

Early Childhood Center Ribbon Cutting & Middle School & Theatre Ground Breaking



STEPHEN GAYNOR SCHOOL

PIER SIXTY AT CHELSEA PIERS
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2012

2012 Annual Gaynor Gala



*There's
Still
Time!*

**OPENING DOORS.
UNLOCKING POTENTIAL.**

HONORING:



SCOTT A. MAGER
Chairman & CEO at
Perfect Building Maintenance
Stephen Gaynor School
Trustee and Parent

HOSTED BY:



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RIPA**
Host of
"LIVE! with Kelly"



**MARK
CONSUELOS**
Actor, President of
Milojo Productions

GUEST ARTIST:



LAURA BELL BUNDY
Mercury Recording Artist,
Tony-nominated Broadway Star
Film & Television Actress

COCKTAIL HOUR | DINNER | ENTERTAINMENT | LIVE & SILENT AUCTION

Dear Friends,

The theme for the 2012 Gaynor Gala is *Opening Doors. Unlocking Potential*. In this edition of the *Gaynor Gazette*, you will see how, through a wide variety of programs and initiatives, members throughout the Stephen Gaynor School community continue to work together to further our goal.

At the 2012 Gaynor Gala, our honoree will be Scott Mager, a parent and trustee who personifies the Stephen Gaynor School mission and whose leadership has been vital in supporting our organization's growth and vision for the future. I am thrilled that Scott will be awarded with this well-deserved recognition.

We keep moving boldly ahead. In September, we welcomed our first students to the new Early Childhood Center (ECC), a unique and innovative model of early intervention for students with learning differences. At the ECC, occupational therapy coupled with speech and language support is part of everyday learning.

Another source of inspiration is the ongoing transformation of the historic Claremont Stables building into an array of new educational spaces, expanding our capacity to reach students. At a groundbreaking and ribbon-cutting ceremony, students themselves demonstrated their excitement for the future, illuminating the endless number of possibilities that our new spaces and facilities will offer them.

Our students' futures rest squarely in our hands. Through the generosity of so many who share this goal, we will make the future of each student brighter through better facilities for arts and academics. Your continued help will make it possible.

Earlier this academic year we saw what your support has meant, when the National Center for Learning Disabilities presented the Stephen Gaynor School with an award for excellence. While our school has long been recognized locally, we are now clearly providing innovations that are garnering recognition at the national level.

And there are areas in student life of which we are especially proud. We hosted our fifth annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament to benefit our Community Learning Center, which provides free after-school reading remediation to public school and other children from our local community.

And finally, an impressive range of academic initiatives has taken root, from Judy Hockman's work with the faculty converting her renowned Basic Writing Program into what we now call the Gaynor Writing Program, Kate Garnett's work as a reading specialist providing consultation with our faculty, and the addition of Singapore Math program to our curriculum. SMART Boards are up and running in the Early Childhood Center, showing that advanced technology can successfully support even the youngest of learners.

As we expand and grow, we remain committed to meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of each child—within what is a nurturing environment that encourages and inspires students to push themselves to learn and grow. But you remain a vital component in our continued success!

Thank you for your ongoing participation in the Stephen Gaynor School community. I know that in the months ahead, we will reach new milestones—and I look forward to sharing with you the news of accomplishments yet to come!

With sincere thanks,

Scott Gaynor



Dr. Scott Gaynor



STEPHEN GAYNOR SCHOOL

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Inside

Brick by brick: One construction phase concludes as another begins.



“Our Goal is to build a premiere facility that allows our children to thrive academically and find their passion whether it’s in the arts, athletics, or sciences.”

— DR. SCOTT GAYNOR

On January 20, 2012, Stephen Gaynor School students, parents, friends, teachers, and staff gathered to mark two important milestones: the opening of our new Early Childhood Center (ECC) and the official launch of construction on our Middle School and arts center. Congregating in front of the large wooden doors leading to the central lobby, more than 200 people cheered as Head of School Dr. Scott Gaynor and Stephen Gaynor School co-founders Yvette Siegel and Miriam Michael cut the green ribbon tied across the entrance, officially welcoming our youngest students and their families to the Gaynor School campus.

Following the ribbon cutting, the celebrants assembled inside the future theater, where they learned about the next phases of construction and listened to remarks by leaders in the Stephen Gaynor School and Upper West Side communities, including Henrietta Jones Pellegrini, president of the Stephen Gaynor School Board of Trustees, Gale A. Brewer, member of the New York City Council, and Neil Rubler and Irwin Simon, co-chairs of the *Believe & Achieve* campaign.

Before Siegel and Dr. Gaynor removed a brick from the wall of the future theater, signaling the start of the next phase of construction, the audience was treated to presentations by Stephen Gaynor School students,

including science demonstrations, scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, and choral renditions of popular songs including “A Whole New World” from the musical *Aladdin*, which the Middle School will stage this spring.

“What has made all of this possible is a vision that turned into a lifelong mission that all of you have shared,” remarked Dr. Gaynor during the ceremony. “By sharing this mission to provide a nurturing

environment where children can grow academically, socially, and emotionally, you have allowed this dream to become a reality.”

Reinventing history

Rogers Marvel Architects, the firm responsible for designing the new Stephen Gaynor School facility, is no stranger to reinventing old structures for new purposes.

The firm recently helped turn a Brooklyn ice cream factory into a charter school and a Soho candy factory into a branch of the New York

Public Library. According to Marta Sanders, lead architect, the firm enjoys working within the complexity of New York City’s urban landscape and relishes the chance to breathe new life into historic buildings.

“As an architect and resident of the Upper West Side, I’ve been thrilled to create a school for my neighbors, restore this beloved building, and



Neil Rubler

prepare it for what I believe is optimal use—an educational facility for children,” says Sanders. “Many people involved in this project—from the engineers and contractors to teachers and parents—have friends and relatives who took riding lessons here. There’s a lot of sentiment toward this building, and everyone seems to agree that if the horses can’t be here, children should be.”

Sanders continues, “With all of our clients, we work hard to understand their mission, goals, and concerns, and we bring that understanding into the process at every step of the way, from planning to interior design. With Gaynor, the challenge is to create an environment conducive to learning that makes students feel secure and enables them to maintain their focus and interact positively with their teachers and classmates.”

A home of their own

While construction was well under way on the Early Childhood Center this summer, the design team was finalizing plans for the Stephen Gaynor School Middle School, scheduled to open fall 2012. Occupying the third and fourth floors—and eventually expanding to include the fifth floor—the Middle School will ultimately include 11 classrooms, six seminar rooms, seven learning specialist’s offices, a modern cafeteria, state-of-the-art science laboratory, and sky-lit library and writing center.

“We worked very closely with a team of middle school teachers, including Middle School Supervisor Ali Giovanni, to create an environment ideally suited to the academic, social, and emotional development of middle school children,” says Sanders. “They gave us a lot of input and feedback on design proposals, and together we determined the ideal number of classrooms and seminar rooms and how to best meet the needs of young adults, particularly as they transition to high school.”

With one seminar room for every two classrooms, teachers can break the students into groups of five or six to work interactively on projects. Similar to the ECC classrooms, the Middle School classrooms are



designed to reduce distractions while providing students with large volumes of fresh air and natural light—creating a healthy, clean, and quiet environment that supports students’ efforts to pay attention to their teachers, participate in class discussion, and concentrate on schoolwork.

The design team also took special care to ensure spaces

throughout the Middle School will promote students’ social needs and growing independence. In addition to a large cafeteria with a loose seating configuration, students will enjoy spacious lockers and generous corridors with plenty of areas to socialize before and after class.



The art and science of learning

As the Middle School expands, so will the learning opportunities available to all Gaynor students. The fourth floor will include two large north-facing art rooms, one dedicated to the use of a wide variety of media and the other to digital art. Featuring big sinks and a kiln, the Multimedia Art Studio will enable students to explore their imaginations using a range of materials including colored pencils, paints, oil pastels, charcoal, clay, and papier-mâché. In the Digital Art Room, students will learn how to create and manipulate art using traditional photography and advanced computer programs. The room will include

11 computer workstations, a projection screen, photography lighting and backdrops, and an oversized table for displaying and discussing work.

Along with enhanced arts facilities, the new Middle School will feature advanced science and technology programs. Students will be able to charge their laptops at charging stations located in every classroom and send documents wirelessly to printers located in common areas. And in the state-of-the-art science center on the fifth floor, students will have access to equipment such as beakers and Bunsen burners that support an advanced science curriculum—and prepare them for the demands of a high school science program.

Enhanced performance

Rogers Marvel is working with a theater designer to create the ideal performing arts center for Gaynor School students, faculty, and families. The center features a stage with a proscenium as well as space for more than 250 seats, some of which will retract into the rear wall to create a spacious, open area for group gatherings including science fairs, school dances, and fundraising events. The theater will also include advanced lighting and audiovisual systems to provide professional-quality technical support and recording capabilities for performances, speaking engagements, and other events. Adjacent to the theater, music and drama rooms will be available for chorus, band practice, and theater study as well as individual music and acting lessons.

While the new facility will enhance students’ ability to grow artistically, it will also help them



develop athletically by providing additional outdoor space for organized sports and games, gym class, and recess. The existing play yard at the second-floor level will extend onto the rooftop of the theater—nearly doubling the size of the current play yard. The architects are also working closely with the

school to design an athletic field for the roof of our 89th Street facility that complements the building architecturally.

“The collective strength of our community has been like a lightning rod that has attracted the resources

necessary to purchase and develop the first phase of this building. We are fortunate to have so many supportive and generous families,” remarked Dr. Gaynor during the January celebration.

“Our goal is to

build a premiere facility that allows our children to thrive academically and find their passion whether it’s in the arts, athletics, or sciences. We have big plans for this space—and we need your help to reach our next phases of development.”

Yvette Siegel and Dr. Scott Gaynor remove a brick from the wall signaling the start of the next phase of construction.

Early Childhood Center

“The classrooms are remarkably serene, and the acoustics are incredible. The sounds are so soft, one does not need or want to raise one’s voice. The rooms feel like an oasis.” — DONNA LOGUE, ECC DIRECTOR

Learning by design

At the Stephen Gaynor School, 2012 marks more than a new year, but also a new beginning for more than two dozen Gaynor School families. On January 3, the Early Childhood Center (ECC) at the Stephen Gaynor School moved into its new home on the second floor of the former Claremont Stables building along with two Lower School classes. In addition to a curriculum designed to meet their individual needs, ECC students benefit from an environment optimized for learning, discovery, and personal growth.

To design the center, Rogers Marvel Architects worked closely with Stephen Gaynor School co-founder Yvette Siegel, ECC Director Donna Logue, occupational therapists including Kirsten DeBear, speech-language pathologists, and special educators. The therapists and educators provided insight on their ideal classroom environment as well as innovative ideas to enrich the educational experience, including a child-friendly kitchen, outdoor vegetable garden, library, and sensory gym. “The challenge was to create an environment where students feel secure, maintain their focus, and communicate with each other and their teachers,” says Marta Sanders of Rogers Marvel. “The constructive dialogue with school leaders, teachers, and trustees about design from beginning to end made the ECC the functional and beautiful place it is. Yvette’s question, ‘Yes, but is it peaceful?’ still rings in my ears.”

A continuous journey of discovery

The design team took great care to ensure students would be eager to start their school day and climb the stairs to the ECC, which is the equivalent of two stories above street level. They embedded horseshoes in the concrete stairs to honor the building’s historic roots and pique students’ imaginations as they ascend. Students can stop at



several landings along the way to peer through over-sized windows, and they can rest halfway up at the book cove, where classes frequently gather to participate in reading circles. “Separating from their primary caregivers to spend the day with their school caregivers can be an emotional experience for many children,” says Sanders. “We really

focused on making that transition appropriately challenging, fun, and inviting.”

Once inside, children find the ideal environment to launch their academic life and build the tools to become successful students. The ECC features open classrooms with the optimal level of natural light and a quiet environment ideal for learning. SMART Boards™, included in every classroom, can be adjusted in height so that students can interact with them whether sitting at tables or on the floor. Ample cabinet space ensures teachers can store materials out of sight when they are not being used in order to minimize distractions, while Phonic Ear sound field systems amplify teachers’ voices, helping students hear, understand, and stay on task. “The classrooms are remarkably serene, and the acoustics are incredible,” says Logue. “The sounds are



SMART Boards™, included in every classroom, can be adjusted to any height for student accessibility.



Honoring the past. Shaping the future.

In 1990, the Claremont building was designated a New York City Landmark, which requires the Stephen Gaynor School to preserve historical elements visible from the street, including the façade, windows, and doors. As a result, the architects worked closely with the builders to create fixtures that would function much more efficiently than their historic counterparts—such as modern door hinges and energy efficient windows—while preserving the building’s original appearance. In fact, the double doors of the carriage house are custom-made replicas of the originals, designed by the architects after examining old photographs and drawings of the building.

The interior of the new facility also features many design elements not mandated by the city that honor the building’s former life as a riding school and horse stable. In addition to the horseshoes embedded in the walkway and stairway, white tongue and groove boards span the walls and ceiling over the ECC’s open staircase, adding beauty and texture to the lobby while recalling the riding arena that occupied the space for many years.

Now that it houses the ECC—and will soon include the Stephen Gaynor Middle School and arts center—the beloved Claremont building has been repurposed for a worthy cause. Just as important, Siegel’s longtime dream of extending the Stephen Gaynor School experience to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students has finally become a reality. Logue has been thrilled to help realize that dream by contributing her expertise to the development of the programs as well as the physical spaces. “Designing a physical environment that truly complements the ECC’s mission is an unbelievable opportunity,” says Logue. “We’ve created the ultimate educational experience for our teachers, parents, and most important, our students.”



Early Childhood Center MUSIC

Amelia Robinson

(aka Ms. Amelia), a Suzuki-trained classical pianist/vocalist, is our new ECC music teacher! She has performed at Carnegie Hall, on Broadway, and around the world on her electric ukulele. She is the founder and creator of the popular interactive children’s music concert series, **Mil’s Trills**.



Ms. Amelia received her bachelor of science in biological anthropology from Binghamton University and has been teaching music to children for over eight years.



Children in the Early Childhood Center have explored music and movement through original songs, fun books, and games. They have been able to sing about and dance like falling leaves, elephants, squirrels, and turkeys! In class, students worked hard on preparing for their Holiday Concert, practicing moving and dancing to a new rendition of “Miss Mary Mack”. Students also rehearsed their own solos in “You Have My Heart”, accompanied by Ms. Amelia on the ukulele. They also worked with percussion instruments (jingle bells) in Ms. Amelia’s original song, “Ho-Ho-Home for the Holidays.” Students gave a blowout performance for their parents after their Holiday Party in December.

Students in the Early Childhood Center, invited their parents to attend their first annual Holiday Party. They crafted gingerbread houses with their families and



decorated cookies. It was a wonderful way to close the fall semester and celebrate the holidays!

2012 Gaynor Gala Honoree, Scott A. Mager

The Stephen Gaynor School has announced its honoree for the 2012 Gaynor Gala. This year, the school recognizes **Scott Mager, chairman and CEO at Perfect Building Maintenance**. Scott serves as a member of the Stephen Gaynor School Board of Trustees and is also a parent of David Mager, now in his third year at the school.

Like many others who have served as volunteer leaders at the Stephen Gaynor School, Scott Mager found his path to leadership through his student. Reflecting upon the years before learning of the Stephen Gaynor School, Scott recalls, “Although David was attending a very reputable school, he was having difficulty. It just wasn’t the right fit, and he was facing challenges in reading and with other schoolwork as well. We knew he needed to be in a more nurturing environment.”

That is when the Magers discovered the Stephen Gaynor School and explored the possibility of enrolling their son. Looking back, Scott says, “We were very fortunate to find the Stephen Gaynor School. Even though at first we were worried about the challenges inherent in having our child transition from one school to another, we were confident it was the right step. David is like so many students for whom this school offers the right fit. These kids are really smart, but they just need help to bridge the gap between their intellect and their performance.”

Mr. Mager says that it is with gratitude and respect for the faculty and staff at the Stephen Gaynor School that he looks forward to becoming the 2012 honoree.

“I love the place and what it did for my family—the Stephen Gaynor School turned my child into a student. The one job I cherish most in life is being a good dad for my children.”

Funds raised through the 2012 Gaynor Gala will be used for the ongoing transformation of the historic Claremont Stables into a variety of state-of-the-art facilities that will further enhance the quality of education for students at the Stephen Gaynor School and that will enable the school to have broader community impact.

“As a board member, what makes me proud—in addition to doing the best I can for my son and the other students—is that the Stephen Gaynor School is now able to provide some of the same benefits that my child receives to other children from area public schools. I’m very lucky that my son David can receive these benefits, but I am inspired to know that others will benefit, too.” ✂



*“I love the place
and what it did
for my family—
the Stephen
Gaynor School
turned my
child into
a student.”*

To learn more about or to register for the 2012 Gaynor Gala, visit: www.stephengaynor.org.

National Center for Learning Disabilities honors Stephen Gaynor School at the annual “Celebrating Our Schools” Luncheon

For the second year, members of the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) community, including educators, parents, and leaders in special education, gathered to shine a spotlight on schools doing great work to support students with learning disabilities. The second annual “Celebrating Our Schools” Luncheon was hosted at the 3 West Club in New York City in October.

This year, the *Pete & Carrie Rozelle Award* was presented to two deserving schools: the Stephen Gaynor School and Public School 380, The John Wayne Elementary School. Senior advisor to the NFL Commissioner, Joe Browne, joined in the festivities and introduced the *Pete & Carrie Rozelle Award* and the two award presenters.

The award was presented by alumna Cassidy Kahn, who spoke eloquently about the impact that Stephen Gaynor School had on her life and could not have given higher praise to the committed staff and faculty. Dr. Scott Gaynor accepted the award on behalf of the Stephen Gaynor School.

NCLD’s *Pete & Carrie Rozelle Award* was created by NCLD’s Board of Directors in 2000 to honor the organization’s founders by recognizing schools that are successful in addressing the learning and social/emotional needs of students with learning disabilities (LD) and other students who struggle with learning.

Founded in 1977, NCLD is committed to ensuring success for all individuals with learning disabilities in school, at work, and in life. ✂



Cassidy Kahn speaks at the NCLD luncheon.



Introducing the Gaynor Girls!

Stephen Gaynor’s first-ever all-female sports team

If you’ve found yourself in the Stephen Gaynor School this winter, you may have heard deafening noise coming from the gymnasium. Introduced this September, the girls basketball team has quickly built a dedicated fan base and became the team to watch this season. During home games, the benches are packed with family members, faculty and administration, and other students, all coming to support and cheer on the girls.

The girls basketball team is the first-ever all-female sports team in the Gaynor School’s nearly 50 years of operation. The team started with 10 girls and quickly grew to 17, forcing coaches Sheera Graber and Laura Sargent to start a waiting list. “The response of the girls basketball team has truly been amazing,” states Graber. “We weren’t expecting such a positive reaction!”

Not only are the girls learning the basic skills and rules of basketball, they are learning much more. Focusing the team around teamwork, building camaraderie, and sportsmanship teaches the girls life skills. They are also improving their hand-eye coordination, concentration, and sense of themselves.

On game days, the girls participate in spirit wear. The girls decide as a team what they will all wear to school the day of their game. By dressing in themes, the girls mark themselves as a team during the school day. Some of the spirit themes have been Nerd Day, Pajama Day, and dressing up with the boys for their co-ed game.

The team may have had a rough start to their season, losing their first three games. Sargent says, “These girls lack anything but determination and heart.”



ROSTER:
Sirena Beard-Galati
Mimi Benadrete
Lily Blum
Stephanie Brown
René Burkert
Katherine Glenn
Katie Kagel
Anna Maité Kaplan
Maddie Kostman
Mason Landis
Jordan Levi,
Co-Captain
Daniela Marton
Katie Mauthner
Bella Morand
Hannah Murphy
Stella Solasz,
Co-Captain
Lily Warshaw

“These girls lack anything but determination and heart.”

— LAURA SARGENT, COACH

The girls started as girls who just wanted to play basketball, they’ve now become a team.”

Another first this season was putting two of the girls in a leadership role. Jordan Levi and Stella Solasz, both graduating this year, were named as co-captains of their team. During practice, Jordan and Stella lead the girls in their warm-up run, lead the stretches, and have the final say in what the girls will wear for spirit. These two ladies have taken the role above and beyond, taking the initiative to put together a team email and phone list to remind their teammates what to wear on game day and giving words of encouragement.

As this inaugural team continues to improve and increase their skill level, they are setting the bar for future players. If this successful first season means anything for the future, the Gaynor girls are foreseen to become unstoppable, on and off the court. ⚡



The boys and girls soccer team had another stellar season this year!



Led by co-captains Stephanie Brown and Callum Gordon, FC Gators spent a lot of their season working on maintaining control of the ball and hustling on defense. Coaches James Melillo and Josh Bookin agreed that the team’s hard work showed through their efforts on the field. The team faced opponents twice their size, playing on fields much larger than their home turf. The sheer determination the team displayed has been unlike any other team at Stephen Gaynor School. Coach Bookin comments, “It’s incredible to see what these players are capable of and thrilling to watch them compete at such a high level.”

Gaynor’s defense had much to do with the success of the soccer team this season. Led by Quinn Lansill, Jacob Sokol, Kenny Goldberg, Garrett Simon, Zac Targum, and Haley Smilow, they were impenetrable. Goalkeeper, Oscar Saraf commented on the team’s victory. “You know, we play our hardest every time out, and sometimes we win, sometimes we lose. I try my best in goal, but I think it is thanks to players like Ari [Simmons] and Katie [Kagel] who just never quit out there. That’s why we win. I think it’s the hustle.” ⚡

ROSTER:
Mimi Benadrete
Stephanie Brown,
Co-Captain
Isabella Gerstein
Kenny Goldberg
Callum Gordon,
Co-Captain
Ira Heppard
Katie Kagel
Maddie Kostman
Quinn Lansill
Angus Lodge
Alex Parrasch
Aaron Rabin
Oscar Saraf
Ari Simmons
Garrett Simon
Haley Smilow
Jacob Sokol
Zac Targum
Lily Warshaw
Aden Weiner



Black and White Photography: *(Fine Arts cycle 2) 1, 2, MS*

Ansel Adams landscape print would not have as much impact if it were photographed in color! To photography teacher, Adam Gaynor, black and white pictures always paint a more simplistic feeling and give him a wonderful imagery of elegance and sophistication. It causes him to not focus so much on the vibrancy of color, but the natural beauty of what is being captured. Working with black and white images requires advanced techniques to control contrast and tone.

Students learned to take full advantage of the new and improved grayscale features in Photoshop and Camera RAW to produce full tonal range black and white images and prints. Using Epson R2400 printers, students printed black and white archival photographs taken from documentary shooting assignments. Topics included color vs black and white; converting color images to rich black and white; and revealing the details of the image with adjustments to masks of the layers. Through hands-on exercises, students learned the new workflow of black and white digital imaging and produced exhibition-quality images and prints which will be displayed in the school. ✎



Ira Heppard



Kathrine McGorry



Maddie Kostman



Jackson Bogardus

The Latest Import from Singapore: Innovative Mathematics Education

This year the Stephen Gaynor School has incorporated a new and dynamic educational tool into its mathematics curriculum—**Singapore Math**. This system complements the Stern Arithmetic, already in use. The Stern method emphasizes a hands-on approach, getting away from abstract concepts and presenting tools that make those concepts real and practicable.

With Singapore Math, says Middle School Supervisor Alison Giovanni, “We are able to put math into a real-world context, to get away from it being the thing that students think they will never really use. Our goal is to help students realize that math is relevant and useful.” As the name implies, this new approach was developed in

Singapore. There, educators surveyed the best and most effective methods of math education being used in Europe, Japan, China, and the United States, and from their survey culled together the tools they believed would comprise an effective program to address all student needs. In particular, Singapore Math is helpful to students in solving word problems, which have long been a challenge.

Says Giovanni, “Students are able to break complex problems into component parts. They start by restating a problem as an answer, and then work back to determine whether they’re trying to find a part or a whole of the question. Using graphics (a numeric “unit bar”) that turns words into symbols that can be manipulated by the students, the process of finding answers is simplified.”

This practice mimics those used by advanced mathematicians and engineers, who break bigger problems into smaller, bite-size pieces to make equations less daunting and easier to tackle.

Math Specialist Joe Kaufman reports that Singapore Math has already made a difference, demystifying what for many students had been an elusive and intimidating topic, doing so by visually demonstrating relationships between elements of an equation. Says Kaufman, “An underlying and important concept of Singapore Math is emphasizing part-whole relationships. That is, the program is based on this concept of identifying individual components within problems and equations and understanding how they relate to the whole.”

In a more traditional approach to math education, teachers might often focus more on answers and outcomes than the underlying process. Kaufman adds, “What Singapore Math has reinforced among the faculty is that the most fundamental element of our success is ensuring students understand the process itself. If a student has mastered the process, even if there is an error in calculating the final result, they’ve done the most important work. The answer

itself just becomes a mechanical step completing the process.”

Beyond providing tools to the students that will make learning math fun as well as productive, Giovanni emphasizes that “Singapore Math also reduces the stress and anxiety that students otherwise might experience using

more traditional approaches to solving equations, which are not as intuitive as our new approach.”

One interesting observation about the Singapore Math approach is that it provides tools for problem-solving in general. Giovanni and other faculty members like Joe Kaufman believe that through providing structures around solving complex problems, this system may offer benefits to

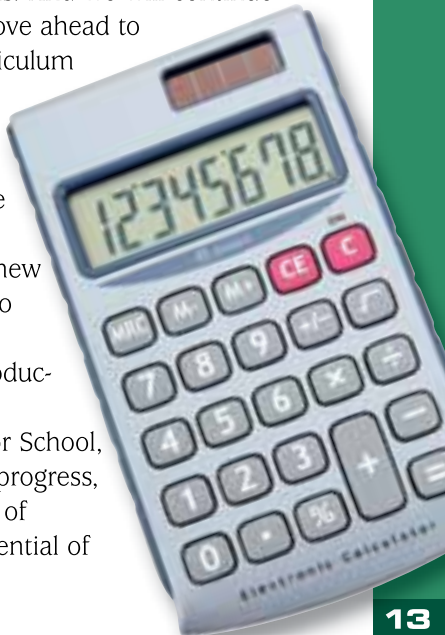
students in other parts of their education as well. That is, problem-solving is not only a mathematical skill, but a life skill. Says Kaufman, “There is potential long-term benefit, not just in the area of math. What Singapore Math does is to help students organize their thinking, giving them the tools to solve problems. It gives them confidence. In the past, there might be a big stop sign around a word problem because it was hard to organize and break down into manageable pieces. I would like to think that what they learn here will have benefits in many other areas as well. Most important, we are providing methods students can use to attack problems.”

Training and refinement of Singapore Math will continue to be a source of focus for the faculty. Says Giovanni, “We went through a rigorous training for Singapore Math and have been using it this year. And we will repeat the training annually—both for new faculty and for existing faculty who will continue to hone their skills. And we will continue looking for resources as we move ahead to improve and enhance the curriculum and learn from the students about their preferences and ideas.” In the meantime, faculty members communicate regularly to share updates on how they’ve incorporated the new system into the curricula and to exchange ideas.

As is the case with the introduction of Singapore Math and all curricula at the Stephen Gaynor School, it remains a dynamic work in progress, part of the continuous process of unlocking the true and full potential of each student. ✎

“With Singapore Math, we are able to put math into a real world context...”

— ALISON GIOVANNI, MIDDLE SCHOOL SUPERVISOR



Early Childhood Center Class Projects

Willow Room

Nutrition

One of the many things Ms. Jurow's class is learning about is nutrition. Students sorted a variety of food on "My Food Plate," which sorted fruit, vegetables, protein, dairy, and grains. Next, students had a taste test. They tasted pears, blackberries, grapes, carrots, celery, cucumbers, turkey, breads, and cheeses. Cooking and nutrition is a weekly activity for the Willow Room. They discuss what food groups are in lunch boxes and everyday foods. They also talk about sometimes food, like rice crispy treats.



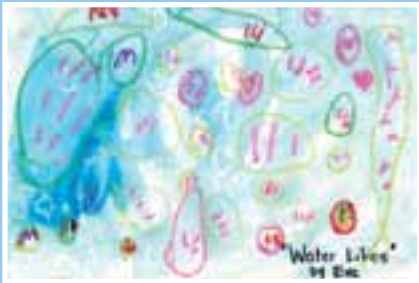
Another study for the Willow Room was learning about gardening with Gardening Consultant, Stephanie Rose. Students drew what they knew about a plant.



Casco Room

Water Lilies by the Casco Room Impressionist Artists

The Casco room children learned about the famous French Impressionist painter, Claude Monet. The children were thrilled to learn that Monet's "Bridge Over a Pond of Water Lilies" can be found right here in New York City at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These watercolor paintings are their renditions of *Water Lilies*.



Eve Wilson



William Caro



Ethan Chiweshe



Grace deMenocal



Madeline Bender

Caraway Room

Playing Games

In the Caraway Room, students take time each morning to play games with one another. These games are intended to improve skills across all curriculum areas. The class is currently focusing on vocabulary building, categorization, turn taking, and cooperative play. Through these games, students are learning appropriate classroom behaviors and developing their self-regulation skills in a fun environment.



Three Little Pigs



The Caraway Room's Three Little Pigs unit was tremendous fun. In addition to reading and discussing several versions of the popular nursery tale, the children engaged in a variety of math, science, art, OT, and language activities based on the story. A favorite activity was a science exploration involving a piece of hay (straw), a stick and a brick. The children tested the weight and properties of each material and made predictions about which one would go the farthest when blown. They each used a sticky note to record their predictions on a graph. They then took turns blowing the materials. It seemed that every child was thrilled to discover that no matter how hard they huffed and puffed no one could move the brick! After each child had a turn, Ms. Gonzalez revisited a book titled, *Ziggy Piggy and the Three Little Pigs* in which the wolf succeeds in blowing down the brick house. The children discussed whether this was feasible in light of their experiment and concluded that it was highly unlikely that anyone (or any big bad wolf) could blow a heavy brick house down.

The Caraway Room's Three Little Pigs unit was tremendous fun. In addition to reading and discussing several versions of the popular nursery tale, the children engaged in a variety of math, science, art, OT, and language activities based on the story.

Raising Cancer Awareness

In the October 11, 2011 issue of the *New York Post*, one of our students, Caroline Watters, was highlighted for her work with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. When Caroline was just 2 years old, she was diagnosed



with leukemia. Her 4-year-old sister, Lisette, donated bone marrow for a transplant that saved Caroline's life. Now the girls are helping others by sharing their story at LLS events and help raise awareness and funds for blood-cancer research. Caroline, now 11, has been cancer-free for more than nine years. Due to their hard work and collaboration with LLS, the girls have been nominated for a Liberty Medal in the Young Heart category by the New York City chapter of the LLS.

Diversity Day

In social studies, Ms. Bode and Ms. Zelekowitz's classes learned about what makes our community diverse. They discussed how our community shares different foods, languages, holidays, and traditions. On January 30, their classes held a special event to celebrate our diverse community. Diversity Day was a chance for students to share and celebrate their background and heritage with their classmates and families. Parents and family members joined them that afternoon to share a cultural connection with the class. Students shared music, clothing, games, and delicious food!



Sports Nights

Coach James and Coach Pat organized three fantastic sporting events for our families this year! Each event was split by age group and they played three games they had been practicing in gym class.

During the Early Childhood Center Sports Afternoon, students competed in a sports photo hunt, Keepers of the Castle, and number sideline soccer.

Lower School students participated in a variety of relay races including running, soccer, dribbling with a beach ball, basketball dribbling, tennis balance, and scooters. They also played bean bag basketball and scooter soccer!

Our older students played hula hoop basketball, kingpin, and baloney soccer.

Each game was meant to promote good sportsmanship and encourage a love for physical activity. Thank you to the Parents Association for sponsoring these events! 🏀



Across the Finish Line, and Beyond, with Alumnus Lex Zee

Stephen Gaynor School alumnus Lex Zee '08 calmly tells us, "If you set your mind to it, you can do anything." This idea was at the core of a paper he wrote for one of his high school classes earlier this year. And to prove his thesis, he decided to run the New York City Marathon.

Though he had not run a marathon before—and for that matter, didn't have time to train—he was determined. Lex believes he learned the power of determination as a student at the Stephen Gaynor School.

As a youngster, before enrolling at the Stephen Gaynor School, Lex remembers facing obstacles in academics. "I wasn't getting the support or attention I really needed from the teachers. I was tested and discovered that I had learning differences. Then, after searching, my family and I discovered the Stephen Gaynor School, just one block away from my house. It was right there the whole time and I didn't even know it."

One area in which Lex especially faced challenges was reading. He recalls, "It was a huge issue for me, but I emerged from the Stephen Gaynor School with confidence. Whereas I was afraid to read aloud before going there, I later gained the confidence to read reports in front of the entire class."

It was also at the Stephen Gaynor School that Lex discovered an interest in the arts. In reflecting upon his art classes there, he reports with awe that at the Stephen Gaynor School, "You don't always need to paint the sky blue and the grass green—it can be whatever you want it to be."

Today, Lex is preparing for an elaborate exhibit of his works that will be presented at the Eagle Hill School in Hardwick, Massachusetts, where he is now completing his senior year. What's more, he will attend Syracuse University in the coming year, where he will continue to study art—not classic or fine arts, but art design, which he says is "definitely related to my roots in art studies at the Stephen Gaynor School." Once at Syracuse, he will determine his major and decide what path of specialization to pursue, with possibilities including industrial design or communications design. As Lex considers advice he can offer other students who



To see more examples of Lex's work, visit <http://lexz.net/>



"...with what I've learned [at the Stephen Gaynor School], I feel I have the tools that I will need to get through each [challenge]."

interests at the Stephen Gaynor School, and that he has carried this forward through all of his educational experiences since.

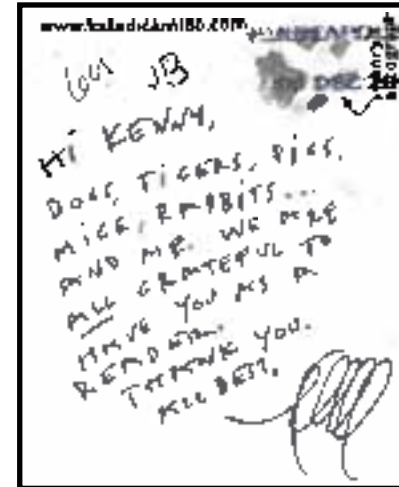
Looking ahead to college, Lex purposely chose a larger institution. Describing his process for selecting a school, he says, "When I was looking for colleges, I wanted to deviate from the norm. I'd attended smaller schools my whole life and decided it was time to try something bigger. With Syracuse, this seems like the time to put myself in an environment where there are more students. One of the big things I hope to gain from college will be to put myself in an environment that is different and where I will be challenged."

As for the New York City Marathon, Lex ran it, and completed it! Reminiscing, he tells us, "The marathon was a one-time thing, something you get to check off your list and then you're done. But I still see there are many marathons in my future as far as other challenges yet to come in my life. And with what I've learned, I feel I have the tools that I will need to get through each of them."

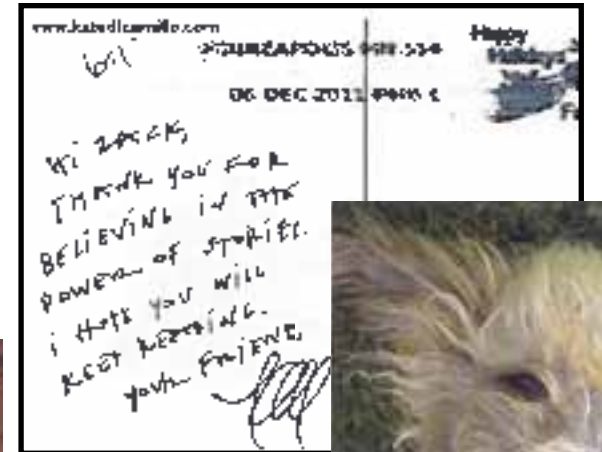
With his unyielding spirit of determination, there is no question that Lex will continue to cross the finish lines as he tackles new challenges at Syracuse University and beyond. ✂

Letters to Author Kate DiCamillo

Ms. Alvarez's reading group wrote letters to author Kate DiCamillo about her book *Because of Winn Dixie*. Students wrote about what they liked about the book and how it was different from the movie that was created. It was a nice surprise when Kate wrote back! ✂



Kenny Goldberg



Zach Gartenberg



Ancient Egypt

Ms. Hurlbert/Ms. Klausner's class studied ancient Egypt and what archaeologists have learned about this time period. Students also learned about the lives of people in ancient Egypt.

To assist in their studies, students took a trip to the Jewish Museum and the kids participated in an archaeological dig! ✂

Ancient Egyptian Houses

by Jacob Goodwillie

Houses in ancient Egypt were shaped and made very specific. The materials used for housing were mud brick walls, columns made from papyrus reeds, and of course the houses were painted. The basic floor plan was simple. The outer room was used as a workshop, the center of the house the people lived in, and the bedroom and the kitchen were on the far side of the house. Also stairs led to the roof. When cooking the kitchen had no roof, they baked food in dome clay ovens, and the grains were kept in the courtyard. To keep cool the Egyptians had the windows near the roof, sometimes they slept on the roof, and they had an awning to have shade. Houses in ancient Egypt were different from houses today.



Medicine in Ancient Egypt

by Sarah Warshavsky

Egyptians had magical and scientific explanations of medicine. For science they had ointments and gargled garlic. For magic they would put amulets around their necks and pray to the gods. For treatments they didn't put them to sleep and used a scent of the lotus flower to help them breathe. Skills of ancient Egyptians were medicine.

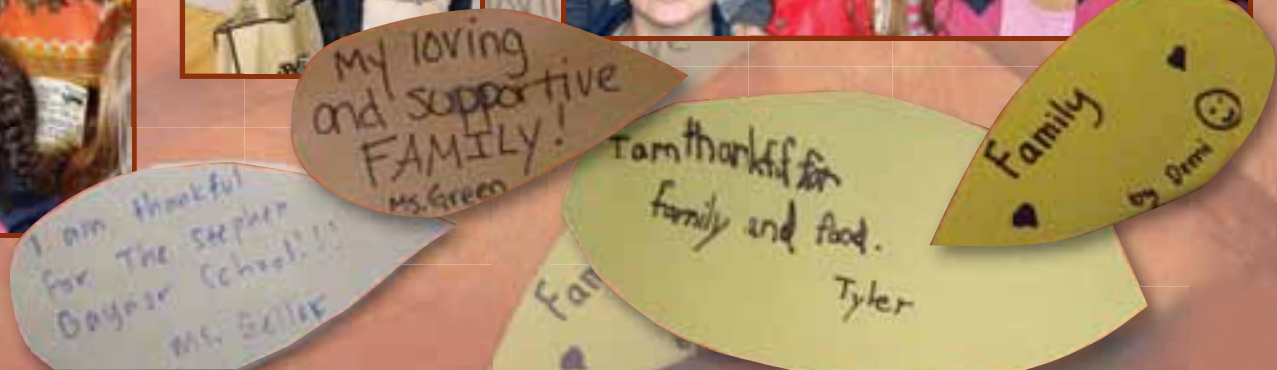


Family Picnic

To kick off the school year, families were invited to our annual Family Picnic in Riverside Park. Students sat by cluster and families were able to catch up over a long summer break and meet the other families in their class. This is a wonderful event for our new families and they were quickly introduced to our close Stephen Gaynor community. ✂



THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE



Fall Fest

The Parents Association hosted the second annual Fall Fest on October 31. The gymnasium was transformed into a festival for students in the Lower School. Students decorated cookies, had their faces painted, played games coordinated by the gym teachers, and participated in arts and crafts. Parents and siblings were invited to join the fun. Ms. Brandeis' class kicked off the event by singing a Halloween song they had written themselves.



ECC Fall Fest

Students in the Early Childhood Center had their own Fall Fest. The layout was similar to the Lower School's event where students and their families decorated cookies, played games, and had an arts and crafts section. After their festival, they gave a brief Halloween parade for the older students on the sixth and seventh floors. ✂



Ice Skating Party

The Parents Association hosted our annual Ice Skating Party on November 10. Students and their families met at Bryant Pond to enjoy a night of ice skating and a rink-side party room where they mingled with their friends. 🌀



CLC Basketball Tournament

The annual Community Learning Center "Shooting for Success" basketball tournament was held on Saturday, December 10. Faculty and friends joined to compete in a round-robin style tournament. During the last game, it was an epic match-up between The Dads, Dr. Scott Gaynor's team and No Refills, comprising our gym teachers, James Melillo and Pat Fitzgerald, and three Stephen Gaynor students, Max Wagenberg, Matthew Chatzinoff, and Alex Parrasch.

In the end, The Dads won and reclaimed the trophy they lost last year. The tournament helped raise nearly \$5,000 for our Community Learning Center, a free after school reading program for children in New York City public schools.

We will be hosting our *Spinning for Success* event in April at a local New York Sports Club. Watch for details! 🌀



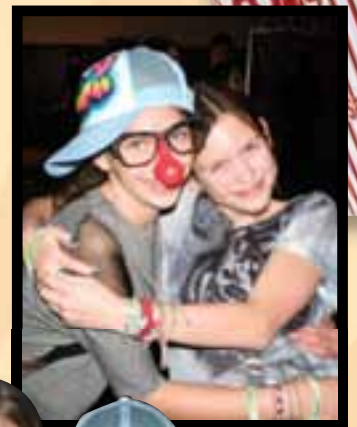
Upper School Dance

The Upper School dance is a highly anticipated event for our older students. This year, Student Council helped plan the event!

The students came up with the theme, designed the invitation, and chose the activities they would like to have. They also learned budget management and the process of planning an event.

The lobby and gymnasium were transformed into a Gaynor Carnival. Students enjoyed a night of playing carnival-style games, a balloon twister who crafted masterpieces from balloons, a caricaturist, graphic art, photo booth, and dancing to a DJ's playlist that they crafted. Students also enjoyed cotton candy, lollipops, pizza, and cupcakes.

Thank you to the Parents Association for sponsoring the event and indulging our students with such a fantastic event! 🌀

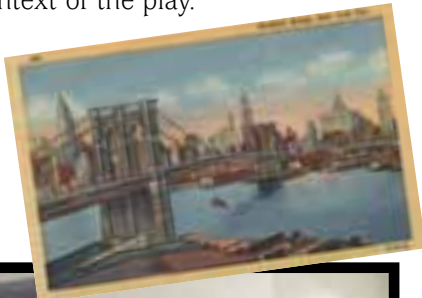


Drama

Students in the classes of Ms. Schostak, Mr. Bookin, and Ms. Hurlbert/ Ms. Klausner worked in pairs to write and perform short original plays, centered around a flower. Before students wrote their plays, they explored different settings and characters associated with flowers, as well as themes. These ideas formed the work that the students ultimately created.



Students from the classes of Mr. Meyer, Mr. Beich, and Mrs. Stackow performed two-person scenes from Arthur Miller’s *A View From the Bridge*. In addition to learning their roles, students gained background knowledge about the playwright and the historical context of the play.



Romeo and Juliet

Students from Ms. Graber and Ms. Susser’s classes are working together to perform scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*. In addition to acting, they are learning about the exciting role music plays in theater, film, and television. They have been writing their own original music score on the piano and taking turns accompanying their performances.



Music

Students from the classes of Ms. Schostak, Mr. Bookin, and Ms. Hurlbert/Ms. Klausner, studied the 12 Bar blues. They learned about the history of the Blues, the musical chords and progressions used, and how to play this style of music on the piano, guitar, and boom-o-phones. Topping off the sound, several students sang versus from classic 12 Bar blues songs including “Ain’t Nothing But a Hound Dog.”



Students from the classes of Mr. Meyer, Mr. Beich, and Mrs. Stackow learned how to entertain in true rock band style! They learned how to play a variety of chords on both piano and guitar, and how to play together as a band. Students focused on one particular instrument and brought everything together in a cohesive jam complete with intros, breakdowns, and an ending.



Child Mind Institute Art Exhibition

In September, several students had their artwork displayed in an exhibition at the Child Mind Institute. Titled *"Self-Selected Moments in Time,"* this exhibition highlighted work from Mr. Gaynor's photography classes and Ms. Rachlin's art classes. The opening reception was held on September 25 and the exhibit ran until November 1.

Students in Mr. Gaynor's photography class studied turn-of-the-century photographers, such as Julia Margaret Cameron, Nadar, Cartier-Bresson, and Eugene Atget. Inspired by the works of the photographers, students created images using Photoshop that emulated traditional photographic techniques.

Students from Ms. Rachlin's class selected their favorite painting or drawing to be displayed. The exhibition was a wonderful showcase for our students!



Student Name



Student Name



Student Name



Art History

Mr. Beich's class worked with art teacher Ms. Rachlin on exploring the work of El Anatsui, a contemporary African artist. He was born in Ghana and works in Nigeria, creating beautiful tapestries made from discarded metal.

The class held a discussion centered on comparing El Anatsui to other famous artists including Jackson Pollock and Chuck Close.

An assignment was given to students to use various artistic methods and visually connect the artwork of El Anatsui to other well-known artists. This art history project culminated in a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to view his extraordinary pieces as well as many others.



Ms. Plotkin's Reading Group Chases Vermeer!

After reading *Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett, Ms. Plotkin's reading group went to see Vermeer's paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Jan Vermeer was a Dutch painter from the 17th century, and is known for only 35 paintings. His work is celebrated for his use of shadow and light, vivid colors, and the mystery evoked by his subjects. Students sketched replicas of his artwork and wrote about what they drew.



Ms. Graber's Writing Assignment

As part of their writing class, Ms. Graber's students learned how to organize multiple-paragraph essays. Their topic was to outline a skill they had taught someone else. They brainstormed ideas and created an outline on one skill. They made multiple drafts and edited their work. Students enjoyed presenting to their classmates the skill they had taught someone else and learning about themselves in the process.

Rebecca Raimo-Ruiz
Writing

A Skill I Taught Someone

Over the summer I taught my cousin how to swim the stroke freestyle. This particular cousin is older than I am by just a few months. He has a circular pool in his backyard that we sometimes swim in during the summer. I was at his house and we were swimming in his pool. I decided to teach him how to swim the freestyle stroke because we were bored and freestyle is a first stroke I thought of. It was fun to teach him.

First, I taught him the proper diving technique which I thought might be relevant if he ever joined a swim team. I told him to keep his hands on top of the other next to his ears and make sure that they are straight. After that, I told him to curve his back and spring up in a curved motion into the water. Lastly, I told him to use the propulsion of his dive to do a few butterfly kicks (kicks in which you keep your legs together) under water. He had successfully done a dive on his first try!

Next, I taught him what he had to do with his arms to preform the freestyle stroke. I told him to make sure that he was keeping one arm straight as he pulled the other arm around. Then, I told him to do the same with the arm he had just had by his ear and to keep the first arm by his other ear. Once he had done the same thing with the first arm once more I told him to breath to the side making sure that one arm was by his side and one was straight next to his ear. He now knew what to do with his arms while swimming the freestyle stroke.

It was a little obvious that he had to kick his legs but there is a certain way so I taught him how. First, I told him that as kicks he has to keep his legs straight and make sure you do not kick like you're pedaling a bicycle or like your kicking someone. Then, makes sure you keep your legs underwater as you kick and use those kicks to propel yourself forward. Lastly, I told him not to try to splash as much as possible. He now knew how to swim the freestyle stroke.

My cousin a pretty good student, although he never seemed to take me seriously. Since I am on a swim team this is how I swim during our practices and meets. I thought that teaching him was a good way to pass the time. Believe it or not this is the easiest stroke you could possibly learn and once you learn this one I have faith that you can swim any of the four strokes no matter which stroke it may be. It was a good experience and I hope I get the chance to do it again.

11/10/11
Ms. Graber



Alex Parrish
Writing

11/17/11
Ms. Graber

Teaching Basketball

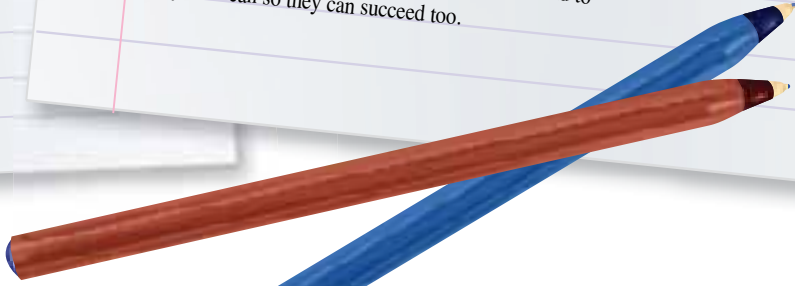
Being an amazing basketball player requires hard work, dedication, leadership, teamwork and creativity, I have taught this method to a number of kids. Coaches love the players who hustle and dive for loose balls. I have taught a few kids about hustling. In my opinion, hustling mainly involves determination because you have to want it to believe it. That is the one thing basketball players cannot control. We can't control how much we want something. Usually determination is something you have to work for. If you remain dedicated to the game, than you work harder. If you work harder you become determined because you have worked so hard for a goal. And finally, if you are determined you will hustle as hard as you can go. Diving for loose balls, making the big and small plays and just giving the other team a rough time when you are on the court. It is better to get this in their minds now because it will have a better chance of sticking in their minds.

I have dealt with a few players who are only interested in shooting. There is nothing wrong about shooting the basketball. I love offense too. But you also have to hustle back to defense. At the end of the day, defense sets up the offense and the better defense you play the better offense you can play too. This is an all around kind of basketball player that every coach wants. Some people that I have taught were, at first, selfish with the basketball and mainly cared about how they play instead of how the team plays. Well let me tell you something. If your team plays well, than you played well. When your team plays well you most likely win the game and, if you played, you contributed to the win.

When you shoot the basketball, your body has to be set up. First off, you have to set up your feet towards the basket. As well as your feet pointed towards the basket, you have to make sure your feet are not too close. But shooting does not just involve your feet. Your fingers are a major part of shooting. The last thing the ball touches should be your fingers so the ball rolls in the air. Now none of this can be done unless you get yourself open. In order to get open your team could call plays. But if no plays are called you can simply run up and down the sidelines.

As well as using your fingers for shooting, you also need to use your fingers for dribbling. Using your fingers will help you keep control of the ball. And when you practice enough, you can start to bring dribbling to your advantage. But before you do that, you will have to know one thing. dribbling the basketball is one of the most helpful but overused mechanic in the game. I have heard that by my coaches and on TV. You never want to dribble across the court. You never want to dribble for too long. You never want to just dribble the second you get the ball. And once you can follow this you are able to do moves like the in and out or between your legs. I know this can be confusing but this is crucial to the game, so if you want to play you better know that you live and die doing that.

Many people say I have a positive mentality. I have worked with a few people who simply can't handle that kind of "stuff". If you remain positive and care more about your team than yourself than coaches will love you. As I said, you can't just care about yourself, or refuse to hustle. I love leading my team and I love being co-captain of the Stephen Gaynor Gators. I love teaching and helping teammates and kids work on their mechanics. I will continue this method and will spread it around to everyone I can so they can succeed too.



Eleuthera Trip

Exceptional Education Outreach – Trip to Eleuthera Island

This past summer, Head Teachers Alex Bermel and Julia Borders partnered with Exceptional Education Outreach (EEO) and spent two weeks teaching students in the Bahamas. EEO is a nonprofit special education and literacy project operating in the Bahamian Family Islands.



The organization strives to provide special education and literacy outreach programs to students and their communities in Eleuthera and Harbour Island.

The Bahamas lack the funding and resources for students with learning differences. EEO has set up a summer program that brings teachers such as, Bermel and Borders to teach at P.A. Gibson Elementary School, located in Hatchet Bay, the

poorest community on Eleuthera Island.

There are 16 students in the program who range in reading levels from pre-primer to first grade. Their ages range from 5-14 and all come from different backgrounds including poverty, abuse, sexual activity, pyromania, starvation, and lack of love and attention.

For two weeks, Monday through Friday, Bermel and Borders taught these students. They used the Wilson Reading Program, a multisensory approach to reading. They broke students into small



groups and instructed them at their appropriate levels. They created worksheets and activities for the students to use, instructed social skills, and educated teachers on how to work with students with learning differences.

Bermel and Borders have now become attached to EEO's initiatives and returned to the island this past December with another Head Teacher, Asti Spinelli.



In addition to working with students in small groups, they also held a teacher workshop for approximately 20 educators from all over Eleuthera and Harbour Island. They presented information about how to best support and teach students with learning disabilities. In addition, the teachers shared educational games and multisensory activities for teachers to use in their classrooms. ✂



People Montage

Sometimes a subject can't be summed up in just one photo. This is where montages come in! This semester, students in Ms. Sandler's classtook photographs of each other, then put them together so that they could tell a more complete story than a single image ever could. With "people montage," students were able to record every detail about a person, from the look on their face and the slogan on their T-shirt, to the type of shoes they are wearing.



Mason Landis



Quill Lansil



Bella Morand

MESOPOTAMIA

Enuma Elish

by Jacqui Lerner

Enuma Elish is the Mesopotamian creation myth that tells how the world was created. Father Apsu, who ruled the sweet waters, and Mother Tiamat, who ruled the salt waters, had children and grandchildren who disturbed the calm waters. Father Apsu decided to do something about it, so he called for a battle. At night Ea chained up Father Apsu and took his crown and halo away. This killed his power and made him die instantly.

Later, baby Marduk was born. Ea was so proud of his son that he doubled Marduks powers making him the most powerful god to live. Marduk's grandfather, Anu, sent four great winds that angered Mother Tiamat. She decided to team up with her eleven monsters and the evil god Kingu to beat the other gods once and for all.

Mother Tiamat's monsters scared away Ea and Anu, which left only Marduk to fight. If he were to battle and make his powers last forever he would have to prove himself to the gods. Of course he succeeded. He prepared himself to fight with plants and poison beasts. When he had won the battle he decided to make the earth from Mother Tiamat's body and make human beings from Kingu's blood to serve the gods each and every day.

From Enuma Elish, it is clear that the Mesopotamians were very in touch with their surroundings and religion. In Mesopotamia the citizens believed in many more gods and goddesses than just one. They believed that humans were made to serve and take care of gods every single day of their life. Mesopotamians were exceedingly religious and strict when it came to religion.



Katie Pepi



Sophia Michaelson

Science

The Stephen Gaynor Laboratories were busy this fall. Experiments were done in many scientific disciplines ranging from food chemistry to rocket science.

Ms. Hurlbert/Ms. Klausner's class, along with **Mr. Bookin** and **Ms. Schostak's classes**, explored

the chemistry behind cooking. First, they did a chemistry experiment that led to making cheese curds. Our Gaynor scientists acidified milk by adding vinegar, causing curds to separate from whey. By adding salt, it resulted in tasty cheese curds. Next, students used salt to create a temperature depression, allowing them to make ice cream in plastic bags. Departmental classes of **Mr. Beich**, **Ms. Graber**, **Mr. Meyer**, **Mrs. Stackow**, and **Ms. Susser** each built landing modules. The landing modules were built from simple materials including cups, cotton balls, and straws. They were designed to allow the safe landing of an "eggstronaut" from a four-story drop. Even though all the eggstronauts didn't survive, all the students learned about the engineering process. ✂



A tilted photograph of a presentation board. The title at the top reads "OUR TRIP TO BANGKOK, THAILAND" in large, bold, white letters. Below the title, in smaller white text, it says "By Austin and Mike". The main part of the board features a black and white photograph of two young men, Austin and Mike, standing side-by-side and making "L" hand gestures. The entire presentation board is set against a dark background.

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hotels and snorkeling in the crystal clear waters of Bora Bora, while **Max Wagenberg** and **Austin Cottam** lived the high life in Thailand. Finally, **Aden Wiener**, **Callum Gordon**, and **Chris Nelson** flew to Australia, where they toured the Sydney Opera House, explored the Great Barrier Reef, and enjoyed the varied wildlife of the Outback.

It's safe to say that Ms. Chantel and Ms. Kristen raised the bar this year with Stephen Gaynor School's annual winter concert. The theme was Rock n' Roll Forever and students in our Lower School jammed out to tunes including "Blue Suede Shoes," "Surfin' USA," and "Tutti Frutti."

A photograph of three young girls smiling and posing together. The girl on the left is wearing glasses and a pink shirt. The girl in the middle is wearing a pink bow and a pink shirt. The girl on the right is wearing a black and white striped shirt. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

A photograph of three students standing back-to-back. On the left is a boy with dark hair wearing a black leather jacket. In the middle is a girl with blonde hair in a ponytail wearing a white shirt. On the right is a girl with dark hair and glasses wearing a white shirt and a black vest. They are all looking towards the camera.



Rock'n'Roll
Forever

Reading and Writing Specialists Advancing Teacher Development and Training

Two noted experts—**Dr. Judith Hochman**, and **Dr. Kate Garnett**—have been consulting with the Stephen Gaynor School faculty and staff to provide on-site resources, expanding the array of tools available to teachers to engage students in writing and reading.

Both Dr. Hochman and Dr. Garnett presented summer training sessions to faculty before the academic year, and continue to work with teachers to develop a richer and deeper set of methods for instructors to have available to most effectively reach students. Here are updates on their exciting progress:

Judith Hochman

Dr. Judith C. Hochman is the former Superintendent of the Greenburgh Graham Union Free School District in Hastings on Hudson, New York and Head of Windward School in White Plains, New York. She is the founder and senior faculty member of the Windward Teacher Training Institute. As an expert in methods for teaching writing skills, Dr. Hochman has built a career not only working with students, but providing support to other educators in helping them improve their ability to engage students in their own classrooms.

Says Middle School Supervisor, Alison Giovanni, “At the beginning of year there was a writing assessment in which Judith met with our teachers, and offered thoughts and insights on where writing instruction could go. More recently, in January—after the winter break—she did another review, visiting each classroom to conduct a class-by-class assessment, meeting with each teacher as a follow-up.”

Giovanni emphasizes that Stephen Gaynor School teachers are already far ahead of the curve, but that the added resource Dr. Hochman provides helps teachers build an even stronger repertoire to use in their interactions with students, with a focus on individualized methods. That is, each student is often in a unique phase of learning and demonstrates unique needs. As such, the methods best applied in reaching a specific student can be unique.

Additionally, Giovanni tells the story of a teacher, who, through Dr. Hochman’s methods, has found that his own writing style has been impacted: “There is one teacher who really has grabbed this and gone with it completely, and he tells me that it has changed not only how his students write but how he writes, as well.”

In essence, the approach within the writing program is to emphasize a structured system, focusing first on sentence work and formation. That serves as the building block for developing strong paragraphs and longer articles or essays. By breaking writing assignments into manageable components, and giving students tools for tackling bite-size pieces, longer assignments can eventually become navigable.

Giovanni describes this process as one through which Dr. Hochman is helping to develop a Gaynor-specific curriculum. That is, the body of knowledge and the toolkit under development through her collaboration with the faculty will continue to be available at the Stephen Gaynor School for teachers today, and those in the future. Says Giovanni, “building a writing skills program and teaching basic writing skills require that we be open to new ideas and modifications in current practice. The idea in developing best practices that are unique to our organization is that anyone can pick them up and develop a good writing program from the knowledge base we are developing.

Ultimately, our goal is to continue to provide our teachers with opportunities to further hone their skills, with the end result of providing our students with the best educational experience possible.”

Kate Garnett

That same spirit of collaboration has resulted in enhancement of the toolkit available to the faculty around reading skills instruction. In that arena, Dr. Kate Garnett has been working with faculty and staff through this academic year as well, in the lower school—with plans to expand her work into the Middle School in the next year.

Garnett, a professor of Special Education/Learning Disabilities and Chair of the Department of Special Education at Hunter College, developed Hunter’s teacher preparation in Learning Disabilities (LD) program from its inception and has continued building it for more than 25 years. During that time, she also spent seven years designing The Edison School’s special education training and service model, engaging intensively in the preparation of teachers and school leaders as the Edison school reform experiment grew from four to 120 sites nationwide.

Says Mindy Stern, Assistant Director of the Lower School, “Kate has been a tremendous help to the faculty, strengthening their confidence in being able to see a challenge, but then feeling well-equipped to address it. Kate has been giving feedback to each teacher to help adjust or modify their reading programs, usually through small tweaks, in order to make the process even better.”

Stern reports that the cumulative effect of many small adjustments “has been huge,” when considered in terms of the overall impact for the students this year. In addition to one-on-one work, Dr. Garnett also conducts larger sessions as well, presenting to all Lower School teachers and Reading Specialists, for example.

Stern is enthusiastic. “It’s been a very positive experience,” she exclaims, “because all our teachers and staff are very open and flexible, and they ultimately want what’s best for the students, so even though each teacher has his or her own method, there is an openness to try new approaches and to modify strategies to become even better, in order to address the needs of each student.”

In addition to weekly visits to the school, Dr. Garnett also holds weekly conferences with Stern and her colleague Kate Adlin, Supervisor of the Lower School. Eventually, Dr. Garnett is expected to extend her consulting reach into the Middle School, once the bulk of her work with the Lower School is complete. Dr. Garnett will present a year-end summary, and conduct another training in August in preparation for the new academic year. Summarizing the impact of Dr. Garnett, Mindy Stern asserts that “the things you get from her you cannot get from a professional development course—this is different, we are lucky to be working with an out-of-the-box thinker.”

This investment in professional development for the educators within the Stephen Gaynor School organization will ultimately further enrich the experience of students, in what is the ongoing process of assessing effective teaching methods and collaborating across the organization to share best practices universally. ✂

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