting with her time at Charles River School.

Nicolas was the only student of color in her class when she arrived at CRS, and, while that wasn’t easy, she always felt

supported here. “My teachers and advisors made it comfortable to be here, a home away from home,” says Nicolas. “There were so many people who made an impression on me and impacted my experience. Mr. Walsh and his guitar were my first introduction to CRS, and Mimi Earley was like a second mom to me here. They made me feel like I belonged, even when I felt like a fish out of water. I also credit Mary Walsh, Kent Rouillard, Chris Raskin, and so many others for allowing me to try new things.”

Nicolas was able to have the full Charles River School experience, from advanced math, meditation, and music to field hockey, speech competitions, and science. When she arrived at CRS in the fifth grade from a small parochial school in Milton, the Canton native hadn’t been exposed to such an enriched academic program or the wide variety of extracurricular activities the school offered. Her mother, a Boston public school teacher, wanted the best, strongest educational experience for her children. One of Nicolas’ younger sisters, Gina, also attended CRS. Both women agree that because their mother placed such a high value on their education, they, too, understood the impact CRS could have on their lives.

“The biggest lesson I learned at CRS is that I can take on anything,” says Nicolas. “I’ve moved to places where I didn’t know anyone—first to Georgia for Spelman College, then to New York, and California for my career. I know I can tackle anything, even if I haven’t done it before. Nothing scares me.”

Her experiences as a student—from CRS to Spelman and beyond—have inspired Nicolas to give back to other young people. She started a non-profit called Dreams2Reality for underserved youth to provide them with training, life skills, networking opportunities, etc. Living out her own mantra—if you can see it, you know you can achieve it—Nicolas is a role model and mentor to so many. 🌱



Trisha Nicolas '05 speaks to the entire middle school community during a visit to CRS.

## Connecting on Campus

On May 14, 2021, sisters Trisha '05 and Gina '08 Nicolas returned to CRS to reconnect with teachers, tour the campus, and talk with middle school students. The visit brought a flood of happy memories for both young women, as they excitedly pointed to where they celebrated May Day, performed in the eighth-grade play, or participated in flag football games. And, while they both say their experience at Charles River School was impactful and positive, they also spoke to the challenges they each faced as one of few Black students at the school. Their willingness to engage in this dialogue helped today’s students of color to connect through shared experience and inspired the full CRS community as the school continues to strengthen its commitment to inclusion and belonging.

Trisha and Gina first met with the Middle School Girls Community of Color affinity group. They talked about being Black girls at a predominantly white institution, and how that affected everything from friendships with classmates to relationships with teachers, most of whom didn’t look like them. Our students were able to see themselves in Trisha and Gina, who both offered to keep in touch and continue mentoring the girls. Later in the day, Trisha spoke with the entire middle school about her experiences as a Black student in elementary school, high school, and college. She talked about her career path to Snapchat, and reinforced CRS’s digital literacy curriculum, which helps students navigate their online presence safely.

As alumnae of Charles River School, both Trisha and Gina embody the school’s mission; they know themselves, understand others, and are shaping the future of our diverse world with confidence and compassion. On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students, we are so grateful to them both for giving back to the community and sharing their perspectives. 🌱



▲ Mickie Laguerre '26



▲ *Sulwe* by Lupita Nyong'o



▲ Students in grades PreK-3 were captivated by Mickie's read aloud.

# Sharing *Sulwe*

**CRS third grader Mickie Laguerre read aloud one of her favorite stories to the community, and, in the process, shared a piece of herself.**

**ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES** during the 2020-21 school year was staying connected as a community. Even though Charles River School returned to in-person learning in the fall, health and safety guidelines made physical distancing and cohorting a new reality on campus. Our teachers and students yearned for ways to bridge the gap and with commitment, creativity—and a little help from technology—they managed to find ways to come together. Through the power of Zoom, one student shared her favorite story—igniting a spark for other students and within herself.

Grade 3 Co-Teachers Lizz Albany and Kelsey Lees noticed that student Mickie Laguerre always gravitated to the book, *Sulwe*, written by Academy Award-winning actress Lupita Nyong'o. Mickie had moved on to reading more advanced stories, but the children's picture book remained one of her absolute favorites. So, her teachers asked if she'd be interested in reading the story aloud, via Zoom, to students and classmates in grades PreK-3. "It sounded fun, but also really scary," says Mickie. "Even though I couldn't see [the audience], I knew it was a lot of people listening to me. Even my mom and dad were there, which made me more nervous."

The stunningly illustrated book tells the story of Sulwe, a young girl whose skin is the "color of midnight." Sulwe wants to be beautiful like her mother and sister, and goes on an imaginative journey to discover her own beauty. "I like *Sulwe* because I've felt like that before," says Mickie. "But then I tell myself, 'You're beautiful the way you are.'"

The day of Mickie's reading, students gathered in their classrooms to hear her voice and watch her turn the pages on a projected screen. Their eyes were glued to the illustrations as they listened. The same story that inspired Mickie also resonated with students across the early grades. When students saw her in the days that followed, they called out to her, thanking her for sharing the story and letting her know she had done a great job.

"When I was in PreKindergarten I remember my buddy did something at a Sharing Assembly, so this was kind of the same," says Mickie. "I think I'll read another story someday, maybe when things are back to normal and I can be on stage, too."

As for that next read aloud? Perhaps it will be an original piece of her own. After reading *Sulwe* so many times, Mickie was inspired to write her own story about finding beauty within. She's been working on it all year and even has plans for a sequel. "I like creating my own because I can do what I want," says Mickie. "And maybe someone will read it the way I do with *Sulwe* and feel better." 🐼

# What is a Wet Lab?

**Our state-of-the-art science classrooms allow middle schoolers to observe, hypothesize, and investigate—whether they’re using the facilities as a wet lab for life sciences or as a dry lab for calculations and research.**

**OUR STUDENT SCIENTISTS** always look forward to lab days. The hands-on experience gives them a chance to ask questions and explore for the answers, which leads to deeper understanding. In grades 3-6, science teachers Annie Kenney and Kathleen Boucher-Lavigne transform their classroom spaces into what students need. And the opportunity to participate in either dry or wet labs helps prepare students for the upper level labs that they do in Grades 7/8 as well as for high school.

By definition, a wet lab is where chemical or biological matter can be tested and analyzed. In sixth grade, the curriculum focuses primarily on biological matter, while 7/8 focuses on both chemical and biological. A dry lab focuses more on applied or computational mathematics and this is one way that CRS integrates its math curriculum into science.

“Dry labs are particularly helpful when the materials you want to study are too harmful to handle or are far away,” explains Boucher-Lavigne, who teaches Grade 6. “For example, in the Environmental Justice and Freshwater Systems unit at the beginning of the year, students did dry labs to investigate the Nā Wai ‘Ehā streams in Hawaii, where there have been legal battles and decades of work to get the Waiahole water restored to their original streams. Dry labs helped students explain how the diversion of the Four Rivers affected the local ecosystem over time and what data were used to determine these effects.”

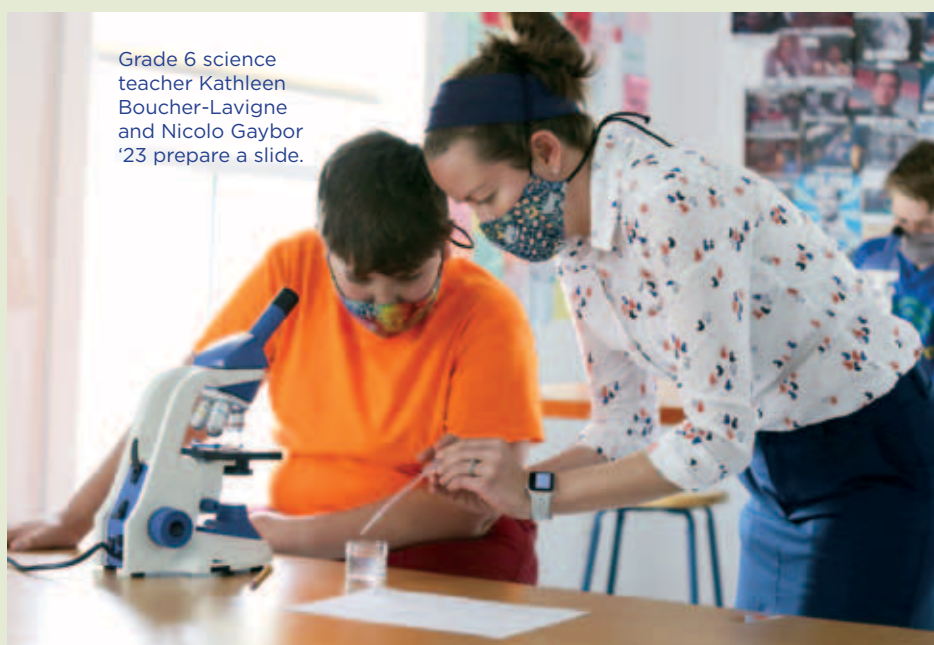
Later in the year, sixth graders participated in a lab with both wet and dry components when they studied food chains and energy flow. Students were introduced to an aquatic food web diagram that had three missing “mystery” organisms: yeast, paramecium, and didinium cultures. After drawing inferences about those mystery organisms, a microscopic investigation was done to solve a “who eats whom” mystery. One student said with excitement, “It looks like Pacman to watch the predator and prey relationships.” Another observed, “I can totally see which one is a consumer and which one is a decomposer. The decomposer breaks down organisms, but the consumer eats specific organisms.” Sixth graders had a chance to revise any cases of initial mistaken identity as they carefully looked at specimens.

This was a mixture of a wet lab and dry lab because students used physical and mathematical models to analyze the loss of energy between trophic levels.

Our state-of-the-art facilities, masterful teachers, and progressive approach to learning help students uncover different angles. This journey to discovery—during a wet lab, dry lab, and also an English class, math lesson, or conversation about current affairs—has a profound effect on what students learn, since they uncover and understand the why. 🌱



Sydney Townsend '23 examines a didinium culture during a wet lab.



Grade 6 science teacher Kathleen Boucher-Lavigne and Nicolo Gaybor '23 prepare a slide.



# CONGRATULATIONS graduates

— CLASS OF 2021 —



# Coming Together At Long Last to Celebrate the Class of 2021

Emotions were high, for all the very best reasons, on Friday, June 11, as faculty, staff, parents, and guests gathered under a stately graduation tent to celebrate the Class of 2021. In the days leading up to the in-person, outdoor ceremony, several COVID restrictions were lifted, allowing graduates and their guests to leave their masks behind. For some parents, it was the first time stepping on campus this year, and the fact that they could see and share smiles to mark this important milestone made all the difference. Head of School Gretchen Larkin said that this—the simple joy that a smile brings—is one of the things she missed most throughout the mask-wearing mandates of the pandemic. Still, little time was spent dwelling on what was lost this year; instead all things pointed to our graduates' bright futures and all that lies ahead for them.

In her graduation remarks, Larkin's parting words to the graduates were:

*"Class of 2021, you are bright, capable, high spirited, lively, animated, and exuberant! Today is your day and we are so happy for you. Because you will have opportunities in high school—and beyond—that few in this world have, practice kindness and compassion always. Life is too short to be anything but kind. Call upon your goodness, smile often, and remember that you are surrounded by people who love you infinitely. We miss you already."*



- 1 Brooke Travis (left) and Gabby Woods
- 2 Alex Leahy
- 3 The Class of 2021
- 4 Jackson Beehr receives his diploma from Gretchen Larkin.
- 5 Owen Wigren celebrates with his father, Andy.
- 6 Alex Lowitt (left) and Henry Booth present their CRS reflection.
- 7 Nathan Gomes shares a special moment with his mother, Olga.
- 8 Gretchen Larkin (center), smiles with Elizabeth (left) and Hannah '18 Lapidés.
- 9 Center stage, from left: Lisa O'Leary, Eva Scanlon, Maxim Harding, Elsa Poler, and Gabby Woods



10



11



12



14



13

**10** Riley Anukem (left) and Terrence Flewelling-Allen

**11** Elizabeth Lapides (left) and Priya DuBois

**12** Gray Jarboe performs a karate demonstration.

**13** The DuBois Family, from left: Nisha, Mara '20, Priya '21, Leela '17, and Steve

**14** Maxim Harding presents a flower, a CRS tradition to express students' appreciation for their loved ones.



- 15 Our graduates completed the tile art project, a CRS tradition, with a new twist this year.
- 16 Elsa Poler receives her diploma from Gretchen Larkin.
- 17 The Anukem Family, from left: Quana, Riley, and Promise
- 18 From left: Nathan Gomes, Alex Lowitt, Lisa O'Leary, Gabby Woods, Brooke Travis, and Elizabeth Lapides
- 19 Friends, family, and faculty celebrate under the graduation tent.



## GRADE 8 PRESENTATIONS

One of the most beloved traditions of a Charles River School graduation ceremony is the student presentations, reflections, and shared talents. This year, our graduates gave us a wide range, presenting passions for music, dance, athletics, and martial arts. They impressed us with new skills they've learned, inspired us with original written pieces, and shared their favorite poems. It's difficult to capture the magic of these presentations on paper; below is just one of so many truly awe-inspiring submissions:

# An Ode to CRS

By **Ben Fogler**, Class of 2021

What school could it be,  
One that cares so much about thee,  
What place, of knowledge, of thought  
Where not just academics, but friendship is taught?

Named after a river that runs strong and true,  
With five buildings, and a barn, too!  
The school was built in 1911,  
Some call it Charles River, I call it heaven!

In a town called Dover, down Old Meadow Road,  
Lies CRS, a place of wonders untold.  
Of its dedication to learning, no one's in disagreement—  
Its motto is "Deeper Understanding, Higher  
Achievement!"

There really is no other place for me,  
CRS is the best, it's plain to see,  
My point is clear, so I shall not dither -  
Next to CRS, all the competitors wither!

So to this school, I must say thanks,  
It's given me oodles, and you can take that to the bank!  
Let's start with the teachers: Leigh, Kent, Chris,  
and Tessa,  
Plus Julie, Elizabeth, Mary, and Becca!

Of course double gratitude is due  
To Tessa and Chris, my advisors two.  
A more epic group, thou never shall meet,  
'Tis why they are both thanked in repeat!

I'd be a fool to forget my mentor, Simon  
If I said he didn't brighten my day, I'd be lyin'  
None can hope to be a better mentor than him,  
Indeed, the chances of that happening are very slim!

Now I've already thanked the teachers for grades 7 and 8,  
But there are teachers of all ages, and it would be in  
poor taste  
To not thank those who educate in PE, art, technology,  
and music,  
Such as Mica, Mary, Aaron, Billy, and Paul Rupprecht!

And last but never least, the people who make every  
day great,  
A thousand thank-you's to my fellow classmates.  
Although it is sad that this is the end,  
I am always glad I can call you my friends.

There are so many more to appreciate,  
If I were to say them all, we'd be here all day.  
But know that even now as we depart,  
CRS will always have a place in my heart.



**EXCERPTS FROM GRADE 8 ADVISORS —  
ELIZABETH CLAYTON, BECCA HURD, LEIGH HUTCHINSON,  
KENT ROUILLARD, TESSA STEINERT-EVOY, AND JULIE WEEDEN**



**RILEY J. E. ANUKEM:** “We know that no matter what you do you’ll bring your big heart into it.”



**JACKSON TALBOT BEEHR:** “You are an amazing teammate; talented and generous, you ‘play’ sports in the best sense of the word.”



**HENRY ORRIN BOOTH:** “A kind hearted student who isn’t afraid to tap into his creative side...One of your classmates remarks that you have the incredible ability to be ‘both smart and funny.’”



**PRIYA SADIE DUBOIS:** “For such a dedicated student, you managed to still fill our classrooms and our hearts with your distinctive laugh. Your zest for life was apparent from the first moment we met you.”



**TERRENCE MILES FLEWELLING-ALLEN:** “Captivating, perceptive, observant, and knowledgeable, you are acutely aware of equity and justice issues and passionately uncover truths.”



**BENJAMIN JOSEPH FOGLER:** “With the realism mixed with your thoughtful intelligence, we are so looking forward to seeing how you change the world.”



**NATHAN J. GOMES:** “You have a profound respect for everyone, though especially for the younger students...you look out for them with keen awareness and little fanfare.”



**MAXIM ALEXANDER HARDING:** “Your passion for facts and logical arguments is not all you are—a strong athlete, a convivial community member, and helpful to classmates when they need it.”



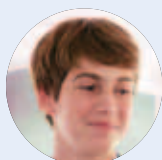
**GRAY AVERY JARBOE:** “You are our voice of conscience, our bravery in action, our hope for a better world.”



**ELIZABETH RUSSELL LAPIDÈS:** “An unmatched leader, there is yet to be a committee, classroom, or collaboration that has not benefited from your presence.”



**ALEX G. LEAHY:** “You are a beacon of strength, the calm in a sea of mutinous discussion.”



**ALEXANDER MILES LOWITT:** “While you may lead with your heart, it is your insatiable curiosity that fuels you. You are a staunch supporter of the underdog and epitomize our hopes for the future.”



**LISA JOSEPHINE O’LEARY:** “Your determination is remarkable—whether succeeding as an entrepreneur, a student, or an athlete—you give your all to every endeavor.”



**ELSA COOPER POLER:** “A scholar in every sense of the word, you are a hard worker who loves learning.”



**EVA MIN-JHEE SCANLON:** “Never one to demand the spotlight, you notice everything and then find a way to contribute and make a difference.”



**BROOKE JANET TRAVIS:** “A consummate mathematician, an award-winning Model UNer, a talented dancer—but more importantly, you are composed, considerate, generous, and acutely aware of the world around you.”



**OWEN CIAMPI WIGREN:** “You brighten our days with your easy smile, fill our classrooms with your energy, and challenge us with your love of a good debate.”



**GABRIELLA HYACINTH WOOD:** “An empath in every sense of the word, you see people for who they are and care deeply for your family, friends, and community.”

# New Trustees



## Kate Paglia

Kate lives in Dedham with her husband, Mike, and their two children, Evelyn '27 and Charlotte '30.

After earning her bachelor's in English literature at Brown University, Kate worked in higher education textbook publishing for 10 years. She worked in sales and marketing before becoming a senior acquisitions editor. In 2011, she transitioned to teaching by earning her master's in education at Lesley University; she taught tenth-grade English at Franklin High School for four years and now works as a freelance editor and project manager for various publishing companies, including Pearson Education.

In her free time, Kate is an avid reader; she also loves cooking, spending time on the Cape, and spoiling her family's rescue dog, Sunny. She has volunteered for multiple roles within the CRS community, including treasurer of the PA, class parent, and host family, as well as sitting on the Development Committee.



## Tessa Steinert-Evoy

EDUCATIONAL STAFF TRUSTEE

Tessa joined Charles River School in fall 2020 and recently completed her first year as the 7/8 social studies teacher. Before joining our community, she earned a master's in religion, ethics, and politics from Harvard University. While at Harvard, she focused on building a diverse curriculum that integrates religious literacy.

Tessa has worked on curriculum projects for PBS and the Children's Museum in Boston. Prior to this, she taught eighth-grade history and ninth-grade English at Falmouth Academy, and worked in the admissions office at Boston University Academy. Tessa grew up as a faculty child on a number of independent school campuses, including Choate Rosemary Hall and St. Mark's, and she became a student at two, The Fay School and Concord Academy. All of these experiences inspired her to teach in independent schools. In addition to her master's, Tessa holds a bachelor's from Boston University in history.



## Tracy-Ann Bain

Tracy-Ann lives in Easton with her husband, Ludger, their son Lucas '22, and daughter Ella '18. Tracy-Ann is a member of the CRS Development Committee and informally does her best to recruit new families of color to Charles River School.

Tracy-Ann holds a bachelor of science degree in marketing from Boston College and works at Northeastern University as a technical recruiter for the information technology services department.



## Janine Pardo

Janine and Doug Pardo and their daughter, C.J. '26, have lived in Dover since 2017. They originally moved to Massachusetts from New York in 2013. C.J. has attended CRS since Kindergarten.

Janine is an alumna of Princeton University. She works as a concierge physician at Synergy Private Health in Chestnut Hill where she practices a blend of primary care/internal medicine and functional medicine. She has more than 15 years of experience practicing medicine and has served on the CRS Health and Safety Committee since the start of the pandemic. Prior to that she had served on the CRS Parent Association as New Families Coordinator for two years.

# New Faculty and Administrators

## SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS

*This year, Charles River School created two inaugural positions, the Director of Auxiliary Programs and the Director of Equity, Belonging, and Community Life. Both of these roles will shape and support our community in different but much-needed ways.*

### **Netra Srikanth** DIRECTOR OF AUXILIARY PROGRAMS



In addition to overseeing all CRS Summer opportunities, including Charles River Creative Arts Program and new programming options offered during the summer months, Netra Srikanth will manage all programming that supports the mission of CRS throughout the year.

In recent years, Netra co-founded and directed several highly acclaimed programs, including Birch Learning, Urban Kids Music Collective, and Leoa Academy and Sports Pvt. The progressive learning company, Birch Learning, helped build inclusive programs for students ages 2-18, throughout the pandemic, pairing educators with families in home-based pods while schools were closed.

She has also worked as a curriculum development leader and teacher at several schools and educational programs. She served as the music director and teacher at Sisters in Song Women's A Cappella Group, Curriculum Director at Creative Minds Preschool, and teaching staff member at Hudson Sudbury School, to name a few roles. She also taught global history at The Urban Assembly School for Criminal Justice in Brooklyn, NY. Prior to her experience as an educator, Netra co-founded the tech start-up company Flipsicle.

Netra earned her bachelor's in world history from Tufts University, as well as her master's in education from the Teacher's College at Columbia University. She is a talented musician with a passion for education, athletics, and the arts.



### **Nia Jacobs** DIRECTOR OF EQUITY, BELONGING, AND COMMUNITY LIFE

The Director of Equity, Belonging, and Community Life role reflects our long-standing and deep commitment to fostering an environment in which each of us is welcomed, recognized, and valued. Nia Jacobs will work with every corner of our community to strengthen anti-racist and inclusive practices, both in and out of the classroom.

Nia joins CRS from Dana Hall School, where she most recently served as the Academic Dean. In this role, she developed and reviewed curriculum and academic policies for grades 5-12. She also coordinated diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts for faculty in conjunction with the Director of Community, Equity, and Inclusion. Nia served on the Community and Equity Council and as the chair for the Department Heads' and Curriculum Committees. Prior to her role as Academic Dean, she was the Assistant Director of the Upper School and the Junior Class Dean at Dana Hall.

Nia has served as a Teacher Mentor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she guided mentees through their first experiences with lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment design. She also taught U.S. history at both Buckingham Browne and Nichols School and Beaver Country Day School.

Nia earned her bachelor's in history from Columbia University, as well as her master's in education from Harvard Graduate School of Education. She served as a trustee for Boston Renaissance Charter Public School and was awarded Teacher of the Year at BB&N and The Peter Gow III Award for Excellence in Teaching at Beaver.



**Lily Yee**  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

With nearly 20 years of professional experience, Lily Yee brings her expertise in finance, budgeting, analysis, financial reporting, compliance, and grants management. She joins CRS from the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University (HNRCA), where she most recently served as the Associate Director of Planning and Analysis. At the HNRCA, Lily was the primary financial advisor and technical resource for all accounting and financial management matters with additional responsibilities in the areas of billing and compliance, purchasing, human resources and recruitment, capital equipment procurement, and audit support. She was also responsible for overseeing the annual operating and capital budgets for HNRCA and managed a team of staff assistants who provided daily support to the center's research laboratories, core scientific units, scientific computing, physical plant, and facilities.

Prior to her most recent position, Lily worked at Boston Children's Hospital as the grant compliance specialist and senior grant officer and at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center as an administrator in the Office of Sponsored Programs. In each of these roles, she worked closely with department administrators, managers and staff to consult, train, and advise on best financial practices. She also has extensive experience in grant proposal review, submission, and subcontract negotiations.

Lily earned her bachelor of arts in economics from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.



**Jody Barron**  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Jody Barron is a seasoned fundraiser with more than 20 years of experience in independent schools. She joins Charles River School from Tenacre Country Day School, where she served as the Director of Development for 14 years. During her impressive tenure there, Jody successfully completed two capital campaigns and one major gift project, all while increasing annual giving and participation from parents, alumni, grandparents, and staff. In honor of the school's 100-year anniversary in 2010, Jody designed and planned their year-long Centennial Celebration.

Prior to her role at Tenacre, Jody worked at Dedham Country Day as the Assistant Director of Development, with earlier positions as the school's campaign officer and annual fund assistant. In addition to managing the school's \$8 million endowment, she served on the Building Committee, overseeing a \$4.5 million state-of-the-art facility project. Jody is a former trustee at Middlesex School and the former treasurer and co-chair of the Advancement Alliance.

Jody received a bachelor's in studio art and art history from Boston College. She has volunteered her time and expertise throughout her career in advancement, presenting at multiple conferences for both the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE) and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).



## FACULTY

**Jamie Scavone**  
GRADE 3 CO-TEACHER

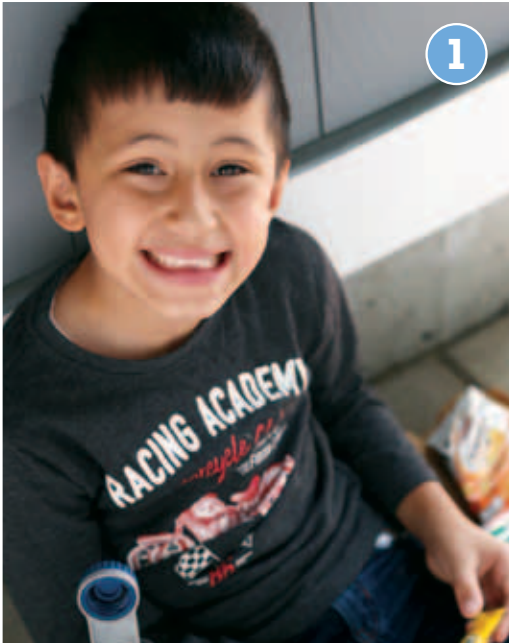
Jamie is an experienced elementary school teacher who most recently worked as a substitute teacher for the Clyde F. Brown Elementary School in Millis, Mass. In that role, she covered classroom teachers, specialists, and paraprofessionals for Prekindergarten through Grade 4. Prior to that, Jamie was a fifth-grade homeroom teacher at Buckingham, Browne & Nichols School in Cambridge. There, she created a project-based curriculum and integrated language arts and social studies within units of study.

## FACULTY MILESTONES

Congratulations to Grades One/Two Co-Teacher Jennifer Worthington and Grade 3 Co-Teacher Kristin Jayne, who each celebrated 25 years at Charles River School this year.

# UNMASKED MOMENTS

We love seeing teachers and students smiling during a mask break! As the year went on and the school was able to ease some of its COVID restrictions, we caught even more unmasked moments.



1 Joaquin Rodriguez '28  
2 Emerie Tull (left) and Sunny Willis, both '30  
3 Cate Byrnes '29  
4 James Zhou '26  
5 Nate '24 (left) and Nolan '27 Newmark  
6 Erin Grimm '25





- 7 Lorraine Colas '25
- 8 Ian Zhou '22
- 9 Siena Pedder '22
- 10 Head of School Gretchen Larkin (left) and Associate Head of School Elizabeth Clayton
- 11 Grade 5 Co-Teacher Sandra Annisette
- 12 Micah DePina-Holmes '22
- 13 Olivia Falotico '29
- 14 Grades 1/2 Co-Teacher Theresa Leone
- 15 Alex Tarantino '22



# Building a Culture of Belonging

By Nia Jacobs, Director of Equity, Belonging, and Community Life

## THE FIRST TIME I STEPPED FOOT ON CHARLES RIVER SCHOOL'S CAMPUS

was the first Friday in June, long after I'd been hired. My interview process in the early spring had been on Zoom, and I had been longing to come to campus ever since. I was right to be excited; the energy and joy were palpable—there were fourth graders using pool noodles to show multiplication skills to their first-grade buddies, popsicles for snack, a rabbit who hopped by during my tour of the ECB, a sixth grader's giant scale model of a container of Marshmallow Fluff in a hallway. As I walked around campus, everyone was friendly, of course, offering introductions and saying hello. At the end of my visit, Gretchen and I passed a group of second-grade students waiting for pick up. They greeted her enthusiastically, and she introduced me. A small dark-haired girl smiled at me and showed me a leaf she clutched in her fist. "It's beautiful," I said because it was—tiny and a brilliant shade of red. "It's for you," she said, "because you're here."

When I first saw the job description for my role here at CRS, I was struck by two things. First, I was happy to see CRS joining the ranks of schools that recognize that a senior administrative position focused on equity and inclusion was necessary to move a school forward in said work. The second thing that struck me was the title of the position itself. It involved the word "equity"—yes, a common term used in connection with the work of this position—but it was the word "community," and even more so the word "belonging," in the job title that stood out.

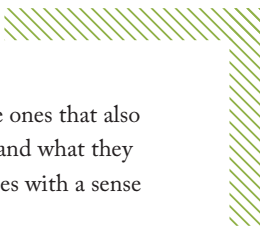
As roles such as this one became increasingly more frequent in schools over the last two decades, titling them as Diversity Directors was certainly most en vogue. But over the last five years or so, schools have begun to chart their own paths in terms of the type of work that the person in my position will do and what title most effectively communicates institutional goals. By not including the word "diversity" in my title, CRS was taking a very clear stance with this new

position. And that stance resonated very deeply with me, both professionally and personally.

With apologies to any Latin scholars for my oversimplifications here, the noun "diversity," derives from the Latin word *diversus*, literally meaning "turned aside," and more commonly used to mean "opposite or separate." However, the word "community" derives from the Latin word *communis*, meaning "common, or shared by all."

For far too many schools, diversity has become about enumerating differences, checking boxes, making sure that when one disaggregates the number of students or employees and breaks down the total along racial, ethnic, socio-economic, or gender lines, the number allows for the school to proudly label itself "diverse." The concurrent idea is that simply having a diverse student body or employee total is indicative of the school being an anti-bias or culturally competent one. But we know that's not always the case. Sadly, diverse places are not





necessarily welcoming ones. Not all diverse schools are ones that also have equity or inclusion at the center of who they are and what they do, and thus impart all students, families, and employees with a sense of belonging.

I can think of numerous moments in my life in which I have felt welcomed for the diversity that I represent, but have not felt a true sense of belonging. Some of those moments happened when I was younger; I'm the graduate of a local independent school that I loved very much and that tried hard to get it right, and most often did, but could occasionally miss the mark. I'm not sure how much as a young person I thought critically about the true difference between diversity and belonging, but as a Black woman married to a White, non-American woman and parenting an adopted child, I'm constantly confronted with the difference between those words. I think about a recent trip to a new dentist and the receptionist who smiled broadly when my Afro-Latino son and I walked in. She showed my son the machine that would offer him a prize at the end of his visit while she left me to fill out paperwork in a chair in the corner. When I looked at the paperwork, I saw that the spaces for my son's family information were marked "Mother and Father" as opposed to "Parent 1 and Parent 2." Their paperwork made me feel like I didn't belong there, that when they thought about the community of people their patients represented, a family like mine wasn't included. Whether or not that message was intended, it was the one I received.

Schools can do the same thing—welcome students and families to enroll with open arms without taking the time to truly reflect on whether or not everything from their paperwork, policies, and procedures to their curriculum and campus events say those families belong and are a full part of the community. Every single CRS child and family deserves to be seen and valued and is worthy of knowing that this is a school not just checking boxes, but instead creating a social and academic culture that centers true belonging at its core.

Diversity should be a means to an end, rather than an end in and of itself. None of us wants to simply be a part of a calculation or a number merely added in a brochure. What we want is to be counted and to be considered, to be fully realized and embraced as part of a whole, to be a member of a community that sees, loves, and respects us for who we are and what we add. Diversity says, "I'm here," but belonging says "I'm here and I matter."

I held on to that tiny leaf from my new second-grade friend for the weeks leading up to my official start date, and it's now in my new office here at CRS. Although brief, the interaction I had with that student encompassed for me exactly what I hope to do in my role. She didn't just say a simple hello; she truly welcomed me and gave me, quite literally, a piece of the community and acknowledged that I was now a part of it. The gift she gave me that day was a sense of belonging, and it is in that same spirit that I look forward to undertaking my work. ☺

## Recently Read and Highly Recommended by Nia

### Adult Non-Fiction

*Don't Let It Get You Down: Essays on Race, Gender, and the Body*, Savala Nolan

### Young Adult Non-Fiction

*Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning*, Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds

### Elementary Non-Fiction

*Areli Is a Dreamer: A True Story by Areli Morales, a DACA Recipient*, Areli Morales

### Adult Fiction

*Transcendent Kingdom*, Yaa Gyi

### Young Adult Fiction

*Blackout*, Dhonielle Clayton, et. al.

### Upper Elementary/MS Fiction

*Measuring Up*, Lily Lamotte and Ann Xu

### Early Elementary Fiction

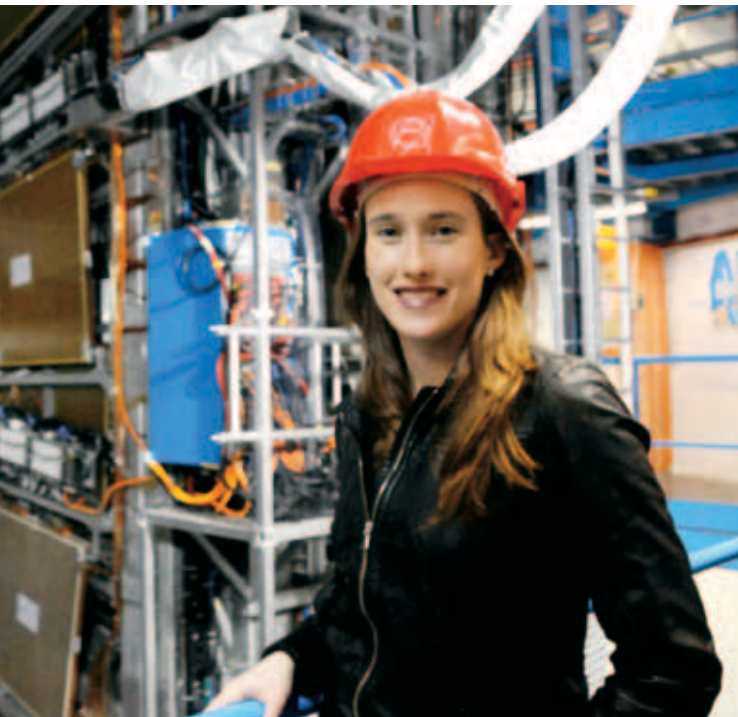
*Fatima's Great Outdoors*, Ambreen Tariq

## Coming This Year

- **New Affinity Groups for Students, Employees, and Families**
- **Monthly Family Engagement Series**
- **Student/Family Book Group**

# CRS 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award

## Clare Bernard '01



**CLARE BERNARD**, this year's Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, is honored for her professional achievements and advancements in the field of physics. While doing what she loves, she has helped countless others.

After nine years at CRS, Clare went on to Milton Academy where she spent her junior year in China becoming fluent in Mandarin and learning to play the guzheng, a Chinese zither. As an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins University, she was a double math and physics major as well as the president of the Johns Hopkins Society of Physics Students. She won a research grant from the NSF Materials Research Science and Engineering Center for her study of magnetic colloids in liquid crystal. Her CRS teacher and advisor Mary Walsh recalls, "Clare was jazzed by the challenges of non-routine

problems, and when she was in college she told me that MathCounts had taught her to trust her own thinking. She said, 'I don't want to be doing my physics just like everyone else; it's better to do it my own way.'"

Upon graduating with general and departmental honors, Clare attended Boston University where she earned her PhD in experimental high-energy physics. Much of her doctoral research was done at CERN in Switzerland, home of the Hadron Supercollider. Clare wrote software for the detector, and collected and analyzed resulting data to learn more about the fundamental particles that make up the universe. She shared her research at the International Conference for New Frontiers in Physics, the International Conference on Advanced Technology and Particle Physics, and the American Physics Society annual conference.

Former CRS science teacher Pam Moor recalls, "The tenacity with which Clare approached projects in my classroom, that determination to do her best, was only outdone by her achievements. I'm not surprised by her accomplishments as an adult. She was always outstanding!"

As an early employee at Tamr, a successful tech start-up, Clare rose to the role of Head of Product and Engineering after just three years. Currently, she serves as Senior Director and Head of the Data Sciences Platform at the Broad Institute. The Broad, a collaboration between MIT and Harvard, was launched in 2004 to improve human health by using genomics to understand disease and develop new therapies. It has been instrumental in COVID testing in colleges and schools like CRS. Clare also serves as a tutor for Boston high school students for Minds Matter.

As Mary Walsh relayed in her 2001 graduation remarks, "Clare, some describe you as smart and unusual, and others call you unusually smart; each of these conveys respect for your fresh ideas and the fact that you have a mind of your own. In short, you are an awesome friend who is sure to succeed in everything you do." 📍

*The Distinguished Alumni Award is given annually to that alumnus/a who has demonstrated excellence in personal accomplishment, professional achievement, or humanitarian service; or has made and sustained significant contributions to the school and whose efforts have built community and enhanced the lives of our students, faculty and staff.*

# CRS 2020 Young Alumni Award

## Andrew Daniels '17

**ANDREW DANIELS** joined Charles River School as a seventh grader in 2015. He quickly gained the respect and friendship of classmates and was elected Class Moderator during his first year at CRS. He also volunteered with the Admissions Office to speak about his experience as a new middle school student. Director of Admissions Kat Whitten says, "It's the rare student who is selected to serve on an Admissions Open House panel just six weeks after starting at a new school, but Andrew made a quick and lasting impression on all of us. Since his graduation, he has frequently returned to campus to speak about how impactful the 7/8 program was for him and how it set him up for success in high school."

Andrew continued to lend his strong leadership skills to Beaver Country Day where he attended high school. At Beaver, Andrew was elected Student Council Grade Representative during both junior and senior years. He was named captain and MVP for the JV tennis team as a sophomore and went on to play for the varsity team. A talented guitarist, Andrew was also selected for Beaver's elite Cuban Jazz Ensemble.

Andrew cares deeply about those in his community, particularly those with special needs. As president of the Acoustic Coffee-house Club at Beaver, he spearheaded a virtual performance of "Here Comes the Sun" for senior centers during the pandemic. Last fall, during a term at the NuVu Innovation School, an intensive, multidisciplinary, studio-based academic program on MIT's campus, Andrew worked with a man with spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy to make an assistive device that allowed him to play the guitar.



Andrew Daniels,  
receiving his award during  
CRS Final Assembly.

At Beaver, Andrew received numerous awards, including *Mente Et Manu* for outstanding contributions to the school, the Faculty Prize for academic excellence, and the Modern Language Award in Spanish. He graduated near the top of the class with the most demanding academic program Beaver has to offer.

Perhaps most impressive is Andrew's character. His college counselor describes him as "one of the most impactful, nurturing, humble, generous, and self-aware students I have worked with in 25 years. Extraordinary, bright, hardworking, indefatigable, and curious, there is not a space on our campus he has not touched, tried and inevitably made better. Andrew inspires others to be their best selves. We have a lot to learn from this remarkable young man."

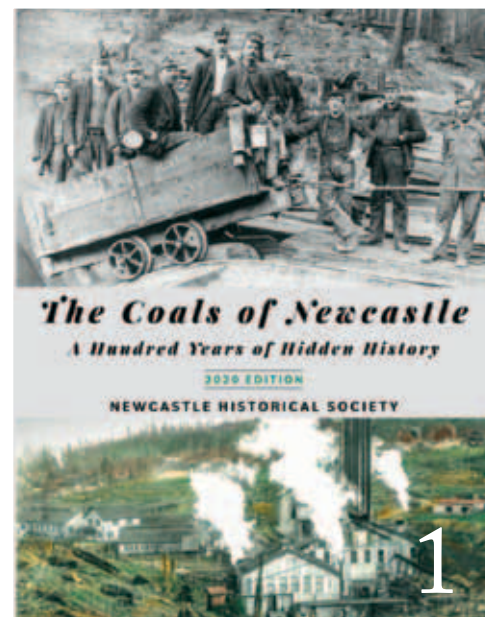
Andrew attended Final Assembly on June 10 to receive his award, and shared, "The foundation CRS laid for me made my success in high school possible, and will continue to help me thrive in all facets of life in the future. CRS taught me how to collaborate, think critically, share ideas, problem-solve, work hard, stay curious, and, most importantly, love learning." Andrew will attend Northwestern University next fall, and we can't wait to see what he'll accomplish next. 🍌

*The Young Alumni Award is presented each year at Final Assembly to that alumnus/ a from the past five years who has demonstrated excellence in personal achievement or community service since leaving CRS.*



Class of 2011

# Alumni News



1951

**ROBERT FULLER** writes, “I was interviewed by a group of 7th and 8th graders via Zoom as a part of the ‘CRS in the Era of COVID-19’ project. I was asked about my time as a CRS student. I first spun them a colorful yarn about being kidnapped by Corsican pirates and held for ransom while vacationing on the island with my parents in 1949. The students gaped open-mouthed and wide-eyed until I relented! I told them about my days in the classroom, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance each morning with my classmates, and practicing cursive handwriting on a blackboard. I went on to describe the unpleasant effects COVID-19 had on me, including living in lockdown in my apartment, unable to socialize with other residents, receive visitors, or attend cultural events at the Kennedy Center and the Washington Nationals baseball park.”

1954

**BARBARA RUSSELL WILLIAMS** writes, “In the last year and a half since the COVID-19 pandemic changed so many of our lives, my husband and I have found ways to creatively find a new lifestyle. [1] In many ways it was more relaxing than before.... And yes—we did a lot of Zooming for meetings and gatherings of family and friends from Switzerland, New England, North Carolina, the Pacific Northwest, and Finland. I think we met more often and got to know one another better than before. For my husband, Steve, and I, being retired and able to stay in ‘our bubble’ was perfect for researching and writing articles for the book our team of 10 people published in November 2020. The title of the book is *The Coals of Newcastle: A Hundred Years of Hidden History*. It is published through the Newcastle Historical Society and is available for

sale through Amazon Books. It is the history of the local coal mining area not far from where we live. The coal was distributed around the United States and President Rutherford B. Hayes came to visit these mines.

The reduction in social activities made a perfect environment for me to write articles for the Bellevue Botanical Garden and Eastside Heritage Center, two organizations for which I volunteer. I had no excuse not to write, so I did. It has been fun and a good connector with other interested people.

One thing for sure, our garden has never had so much attention. It actually looks pretty good with fewer weeds and slugs. We have had time to keep track of those slugs that eat every plant they can get their hungry jaws on! Presently, we are conducting a ‘scientific study’ to see which plants they do not like.

— continued —



The Board of Trustees planted a tree on campus in recognition of Jessica Thompson Somol's invaluable contributions and commitment to CRS.

## Sending Jessica Thompson Somol '84 P'17 '19 Off with Lots of CRS Love

Earlier this year, Jessica Thompson Somol '84 announced that she would leave her role as Director of Development at the end of June to pursue other professional opportunities. But, while her colleagues and the community will miss seeing her on campus every day, we know that she is not saying goodbye to CRS. As a dedicated alumna, past parent, supporter, and friend, Jess has proven that her commitment to the school will be long-lasting.

Jess is a proud End-to-Ender, having attended Charles River School from PreKindergarten through eighth grade. She talks often about the impact that CRS made for her and her siblings, sister Juliet '81 and brother Rupert '78, and daughters, Charlotte '17 and Emma '19. "I've always valued that CRS taught me how to think, how to look at everything holistically and analytically," says Jess. "I have vivid memories of how supportive this community was when I was a student, and when the time came I wanted that for my own daughters."

As a parent, Jess was an active member of the Parent Association and a dedicated volunteer. In 2015, Head of School Gretchen Larkin hired Jess to be the Director of Development, knowing she'd bring the same passion and love for CRS to the role. During her tenure Jess oversaw the successful Elevate and Celebrate Campaign, which raised \$10.8 million for the school.

In honor of her contributions as an alumna, past parent and former staff member, the Board of Trustees planted a tree in front of the middle school. We wish Jess all the best and can't wait to welcome her back to campus soon.

From left, Trustee and Chair of the Development Committee James McElligott, President of the Board Leslie Jackson Judge '91, Jessica Thompson Somol '84, and Head of School Gretchen Larkin





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3

For us, and many other people, we have found creative ways to cope with a tough situation. If we can help others to avoid contracting this terrible illness, we will. We still wear our masks inside public places even though we are fully vaccinated. It makes us feel good to think we are doing a little bit to help others who may not have been vaccinated. Let us all stay considerate of others and hope for a good year as we emerge from our hibernation and return to our normal lives.”

1980

**GEORGE LEE**, Co-Chief Information Officer at Goldman Sachs, connected with classmate and current CRS Trustee **LAURA KUNKEMUELLER**. He writes, “I told Laura that she made a lasting impact on me over our eight years together at school. After growing up with her in the classroom, I always had the expectation that the smartest person in the room was likely to be a girl/woman. One of the signature elements of my career is that I ended up with more female CEO clients than anyone else and more peers and direct reports who were women—and I definitely can trace a throughline from my experiences

at CRS (with teachers and classmates) to that outcome.”

1982

**[2] ZANDER SPRAGUE** and **SANDY HOWLAND** recently caught up when Sandy’s lacrosse team, Tamalpais High, played in town.

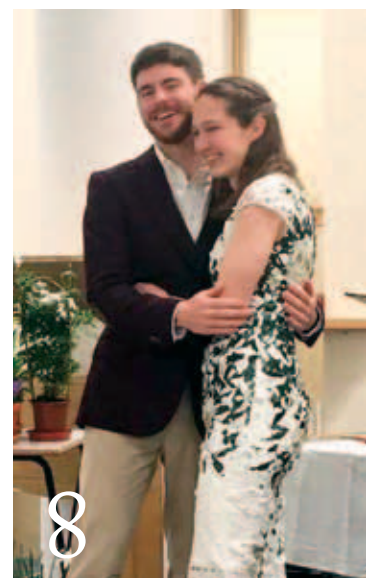
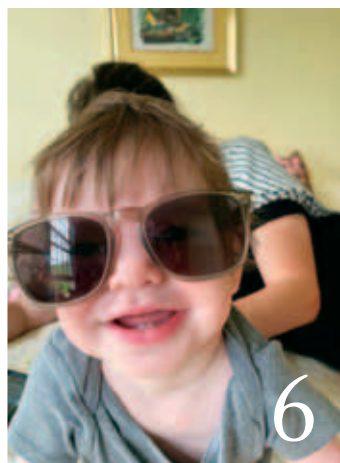
1992

**[3] CARRIE KASPER**, who lives in Denver, Colorado and works as a tutor, stopped by campus during a trip east to show her kids, Dylan (8), and Rosie (4), where she went to school.

1994

**SETH COMPTON** writes, “We welcomed a baby boy, Witold Paul, in February 2020. I have been living in Poland for nine years where I have worked in film, TV, and theater. I run an NGO exploring the intersection of art, cultures, education, and technology and have led three seasons of Creative Summer, an arts program modeled after CRCAP.”

**[4] MIKE DESCOTEAUX** writes, “I have gone on quite an adventure since my days as director of the Charles River Creative Arts



Program. After years as the artistic director at ImprovBoston, I left the arts world to pursue an aviation passion becoming a commercial pilot and flight instructor at Horizon Aviation in Norwood. In May, I accepted a dream job as a first officer for Cape Air, flying the beautiful New England skies (and beyond). My partner Deana and I recently bought a home by the sea in Winthrop where we attempt to grow backyard 'gardeny' things with our kids (CRCAP counselors Jackson and Maddie), dog Skipper, and new addition, Wanda, the kitten."

#### 1995

[5] Last summer, **AMY LISBON BRANTON** and her children, **LILAH '26** and **ETHAN '28**, ran and biked a total of 400 miles to raise money for a local charity.

#### 1996

Past parent Anna Young writes, "Our sons, **MICHAEL LONG** and **WALLY LONG '98**, spent

wonderful years at Charles River. While they certainly had a wonderful academic education, I think the most valuable lessons they learned were through and with the community. CRS taught my boys a lot about giving back to their community, not just recognizing a need but doing something about it."

The *San Antonio Report* ran a feature piece about Michael this winter. The story focused on his relationship with a dear friend and elderly neighbor whose house was deemed unstable. After the city gave her just days to submit a plan for costly repairs, Michael stepped in to help her. In addition to working on her house, he also started a GoFundMe page to help with costs.

#### 1998

**JANNA SPOCK** writes, "After 11 years living in New York City, my husband, Greg, our 3-year-old son, Austin, and I are new residents of Westchester County, New York. We are looking forward to life in the

#### 7

'burbs, especially having a backyard to play in and space to entertain family and friends!"

#### 2000

[6] Congratulations to **GREG KANTROWITZ** on the birth of his son, Jack Edward.

#### 2001

[7] **SARAH PARSONS WOLTER** writes, "My husband, Jon, and I recently welcomed our first child, Sophie. I also released my second book, *What Happened to the USMNT: The Ugly Truth about the Beautiful Game*, a book about the U.S. Men's National Soccer team."

#### 2005

[8] **EMILY MODER** writes, "I married Greg Chandler in Manchester, UK, on April 17. My family watched the small ceremony via Zoom from the United States. We are moving back to the U.S. and will be traveling around the country this summer."



### 2008

[9] **GINA NICOLAS** joined her sister, **TRISHA '05**, for a campus visit this spring. While Trisha was here to speak to students about her role at Snapchat (see page 28 for full story), Gina connected with many of her former teachers and also shared insight about her time at CRS. We're so grateful to both women for the visit!

### 2013

[10] **EMMY CHEN** writes, "**GENNY COHEN, ISABELLE BASTIAN**, and I had a fantastic time catching up last August while on a walk in the Dover woods. I graduated this spring from McGill University and Genny graduated from Hamilton College, while Isabelle has one more year at Harvard University."

**NATE HOCHMAN** writes, "I graduated from Colorado College in May. I was awarded the Edith Bramhall Award, given annually to the student whom the political science faculty deem the outstanding scholar in the department. Next up, I will be moving to Washington D.C. in the fall to begin working for the *National Review* while I write a book as a recipient of a Novak Journalism Fellowship."

[11] Once a CRS Buddy, always a CRS Buddy! **GENNY COHEN** returned to campus this spring to watch her PreK/K Buddy **ELIZABETH LAPIDES '21** graduate. She kept a promise to come back for Elizabeth's eighth-grade graduation and surprised her for the celebration.

## Veterans' Dedication Wall

**Charles River School is proud to unveil a new permanent display to honor the sacrifice and service of all military veterans in our community.** The space will be located in the Community Building and will feature photos, profiles, and other memorabilia from our alumni, former faculty and staff, and past or present parents who are serving or have served our country. If you are a veteran and would like to be included in the Dedication Wall, please reach out to [alumni@charlesriversschool.org](mailto:alumni@charlesriversschool.org).



2017

**[12] CHRISTOPHER MACLEAN**, son of Grades 1/2 Co-Teacher **THERESA LEONE**, graduated from Worcester Academy this spring. He received the Allan Glazer Memorial Senior Award for science and engineering and was tri-captain of the boys' varsity cross-country team. He will be attending the Honors College of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Maine this fall. He also recently achieved the highest rank in scouting, Eagle Scout. Worcester Academy's Head of the Upper School **MADELINE SURGENOR RICHARDS '00** celebrated Christopher's graduation with him this spring.

**[13]** Congratulations to three CRS alumni who were recognized for

their artwork in the Page Waterman Next Up 2021 juried art exhibition for high school students. **HANNAH LAPIDES '18** was awarded first place in the photography category for her piece, "Winter Exhale." **PHILIP SPYROU** was awarded first place in sculpture for "Self Portrait of the Aegean Sea," and **ISABELLE GUILIANO** was awarded third place in sculpture for "Overshadow." **[14] ISABELLE GUILIANO, MAX MEYERHARDT, and MADELINE WAMBACH** attended the Rivers School prom in May.

**[15] MELANIE CHEN, ANDREW DANIELS, PHILIP SPYROU, SARAH BO '18, and TORI EYSIE '18** returned to campus for the annual Alumni Breakfast with the eighth-grade class.



## Giving Relay: And the Winner Is...

The Development Office introduced the first-ever Giving Relay this spring, rekindling the Blue/Gold rivalry for alumni, past parents, and friends. In the days leading up to Sports Day, community members were encouraged to give to the CRS Annual Fund. We kept a tally of gifts made in honor of each color and, in the end, the GOLD team (with 33 gifts) edged out the Blue team (with 41 gifts) for the win. Thank you to everyone who participated. Every gift matters!

## IN THE KNOW



2019

[16] Head of School **GRETCHEN LARKIN**, **JULIUS HOCHBERG**, and School Nurse **CAROL AHEARN** caught up on campus this spring.

[17] **SOPHIA ETHRIDGE**

writes, "I am doing really well and have all A's in my classes. In July, I went to Oxford to study forensic science, criminology, archaeology, and anthropology business and leadership for a month."

2020

**COLIN LEVINE** writes, "I enjoyed my first year at Noble and Greenough, where I was recognized with the Sutherland Award for excellence in modern language for my work in Honors French II."

**SYDNEY MEYERS** writes, "I had a great freshman year at Dana Hall. I was recognized with The Marguerite Finch Maxwell 1915 Award for Achievement as a member of the string society."

## IN MEMORIAM

*The Charles River School community extends its sincere condolences to the following families.*

### ALUMNI

**DAVID ELLIOTT '54** died on November 12, 2020, after a two-year battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. After CRS, David attended Fessenden School and Phillips Exeter Academy before completing a degree at Harvard University. David served as the voice of Harvard's radio station, WHRB (95.3 FM) for 58 years and was president of the WHRB Board of Trustees.

**DAVID WHITNEY LEWIS JR. '55** died on December 13, 2020. A lifelong resident of Dover, David attended Milton Academy, Harvard College, and Georgetown Law School after graduating from CRS. After a short time in the Marine Reserves, David practiced law for most of his life, but his true passions were riding and hunting. For many years he was chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dover Land Conservation Trust. A few years before his death, David was heavily involved in the preservation of what is now known as "Lewis Hill," the highest point in Dover, now named for him. Due to his hard work and commitment, it's a permanently open public space for all to enjoy.

### COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**ROBERT HUNT** died on May 11, 2021. Robert was a teacher for 45 years both in Massachusetts and Connecticut. From 1990 to 2001, he was a sixth-grade classroom teacher at Charles River School.

**BERND KUEHN**, grandfather to Niklaus '07, Hans '07, and Sophie '09 Vitzthum died on December 24, 2020. Bernd worked for IBM for more than 30 years, was an avid traveler and worked in Asia, Australia, and South America. He was an enthusiastic skier, competitive tennis player and amateur gardener.

**SHERRY B. WELCH** died on February 17, 2021. Señora Welch, parent to Seth '93 and Mali '91, taught Spanish at CRS from 1980-1989. In addition to teaching, Sherry was a docent with the Portland Museum of Art, a Big Sister, and a volunteer for the Hurricane Island Outward Bound program.

# Leave Behind a Legacy with Planned Giving

“I have been at CRS for five years and this year was one of the most challenging I’ve faced as a coach and educator. Witnessing the hard work that went on behind the scenes to ensure our students were able to learn safely in person all year, when so many schools were remote, reminded me how extraordinarily lucky I am to be a member of this community. CRS students love to learn and seeing their joy and happiness during this difficult year has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I wanted to make sure that I did my part to give back to the school in a way that would contribute to its long-term sustainability and a planned gift was a great way to do that.”

— Paul Rupprecht, Director of Athletics

If you are unsure about giving cash or securities today, **A PLANNED GIFT CAN BE THE PERFECT SOLUTION.** There are many different types of planned gifts with unique advantages, and each of them allows donors to leave their legacy in support of Charles River School’s mission and program. Contact the Charles River School Development Office at (508) 785-8215 to learn more about planned giving.



**The CURRENT Fall 2020**

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Dover, MA 02030  
[www.charlesriverschool.org](http://www.charlesriverschool.org)

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**CHARLES RIVER**  
SCHOOL



## Understanding the “why” makes them masters of the “what.”

The excitement and reward of discovery through hands-on, experiential learning shapes critical thinkers and resilient, creative problem solvers. When students are inspired both inside and outside the classroom, they gain the awareness of themselves and the world around them.

**This is the Charles River School  
point of view.**

◀ Zack Swale, Maintenance Facilities Associate, leads a fifth-grade science class project.

**DEEPER UNDERSTANDING, HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT.**