

GAYNOR

Gazette



INNOVATION

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Contributing Writers: Maggie Keith,
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Design: Di Vision Creative Group, New York

Photography: Adam Gaynor,
Kristen Browning, and April Starling

Printing: Western Commercial Printing



If you are receiving duplicate copies of the
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The Gaynor Gazette is printed
on recycled stock using soy inks



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OPINION EDITORIAL FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Evolution of the School Library – Gaynor's SMART Lab

Integrating Science, Math, Art, Research, and Technology Under One Roof to Build Real Life Problem-Solvers



The concept of building Gaynor's SMART Lab started with the simple question: What is the library of the future? Traditionally defined as a repository for books, the standard library model that knowledge is stagnant and must be stored in a finite space is something we wanted to break. Today, we know

that access to information using search engines to pull data from the Internet seems infinite. So much so, that the task of accessing information requires the higher level skills of culling the information and critically analyzing the results to not only answer a question, but to improve upon it. Gone are the days of grabbing the Encyclopedia Britannica off the shelf to get a specific answer to a specific question. We want our students to be innovators, problem-solvers, and agenda setters for the future. Instead of building a place to store information, we built a SMART Lab to teach children how to improve the world around them.

If you give a classroom of students a project to build Native American longhouses and provide them with the same materials (shoe box, popsicle sticks, and glue), there will be little variation in the results. The students would have a good understanding of what the structure looked like, but might miss the deeper understanding of why the houses were built this way. If you bring those same students to

the SMART Lab and tell them to use their imagination to represent how Native Americans lived, you will get as many variations as there are students in the room. One student may decide to use green screen technology to create a video depicting Iroquois life. Another student might use our design

software to create a modern energy efficient version of the longhouse that can be printed off our 3D printer. Finally, a student could use recycled materials to build a longhouse, demonstrating how the Iroquois were resourceful in using materials from their natural environment. All three examples would not only build a deeper appreciation of Native American life, but would also extend students' understanding of other cultures, as well as their own.

Developing children's critical thinking skills at an early age is essential to meeting the demands of today's dynamic curricula. These skills are also required by our evolving workplace. We need future leaders who are not only socially action minded, but are also innovative in their approach to problem solving. I am hopeful that we can inspire students who can go out and build a safer, caring, and more sustainable world. Giving students the skills and experiences offered in the SMART Lab will not only help to prepare them to manage their paths to success, but it will also embolden them to create their own paths.

Scott Gaynor

DR. SCOTT GAYNOR
Head of School

Building a Stronger Community:

Gaynor's South Building Expansion Continues to Unfold

When the doors of the South Building opened at the start of the school year, architectural drawings vanished and new opportunities emerged. The stairway outside the South Cafeteria, which had been closed off for construction, led to an entire new floor of Middle School classrooms, complete with a Science Lab and innovative Science, Math, Art, Research, and Technology (SMART) Lab. The cranes that had been spotted outside the building left their mark with a unique enclosed rooftop field house for year-round sports activities. Stephen Gaynor School students now have nearly 80,000 square feet in which to learn, grow, and reach their full potential.

In 2009, the School seized an amazing opportunity to purchase the historic Claremont Stables and Carriage House on West 89th Street and began planning an expansion that would add nearly 50,000 square feet to the campus. The construction unfolded in phases, first with the opening of the Early Childhood program in 2011, then two floors of the new Middle School in 2012 (including Digital Photography and Fine Arts Studios), and a

bridge connecting the two buildings in 2013. Since then, construction crews have been working feverishly to build out the fifth and sixth floors in time for the start of this school year. "It's been a phenomenal run seeing the development of the South Building over the past several years," explained **Dr. Gaynor**, Head of School. "It falls under two categories: launching the EC and expanding the learning experience for all of our students - both of which have made us a stronger community."

Middle School students are thriving in their new space, which was designed specifically for them. Green Cluster students, who used to occupy the seventh floor of the North Building, now have new class and seminar rooms on the fifth floor, putting them in close proximity to their Blue Cluster peers on the third floor. The new Science Lab on the fifth floor has divided space for lectures and experiments, which allows students to better focus on the task at hand. **Ms. Fabricant**, Chair of the Science Department, explained the impact of the new space. "Having this new space lets our students explore their potential, with more sophisticated experiments that will better prepare them for

High School. We're able to conduct interesting chemistry experiments and we have plenty of room to move around for physics. It's so exciting to see this come to life for our students."

Realizing the importance of creative problem-solving and having a trans-disciplinary space, the school has developed a SMART Lab on the fifth floor. Middle School Technology Teacher, **Mr. Russ**, who was very involved in the development of the lab, explained, "The SMART Lab gives students an opportunity to address real-life problems, come up with solutions, and build something to solve them. It is a place that allows for trial and error and for mistakes to be made - but we know that this is where inspiration and learning happens."

In addition to problem-solving, students have a greater opportunity to explore their interests from video production with a green screen to 3D printing. In the SMART Lab, teachers take curriculum from the 2D level to the 3D level, as students problem-solve with the help of materials like cardboard, modeling clay, circuitry components, and twine. When students have a problem, they enter the lab and take advantage of the resources that are available and begin



mocking something up to help them puzzle through the solution. (See more information on our SMART Lab on page 18.)

All Gaynor students – from Early Childhood through Middle School – are enjoying the rooftop field house, a structure unlike any other in New York City schools. At its peak, the interior height is 20 feet, with a gentle slope to maximize light in the space. With more than 3,600 square feet, the field house provides additional space for PE and recess, and is also ideal for after school classes, such as flag football. **Max Silverman**, Lower School student, shared his thoughts on the new space. "My favorite thing about the field house is how soft the grass is," he exclaimed. "In flag football, it feels like you're in a real arena,

like real football players. It's just amazing!"

The last phase of this exciting expansion project in the South Building will be the Performing Arts Center, consisting of a full-size stage, space for nearly 300 seats, and the home of our exceptional music department. We look forward to seeing our talented students shine on stage!

We are grateful to all in our community who helped make the idea of expanding our campus a reality. Thank you for donating your time and resources. Not only are we now able to provide an individualized education for more students, but we also have state-of-the-art facilities designed to ensure an optimal learning environment for them all.



SCIENCE LAB



"It's been a phenomenal run seeing the development of the South Building over the past several years."

*Dr. Scott Gaynor,
Head of School*

Technology in the 21st Century

By Chris Koble,
Lower School Technology Teacher

One are the days of computer labs and Oregon Trail. Stephen Gaynor School's approach to the integration of technology is unique and prepares students with the critical thinking skills needed for success here at Gaynor and beyond. At the center of this strategy is the SMART Lab - a Maker-Tinker-DIY project space that marries the study of Science, Math, Art, Research, and Technology with what students are studying about in their homerooms. Lower School and Middle School Technology Integrators (myself and **Mr. Russ**) work with faculty to help realize this goal. **Mr. Russ** says of the new approach, "We don't see what happens in the classroom and what happens in the SMART Lab as separate learning endeavors. We believe that they coexist and that learning through making allows for an in-depth exploration of a particular topic."

So far this year, Middle School students have been busy flexing their creative muscles with a variety of projects ranging from creating ancient artifacts to support the study of archaeology and descriptive writing in **Ms. Glazer/Ms. Finn's** homeroom, to learning about video production and green screen technology to create videos that depict what they are learning about in their study of the Revolutionary War.

Lower School students have been developing their computational thinking and reasoning skills through a series of design challenges geared toward helping them work with their peers to solve problems while learning about the iterative design process used in the SMART Lab as a basis for our work.

While project-based learning in the SMART Lab is a major component of the curriculum, it is also important for our students to gain an understanding of how to be productive and responsible users of technology, both here at school and at home. Our digital citizenship, keyboarding, and literacy programs help students build a solid conceptual foundation for the more advanced work that we engage in throughout the school year.



CHANGING OF THE GUARD: GAYNOR BIDS ADIEU AND WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

*Stephen Gaynor School could not be a leader in special education without our committed and passionate Board of Trustees, all of whom are dedicated to ensuring our school remains true to its mission while providing an excellent individualized education for each student. With heartfelt gratitude, we are saying goodbye to three dedicated members – **Neil Rubler** and **Daryl Simon** who served a combined 11 years, and **Dr. Gordon Gaynor**, who served as President for 25 of his 40 years of service. We are filled with deep appreciation for their guidance over the years. As we bid adieu, we are delighted to welcome new members **Kass Lazerow**, **Ericka Leslie Horan**, and **Elizabeth Mily** to the Board of Trustees.*

KASS LAZEROW

Kass Lazerow is a serial entrepreneur whose last company, Buddy Media, sold to Salesforce.com in August of 2012. Buddy Media, started with her husband Mike, provided the world's largest brands with a software platform to manage social media marketing efforts.

As Chief Operating Officer of Buddy Media, Ms. Lazerow managed day-to-day operations, as well as marketing, finance, recruiting, public relations, and human resources. Before Buddy Media, Ms. Lazerow was the Founder and President of GOLF.com. Ms. Lazerow is also among New York's most active startup investors with her husband. Lazerow Ventures has invested in approximately 50 startup technology companies, including Facebook, Tumblr, BuzzFeed, Mashable, Dash Radio, Rebel Mouse, Whipclip, Nourish Snacks, and Scopely.

In addition to Gaynor, Ms. Lazerow is also on the Board at Riverdale and Cycle for Survival. Ms. Lazerow has three children, Myles – who attends Gaynor, Cole, and Vivian.

ELIZABETH MILY

Elizabeth Mily joined Barclays Capital in 2010, serving as the Chief Operating Officer of the Global Mergers and Acquisitions Group for two years before moving to Global Healthcare as a Senior Coverage Officer. Ms. Mily is a senior member of the Global Healthcare Group, with primary responsibility for client relationships in the BioPharma, Pharma Outsourcing, Life Science Tools, and Diagnostics sectors. Ms. Mily has 22 years of experience in investment banking and M&A, predominantly in the healthcare sector.

Prior to joining Barclays Capital, Ms. Mily served as Senior Vice President for Corporate Strategy and Development at Thermo Fisher Scientific. Prior to that, she spent 16 years at Goldman, Sachs & Co. where she was a Managing Director and Senior Coverage Officer within the Healthcare Department of the Investment Banking Division.

She has a son, John, who attends Gaynor.

ERICKA LESLIE HORAN

Ericka Leslie Horan joined Goldman Sachs in 1996 in the Finance Division and moved to Technology in 2000. In 2003, she was named the Global Head of Commodities Technology and in 2006 she became the Global Head of Currencies and Commodities Trading Technology. Ms. Horan joined Operations in 2008, assuming additional responsibility as Global Head of Operations Risk Management in 2009. In 2011, she was named Global Co-Head of Derivatives Operations and assumed her current role in 2013. Ms. Horan was named Managing Director in 2006 and Partner in 2012.

Ms. Horan has oversight responsibility for Derivatives and Clearing Operations. She is a member of the Firmwide Structured Products Committee, Firmwide Technology Risk Committee and the Operations Operating Committee, and serves as Sponsor of the Operations Financial Reform Steering Committee.

Ms. Horan has a son, William, who attends Gaynor, and a daughter, Emily.



"My legacy will be one of support. It is time for me to take a seat at the table and be proud of all that has transpired and all that will be achieved by the able soles sitting beside me."

*Dr. Gordon Gaynor,
President of the
Board of Trustees
for 25 years*

Imagination Leads to Creation: Lower School Students "Up Cycle"

In **Ms. Hochman's** art class, imagination was ubiquitous. While students were sometimes given prompts, they mainly had the freedom to express themselves however they chose. Many students in the Orange, Yellow, and Silver Clusters gravitated towards the "Inventors Workshop" center in the art room. Here, students used new or recycled materials to build their artwork. They learned the concept of "up cycling," or reusing discarded materials to create new objects. Students constructed creatures, boats, secret towers, parachutes, stadiums, and a news media set - to name a few examples. **Ms. Hochman** reflected saying, "The kids absolutely LOVED it, and it truly captured how creative their minds are."



TARO LASKY



FRANKIE LANE



JAKE SKLAR



ZENNER MARKSOHN



MAX WINTER



JONAH LICHTMAN



JOLIE LANDAU

GRACE DE MENOCAL



LIAM ENRIQUEZ



ODETTE RUFFALO



REHANNAH BAKSH



SOFIA MANN



DECLAN RENNICK



MINA KARSEVAR



SAM WEISS

Individual Expression Drives Middle School Students' Art Projects

At the beginning of the year, **Ms. Rachlin** told her Middle School art students: "Art isn't in your hands; it's in your head." She wanted students to value their individual talents and creativity, no matter how sophisticated or simplistic their final products may be. Hence, individual expression was the theme in her art class. Similar to **Ms. Hochman's** class, students in **Ms. Rachlin's** art class were given assignments designed to prompt their innovative thinking and generate their own

art projects. For example, some Middle School students used technology applications to enhance their skills in graphic design, recreated scenes from literature, constructed sculptures that were architectural in nature, sketched couture fashion for the runway, and painted murals and still life pieces. "It's all about how you relate to the materials," said **Ms. Rachlin**, who was proud of how her students garnered their inner passions to create beautiful art.



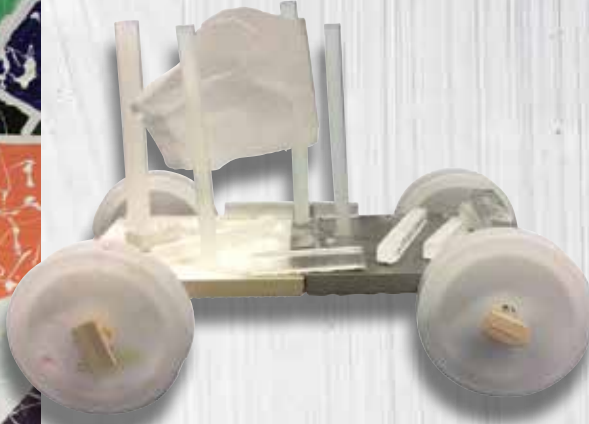
ALY FERDINAND



CHARLIE MANZANO



AVERY ZABAR



AVERY MEER

Bringing a Legend to Life:
 Lower School Students Perform

Throughout the fall, students in **Ms. Plylar-Moore's** (AKA **Ms. Kristen's**) drama class have been preparing to bring a legend to the stage. Based on a Native American tale called The Legend of the Shooting Star, students in **Ms. Buckles/ Ms. Fung's** class created an original play to be performed for their peers in the Orange Cluster in January. Rehearsals have allowed students to refine their acting skills, build confidence in their ability to be creative, engage in collaborative teamwork, and express themselves as individuals. Kudos to our young thespians!



Middle School Drama Update:
 Learning Self-Expression and
 Revisiting History through Plays

Ms. Plylar-Moore's (AKA **Ms. Kristen's**) Blue Cluster drama classes recently studied and rehearsed one of two plays, scheduled to be performed in January for the entire Blue Cluster: Eight Angry Jurors or The People of Clarendon County. Both plays provided insights into historical events and simultaneously tied into the larger study of diversity and ally theme, which was adopted school-wide this year. Eight Angry Jurors allowed students to gain an understanding of the challenges faced in our criminal justice system, including the way prejudice and quick judgements can be detrimental to the process of receiving a fair trial.

Through The People of Clarendon County, students learned first-hand about the hurdles many people faced leading up to the historic Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. the Board of Education. In preparation for the January performances, each student took an introspective look at his/her character's point of view, with a specific focus on how each character chose to express him/herself.

Conversely, Green Cluster students worked to become play-writes. Students honed in on their writing, creative, and character-building skills in order to write a short original play about a topic of their choice. Examples included economic hardship, friendship, and sibling rivalry. The plays were presented to the entire Green Cluster in November. Bravo to all Middle School actors and play-writes!



SOPHIE: Should we go inside

AVA: No not until we get
 a flashlight

SOPHIE: Ok but hurry

AVA RUNS TO GET A FLASHLIGHT

AVA: Now we are ready

SOPHIE AND AVA GO THROUGH
 THE DOOR

SOPHIE: Wow it's dark in here

AVA: Yes but look a river

SOPHIE: It's so cool and look
 there is a boat

AVA: Ready to paddle

SOPHIE: Ready as I will ever be

AVA AND SOPHIE PADDLE

AVA: Now look I think I see
 something in the distance

SOPHIE: I see it too

AVA AND SOPHIE GET TO LAND

WRITTEN BY AVA KIMMEL

Lower School Students
 Make Melodies

Whether in the Pink or Red Cluster with **Ms. Robinson** (AKA **Ms. Amelia**) or **Ms. Patti**, or the Orange, Yellow, or Silver Cluster with **Ms. Shuppy**, all Lower School students explored their musical talents using multi-sensory tactics. Students learned about rhythm and beat, which helped them develop expressive movement with their bodies. As a group, in trios, duos, and individually, students sang solfege to encourage pitch matching and voice control. In order to become better musicians, students also learned musicianship skills, or the importance of focusing and listening to achieve success in music.

Musical connection was a big theme in **Ms. Patti's** class, where students were encouraged to connect music from class to prior experiences outside of school. Building a sense of community was central to **Ms. Shuppy's** class, where all students participated in group games and songs. Students also learned to work with one another to perform as an ensemble. The culmination of the semester came during the Winter Arts Festival when each cluster performed songs that they had rehearsed since October.

Middle School Students Show
 Off Their Talents for Peers

Building from their years of musical experiences in Lower School, Middle School students in **Ms. Shuppy's** class delved deeper into the study of music theory and instruments. Green Cluster students spent eight-weeks in music class, improving their music skills while working in an ensemble. Tailored to their level and understanding of basic music theory (rhythm, reading notes, musical terminology), students learned melodies on pianos and xylophones, which they bravely performed for their cluster to complete their music classes.

Blue Cluster students enjoyed music for the semester, taking advantage of the time to build upon the skills they mastered while also performing as an ensemble. Each student chose an instrument to focus on in addition to reading notes on both the treble and bass clef and playing chords on the piano and guitars. Those interested in rhythm and beat particularly liked performing rhythms on drums, bucket drums, and playing melodies on boomwackers. The grand finale? These students also braved an end of semester performance for their peers!



Songs and Games in Early
 Childhood Music

Music is a universal language, and it's never too early to instill a love for sound and expression. Our youngest students in **Ms. Robinson's** (AKA **Ms. Amelia's**) music class have focused their time building ear training through call and response songs and games. The repetition helped students learn to match pitch while building confidence in their skills and abilities. Additionally, our EC musicians enhanced their creative expression through music and movement activities, such as singing and dancing while incorporating scarfs in controlled actions. Later in the semester, students participated in a rhythm band where they learned to keep the beat using rhythm sticks and playing various instruments. The highlight of the semester was the Winter Showcase where students performed various songs related to the theme of friendship for their families.



MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS THRIVE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY

Many Middle School students in the Green and Blue Clusters tackled Graphic Design and Photography with **Mr. Gaynor** (Green Cluster's fine arts cycle; Blue Cluster's new fine arts elective). In this class, students learned how to create a balance between design and technology. The curriculum began with a foundation of the history of photography and graphic design and then began integrating technology.

Design principles, creative thinking, and problem-solving techniques were a huge part of this course, providing students a strong foundation to design their own projects. For their final project, students created commercial food labels and music posters. Check it out!



GAYNOR'S SOCCER TEAMS SPRINT TOWARDS THE GOAL WITH THE GREEN SQUAD TAKING THE CHAMPIONSHIP



The overall growth of Gaynor's soccer program this fall was tremendous, as returning and new players came together for a remarkable season that culminated with the Green/Flex Squad winning the league championship! This year was the largest turnout in Gaynor history, with more than 45 co-ed players on both the

Green and White Squads led by **Coach Mellilo** (AKA **Coach James**), **Coach Prasarn**, and **Coach Yellin**. With a record of 7-3-2, The Green/Flex Squad had a great season competing in the American Independent Private School League (AIPSL). Every game was inspiring as players fought for a spot in the playoffs. Highlights included big wins over

The Child School, Rodeph Sholom, Speyer, and Winston Prep.

Led by many students who saw their first ever action in a Gaynor Gator uniform, the White Squad ended the season with a record of 3-3. The highlight of their season was playing the first game in the new rooftop field house, not to mention a victory over The Mandell School. **Coach James**

said, "I was impressed, as their style of play created very exhilarating games for both players and spectators."

Both teams practiced incredibly hard to improve their skills this season. Reflecting on the season, **Coach James** said, "I could not be prouder of their hard work, sportsmanship, and teamwork throughout the fall."



PHOTO: MIKE BAUER, GAYNOR PARENT



PHOTO: MIKE BAUER, GAYNOR PARENT



PHOTO: MIKE BAUER, GAYNOR PARENT



SET, BUMP AND SPIKE: GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL DIVES INTO THE SECOND SEASON

After a slow start to the season, the girls' volleyball team, coached by **Ms. Fung**, **Ms. Moraz**, and **Ms. Ngau**, found its stride and had some electrifying matches. The girls demonstrated a great deal of support for each other throughout each and every game. While the team's record does not reflect the overall growth and performance of the team, the program has continued to gain momentum in only its second year. **Ms. Moraz** said, "Our team members applied their work ethic and love for the sport to improve their volleyball skills, at each practice and game. We're very excited to continue to build our program next year!"



NOT PICTURED: JULIA DIEDRICH AND ISABELLA GERSTEIN

HEALTHY SNACKS, HEALTHY KIDS: EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS LEARN TO COOK

Designed in consultation with Stephen Gaynor School's expert faculty and outside consultants, the Early Childhood (EC) program includes innovations ideally suited to engage our young learners and enrich their educational experience. One of the most delectable is the child-friendly kitchen which provides the opportunity for all EC students to partake in an on-going unique curriculum, Healthy Whole Kids Smart Snack Program, commonly referred to simply as "cooking" by our young chefs.

Students have fun planning and preparing delicious, healthy snacks once per week, using recipes that exclude the top eight pediatric food allergens while remaining gluten-free. Some fall favorites included: stuffed peppers, roasted carrots, apple cinnamon oatmeal with pumpkin seeds, and sun butter. Students always begin by sorting the ingredients into different food groups, then taste test each ingredient to discover new flavors. **Ms. Jurow**, Director of Early Childhood, believes in what she calls the "one bite philosophy." Each student is strongly encouraged to be a risk-taker and try new things. She said, "When one student sees his or her friend trying something new, that student is much

more likely to follow suit and try it as well. The look on students' faces when they try something new and really like it is simply amazing."

Through these hands-on lessons, students learn to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy foods, become aware of what foods they consume, and how those foods nourish the body. Furthermore, cooking assists students in the development of fine motor, social, and collaboration skills, in addition to reinforcing basic math, reading, and writing skills. Materials such as interactive dry erase placemats support data collection and recall while tasting the prepared snack, because students are able to record parts of the process, like how many carrots they used, or how many cups of water were mixed in. Teachers feel confident that this new curriculum is positively impacting each student, and are encouraged by students' excitement when it's time for cooking each week.



TRIED AND TRUE ■ LOWER SCHOOL TEACHERS GO BACK TO BASICS WITH MULTI-SENSORY INSTRUCTION

In a society enthralled by the latest technological advances, Lower School teachers have made a point to remember the basics and incorporate hands-on, interactive methods of instruction. **Ms. Logue**, Co-Director of the Lower School, maintains that, "Established methods that Gaynor has honed over the years often prove to be the most effective ways to build a solid foundation for students to grow and learn."

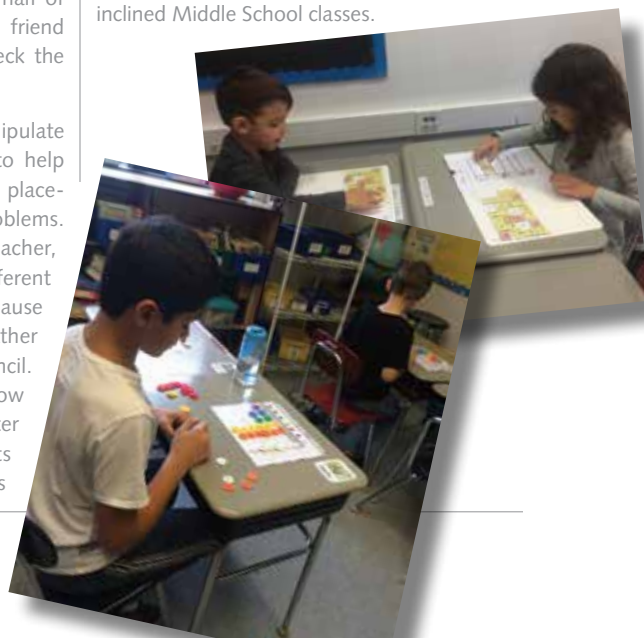
Most schools these days have interactive white boards (e.g., SMART Boards), which serve as a useful teaching tool, allowing students an opportunity to participate in problem-solving questions. However, there are additional tactile methods that prove incredibly valuable. **Ms. Adlin**, Co-Director of the Lower School, pointed out that, "Sliding your finger across the board does not outweigh the benefit of physically manipulating information, like counting blocks." Without discounting the many advantages of technology in the classroom, Lower School teachers have found success in also using tactile methods across all clusters.

For example, Pink Cluster students often use magnet boards during literacy for spelling dictation. Each board consists of a color-coded alphabet on one half to distinguish consonants from vowels. Teachers will say a word and students will choose the corresponding letters to spell the word on the other half of the board. They then confer with a friend and tap underneath each letter to check the corresponding sound.

Similarly, Silver Cluster students manipulate color-coded, foam place-value discs to help with basic math skills, like identifying place-value to multi-digit multiplication problems. **Ms. Sandler**, Silver Cluster Head Teacher, explained, "The visual of creating different sets of numbers benefits students because they can see and touch the process, rather than simply writing numbers with a pencil. Students can group the discs to see how $34 \times 3 = 102$." **Ms. Fox**, Yellow Cluster Head Teacher, who gives her students Hershey Kisses to skip count, said, "It's

all about finding materials that motivate the students."

The examples are endless, but the tangible methods integrated throughout the Lower School years are essential to help students move towards the abstract, more technologically inclined Middle School classes.



"REAL WORLD WEDNESDAY" AND NEW BLUE CLUSTER SCHEDULE ARE A SUCCESS!

September 10, 2015 marked the first day of school, but it was also the launch of a new six-day schedule for the oldest Middle School students – the Blue Cluster. This innovative approach to students' learning provides the Blue Cluster with fresh opportunities to pursue individual interests. The schedule rotates around a set and consistent Wednesday, one of the most important days of learning in the week, when students have the opportunity to consolidate and apply skills to prepare them for a High School curriculum. "Real World Wednesday" is innately student-centered, providing the space students need to learn and grow.

Over a six-day period, students participate in the traditional five-day school week, with one day (Wednesday) consistently providing an opportunity for students to apply the skills they've learned to real-life settings. "I really like the change in our schedule. It brings a different kind of learning into the school," expressed Middle School student, **Jay Siegal**. There is time on Wednesdays for remediation, collaborative project-based work, including dedicated SMART Lab time, and student advocacy (see more about student advocacy on page 25). Project-based learning is a dynamic approach to teaching where students actively explore real-world problems and synthesize their learning into hands-on projects, giving them the opportunity to develop critical

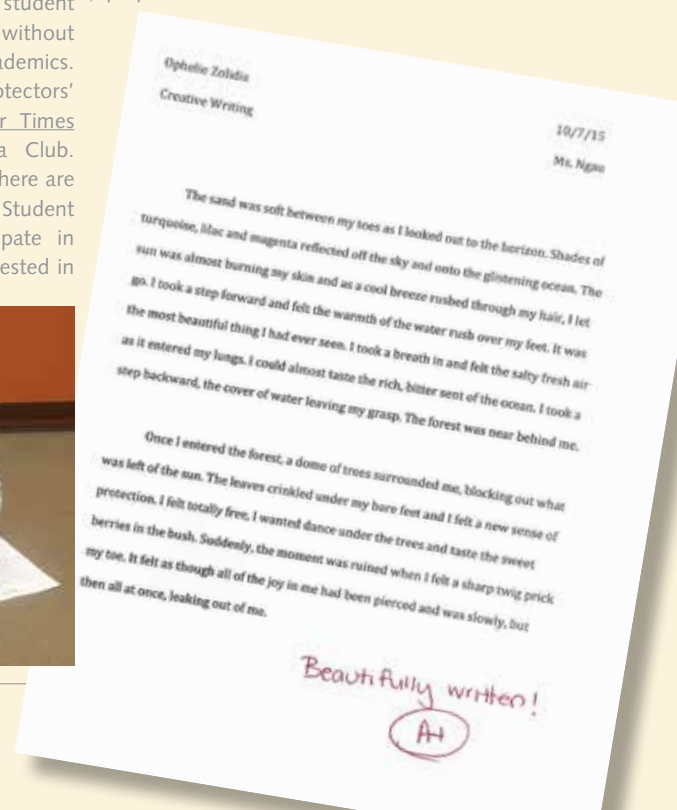
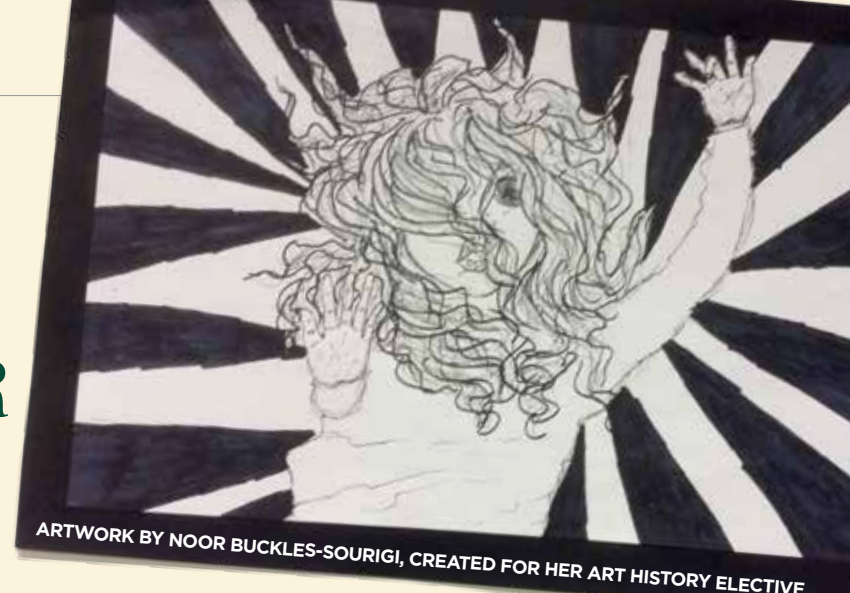
thinking skills necessary to succeed in life. Every student participates in one project-based learning course per semester, *Gaynor Construction Project*, where students use their math skills to develop various types of housing for a real location in New York City, or *Humane Education*, an approach to teaching and learning that addresses the global consequences of our lifestyles, behaviors, and the systems we support.

In addition, the six-day schedule allows time for students to explore their passions through writing-based electives that rotate on a trimester basis. Students choose courses such as: *Public Speaking and Debate*, *Hollywood vs. History*, *Sustainability through Technology*, *Creative Writing*, *Geography: No Boundaries*, *Human Behavior: Holocaust*, *Unsung Heroes of the Social Movements of the 1960s and 1970s*, and *The Personal and The Political: The Work of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera*. Furthermore, students are given the opportunity to participate in one student club of their choice for the entire year, without diminishing the time spent on core academics. Examples include: Youth Animal Protectors' Club, Gay Straight Alliance, *Gaynor Times* Newspaper Staff, and Multi-media Club. Student Council is the exception, as there are three cycles throughout the year, and Student Council members may also participate in another club. If a student is not interested in

participating in a club, he/she attends study skills during the time set aside for clubs during the day's schedule.

"The impact of the new schedule, and particularly 'Read World Wednesday,' exceeded all of our expectations. The heterogeneous grouping of students by interests, rather than skill, opened a platform for connections and conversation unforeseen by teachers," reflected **Mr. Beich**, Director of Middle School. "This new addition to our program has changed all of our perspectives, as both administrators and faculty look to implement additional opportunities for student choice to continue the unprecedented success we achieved this past semester."

At Gaynor, creating an optimal learning environment for our students is critical. We believe the new rotating schedule has done just that, and we are encouraged by our students' responses to the change as they prepare to transition to their next schools.





10 Things You Didn't Know About Gaynor's Newest Teachers

ANDREW PRASARN *Science Specialist*

WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER?

I spent ten years working at science museums as both an educator and an exhibit developer. This experience helped shape my teaching style: hands-on, interactive, and highly engaging. In many ways, Special Education students benefit more from this multi-sensory, experience-based approach. I think it's a great fit for me and hopefully for the students as well.

WHAT SCHOOL DID YOU GRADUATE FROM?

I graduated from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, NJ with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Go Ducks!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT BEING A TEACHER?

My favorite thing about teaching is what I call the "A-ha moment": seeing a student's face light up when they finally understand a difficult science concept. It's like a switch goes on and now everything clicks together. You can tell they fully grasp the concept and that they can apply it going forward.

IF YOU COULD LIVE IN A BOOK, TV SHOW, OR MOVIE, WHAT WOULD IT BE? WHY?

Star Wars? *Star Trek*? Something with space and exploration and discovering what (or who) else is out there.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TYPE OF MUSIC?

It varies depending on my mood. I've been known to listen to rock, alternative, hip-hop, oldies, folk, and even bluegrass.

DO YOU PREFER COFFEE OR TEA? ICE CREAM OR FROZEN YOGURT?

Dunkin' Donuts hazelnut coffee is my hands down favorite! Anything frozen, dairy, and sweet is fine by me.

IF YOU COULD TIME TRAVEL, WHERE WOULD YOU GO?

Probably the future. I'd be interested to see what new technologies we had developed, hopefully interstellar travel.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SEASON AND WHY?

Football season, haha! But really, it's somewhere between spring and summer because the days are long and the weather is good for outdoor activities like sports, hiking, biking, and camping.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE QUOTE OR MANTRA YOU LIVE BY?

"Life is a trade-off. If you want to excel at one thing, you have to make sacrifices in other things."

TELL US ONE FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF.

I once taught a science lesson on Sesame Street! In episode #4263 I taught Murray Monster and a group of kids how to make paper kites. I still get messages from friends when they randomly watch that episode with their children.

ANDREA HOCHMAN *Lower School Art Teacher*

WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER?

Anyone who knows me, knows I've never done anything the traditional way. My love for creative, unique experiences has influenced my career choice. This is what led me towards working on my Master's in Art Therapy. Not only is Art Therapy innovative and creative, but it allows me to surround myself by those who thrive on thinking differently, including kids!

WHAT SCHOOL DID YOU GRADUATE FROM?

I graduated from the University of Illinois for my undergraduate degree in Sociology and The Adler School of Professional Psychology for my Master's in Counseling Psychology: Art Therapy.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT BEING A TEACHER?

There is nothing more rewarding than having the chance to see students grow over time. I am constantly impressed by how children relate to art and I am always learning from them. The moment something clicks for a child brings me so much joy.

IF YOU COULD LIVE IN A BOOK, TV SHOW, OR MOVIE, WHAT WOULD IT BE? WHY?

Ever since I was a child, I have always been fascinated by the creativity and imagination in *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (think Gene Wilder, not Johnny Depp!). Willy Wonka

was able to turn his dreams into a reality while also spreading happiness and giving to others. Also, whether you are reading the book or watching the movie, there is a sense of absurdity and entertainment that pushes your inventiveness. These are the types of lessons I try to use while teaching.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TYPE OF MUSIC?

I love all music but my favorites would definitely be Motown and classic rock.

DO YOU PREFER COFFEE OR TEA? ICE CREAM OR FROZEN YOGURT?

I rarely drink either, but if I were to choose one it would be coffee. Definitely frozen yogurt!

IF YOU COULD TIME TRAVEL, WHERE WOULD YOU GO?

Maybe to the 60's, or to the 90's to meet myself as a child.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SEASON AND WHY?

It may sound corny for a teacher, but I absolutely love fall. Not only for that eager back to school feeling, but also because I love being able to walk down the street, see leaves changing, and breathe in that crisp New York air.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE QUOTE OR MANTRA YOU LIVE BY?

"Logic will take you from A to B, but imagination can take you anywhere." – Albert Einstein
Of course, "Always smile!"

TELL US ONE FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF.

I have lived in four states and two countries.

EDDIE OCASIO *Middle School Assistant Teacher*

WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER?

When I was a substitute teacher, I saw a lot of students struggling academically and not getting the support and services they needed from their teachers. I wanted to be a part of the solution and be a teacher who was trained in Special Education to become a resource for all students.

WHAT SCHOOL DID YOU GRADUATE FROM?

I graduated from the University of Scranton (PA) with a degree in Secondary Education and History. I am currently attending Hunter College for my Master's Degree in Special Education for grades 7-12, and am slated to graduate in December 2016.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT BEING A TEACHER?

There are several: helping young people discover what they are passionate about in life, working with students who think critically about the world, and watching the moment where a student can solve a problem he/she has struggled with.

IF YOU COULD LIVE IN A BOOK, TV SHOW, OR MOVIE, WHAT WOULD IT BE? WHY?

I would live in CS Lewis' Narnia or Pride Rock from *The Lion King* because they are two of my favorite movies and the settings are beautiful.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TYPE OF MUSIC?

90's alternative/pop songs or anything by T-Swift.

DO YOU PREFER COFFEE OR TEA? ICE CREAM OR FROZEN YOGURT?

Coffee. Frozen Yogurt (for the toppings).

IF YOU COULD TIME TRAVEL, WHERE WOULD YOU GO?

I would go to Renaissance Italy (even though I don't speak Italian), 18th century America, or the future.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SEASON AND WHY?

My favorite season is summer. I love the sunshine, the beach, barbecues, and nice weather. I also enjoy not having to wear a jacket.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE QUOTE OR MANTRA YOU LIVE BY?

"Be so happy that when others look at you they can become happy too."
"Do it for the kids."

TELL US ONE FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am obsessed with Marvel movies. My favorite superhero is Captain America.

Apple Picking

Traditions run deep at Stephen Gaynor School and there is none more cherished than the annual Apple Picking field trip! To celebrate the beginning of the fall season, Lower and Middle School students and faculty made the familiar trek to Demarest Farms for a fun-filled day of apple picking, tractor rides, and a picnic lunch in the midst of the pumpkin patch. The Orchard Store provided another sweet treat with homemade pumpkin donuts, for Gators who wanted to ensure they captured the full experience of all the farm had to offer.

Fall Fest

October always brings the familiar sounds of children's delight and surprise during the annual Parents' Association Fall Fest. Early Childhood students transformed into animals, princesses, and superheroes as they proudly paraded around the Middle School halls. Lower School students headed to the depths of the school, the gym, where a creepy chemistry show awaited them. Goopy slime experiments, mounds of pumpkin foam, and the interactive dance party made this Fall Fest a memorable one for all!

After School Community Service Club Supports Holiday Food Drive

In conjunction with the holiday season, Gaynor Gators took a moment to reflect on how they could help the broader community. In November, Community Service Club students, under the guidance of **Ms. Felt** and **Ms. Nielsen**, decided to host a bake sale fundraiser and food drive for longtime community partner, and next door neighbor, St. Gregory's. During the Thanksgiving season, St. Gregory's provides meals to families in need. Proceeds from a student bake sale went to support the cost of perishable food items for a warm holiday meal. In addition, students wanted to bring more attention to Gaynor's Thanksgiving food drive, so they decorated collection bins and placed them strategically on every floor to boost visibility and awareness of this important donation effort. Along with St. Gregory's, students from our entire school donated nonperishable food to support people in the community who could use a helping hand.

3-on-3 Basketball Tournament Supports Gaynor's CLC

The Community Learning Center's (CLC) annual basketball tournament was held on Saturday, December 5th. Named in memory of Ms. Jackie Long, Gaynor's longtime Director of Admissions who passed away in 2012, the **Jackie Long Memorial Tournament** brought Gaynor faculty, parents, alumni, and friends together for a morning of friendly competition and fundraising.

The CLC is a free after-school reading program for public school students in our community. This annual fundraising event is critical to ensure the program can continue to serve neighborhood children who truly need the extra support. Co-Directors **Ms. Adlin** and **Ms. Evans** are thankful for the continued generosity from supporters that helps maintain the program's strength. "We have more siblings than ever coming through the program, and families are approaching the public schools to inquire about how to enroll their children, even before the schools are flagging children as 'at risk,'" said **Ms. Adlin**.

This year, eight teams came out strong to compete and support the admirable cause.

Cleaner and Greener: After School Community Service Club Revamps Recycling

Students in our After School Community Service Club were tired of seeing the non-descript recycling signs provided by New York City's Department of Sanitation posted around the school. Not much recycling was happening because students could not easily decipher what could and could not be recycled. "Our students decided to make a change," said **Ms. Nielson**, Community Service Club Advisor. "They researched what items could and could not be recycled, looked around our buildings to see what materials were often thrown away that could be recycled, created new, detailed, and informative signs, and replaced the Department of Sanitation ones." As a result, Gaynor's facilities are both cleaner and greener. Community Service projects often help the greater community, but this year, saving the planet started within Gaynor's own halls.

From Popsicle Sticks to 3D Printers,
Gaynor's Innovative

SMART LAB

Fosters Problem-Solving Skills

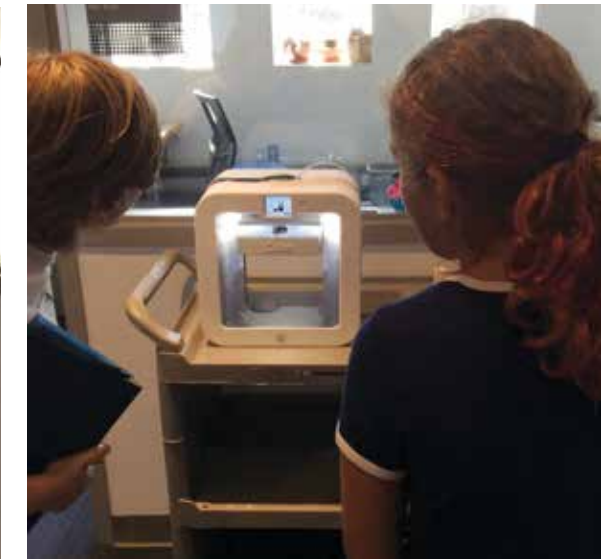
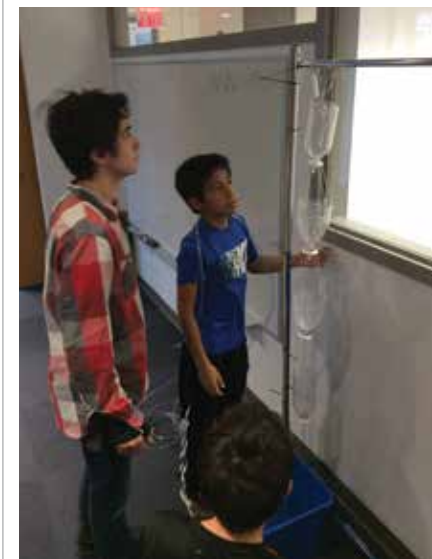
STEAM, STEM, tinker space, maker space – these are all buzz words in the world of innovative education. At Gaynor, we've taken elements from all of these concepts and incorporated them into our new Science, Math, Art, Research, and Technology (SMART) Lab.

The SMART Lab wasn't always intended to be so. Originally, the space was slated as a Research and Writing Center – a library of the future. But it soon became clear that in order for students to succeed in the 21st century, we needed to design a trans-disciplinary space where they can be engaged in exploration, problem-solving, and project-based learning. The SMART Lab allows teachers to take curriculum from a 2D level to a 3D level, inspiring students along the way. "We see the lab as an area of opportunity for students to expand their horizons and open their minds to new opportunities," explained **Mr. LeWinter**, Director of Technology. "The end results may look different – from robotics and design, to video editing or 3D printing – but the goal is the same: creative exploration."

Much thought and research was put into what we now proudly call our SMART Lab. Administrators, teachers, and specialists participated in bi-weekly brainstorming sessions, as well as site visits to schools and colleges with successful design and tinker labs to examine the spaces and curricula. Determining the layout of the room to ensure creative work flow (e.g., collaborative project space and individual space) and the specific materials that would flexibly work well within the space, and more importantly, pique students' creativity, required thoughtful time and planning. Materials like cardboard, foam, Legos, zip ties, popsicle sticks, bamboo poles, repurposed plastics, modeling clay, circuitry components, and twine fill the shelves, which are surrounded by tables that fold down to make additional floor space for student work, as needed.

But most importantly, there was deep discussion on the ideal philosophy of the space. The emphasis is on being bold enough to try, not whether or not students have accurate hypotheses. A critical aspect of the SMART Lab is its ability to be a safe haven for our students where they are encouraged to problem-solve, fail, learn from their mistakes, try again, and succeed. This idea requires close collaboration with teachers to ensure the space is being used for the right types of activities and projects, incorporating science, math, art, research, and technology.

This summer, teachers, specialists, and administrators participated in vital professional development to ensure optimal use of the



SMART Lab. They took part in the "SMART Lab Challenge" where each team was tasked with developing something in a short amount of time, forcing them to experience first-hand how creative problem-solving works within the confines of the lab. This experience better informed their lesson plans and allowed them to see what type of resource the lab could become. "It's all about connecting the use of the materials to enhance what you're teaching," explained **Ms. Schostak**, Writing and Social Studies Coordinator, who has helped teachers this fall facilitate low- and high-tech projects in the lab.

Ms. Paterson and **Ms. Janczyk's** Orange Cluster students' inaugural SMART Lab visit centered on a low-tech assignment – they had to "save Fred." Fred, a gummy worm, was positioned on top of a life raft (AKA a cup) and had to be dressed in a life jacket (AKA wire), which was stuck under the life raft, to become safe. The students were armed with two paper clips and were not allowed to use any technology in the room. **Mr. Koble**, Lower School Technology Teacher, designed the experiment to help foster creative problem-solving. "I was looking to gauge how students worked together to deconstruct a problem. It helped me understand how to get them to

the next level of creative problem-solving." **Ms. Paterson** added, "It was important for students to understand that technology isn't just about iPads and key boards. The goal is to work on problem-solving first, then weave in technology."

Middle School Technology Teacher, **Mr. Russ**, encourages his students to use every aspect of the SMART Lab. "It's typical for students to circulate the room, grab and go, build, experiment, break, damage, get dirty, and have fun exploring and solving problems," he expounded. Blue Cluster students taking his *Sustainability through Technology* elective have been exploring different technologies that can be used for environmental causes such as energy, gardening, and recycling. They used their time in the lab to build three different types of gardens using recycled materials, repurposed materials, and a hydroponic system to compare/contrast the best system to grow plants in an indoor environment.

Providing an opportunity and innovative space for students to tinker, explore, and problem-solve is essential to their growth. Gaynor's new SMART Lab affords our students the ability to do just that and we believe the benefits will be seen for years to come.



**Color Like Me:
EC Students Explore
Skin Tones**

During social studies, Early Childhood students in **Ms. Saad/Ms. Gerhard's** and **Ms. Chan/Ms. Young's** classes studied how people are alike, but not exactly the same. They read the book The Skin You Live In, by Michael Tyler and The Colors of Us, by Karen Katz, to better understand the varying skin tones people have all over the world, and learned that people are not simply white, black, brown, or olive. With the help of their teachers, students were able to find their own skin tone by mixing together a combination of eight shades of paint, including ebony, chocolate, cinnamon, almond, caramel, peach, olive, and beige. Students realized their skin was not one color, but two or three colors! Once they found the perfect match, each student traced his/her hand, and then painted it with the appropriate colors. Finally, they compared skin tones with a friend and noted that while some were similar in color, none of them were exactly the same, and most importantly that skin tone does not reveal anything about an individual's personality or interests.

**Who Did What?: Pink Cluster Students Combine
Writing and Social Studies for a Fun Exercise**

In preparation for their trip to the local police station, **Ms. Rothbart/Ms. Sprung's** class combined writing and social studies curriculums to create "Who Did What?" sentences. With the help of a graphic organizer on the SMART Board, students identified multiple parts of a sentence, the "who," the "what," and the action word. The "who" was always a policeman, but the "what" was determined by personal choice, such as, the policeman blew his whistle, took someone to jail, helped a boy, or ran. This helped students learn about the variety of things that policeman may do throughout the day. Then, each student made their own "who did what" sentences at their desk by choosing a "who" and "what," pasting it on the graphic organizer, and writing the sentence.



**Readers Turned Film Makers:
Yellow Cluster Students Make
"Magic E" Movie**

Students in **Ms. Fox/Ms. Vidra's** class took their reading curriculum to the next level by writing a script and filming a short movie to help them master reading rules and skills – specifically, the role of the "Magic E" at the end of a word. Students brainstormed ideas, wrote a script, assigned parts, and filmed a short movie explaining the spectacular duties of the "Magic E." Students came up with the idea to create a "Magic E Wizard." To show its role, the "Magic E Wizard" consistently jumped over the consonant to make the vowel say its name. **Ms. Fox** loves this interactive approach to teaching reading because she said, "It's multi-sensory and students learn by writing the script and then watching themselves on film." What fun!



**Middle School Students
Use New Technology
to Create Ancient Artifacts**

As part of a social studies unit on archaeology, Green Cluster students in **Ms. Glazer/Ms. Finn's** class constructed their own artifacts in the new SMART Lab. The purpose of the project was for students to grasp the concept of an artifact and how it relates to the way people understand ancient civilizations. Students tapped into their creativity to produce artifacts out of a variety of materials, including Styrofoam, clay, popsicle sticks, and paper bags. Out of these materials came an incredible teddy bear, watch, boat, and clay figurines as well as several other innovative artifacts. The project concluded with an exercise in creative writing in which the students wrote colorful descriptions and original stories about their newly developed artifacts.



PHOTO: TRACI LESTER

GAYNOR PARENTS' ASSOCIATION FORMS DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

To help foster our students' growth and understanding about diversity, Gaynor has several ongoing diversity initiatives, including the Community Values Committee (CVC) and the Gay-Straight Alliance, which faculty and students voluntarily participate in. Elements of these two initiatives are infused in curriculum from Early Childhood through Middle School. In addition to these school-led efforts, the Parents' Association, who also recognized the need for more of a focus on diversity, is proud to announce its newfound Diversity Committee, chaired by **Ms. Traci Lester**.

The Diversity Committee is a sub-committee of the Stephen Gaynor School's Parents' Association and is dedicated to promoting and advocating for increased diversity and sensitivity to differences among the Gaynor school community. "I applaud the PA's efforts and am grateful to have additional support

of our endeavors throughout our community," said **Dr. Gaynor**, Head of School. "It's comforting to know that beyond the school's efforts, the PA is also working diligently to bring awareness to diversity, while fostering an inclusive environment among our families."

Stephen Gaynor School itself is a special community of children who learn differently, but this committee addresses many types of diversity within our community. The Committee hopes to serve and celebrate the many types of diversity within the Stephen Gaynor School community including: ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, ability, religion, sexual orientation, family configuration, lifestyle, language, gender, and adoption status. They are planning various activities throughout the year, where family and student participation is voluntary and solely through self-identification.

Orton-Gillingham Update

By Sloan Shapiro, Reading Department Chair

Learning Latin roots and affixes will broaden your vocabulary!



Stephen Gaynor School was very busy this summer as our school-wide Orton-Gillingham initiative rolled on under the supervision of our OG master fellow, Ann Edwards. In June, teachers from our Middle School participated in a week-long practicum working with students from the Early Childhood program and Lower School to refine their knowledge and understanding of the phonics skills taught to our youngest students. In July, teachers from our Lower School spent a week focusing on morphology instruction (the study of the smallest units of meaning), particularly on how to make it accessible to even our earliest readers.

Finally, as of our August Summer Training Institute, we can proudly announce that our entire teaching staff, including new staff and all specialists, has had at least thirty hours of OG training. **Mr. Kaufman**, Math Specialist, recently shared with me how he now uses morphology to enhance math instruction. Explaining to his students that the word fraction actually contains the Latin root fract, meaning to break, or how perimeter's Greek origin can be translated to measuring around.

"Thank you" to the members of our dedicated staff who voluntarily took time from a well-deserved summer break to continue developing their knowledge of the layers and complexities of the English language and to strengthen their already overflowing teacher toolboxes.

BREAKING BARRIERS:

Middle School Students Discover Strengths in Self-Advocacy

As a pioneer in special education, Stephen Gaynor School prides itself on remaining true to its mission to provide a highly individualized educational program for students to learn, grow, and reach their full potential. The faculty and administration strive to develop self-confident, self-aware learners who can advocate for their own needs and have respect for themselves and others. This year, an innovative new class on Student Advocacy has been implemented for all Middle School students in the Green and Blue Clusters to better fulfill the school's mission and formally instill the life-skills of understanding what it means to be a self-aware learner and advocate.

Ms. Kasindorf, Middle School Head Teacher, forged this new addition to the curriculum from experiences in her own classroom. In describing her first year at Gaynor she said, "It became apparent early on that many of our students did not have a solid understanding of the specific strengths and challenges that affected their learning." Consequently, these students were unable to advocate for themselves. Her students recognized that certain tasks were more difficult than others, but could not provide a reason why. This disconnect between her students and their learning differences sparked the formation of formal Student Advocacy lessons. **Ms. Kasindorf** said, "As special educators, we have a responsibility to provide our students with the skills and strategies necessary to become successful students and later, successful adults."

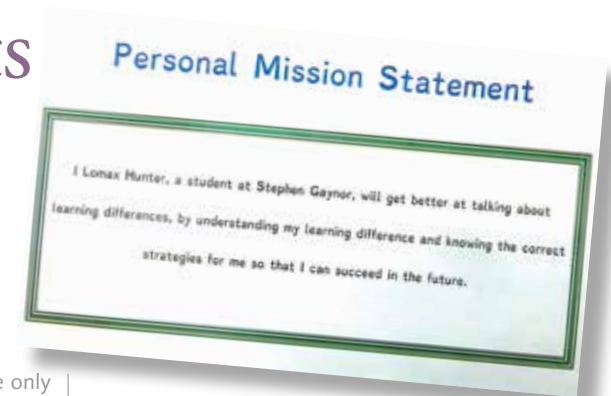
This year, the Student Advocacy class is taught by homeroom teachers weekly. The goal is for students to discover their strengths, what skills they need to develop and why, who they are as learners, how they learn best, and how to proactively articulate what they need to be successful. The class is largely discussion based, and the environment exudes a sense of community where students feel safe discussing what can be a sensitive topic. The opportunity to hear from peers allows students to relate to one another on a deeper level and feel empowered. **Sirena Beard-Galenti ('15)** said,

"I was scared to find out that I was the only one struggling with equations in math, reading, and writing; then, when I heard all of my other peers' differences, I felt a strong connection."

As students gain a concrete understanding of what type of learner they are, teachers encourage them to express themselves in the most comfortable way. Multi-sensory learning is vital to self-discovery. For the same assignment, some students will choose poetry and art as a means of expression, while others write and sing songs. Word clouds are another unique technique students use to express their emotions about their learning differences, from fear to pride. As students become increasingly more self-aware, they generate an ownership of their learning differences and begin exhibiting positive feelings towards them. Recent alum, **Henry Hamilton ('15)** reflected on the class and said, "I was in a cave and didn't want to talk about my dyslexia, but now I am out of the cave!"

Gaynor faculty and administrators feel strongly that the Student Advocacy class is positively shifting the trajectory of each student's future. Class assignments, including a personal mission statement and essay titled, "When I First Found Out" reveal each student's journey through self-discovery. Growth is displayed in additional assignments such as a letter to one's future self and a poem outlining strengths. From small language modifications such as "I can't do it" to "I can't do it yet" to students asking a teacher to help them evaluate potential high schools based on their learning needs, it's evident that the focus on Student Advocacy is positively impacting Gaynor students. Current Middle School student, **Lomax Hunter**, recounted, "Through the ongoing process of self-discovery and self-acceptance, I will continue to grow and become a stronger person. Through hard work and determination, I know that I will be successful regardless of my challenges."

Transition and life after Gaynor are popular topics for older Middle School students. Through the Student Advocacy class, students learn interview skills and how to respond when



someone asks about their learning differences. Confidence is built through role-playing exercises where **Dr. Gaynor** conducts mock interviews to provide students an opportunity to practice advocating for themselves. This video-recorded exercise proves useful in real-life interview preparations as students may refer back to it for tips. Henry's parent, **Ms. Hamilton** agreed saying, "The curriculum really gave my child all the right language to use when interviewing for high school."

The Student Advocacy curriculum allows students to shift to a growth mindset, encourages innovative thinking, and equips them with the most powerful tool for educational success: knowing who you are as a learner, what you need help with, and how to ask for it.



GREAT GATSBY INSPIRES MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCE



Gaynor Gym turned Great Gatsby this past December as students clad in dapper outfits descended into the roaring twenties for the Middle School Dance, sponsored by the Parents' Association. Inspired by the opulent lifestyle of Jay Gatsby himself, Student Council members worked diligently alongside Parents' Association Middle School Co-Chairs **Conni Langan** and **Fanci Sachs** to plan the evening.

"The dance was really fun because everyone actually danced this year," recalled Middle School student **Samantha Lang**. "We learned to play blackjack, won prizes, and ate lots of food. It went by too fast!" Lavish entertainment included billiard stations and photo booths, in addition to a live DJ who spun tunes for students who danced the night away. A feast fit for royalty consisted of options such as sushi, chicken fingers, macaroni and cheese, pizza, cupcakes, refreshments, and more!

Prior to the dance, students used class time to create timeless decorations relevant to the innovative twenties era, including elegant head bands and hats to accessorize their outfits upon arrival.

Thank you to the Parents' Association for taking students back in time for this exciting evening!



Gaynor Gazette Shout Outs!

A huge "shout out" to Middle Schooler **Kaia Miller** for being the youngest artist ever to be featured at Ricco Maresco Gallery in Chelsea as part of a photographic self-portrait show called "ME." According to the gallery, the fall show consisted of "contemporary and vintage photographic self-portraits by known and unknown artists across the spectrum."

Miller makes extraordinary self-portraits on her iPhone using applications such as Superimpose and PixArt to transform basic images into artful masterpieces. She creates one portrait per day and says the hardest part is "coming up with the ideas." Each image is accompanied by a thoughtful, often times emotional, caption. She said it's "how I let out my feelings between the pixels." The self-portraits give viewers a glimpse into "Kaia's world" which she describes as "rainbows and unicorns."

For **Miller**, it's all about the joy she finds in manipulating photos to create astonishing self-portraits. She repeatedly references how much fun it is for her. Her artwork has been featured by multiple media outlets, including *The New Yorker*, CBS News, *Shelter Island Reporter*, and various blogs. It can also be found on Instagram by searching for her username: growingrainbows. We are so proud of **Kaia Miller**! Congrats!



The Gaynor Gazette would also like to recognize two of our very own Music Teachers, **Ms. Shuppy** and **Ms. Robinson** (AKA **Ms. Amelia**), for their recent accomplishments.

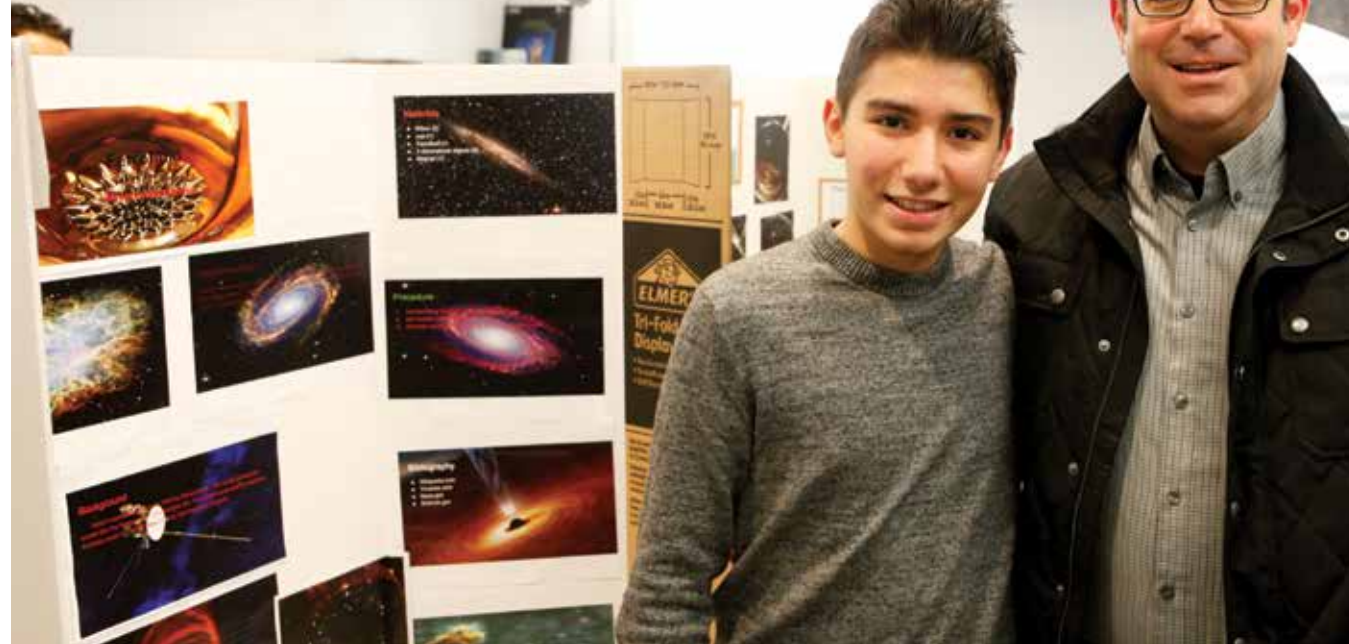
Bravo to Gaynor's own **Ms. Shuppy** and her theater troupe for bringing home the title of International Champions from the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in England! The Blue Hill Troupe performed over the summer, proudly representing the United States and New York City.



Congratulations to **Ms. Amelia** for winning the Parents' Choice Award for her new album, "Now That We're Friends..."! This is the second consecutive year that she has won the esteemed award. She performs under the name Mil's Trills, and last year her album "Everyone Together Now!" took home the prize. Well done!



Middle School Students Unearth Scientific Process through Experimentation

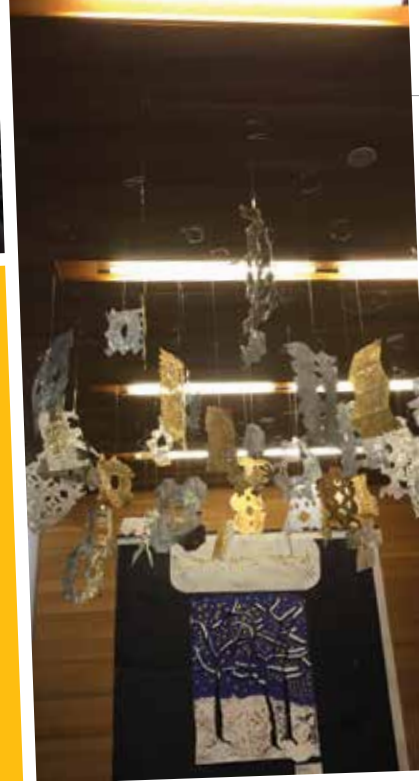


Gaynor Gators are multi-talented and have opportunities throughout the year to showcase their talents, including the annual Middle School Science Fair, which took place on December 4th. Both Green and Blue Cluster students participated in this semester-long project, culminating with tri-fold boards bursting with results and a sense of accomplishment on behalf of the scientists.

"The overall goal of the Science Fair was for students to explore the scientific process from asking a question to determining a hypothesis to communicating end results," said **Ms. Fabricant**, Chair of the Science Department. Middle School students were given a wide range of flexibility when determining which experiment they would perform. There were no strict guidelines, as the Science Fair is designed to be wholly individual, while promoting a love for inquiry. **Ms. Fabricant** encouraged students to choose something that piqued their interest and a project where they would be successful. In the end, she was elated with her students' dedication, effort, and resiliency throughout the process.

The fifth floor of the South Building was transformed into an impressive array of exhibits the day of the Science Fair. Visitors included Lower School students, faculty, staff, and parents who were welcomed by eager scientists ready to share their findings. Middle School student tour guides accompanied visitors throughout the fair where unique experiments, such as finding out how different pollutants affect aquatic environments; a Galileo experiment showing whether mass or height matters more when measuring the speed of a dropped object; the chemistry of making ice cream and what happens if the freezing point of water is lowered; and what happens when different objects, like a pencil, egg, and nail are placed in a cup of Coca-Cola for a week. Needless to say, the Science Fair was a complete success!





Talent Flourishes at Gaynor's WINTER ARTS FESTIVAL

The Winter Arts Festival theme strives to encompass the ideals of community, home, and the season. This year, the festival revolved around “nature” and our place in the world as we travel through the seasons and enjoy the things around us.

Spread over two nights, Gaynor's Winter Arts Festival musical performances and art displays impressed attendees. The lobby was overtaken with immaculate art from students across all clusters. Pink and Red Cluster students in **Ms. Hochman's** art class created snowflakes, which hung throughout the foyer to capture the essence of winter, while older students in the Orange, Yellow, and Silver Clusters painted murals capturing the different aspects and raw forces of nature. Middle School students in **Ms. Rachlin's** art class painted beautiful winter landscape murals. And photography students from the Yellow and Silver Clusters displayed ornate ceramic frames that were created as part of a mixed media project.

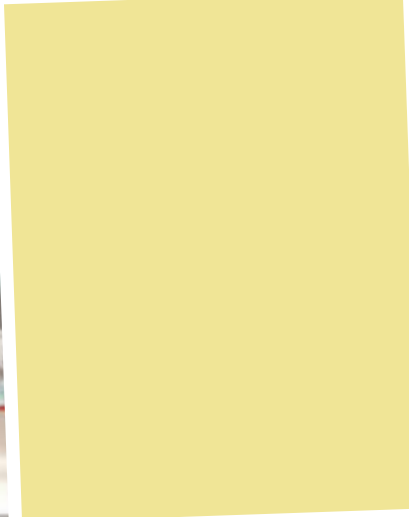
After perusing the creative art work by Gaynor's talented students, attendees moved to the gym to enjoy the concert, spearheaded by music teachers, **Ms. Patti**, **Ms. Robinson** (AKA **Ms. Amelia**), and **Ms. Shuppy**, with help from Drama Teacher, **Ms. Plylar-Moore** (AKA **Ms. Kristen**). On

opening night, Pink, Red, and Orange Cluster students captivated the audience with their performance. An array of songs flawlessly flowed from their harmonious voices, including “Ain't No Mountain High Enough” by Marvin Gaye, “Inch by Inch” by John Denver, “Sunshine Day” more commonly known as the Brady Bunch theme song, “Three Little Birds” by Bob Marley, and “Gaynor Garden,” an original song by Middle School student **Elena Giddens**.

Yellow and Silver Cluster students put on a superb encore the second night for a full house. Students belted out “Gaynor Garden” and “Three Little Birds,” in addition to new tunes including “If You Want to Sing Out” by Cat Stevens, “I Can See Clearly Now” by Johnny Nash, “Lovely Day” by Bill Withers, and the infamous “Seasons of Love” from Broadway's own, *Rent*.

“We are so proud of all of the students who participated in this year's Winter Arts Festival, whether by displaying artwork or showcasing their singing voice,” said **Ms. Shuppy**. “It was wonderful to see our students flourish in the spotlight, celebrate the Gaynor community, and the winter season over two nights.”

Thank you to **Ms. Patti**, **Ms. Kristen**, **Ms. Amelia**, and **Ms. Shuppy** for putting on such a magnificent show allowing all of our students to shine!



GAYNOR GATORS GLIDE DURING SKATE NIGHT



Bryant Park was transformed into "Gator Nation" this past November during the Annual Gaynor Community Skate Night, sponsored by the Parents' Association. Wind painted cheeks were rosy red while students, parents, alumni, faculty, and staff joined together to celebrate over pizza, cookies, and hot chocolate. Distinctive crunches could be heard when metal skates hit the ice, surrounded by laughter as the Gaynor Gator glided past.

In the midst of all the fun, Middle School student **Chase Wickham** had a chance to ride the Zamboni, (a "special experience" his parents won during last year's Gaynor Gala auction). The Second Annual Skate Night Alumni Event was a success, providing an opportunity for alumni to visit with each other, as well as the entire Gaynor community.

A special thank you to the entire Parents' Association Skate Night Committee and especially Co-Chairs **Patty Lifter** and **Sharon Moody** for their hard work in planning such a wonderful winter event!

CULTIVATING DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND ONLINE RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

By, Clare Cosentino, Ph.D. and Rachel Matoto, Psy.D.

Digital technology is here to stay and has extraordinary benefits in the lives of our children. At the same time there is a continually changing cyber landscape that has significant risks, particularly if children are not properly supervised or taught about responsible usage. Children need to become empowered to make smart, ethical, and respectful decisions when using media and technology. Schools need to partner with parents so that together, we can cultivate online resilience and digital citizenship in the lives of our children.

At school, we are addressing this issue through different interventions. In each Middle School technology class, there is a focus on being a good digital citizen and we are encouraging students to treat each other with respect, act kindly, and report any inappropriate behaviors or content. In addition, the Psychology Department, Technology Department, and home-

room teachers are collaborating to have classroom discussions regarding these issues.

The following guidelines are for parents, to foster responsible and appropriate technology usage at home:

1. **Figure out your parenting style and family culture:** Consider what kind of relationship you have with technology and what kind of relationship you wish to model for your family.
2. **Understand the digital landscape:** It is essential to get a feel for how digital technology is actually used today by children and adolescents at different ages.
3. **Create a family technology plan and media rules (proactively) to ensure that technology has a positive impact on your child's development:** It is essential to create a balance between online and offline time, as well as limit our children's exposure to age-appropriate content. Decide together which privacy

- settings protect your children the most and discuss the impact of your child's digital footprint on future goals.
4. **Remain positively engaged:** Pay attention to your children's online involvement and create teachable moments that promote positive digital citizenship. Keep an ongoing open dialogue about social pressures and cyber-bullying as a way to monitor and safeguard your child's online social life.
 5. **Adopt a developmental approach:** The use of technology changes with age. Technology exposure often begins with playing educational games during the early childhood years and peaks into social media usage during the tween and teen years. Autonomy and exposure should be gradual and contingent on demonstrating increasingly good critical thinking skills, safe decision-making and positive digital citizenship.

GROWING UP DIGITALLY: DEVELOPMENTAL THEMES/CONSIDERATIONS:

(ADAPTED FROM JODI GOLD'S SCREEN SMART PARENTING, 2015)

- AGES 6-8:**
The Magic Years - The Calm Before the Digital Storm of Middle School:
- This is a great time to create rules.
 - Technology/YouTube should be treated with respect and requires parent permission for use.
 - Your child is probably not yet ready for a cell phone (there are exceptions).
 - Go online with your child – explore/enjoy the digital landscape, educational games, and apps for this age.
 - Technology can be used to promote literacy and the joy of reading.

- AGES 8-10:**
Welcome to the Frequent Flyer Club:
- Keep computers in public places and out of the bedroom as much as possible.
 - Don't let kids sleep with phones/computers.
 - Teach your children to ask permission to use technology and limit weekday usage.
 - Oversee YouTube and download/buy games and apps yourself (don't allow your children to do so). Ask your children to report inappropriate games/sites/social networks to you.
 - Don't permit technology use during meals and designate screen-free times for the entire family.

- AGES 11-14:**
Tweens and the Texting Revolution - Digital Media use at Its Peak:
- Tweens need help managing time online and offline, protecting study and sleep time.
 - They may need assistance:
 - ◆ With sticky and uncomfortable situations online
 - ◆ Understanding your family values about friendship, technology, and sex
 - ◆ Establishing clear rules and boundaries online and offline and using good judgment
 - ◆ Setting up homework guidelines (minimize distractions, minimize temptations, promote organization) and starting with homework that does not involve the Internet.

For a longer, more detailed article on this topic, please go to the Parent Resources section of the Parent Portal at stephengaynor.org.

Please refer to the following resources for more detailed information and guidance:
Common Sense Media: www.commonsensemedia.org
Media Moms and Digital Dads: *A Fact-not-Fear Approach to Parenting in the Digital Age*, by Yalda T. Uhls, PhD

Gaynor's Development Update

By Maggie Keith, Development Assistant

Introducing Stephen Gaynor School's Alumni Association

We are making great strides this year in growing our alumni community, and continuing to foster and further develop relationships with former Gaynor students and parents. We value our alumni families as an integral part of the lasting community at Gaynor and are excited to share some exciting alumni happenings this year.

Our Second Annual Skate Night Alumni Event, held on November 16th in the Park Lounge at Bryant Park was an evening of fun for all who attended. We had a great turnout from the class of 2015, as well as previous graduating classes. Faculty and staff were thrilled with the opportunity to mingle and re-connect with Gaynor alumni.

We are also excited to announce the formation of the Alumni/Parents of Alumni Committee, made up of alumni and parents of alumni who will serve as ambassadors for their class year. A handful of Gaynor student alumni class representatives have already stepped up to be part of the committee. In addition, almost a dozen parents of alumni have volunteered to act as ambassadors for their child's graduating class. These ambassadors will help strengthen the Stephen Gaynor School Alumni Association, offering their time and creative ideas, while fostering a continued sense of community. If you would like to become involved in the



Stephen Gaynor School Alumni Association, please contact alumni@stephengaynor.org. We would love to hear from you!

Why is the Gaynor Fund important to our community?

The Gaynor Fund supports the day-to-day activities of our students with all funds going to the operating budget. The largest operating budget items are teacher compensation and benefits.

With your gift, we are able to make our school an exceptional community poised to respond to the evolving needs of our students. The Gaynor Fund allows us the capital to recruit and retain expert teachers and learning

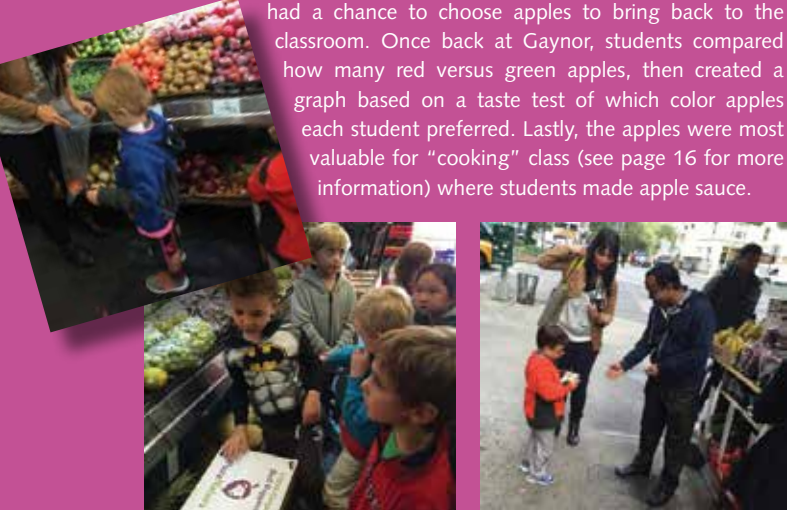
specialists as well as to preserve our signature strengths, including our 3:1 student to teacher ratio. We are also able to support professional development for our faculty to remain current on new research, teaching modalities, and resources in special education. Donations to the Gaynor Fund also help keep our facilities safe, secure, and up-to-date; offer field trips, community service programs, musical and drama productions, and other activities that enhance student life, and offer financial assistance to families who need support.

Each and every gift to the Gaynor Fund, no matter the size, makes a world of difference to our teachers and our community. Thank you for your continued support!



EC Students Shop For Apples

After studying the lifecycle of an apple in science, apple trees, and the changes that occur over the seasons, **Ms. Chan/Ms. Young's** class went on a shopping adventure in early October with only one thing on their list: apples. First, they went to a fruit cart on 90th and Broadway, which they found through their social studies unit studying places in the community. At the stand, five students bought either a red or green apple. They then walked one more block to Gary Null's Whole Foods, a grocery store with a wide variety of organic fruits and vegetables. There, they found organic apples and five new students had a chance to choose apples to bring back to the classroom. Once back at Gaynor, students compared how many red versus green apples, then created a graph based on a taste test of which color apples each student preferred. Lastly, the apples were most valuable for "cooking" class (see page 16 for more information) where students made apple sauce.



Silver Cluster Students Step Back in History at South Street Seaport



In conjunction with their social studies curriculum about the Age of Exploration, the entire Silver Cluster traveled by subway to the South Street Seaport for an action packed day. After studying how and why explorers came to the New World, students climbed aboard the Peking, a ship built in 1911, to learn about its history as a cargo ship. The students explored the different vessels in the ship, while learning how sails moved and the conditions of the boat from a knowledgeable tour guide. Students even had an opportunity to work together to raise a sail just like the sailors did one hundred years ago. The trip allowed students to imagine what life would be like for explorers and sailors during the early 20th Century!



Walking Across the Brooklyn Bridge: Red Cluster Students Study New York City



Red Cluster students learned about New York City as a part of their social studies curriculum, studying each borough while simultaneously investigating what brought people together. To commemorate their study, students went on a field trip to the Brooklyn Bridge, a momentous landmark that served as the first connection between Manhattan and Brooklyn. Prior to the trip, some students built and tested their own ideas for bridges in science class. Students were able to walk across the vast bridge and internalize what a massive undertaking its original construction must have been. They topped off their trip with delectable Grimaldi's pizza at Brooklyn Bridge Park.



Green Cluster Students Seek Human Origins

Green Cluster students wrapped up their social studies unit on early humans with a trip to the American Museum of Natural History's Hall of Human Origins. They were able to see how scientists paired fossils with DNA research to present the history of human evolution from early ancestors who lived more than six million years ago to modern Homo sapiens who evolved 200,000 to 150,000 years ago. Students were enthralled with the life-sized replications of various species in their own habitats and enjoyed seeing the behaviors and capabilities scientists think they had at the time. Afterwards, they feasted on lunch at the local Shake Shack, then strolled back to school, discussing all that they had seen.



From Gaynor Gator to Gelato Creator: Spotlight on Alumnus Harrison Geller

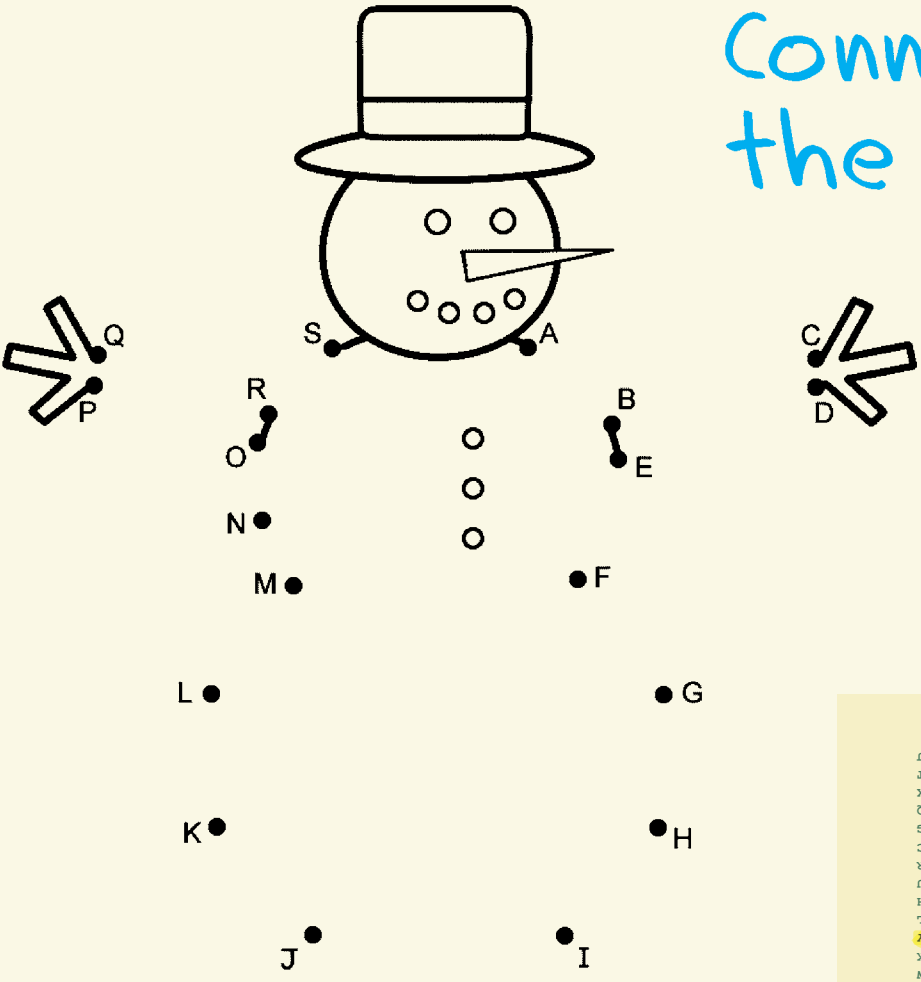
Student success is the end goal at Stephen Gaynor School. Success for **Harrison Geller ('10)**, a drama student and senior at LaGuardia High School, came in the form of a cup, small spoon, and three flavors of personal choice. Last August, Geller opened Polpo Gelato, a pop-up handmade gelato shop and entrepreneurial effort located in the Lower East Side. In his own words, Geller caught the "gelato bug" while on a trip to a farm in Umbria, Italy last summer and learned the craft from an old Italian gelato maker.

The popular shop garnered media coverage from national and local news outlets including ABC News, Yahoo News, and Gothamist.com. Geller's

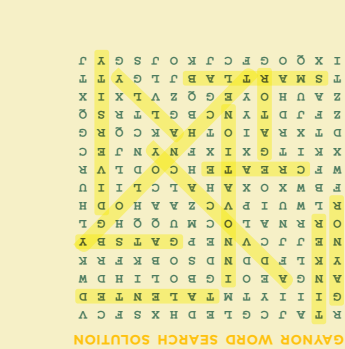
shop featured eight flavors daily, a testament to the name, which means octopus in Italian, with a new flavor being subbed out every other day. Geller said Gaynor directly influenced his ability to be successful. "When I entered Gaynor I was a completely different person. I couldn't focus on my priorities. By the time I left, I felt success in both my personal and academic lives. I learned how to manage my workload socially and academically, and that has made all the difference going forward." As Geller shops for the right college, he assured us that if he ends up at school in New York or Boston, with a little help from his investors, we can keep an eye out for the return of Polpo Gelato!



KIDS ONLY!



Connect the Dots!



KIDS ONLY!

CAN YOU FIND THE GAYNOR-RELATED WORDS?

R T A J C G L E D H X S F C V
G I I I Y T M T A L E N T E D
A N G A E O I G B O L I H D W
Y K L F D D N D S O B K F R K
N E J J C V N E P G A T S B Y
O R R N A L O C M U Q Q H G L
R L W U I P V C Z A A H O D H
F B W X O X A H A L C L I I U
W F C R E A T E H C O D L V R
X K I T G X I X F N Y N J E C
D T X R A I O T H A K C Q R G
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If this issue is addressed to your child who no longer maintains a permanent address at your home, please notify the Development Office at 212.787.7070 ext. 1125 or alumni@stephengaynor.org with the correct mailing address. Thank you.

SAVE THE DATE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2016

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, 6:30-10:30 PM

2016 Gaynor GALA



Honoring Stephen Gaynor School Parents
KASS AND MIKE LAZEROW



Event Host: **SETH MEYERS**
HOST OF NBC'S *LATE NIGHT WITH SETH MEYERS*

Musical Performance by: **JON BON JOVI**
STEPHEN GAYNOR SCHOOL PARENT



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