SPRING 2025



CONNECTIONS

CINCINNATI COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

KNOWN. NURTURED. INSPIRED.

Alumni ASSOCIATION

HOMECOMING

AND REUNION WEEKEND 2025

SEPTEMBER 26-27

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Black Alumni Network Gathering – 4:30 p.m.
Broadwell House

Alumni Reception – 5:30 p.m.
Gordon R. Wright Tennis Complex

Homecoming Football Game – 7:00 p.m.
Brian J. Bortz Family Stadium

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Alumni Breakfast – 10:00 a.m.
CCDS Dining Terrace

All events are gratis, courtesy of the CCDS Alumni Association.

Classes ending in '5 and '0 will celebrate their reunions this year. Please contact Peter Fossett '80, associate director of alumni and legacy giving, at 513.979.0283 or fossettp@countryday.net with any questions.



Giving Day

On Giving Day, Country Day alumni, parents, grandparents, friends, faculty, and staff came together to raise more than $181,000 – bursting through our goal for Givin' on Given and securing our annual fundraising target of over $1,000,000. On behalf of our students, faculty, and staff, THANK YOU! We couldn't be more grateful for the generous show of support from our community.

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Continuing a Legacy of Strong Leadership

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CINCINNATI COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

ON THE COVER:
The *Anastasia* crew and cast members, including Matthew Wood '27, Wes Peters '25, and Nicole McNeal '25 (pictured here), captivated the audience for three nights with their beautiful rendition of this classic heart-wrenching yet heartwarming musical.

Connections is published by Cincinnati Country Day School. Photos are contributed by alumni, students, parents, faculty, and staff. If you have questions or believe any information to be incorrect, please contact Josephine McKenrick at (513) 979-0215 or mckenricj@countryday.net.

Parents of graduates: If you have been receiving CCDS mail for your graduate at your home address and they have a permanent mailing address elsewhere, please let us know how to best reach them. Please send updated information, class notes, or **address changes** to addresschanges@CountryDay.net or complete the form on our website at www.CountryDay.net/alumni/alumni-news.

Cincinnati Country Day School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age (40 or over), national origin, ancestry, or military service/veteran's status in the administration of its educational programs and policies, admission decisions, tuition aid programs, employment practices and benefits, athletics, or other school-administered programs.

SOUND BITES



“I would absolutely go back and do it all over again.”

– **Jack Monroe ’25**, student council president, reflecting on his high school experience (pg. 32)

“THERE IS NOTHING LIKE TAKING STUDENTS TO THE COUNTRY WHERE THE LANGUAGE IS SPOKEN. IT IS NO LONGER A CLASSROOM EXERCISE FOR THEM. IT HELPS BRING THE LANGUAGE TO LIFE.”

– **Jeanette Hecker**, French teacher, speaking about the importance of an immersive cultural experience (pg. 14)



“With my extensive experience in schools and a demonstrated commitment to purposeful and hands-on learning with real-world connections, I am eager to contribute my skills and vision to further Cincinnati Country Day School’s success in the capacity of Head of Upper School.”

– **Jon Zeljo**, incoming Head of Upper School (pg. 10)

“Being part of this football program has meant everything to me. My dad [Coach Dennis Coyle] and the other coaches have built a culture where you’re expected to be your best every day. Watching how much we’ve grown—not just in stats but as a team—has been really special.”

– **Ryan Coyle ’25** (pg. 40)

“Country Day gave me a sense of belonging when I really needed it. Now, I just want to do my part to make sure today’s students and their families have the tools to feel that same sense of support, both in and out of the classroom.”

– **Sarah Habib ’07** (pg. 18)



“What’s so awesome about the Lower School is that teachers are flexible and supportive of projects like this. It’s truly such a special place.”

– **Meredith Simmons,** Pre-K lead teacher, talking about how the Pre-K pet project was possible (pg. 5)

“I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD WAY TO PROMOTE OUR SCHOOL AND LET OTHERS, LIKE PARENTS AND TEACHERS, TRY THE MAPLE SYRUP. SO, SUMMER [SAUD ’33] AND I WORKED WITH MRS. [JANA] WESTHOVEN TO COME UP WITH A PLAN BECAUSE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A BIG MAPLE SEASON THIS YEAR.”

– **Gavin Terhar ’33** on what inspired him to bottle and sell Country Day Maple (pg. 20)



"Create for yourself first. Don't worry about what others think. What matters isn't what you've done – it's what you're going to do next. Stay humble, stay curious, and above all, keep going."

– **Jim Taylor '77**, on discovering one's creative voice (pg. 28)

"Mr. [Nick] Rose has been such a great influence – as a director, an advisor, and someone I can trust. Theater has helped me understand that being a musician isn't just about technique. You're an interpreter, an artist. I draw on a lot of disciplines, including literature, theater, and philosophy when I compose."

– **Autumn Rinaldi '27** (pg. 12)



"At Country Day, we prioritize service learning as part of the student experience, and these three young women are just a glimpse into the many students who go above and beyond our 90-hour graduation requirement. Maria [Steppe '25], Jossi [Johns '25], and Ali [Zimmerman '26] are leaders among their peers and difference makers in the world."

– **Laura Gunn**, director of service learning, on the three students who received recognition at the 2025 Simon Lazarus, Jr., Human Relations Award celebration (pg. 22)



"There were a few factors in saying yes when this opportunity was brought to me. One was the chance to work with someone of Rob's caliber [Head of School Rob Zimmerman '98], and another was the strong foundation that Tina [DiSanto] and the board have built. And on a very personal level, it's my way of giving back to a place that has meant so much to my family."

– **Mary Horton**, incoming board president (pg. 6)

"I'm looking forward to attending Ohio State and joining the Stamps Eminence Scholarship Program so I have more opportunities to make the world a better place."

– **Ashley Odom '25**, about receiving the full-tuition scholarship (pg. 25)



Dear Members of the Country Day Community,

At the beginning of this school year, I challenged our faculty, staff, and students to pursue transformational education. As I told the community, **"Education should not be a transaction where a student follows a pre-planned script and obtains a longed-for credential. Instead, education should be a journey of intellectual discovery and personal transformation."**

What does truly transformational education look like? Inspiration can certainly be found in the pages that follow. But perhaps it is the testimonials of our alumni that resonate the most, as they connect their experience at Country Day to their successes in life.

At two recent alumni events, the Arts and Athletic Halls of Fame induction ceremonies, this transformational spirit – the soul of Country Day – was at the heart of every message shared from our alumni hall of famers:

- Katherine Bossert Brooks '89, a record-setting swimmer and the first female student body president at Country Day, spoke of how she used the skills she learned in the CCDS pool to overcome a life-altering stroke in her 30s. As Katherine put it, "balancing academics and athletics taught me discipline and gave me energy" which was put to the ultimate test when she "had to re-learn everything" after her stroke. But thanks to the resilience and character built in the pool, Katherine has "realized her childhood dream of becoming a mermaid," since, as Katherine put it, she now swims better than she walks. Her inspiring story moved many to tears.
- Cassidy Sachs Masters '13 echoed these sentiments, explaining that "the lessons from a time as a CCDS student have become my foundation. The values the school instills in us are still the core values that guide my best decisions." Importantly, Cassidy highlighted the value of Country Day providing an environment where "students don't have to choose between passions." Despite her stardom on the basketball court, she never had to sacrifice being a strong student or playing piano or serving on student council. And therefore when she left CCDS and "did not chase my dreams to the WNBA, I was able to take those other lessons and find success in those other areas that Country Day prepares us for." Cassidy certainly found that success, as she now stars as a senior editor at Penguin Random House in New York City.
- Miller Lyle '19, a young alumni arts honoree, shared how his "creative foundation was built in this building. When I think back to my time here, I don't just remember the projects or the grades, I remember being encouraged to take risks, to question, and to find new ways of seeing and doing." While Miller's award-winning photography is already earning him plaudits, he shared that "I still carry the habits I formed here [at CCDS] – thinking critically, pushing boundaries, and, most of all, staying open to discovery."
- Alan Light '84, one of the leading music journalists in America today, issued a bold call to action for current students. Like his fellow honorees, he highlighted the range of opportunities one could explore at CCDS: "This was a place where I could be on the basketball team but also write for *The Scroll* but also work in student government but also do so many other things; where if there was something you were interested in and didn't exist, it was very easy for you to figure out a way to go and do it." Despite the increasing pressure for students to, in Alan's words, "be curated to be perfect for their whole lives," Alan encouraged students to "explore, take chances, don't avoid those risks, don't be afraid to commit to the things you love."
- Finally, Rebecca Honig '95 shared the key skills Country Day gave her that paved the way for a successful international career in acting: "How to think creatively, how to problem solve, how to really trust my ideas. How to bounce back from failure, how to be a critical thinker." As she spoke to our students, Rebecca assured the current generation that "CCDS has prepared you well; it has prepared you to work hard, to write like nobody's business, to embrace big, complicated ideas, to take risks."

You'll find more examples of the soul of Country Day in this edition of *Connections.* But as the title of the magazine suggests, **I hope you'll connect these stories with your own experience at CCDS. And keep your memories and reflections in mind; in the next year we'll be weaving together even more stories as we begin to celebrate our centennial anniversary.**



Happy summer,



Rob Zimmerman '98
Head of School



LEARNING BEYOND THE BOOKS:

PRE-K CLASSES ADOPT PETS FOR REAL-WORLD LESSONS

At Cincinnati Country Day School, learning goes beyond the classroom, thriving through hands-on experiences that engage students' hearts and minds. This school year, Pre-K I and Pre-K II classes engaged in a furry – and quite adorable – lesson in experiential learning.

At the beginning of the school year, rather than simply introducing a classroom pet, the teachers asked the students, "What pet should we get?" This driving question allowed the Pre-K students to actively participate in every stage of the class pet selection process. Together, the classrooms explored what kinds of animals could be pets, considered the costs and responsibilities involved, and decided on a class pet.

The inspiration came naturally. "I have wanted to do a pet project for a while," says Meredith Simmons, Pre-K II lead teacher. "The project complemented our literacy program, *Let's Know*, through which we read fiction and nonfiction books about animals. It just made sense: learning about animals and then researching possible pets to bring into our classrooms."

To engage the children's interest through play, teachers created dramatic play areas that resembled a vet clinic, a pet grooming salon, and a pet care setup at home. Students explored various animals by reading books such as "Harry the Dirty Dog" and "Swimmy." They also surveyed Lower School teachers about their classroom pets and visited our resident animal expert, Jana Westhoven, at 7125 House to learn about animal care. Additionally, the students wrote letters to Mark Morowski, head of lower school, advocating for the addition of a class pet.





Their efforts paid off. Pre-K I adopted Lollipop, a bearded dragon, and Pre-K II welcomed a guinea pig named Evie. Students hosted a "Gotcha Day" party to celebrate Evie's arrival, painting colorful gift bags, bringing presents, and opening them together.

Once Lollipop and Evie joined the classrooms, the hands-on learning continued. Students practiced caretaking skills, preparing delicious salads, monitoring their needs, and discussing what makes a healthy environment for classroom pets. As part of their learning, Pre-K I students created a detailed "care guide" for Lollipop along with a video explaining all about Lollipop and how to care for her.

The Pre-K teachers agree that the children love spending time with their classroom pets. "Pets in the classroom have become a comfort for many students, supporting their social-emotional growth," says Meredith.

Each classroom's journey was unique, leading to deep engagement, critical thinking, and real-world learning. The project touched every corner of their curriculum, from scientific exploration to social-emotional growth.

"What's so awesome about the Lower School is the teachers – they are passionate about project-based learning and supportive of projects like this," shares Meredith. "It's truly such a special place."

INTRODUCING OUR NEW TRUSTEE

Sally Hernandez ’05 joins the board as an alumni representative.



Sally Dwyer Hernandez graduated from Loyola University of Chicago in 2009 with a bachelor’s in journalism and a minor in theater, and New York University’s Silver School of Social Work in 2014 with a master’s degree in social work. During her years in Chicago, Sally worked as a social worker aiding in daily life for adults with mental illness. At Northwestern University, she worked in fundraising for both their alumni department and the School of Medicine before moving back to Cincinnati in 2022. She and her husband, Javier, are very active parents of four very active children: Gracie ’36, Abbi ’38, Ollie ’40, and Rosie, who was born in October 2024. Sally loves that her kids attend her alma mater (or will soon, Rosie!). Sally enjoys being back on campus, as evidenced by her robust volunteer schedule at school. She is an active member of the Parents’ Association and has been the lead rep for grades 1-4 and the grade-level rep for Montessori. She has co-chaired the school’s community gala, CountryDate, for two consecutive years (see more on page X) and is also a member of the Alumni Council. Her interests include performing on stage, dancing, basketball, taking long walks, puzzles, and brunching with friends.

We extend our sincere gratitude to her as well as to the trustees whose terms are concluding this year: Tina DiSanto, Dereck Gray, Jason Jurgensen ’95, Tom Langlois ’77, and George Vredeveld. Their contributions have helped shape and strengthen our work, and we deeply appreciate their commitment.

WHEN PASSION MEETS PURPOSE:

CONTINUING A LEGACY OF STRONG LEADERSHIP

Tina DiSanto and Mary Horton exemplify purpose-driven leadership.

At Cincinnati Country Day School, leadership transitions are less about handing off a title and more about continuing a legacy. As Tina DiSanto steps down as board president and Mary Horton prepares to take on the role, the community finds itself in the capable hands of two dynamic leaders who have dedicated their time, talent, and heart to the school, not as part of their careers, but as part of their purpose.

Though their journeys to Country Day differ, Tina and Mary share a powerful common thread: Both left behind high-powered professional careers to pour their expertise into their families and communities. Tina spent 14 years in Silicon Valley, leading HR teams at tech giants including Salesforce. Mary, meanwhile, came from the world of public relations,

"I feel incredibly grateful to have worked with Tina DiSanto over the past three years. She has been a strategic leader of the board, a trusted thought partner for me, and a tireless advocate for Country Day. Tina is leaving the board and Country Day better than she found it, and for that we all owe her a debt of gratitude."

– Head of School Rob Zimmerman '98

working in community outreach and crisis communications during her years in Chicago. "I loved engaging with people, with city departments; it taught me the value of relationship-building and listening," she says. Though not a Cincinnati native, she and her husband Peter moved back to Ohio to be closer to family, eventually making Country Day their home for more than two decades with two children graduating from the school: Reed '25 and Will '20.

Mary has worn nearly every volunteer hat imaginable over her 21 years as a Country Day parent. From Parents' Association (PA) rep to CountryDate co-chair to trustee mentor, her contributions are rooted in both history and heart. "With Reed graduating this spring, it's surreal that we'll no longer have a child attending school at Country Day," she says. "I'm grateful for this new role because I can't imagine not being part of a community that's meant so much to our family. It was the right time for me." Tina, by contrast, is relatively new, joining the Country Day community nine years ago, when Rocco and Luca '30 began attending school. And that fresh perspective quickly became an asset. "I expressed early interest in getting involved," she says. "Starting with the PA's speaker chair role, I soon thereafter joined the board and eventually became board president. It's incredibly rewarding work – you're contributing with purpose."

The admiration between the two women is unmistakable.

"I admire Tina's steadiness," Mary says. "She listens, evaluates, and leads with intent. I've learned a tremendous amount by shadowing her, especially how she integrates her HR mindset into everything. This transition could have been overwhelming, but Tina has provided a terrific support system."

Tina echoes that sentiment: "Mary's commitment to Country Day is awe-inspiring. It's unwavering. She brings incredible warmth and kindness, but also real strength and conviction. That combination, especially in a female leader, is powerful…and sometimes underestimated. I don't know a single person who doesn't love Mary Horton."

This leadership moment for Mary is especially meaningful given the timing. She is stepping into the presidency as her younger child graduates. "There were a few factors in saying yes when this opportunity was brought to me," she explains. "One was the chance to work with someone of Rob's caliber [Head of School Rob Zimmerman '98], and another was the strong foundation that Tina and the board have built. And on a very personal level, it's my way of giving back to a place that has meant so much to my family."

Looking back, Tina reflects on what her time as board president has taught her. "Don't underestimate the skills you bring," she says. "Whether it's HR, communications, finance – those skills have a real impact in a school environment. Don't be afraid to innovate, to break a little glass, and to lead with strength and kindness."

Both agree that one of the greatest rewards of service is the community it creates. "Out of all the volunteer experiences I've had, Country Day stands out," says Mary. "I've made lifelong friends. Our kids' classmates' parents feel like family."

As they close one chapter and open another, Tina and Mary offer a clear takeaway for anyone considering how to give back: Jump in.

"If you love this school, give your time in any capacity," Tina says. "It's incredibly rewarding, not just for the school, but for your own growth. And along the way, you'll make connections that last a lifetime."



Country Date
IN THE QUEEN CITY

















On Saturday, March 1, more than 300 members of the Country Day community – including parents, alumni, friends, faculty, and staff – gathered at Rhinegeist Brewery in Over-the-Rhine for the school's annual gala, CountryDate. The evening was a celebration of community and connection, with every single one of the attendees bringing the fun and energy that only Country Day families can. From Nati the Nighthawk and his Cincinnati sports mascot friends lighting up the dance floor, to the delectable spread of local favorite foods and the electrifying performance by the Bluewater Kings Band, guests experienced the very best that the Queen City has to offer – all in one night!

Our deepest gratitude goes out to Sally Hernandez '05 and Jenna Milligan, our two-time event co-chairs, whose combined passion, creativity, and commitment to excellence created an atmosphere of joy and community that made the evening truly magical. And a very special thank you to the many others who contributed through sponsorship (63 generous families and businesses!), donating raffle items, and volunteering countless hours. CountryDate in the Queen City would not have been possible without the remarkable spirit of generosity showcased by our community.

INTRODUCING **JON ZELJO**

Welcoming A Visionary Educator Poised to Lead Country Day's Upper School into Its Next Chapter



We are thrilled to announce that Jon Zeljo (pronounced ZELL-JOE) has been selected as the next Head of Upper School, effective July 1, 2025.

Jon's appointment is the culmination of a national and international search that was launched in March. The search committee began the process by reviewing dozens of resumes, from which three finalists were selected for on-campus visits with faculty, staff, students, administrators, parents, trustees, and alumni. It was quickly evident that Jon was the right person to lead our Upper School and advance its legacy of rigorous academics in a joyful, student-centered environment.

Jon currently serves as the assistant head of school & director of teaching and learning at York School in Monterey, California. In that role, Jon oversees the school's academic programming and spearheads curricular initiatives, collaborating with department chairs and program directors to ensure alignment with learning outcomes. Among other tasks, he also supervises all faculty and oversees faculty hiring, growth, and evaluation, ensuring high standards and expectations. Jon also cherishes opportunities to engage with students, whether leading trips to Costa Rica or coaching athletics.

Jon earned his master's in East Asian Studies from the University of Virginia and his bachelor's degree from Duke University. As an educator for over 25 years, Jon has served in many capacities in independent schools and at the university level.

"I have spent my entire career as an educator – as a classroom teacher, department chair, program director, and senior administrator, roles that have shaped my passion for nurturing the innate curiosity and potential of young people. With my extensive experience in schools and a demonstrated commitment to purposeful and hands-on learning with real-world connections, I am eager to contribute my skills and vision to further Cincinnati Country Day School's success in the capacity of Head of Upper School. As we enter a unique time in the evolution of schools, I am thrilled about the opportunity to collaborate with Country Day's talented faculty and staff to help transition a distinctive and innovative school into its next phase of growth and success."

Confirmed by his wide-ranging experience in education, Jon feels it is important for students to learn by doing, especially through service and experiential learning.

"I look forward to being at a school that envisions a student-centered program that combines its legacy of academic excellence with an innovative approach that builds students' skills through immersive, hands-on learning. My priority is to work with the faculty, staff, students, parents, and community partners to implement the strategic plan, and I can't wait to collaborate to accomplish this goal."

Jon will be moving to Cincinnati along with his wife, Ali, and their two sons, Gianni and Gappo. Gianni will be a junior and Gappo will be a sophomore. Their oldest child, Nicky, lives in Boulder, Colorado, and their second oldest, Will, is a junior at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

While Jon has resided in Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., Colorado, and California, he has roots in this region. Growing up in Southwest Virginia, he attended Reds games every summer with his family.

"The first star autograph I ever got was George Foster in 1981. In high school, I knew the major stats of every Reds starter, and my favorite players were Barry Larkin and Eric Davis."

While Jon is confident he will attend plenty of Reds games once settled in Cincinnati – no doubt with his baseball-loving Head of School – Jon's family is "currently on a mission to visit every single baseball stadium in the country. But other than that, I like to spend my free time doing whatever my four sons are doing; their interests are always changing and developing, so I'm just along for the ride."

In addition to taking the lead on the academic and co-curricular life of the Upper School, Jon is looking forward to getting involved with the Country Day community.

"It was evident during my visit that it's the people who make Country Day such a special place. Everyone I met seemed authentic, professional, and friendly. What more could I ask for in a new community?"

Jon brings a proven track record of driving curricular innovation, empowering faculty, and igniting student engagement – qualities that will make him an exceptional leader for our Upper School. We are thrilled to welcome him to Country Day and eager to see the vision and momentum he will bring to lead our division into its second century.

Jon will succeed Jenn Weinheimer, who leaves CCDS in June after seven years of outstanding service to our students and community, for which we are deeply grateful.

We would also like to thank our search committee members* for their swift and successful work. The committee approached this process with commitment and discernment, ensuring that our Upper School will be guided by transformational leadership.

Please join us in welcoming Jon and his family to Cincinnati. We are excited to have them join the Country Day community and look forward to Jon's arrival in July.

***Head of Upper School Search Committee**

Jamie Back
Sarah Beyreis
Christine Bridge
Elizabeth DiTullio
Jen Faber
Nat Tracey-Miller
Angela Barber-Joiner
Al Beauchamp
Theresa Hirschauer
Mark Morawski
Mary Horton
Carlton Monro

RAFTS, ZIPLINES, AND CAMPFIRES:

SENIORS GO OUT IN STYLE

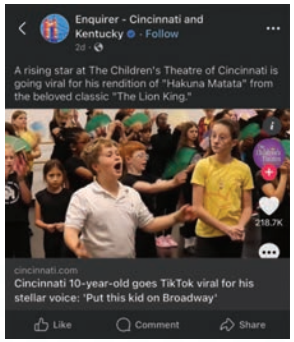


Our seniors wrapped up their final year as Country Day students with a trip to West Virginia! From whitewater rafting thrills and soaring ziplines to late-night fireside fun, every moment was packed with adventure, laughter, and memories made together.

Around the campfire, creativity took over with a cave-drawing competition using burned sticks, sparking lively conversations about art, imagination, and plenty of laughter. After missing some previous class trips due to Covid, this experience felt even more meaningful. It's memories like these that will bond these students forever.

NIGHTHAWKS IN THE NEWS!

Cincinnati Country Day School students make the news – and the CCDS community proud – throughout the school year. Read below for just a few of the students who made headlines this past semester.



Charlie Dougherty '33 has amassed over 2 million views for a video posted on TikTok and Instagram of him singing "Hakuna Matata" for the Children's Theatre of Cincinnati's production of Disney's "The Lion King JR."

Scan this QR code to read the full story: Cincinnati 10-year-old goes TikTok viral for stellar singing voice.

Kylie Smith '29 made the women's U.S. Junior National Team and participated in an international gymnastics meet in Italy, where the team took home gold in April! Individually, she earned silver on floor and placed 4th all-around. Kylie participated in her first international assignment in Montreal in March.





With a passion for engineering, **Jack Albers '26** was selected to participate in the Basics of ASICs course through MIT's Beaver Works Summer Institute program, a challenging and prestigious STEM program designed for high-achieving students entering their senior year of high school.

Flip through this publication to read about more Country Day students and events that recently made the news!

Striking the Right Note:

AUTUMN RINALDI '27 BALANCES VIRTUOSITY AND VISION AS A RISING STAR IN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND COMPOSITION



When it comes to pursuing a passion with extraordinary dedication, few students embody that commitment like Autumn Rinaldi '27. Already an accomplished cellist and a rising composer, Autumn has earned major accolades in the classical music world while continuing to thrive academically and artistically at school.

This year, Autumn was awarded first place in the 2024 Cleveland Cello Society Scholarship Competition, a prestigious honor recognizing technical mastery and musicality. She is also a member of the renowned Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra (CSYO), where she continues to grow as a performer among other talented young musicians.

But performance is only one part of her story. Autumn's original composition *Walk* was featured in the Cincinnati Ballet's 2025 season, choreographed by Taylor Carrasco and performed by the ballet's second company. The piece was originally premiered by Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra percussionist Joe Bricker and violinist Hannah Christensen as part of the From Scratch program, a youth composer mentorship initiative connected to the CSYO.

For Autumn, her musical journey began at just five years old, when a birthday party changed everything. "A family friend was playing violin with her classmates, and one of them brought a cello," she recalls. "The moment I saw it, I knew I had to play it. I asked my mom every day for months to sign me up for lessons."

Once she got her hands on a cello, Autumn never looked back. "From the start, I was practicing at least an hour a day because I was so excited to learn." That early enthusiasm grew into a disciplined and demanding routine. Autumn wakes before dawn to begin her practice each day, spending two to four hours on her instrument daily, including weekend rehearsals, cello performance classes at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, and private lessons with her longtime teacher – a college professor whom Autumn affectionately calls her "cello mom."

Composing entered the picture more recently, when Autumn joined the From Scratch program, where student composers work throughout the academic year with professional musicians and mentors. The program culminates in performances of original student works. Autumn quickly stood out not only for her musical insight but for her openness to collaboration across disciplines.

"Contributing to a dance performance was something entirely different for me," she says. "Watching dancers interpret my music was amazing. In classical training, we focus so much on composers like Mozart and Brahms, but contemporary work – with real emotional depth and modern meaning – is just as powerful."

At Country Day, Autumn finds support for her ambitions both in and out of the classroom. "Ms. [Jenn] Weinheimer and the administration have been great. And Mr. [Rob] Zimmerman is a classical music nerd, so he's just as excited about what I'm doing as I am." The school's structure, including flexible scheduling and dedicated faculty, allows Autumn to manage her workload while fully engaging with her musical path.

She's also active in the theater program, which she credits for helping her grow as an artist. "Mr. [Nick] Rose has been such a great influence – as a director, an advisor, and someone I can trust. Theater has helped me understand that being a musician isn't just about technique. You're an interpreter, an artist. I draw on a lot of disciplines, including literature, theater, and philosophy, when I compose."

Despite her rigorous commitments, Autumn remains deeply engaged with the broader school community and appreciates the intellectual environment at Country Day. "The conversations I've had in class about art, meaning, and history have helped me think more deeply about the purpose of music. A lot of contemporary compositions are about something – a cause, an event, a feeling. That depth matters."

Looking ahead, Autumn is beginning to think about college auditions, a process that includes both video submissions and live performances. She is considering top music conservatories but remains committed to a well-rounded education. "I want music to be central to my future, but I also don't want to give up the academic side of things. Country Day has helped me see the value in both."

For Autumn, Cincinnati has proven to be the ideal place to grow as a young artist. "We didn't move here because of the arts, but I've had so many amazing opportunities. It's a smaller scene, but people here are incredibly invested in young talent. I've had the space to grow as my own person without the pressure cooker environment you might find in bigger cities."

As she prepares for her next chapter, Autumn remains grounded in her passion, driven by discipline, and grateful for the school community that continues to support her journey.

Photos by Mark Lyons, courtesy of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND CONNECTION:

THE LEGACY OF JEANETTE HECKER



A group photo of this year's exchange group before heading out for their daily exploration of Spain.

One of Country Day's core principles is to inspire lifelong learning by promoting intellectual curiosity and the deep exploration of knowledge. To support that growth, our teachers focus on building meaningful relationships with each student, helping them reach their full potential. For the past 26 years, Upper School French teacher Jeanette Hecker has been doing exactly that.

"In the French classroom, we want students to talk about themselves as they're learning the language," says Jeanette. "To do so and to get them comfortable speaking French, I ask them personal questions. If someone tells me on Friday they're going to see a movie, I'll follow up on Monday and ask, 'How was it? Should I go see it?' I don't let what they share go in one ear and out the other; I'm always building on those conversations to create a shared experience in the classroom while they're practicing conversation in another language."

Her efforts do not go unnoticed.



"Jeanette's passion for language as a lifelong skill is infectious and every new generation of students finds themselves magnetized to her classroom," says Nat Tracey-Miller '05, dean of students, librarian, and former student of Jeanette's. "She teaches language and culture as two sides of one coin, and students leave her class with a grander understanding of the world. I credit her with my own success in the program 20 years ago, as well as my ability to travel and use the language as an adult."

Jeanette believes that connecting with students outside the classroom is just as important as what happens inside it. One way she does this is through the one-to-one exchange program she helped start alongside former world language teacher Jane Kairet.

Launched in the 2017-18 school year, the exchange program gives Country Day students the opportunity to host and to be hosted by their partners from France and Spain. The program alternates between the two countries. One year, French students visit Country Day in the fall, and our students travel to France in the spring, and the following year, the same rotation happens with Spain. While abroad, students spend a week living with host families and fully immerse themselves in the language and culture.

"There is nothing like taking students to the country where the language is spoken," says Jeanette. "It is no longer a classroom exercise for them. It helps bring the language to life."

And throughout these travels, she experienced countless hilarious memories with her students, such as forgetting passports on planes, leaving silly putty in their carry-on bag (much to the chagrin of students and annoyance of the TSA agents), setting the panic alarm off at the Paris metro station, and going on a shopping spree when a student's luggage was lost.

"The main thing is that we survived it all," laughs Jeanette. "The golden rule is to come home with the same number of students you left with and the same ones. And so far, so good!"

So how did Jeanette develop such a passion for foreign languages and exploring new cultures? As the youngest of seven siblings, she was determined to carve out her own path and do something none of her older siblings had done before.

"By the time I came along, my parents had already experienced the same achievements over and over again," recalls Jeanette. "I always say that, with my French name, Jeanette Marie, and being born in New Orleans, my father predestined me to learn French."



Jeanette and her French class starting off their Monday by dancing to a French Zumba song.

Before joining the world languages department at Country Day, Jeanette worked at the Chicago Board of Trade as a bilingual trading assistant, using her French-speaking skills to help broker deals with clients from French-speaking Canada. And while she had always pictured herself as an international businesswoman, she began to consider transitioning over to a career in education.

"I was living in Chicago taking night courses to maintain my French," says Jeanette. "I eventually received a full-ride scholarship to live abroad for a year in Switzerland, which is a French-speaking country. I just continued to fall in love with the French language, culture, and history."

Upon her return from Switzerland, she completed both her M.A. and Ph.D. at Northwestern University and began teaching at Georgia Southern University. Although she enjoyed her time at Georgia Southern, she was still searching for a more gratifying teaching experience.

"At the college level, you don't see the students as frequently," says Jeanette. "After speaking with my brother-in-law about how much he loved working at an independent school, I decided that's the type of place where I wanted to work. I wanted to have the autonomy to change things up in my curriculum and build greater relationships with my students. And at Country Day, I have been able to do just that." That deep sense of fulfillment in the classroom has affirmed the life-changing decision she made years ago to leave the business world behind and embrace education full-time.

"I love watching my students grow up and become interesting people – truly becoming themselves. I love it when they really begin to buy into what you are teaching and get excited about the subject, when they are just doing it and forget they are learning."

CCDX

CINCINNATI COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

A WEEK OF DISCOVERY, INNOVATION, AND IMPACT

Upper School Students Engage in Experiential Learning on Campus, in the Community, and Around the World



Students in the Art of Food course working together to set up lights, props, and a pineapple to get the perfect shot.



In Beyond the Tape, students spent one of their days at Beacon Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine learning the basics of sports medicine, including how to properly wrap an injured body part.

In March, Upper School students immersed themselves in experiential learning during CCDX, a signature program that reflects the school's commitment to innovation in education. From hiking and game design to exploring civil rights history in Alabama, practicing sports medicine, and studying cinema, students dove into hands-on, interdisciplinary experiences that sparked curiosity and creativity. Others traveled abroad, participating in a cultural exchange in Spain or engaging in service learning in Costa Rica. Whether in the classroom, the wilderness, or across the globe, students and faculty embraced the spirit of discovery that defines a Country Day education.



Our creative writers were able to spend the entire week creating new pieces, working on in-progress creations, and learning more about the art of literature from published poets, journalists, and fiction writers.



Students in Laboratory Sciences spent the week learning about and exploring a variety of laboratory techniques and scientific instruments, including microbiology techniques, serial dilutions, and automatic pipettes and spectroscopy tools.



The students in Exploring Local Museums visited the Cincinnati Art Museum and examined artifacts from the ancient world, spanning the Persian Empire to the Mughals, and a broad collection of classic European paintings.



While on the Spanish exchange trip, students stopped by the Plaza de España in Madrid, where they saw monuments dedicated to the Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes and his most famous characters, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.



A fearless group of Upper School students spent three nights learning the basic skills of hiking and Leave No Trace camping, wilderness first aid, and orienteering in Mammoth Cave National Park.



As part of their service trip in Costa Rica, students cleared grass and prepared over 300 bags of dirt and fertilizer for tree planting.



Building on their knowledge of US History and African American Studies courses, students visited 16th Street Baptist Church, the site of the infamous 1963 bombing, where three Black girls were killed during the Civil Rights Movement.



Working collaboratively in small groups to explore and solve a community problem with design thinking and the engineering process was an essential aspect of CCDSolves.

Creating leaders who, through the discovery of their own abilities, kindle the potential of others and better a dynamic world.

MISSION *in Action*



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: SARAH HABIB '07
PLANTING SEEDS OF MINDFULNESS

For Sarah, everything comes back to one powerful idea: Childhood should be a time of wonder, curiosity, and emotional growth.

As the founder of Mission2Move and CEO of The Calm Caterpillar, Sarah Habib '07 has dedicated her career to helping children self-regulate, connect with their feelings, and develop lifelong emotional resilience.

But if you ask Sarah how it all started, she won't begin with a business plan or a boardroom. She'll talk about burnout, basketball, and a moment of clarity.

"I was living in San Francisco, working as chief of staff for the CEO of an NBA basketball team," she recalls. "It looked good on paper, but I was miserable. So I quit, started practicing mindfulness, and began coaching youth basketball. I taught the players what I was learning, and then the school asked if I could teach their other students. That was the spark."

In 2017, Sarah moved back to Cincinnati and launched Mission2Move, a nonprofit focused on bringing mindfulness and movement into classrooms. With support from then-Cincinnati Public School Superintendent Mary Ronan, the program started in five schools and quickly grew to 34 buildings across the district. Today, her team serves thousands of students in school districts across the region, delivering daily lessons on emotional regulation and breathing techniques through playful, movement-based practices.

"Our program helps make mindfulness fun and accessible," she says. "And it works; research with the University of Cincinnati has shown an increase in prosocial behavior among students."

As with many aspects of our lives, though, the Covid-19 pandemic changed everything. "We were Zooming into the homes of 2,000 kids. We could see their bedrooms, their living rooms… and we realized, we were helping kids at school, but not their families at home," she says. "That's when The Calm Caterpillar was born."



Starting with a simple Calm Corner Kit and now expanded into a full line of soft, mindful toys, The Calm Caterpillar is a social-emotional toolkit designed for families and educators. The line is now MESH-certified – a new designation akin to STEM, but focused on mental, emotional, and social health. Every plush toy is linked to a specific breathing technique, creating playful entry points for children to explore mindfulness.

Earlier this year, the brand launched nationwide in Barnes & Noble stores, a major milestone that Sarah hopes will expand their reach even further. "Our chief revenue officer used to be at Melissa & Doug, and he's helped us make amazing retail connections," Sarah explains. "We showcased at the toy fair in New York in March, which opened even more doors, including getting picked up by zoos around the country."

The long-term vision? A whole ecosystem of mindfulness toys and educational content, all rooted in what Sarah calls Calmee's Garden: a narrative universe that will teach children how to breathe, reflect, and grow. By year's end, the line will expand to 12 products, many with patent-pending features like the popular Bloomie and Calmee plushes.

Throughout her work, one thread remains constant: a deep commitment to supporting children's mental health. That passion is part of why Sarah was eager to join the school's Board of Trustees.

"I'm really passionate about the intersection of mental health and education," she says. "And as a school, we have a responsibility to protect the idyllic version of childhood. We need to do more to support families, especially around technology use."

This commitment also inspired her involvement with Country Day's Hold the Phone initiative, a campaign aimed at promoting healthier digital habits among students. "What I see in classrooms confirms what the research says: smartphones and social media are hurting kids' mental health. As parents and educators, we're the only ones who can set boundaries that protect them."

It's a full-circle moment for Sarah, who began attending Country Day as a senior after attending schools across the country. Her family settled in Indian Hill when her father took a job in Cincinnati; CCDS was the only school willing to accept a student that late in the game. It turned out to be a perfect fit.

"Even though I'd only been there a year, I felt so accepted," she recalls. "I made lifelong friends, like Julia Wilson and Kellen Pomeranz – I just went skiing with them over spring break!"

Sarah's article continues on pg. 20

HOLD THE PHONE



During the 2024-25 school year, the Parents' Association and the Office of Belonging & Wellbeing teamed up to hold parent discussions to explore one of the most significant parenting challenges of our generation: the smartphone. Evidence increasingly suggests that kids who have access to smartphones and social media before 8th grade are at an increased risk for depression and anxiety, and miss crucial family and social experiences that foster growth and relationships, which can negatively impact brain development at important stages. Country Day parents are encouraged to join other parents in making a thoughtful, collective commitment to hold off on getting their child a smartphone until at least 9th grade.

Why sign a commitment to delay giving your child a smartphone?

- **Protect Mental Health.** Help your child decrease the possibility of stress, anxiety, and social media pressure.
- **Support the Development of Real-World Skills**. Help your child increase independence, focus, and face-to-face connection.
- **Delay or Prevent Digital Addiction**. Help your child avoid screen overuse and online risk during key development years.

Scan the QR code to make your commitment today!

Sarah credits the school's College Counseling Office with helping her chart a path to Tufts University, where she majored in American Studies with a concentration in Comparative Race and Ethnicity. "I applied early and only to four schools," she laughs.

At Tufts, Sarah thrived inside and outside the classroom, eventually serving on the presidential search committee and leading the school's programming board. "Tufts was where I learned that you can do anything you want if you care deeply enough," she says. "I focused on making the community better, and that's really what shaped my career."



Now back in Indian Hill, Sarah and her husband Eric are raising their daughter Elliott '39, a proud Nighthawk who adores her teachers, campus, and friends. "Mrs. [Vanessa] Collett told me I'm in the top 25 percent of needy parents," Sarah says with a laugh. "But there's no place I'd rather be a needy parent. The Lower School is amazing, and they've created an environment where every child – and parent – is accepted."

As Sarah continues to expand her work nationally, she remains grounded in the community that helped shape her.

"Country Day gave me a sense of belonging when I really needed it," she says. "Now, I just want to do my part to make sure today's students and their families have the tools to feel that same sense of support, both in and out of the classroom."

MISSION *in Action*

A TASTY LESSON IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

Fourth Graders Turn a Sweet Outdoor Lesson Into a Successful Maple Syrup Business

With ample trees across our 60 acres, an annual treat for fourth-grade students in their outdoor education class is the pancake party, during which they get to celebrate and taste maple syrup sourced from Country Day's sugar maple trees. Lower School students begin tapping the trees in January and help collect, filter, and boil the sap throughout the maple season, which lasts until the beginning of March.

While learning about the process, Gavin Terhar '33 had an idea: What if the school bottled and sold the maple syrup?

"I thought it would be a good way to promote our school and let others, like parents and teachers, try the maple syrup. So, Summer [Saud '33] and I worked with Mrs. [Jana] Westhoven to come up with a plan because it was supposed to be a big maple season this year."

This year, the fourth grade collected 72 gallons of sap from the trees tapped by each Lower School classroom. "I think Ms. [Prissy] Schoeny's class probably had the best tree for sap production. It looked the most alive, it was further from the road, and closest to a water source," says Gavin.

The students then worked with Jana, the school's outdoor education teacher, to process the sap and bottle it as maple syrup.

Summer and Gavin pulled in Allan Li '33 to help with sales, advertising, and setting up the shop for Lower School Curriculum Night. Their 48-bottle inventory sold before the evening was over, and they made $238 in sales.

"It was cool to work with the cash, but it was also stressful because our shop was busy right away," says Summer. "I also liked visiting everyone on campus to make it happen. And it was cool to learn how to tap maple trees – I've never done that before."

So, what's next?

"We will use the money we made to buy next year's supplies and help next year's fourth graders by showing them what they need to do and how to do it," says Gavin. "Maybe we can even help interview the fourth graders to see who can be in charge of production, because even though it was fun, it was a lot of work. It was worth it though; more people got to try the maple syrup, which we named 'Country Day Maple' and that's pretty cool."





MISSION *in Action*

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE:

Upper School Honors Student Achievements; Kevin Pearson and Nicholas Vredeveld Receive Top Award

The Upper School community came together to celebrate the accomplishments of its students at the annual Awards Day ceremony, where 38 individual recognitions were presented in front of faculty, staff, peers, and families.

The event was more than a moment to spotlight achievements – it was a reflection on a year of growth, perseverance, and shared success.

"Awards Day is a chance to look back and appreciate the year and all it brought; it's not just about those who get called to the stage. Take a moment to reflect and acknowledge that a lot of work was done, a lot of growth happened," said Jenn Weinheimer, head of upper school, in her opening remarks. "Not everyone wins an award – and that's life! You are a part of a community of greatness, and today we celebrate a few particular kinds of achievement on this particular timeline. Every kid in this room has some skill, some talent, some ability to connect with others, and we don't have awards for all those skills and talents. Know that you are seen. Know that you are valued. With or without the piece of paper or the trip to the stage. Celebrate your friends' successes and keep perspective. There isn't an award for every personality trait – and awards are never the reason you should pursue anything."

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of the school's most prestigious honor: the Country Day Award, given to the student who, in the view of the faculty, best embodies the qualities and virtues the school strives to uphold. This year, for only the second time in the past 15 years, two students were selected by the faculty to receive the award: Kevin Pearson '25 and Nicholas Vredeveld '25.

Kevin was celebrated for both his remarkable academic achievements and his genuine character. A standout in the classroom, a leader in the historic CCDS InvenTeam, and a vital member of the flourishing Nighthawk Choir, Kevin has consistently impressed the faculty. Yet it is his character that truly sets him apart.

"He is a leader in empathy, a constant source of warmth and joy," said one faculty member. "Kevin is curious and poised without a bit of cockiness – except when he's looking like a billion dollars making his entrance at prom," said another.

While presenting the award to Kevin, Head of School Rob Zimmerman '98 commented that "his fundamental kindness and humanity are unsurpassed on our entire campus."

Nicholas Vredeveld was honored for his commitment to purposeful innovation and community impact.

"Nicholas pursues entrepreneurship not for self-glorification or resume-building but rather to solve problems and help his community," said Rob. "He does it for impact, not influence. And he models the way for truly transformational education.... He's a role model to others with his humble leadership."

VIRTUE *in Action*

THREE COUNTRY DAY STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING IMPACT & EXEMPLARY SERVICE



For 60 years, the American Jewish Committee of Cincinnati has honored outstanding young leaders with the Simon Lazarus, Jr., Human Relations Awards, recognizing high school juniors and seniors who demonstrate exceptional dedication to community service and social impact. This year marked the 60th annual celebration, and Cincinnati Country Day School was proudly represented by three students whose service work stood out among a competitive pool of applicants from across the tri-state region. Congratulations to Jossi Johns ’25, Maria Steppe ’25, and Ali Zimmerman ’26.

Each applicant submitted an essay and two letters of recommendation. Importantly, all identifying information—such as name, school, religion, and gender—was removed before being reviewed by the committee to ensure a fully anonymous and merit-based process. Out of 56 applicants, 10 juniors and 10 seniors were selected for final consideration. From that group, five juniors and five seniors were named finalists and awarded monetary prizes, following individual interviews with the judging panel.

Jossi Johns ’25 (New Richmond) was named a finalists, having logged 396.5 hours of service throughout her high school years. Her work spans both local and international efforts. In addition to nearly 200 hours spent volunteering at Camp Ernst, Jossi has engaged in global service initiatives in Costa Rica, Hawaii, the Dominican Republic, Greece, and Italy – supporting environmental, educational, and infrastructure projects. Her plans to continue serving this summer in Germany and Portugal underscore her ongoing commitment to making a difference.

Maria Steppe ’25 (Sharonville) was recognized for her impactful service contributions, having completed more than 178 hours by the start of her senior year. Much of her time has been dedicated to food insecurity efforts through the Freestore Foodbank and Hands Against Hunger. She has also helped younger students succeed academically through tutoring programs such as Lower School Math Helpers and Students Helping Students.

Ali Zimmerman ’26 (Indian Hill) was named a finalist, having completed an astounding 471 hours of service… before even finishing her junior year. With a passion for helping others, Ali has dedicated nearly 180 hours to Stepping Stones, a nonprofit supporting individuals with disabilities, and spent 145 hours teaching music at the School of Rock. She has consistently earned the Ambassador Award (100+ service hours) each year through the InnerView platform.

“This event is one of my favorites to attend each year. Hearing the different ways these young adults have made an impact in the world is incredibly inspiring; it makes me want to do more to help others around me,” says Laura Gunn, director of service learning. “At Country Day, we prioritize service learning as part of the student experience, and these three young women are just a glimpse into the many students who go above and beyond our 90-hour graduation requirement. Maria, Jossi, and Ali are leaders among their peers and difference makers in the world.”

All three students exemplify Country Day’s commitment to meaningful service and global citizenship through virtue in action.

COUNTRY DAY LAUNCHES REGION'S FIRST TEACHING FELLOWS PROGRAM TO CULTIVATE THE NEXT GENERATION OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATORS

By: Alpacino Beauchamp, Director of Academic Affairs

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our inaugural class of teaching fellows in the school's first-in-the-region Teaching Fellows Program.

The teaching profession has faced a nationwide talent shortage for years, and it has only been exacerbated by Covid-19. Stagnant salaries, increasing demands on teachers, and post-Covid disruptions have all been significant contributing factors to this challenge. As a result, some universities and colleges have either consolidated their education programs or closed them altogether due to the declining supply of future educators.

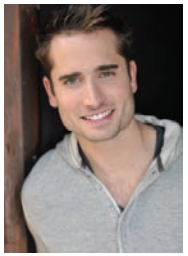
In response, Country Day has created an exciting new program to inspire and attract outstanding individuals to this vital profession. The Teaching Fellows Program (TFP) is a transformative two-year experience for early-career educators and career-changers aspiring to master the art of teaching and make a unique, lasting contribution to our vibrant learning community.

With the goal of cutting through the intense competition to attract and develop the next generation of life-changing teachers, this program is the first of its kind in the region. Fellows will receive a full-time salary, benefits, and cost-of-living stipend. By the end of the fellowship, participants will be ready to teach in premier independent schools across the country – including Country Day – with a strong foundation provided right here at Country Day.

Fellows, as co-teachers, will be paired with veteran teachers, engage in co-creating classroom activities, and enrich our institution in ways that extend well beyond the school day through coaching and leading co-curricular activities. We are confident that our fellows will become exceptional candidates for future opportunities at Country Day as well as at top-tier schools across the country. As a community, we are proud to lead the way in developing new strategies to identify and attract the next generation of impactful teachers. In doing so, we hope to contribute to the education profession in general by serving as a catalyst for growth and excellence in teaching.

In December 2024, we were thrilled to receive a generous donation from an anonymous donor that made this program possible. We shared the news with our staff and faculty, invited passionate faculty members to step forward as mentors, and posted the opportunity nationwide. The response was incredible: more than 60 talented applicants expressed their enthusiasm for this unique opportunity.

After a rigorous selection process, we are delighted to introduce our inaugural teaching fellows for the 2025-26 academic year: Andy Ahrens, Yasmin Noujaim Kloth '01, and William Stratford. These fellows are not only eager to learn from our outstanding faculty but also bring an impressive and diverse array of talents and experiences in areas such as acting, screenwriting, public health communications, doctoral-level research, and international teaching.



Andy Ahrens has been a mainstay in the Chicago acting scene for over a decade, most notably as a member of the cast of *Chicago Fire* and on stage at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Andy originally studied education in college and has a master's degree in creative writing. Most recently, Andy has been a substitute teacher at the Latin School of Chicago and the University of Chicago Lab School.



Yasmin Kloth has been a communications leader at the National Institutes of Health for more than 10 years. Her work has focused on brain research, drug abuse, and public policy. A 2001 graduate of CCDS, Yasmin has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Georgetown University. In addition to her work in the sciences, Yasmin is a published poet.



William Stratford is completing a Ph.D. in history at Boston College. During his doctoral studies, Will has served as a teaching assistant at Boston College and has previous teaching experience in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme in Isesaki, Japan, and the University of Chicago Lab School. Will is also a former college track athlete and Kentucky state champion in distance running.

This program is the result of a bold commitment from our board of trustees and Head of School Rob Zimmerman '98 to pursue innovative approaches that ensure exceptional teaching thrives at Country Day. Our esteemed faculty mentors are already connecting with their fellows and eagerly planning a program of growth, discovery, and impact. We are deeply grateful for our faculty mentors' willingness to embrace this opportunity and invest their time and expertise in nurturing the next generation of educators.

There is truly no better way to celebrate our upcoming Centennial than by highlighting the extraordinary teaching that has shaped our past, enriches our present, and propels us into a bright future.

Inspiring Love for Reading:

MIDDLE SCHOOL 40-BOOK CLUB



A Middle School reading challenge is transforming habits and helping students rediscover the joy of books.

By: Shiva Shyam '26

Recently, students have been picking up books with new enthusiasm, thanks to the efforts of Middle School English teacher Dawn Daugherty and her implementation of the 40-Book Club.

This initiative was first inspired by author Donalyn Miller's *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*. Miller discusses the benefits of redefining the act of reading for students. The 40-Book Club is very much designed upon the same principles and goals: to make reading approachable, easy, and enjoyable, rather than a chore. The initiative encourages middle schoolers to read 40 books over the course of the school year, not for grades, but simply for the joy of reading.

The challenge is less about pressure and more about possibility. Students are given freedom in their book choices, from lengthy favorites like *Harry Potter* to graphic novel classics like *The Baby-Sitters Club*, and they're not required to take quizzes or write reports. "We celebrate everything," shares Ms. Daugherty. "If you read a book, it counts. If you try something new, it counts even more. We're really just trying to instill a love for learning and reading."

Over the four years since its start, the book club has grown into something special. Every student who completes the challenge gets a magnet to celebrate their achievements. T-shirts and social media shoutouts have also become part of the excitement. "It builds passion and connection," says Ms. Daugherty. "There's a real bond that forms between the students and me when we talk about books we both love, or when they ask me for recommendations."

The students aren't left to finish their books completely on their own time. Students read during advisory periods, at home, and in their spare time during classes. "Once you finish what you have to do, you pick up a book," says Ms. Daugherty. "It becomes a habit."

Ms. Daugherty also guides students to explore genres outside their comfort zones, which helps them discover new favorites and strengthens their communication and critical thinking skills. According to her, about 75% of students complete the challenge each year, and she has seen noticeable growth in their reading and writing abilities.

Students like Daniel Klippert '31 have wholeheartedly embraced the program; Daniel has read many works, including those of CS Lewis and Tolkien. "I read almost always at night to go to sleep, and I would get my homework done early to make time to read," says Daniel. "Good books can tell amazing stories. I was born a bookworm; I can't stop reading unless there are no books for me to read at the time."

The 40-Book Club has had a large impact on Middle School students' lives in multiple ways. In environments increasingly dominated by screens, the club reminds us to take a break, to get lost in a good book, and to recognize the importance of reading for its own sake.





ASHLEY ODOM ’25

RECEIVES FULL-TUITION SCHOLARSHIP

According to a study done by Lewis University, less than one percent of freshmen entering college receive a full-tuition scholarship from their chosen university, and Ashley Odom ’25 (Liberty Township) has just joined that exceptionally rare group. The Ohio State University has awarded Ashley the Stamps Eminence Scholarship, making her only the second Cincinnati Country Day School student to earn the scholarship since its inception in 2006.

“I’m very flattered and very excited,” says Ashley about receiving the scholarship. “I wasn’t expecting it, but I’m looking forward to attending Ohio State and joining the Stamps Eminence Scholarship Program so I have more opportunities to make the world a better place.”

By becoming a Stamps Eminence Scholar, Ashley will receive full tuition for up to 18 credit hours per semester, along with room and board, a book allowance, and coverage for other miscellaneous expenses. She will also become a member of the Bradley Hall Honors Community, gain access to up to $5,000 in enrichment funding after completing her first year to fund research, study abroad, or pursue other creative endeavors.

Ashley credits Chuck McGivern, associate director of college counseling, for helping her application stand out by reviewing her essay and encouraging her to create a memorable video for the selection committee.

“Mr. McGivern challenged me to make my video unique,” says Ashley. “So, instead of just talking about my accomplishments and why I deserve the scholarship, I decided to focus on the people in my life who made me, me. I wanted them [the selection committee] to see how important community is to me and how I believe we should give back to those who have helped us along the way.”

“Because of Ashley’s talents and earnestness inside and outside the classroom, I wasn’t terribly surprised she earned the Stamps Eminence Scholarship. Ashley is a scholar, through and through,” says McGivern, who was also Ashley’s English teacher her freshman year. “Ashley has consistently raised the academic bar for everyone, peers and teachers alike. I certainly won’t be surprised if she makes an indelible impact as a Stamps Scholar, knowing she’s made her mark in various programs here at Country Day.”

Jenn Weinheimer, head of Upper School, notes that Ashley has fully embraced the opportunities at Country Day, allowing her to grow and shine in many areas.

“From theater to science to her leadership in student clubs, she has made an impact both inside and outside of our classrooms,” says Weinheimer. “We know that she’s well prepared to find success and shape her world at OSU.”

Ashley knows that her experiences at Country Day have prepared her to succeed in her next chapter of life.

“I have had such incredible teachers who have made me love learning. They have challenged me academically, and through their classes, they have taught me to have empathy, not just for my immediate community, but also for the outside world.”

Ashley plans to major in nursing with a minor in Spanish. She has already been accepted into Ohio State’s College of Nursing, which typically requires undergraduate students to apply after completing pre-nursing coursework in their freshman year.

Bringing Anastasia to Life:

The Role of Choreography in Telling a Story

By: Shiva Shyam '26



This year's spring musical, *Anastasia*, was undeniably one of the best works of the Country Day School Nighthawk Theater Production.

The show marked a bold departure from past productions - not just in plot, but in the sheer amount of dance scenes and choreography woven into the musical. The story itself was told not just through dialogue, but in a mixture of lines, song, and, most importantly, dance.

The choreography was used not only as an embellishment, but also to describe settings – from the Russian folk elements of the first act to the jazz-age 1920s Paris flair of the second, the choreography brought energy and transformation to characterize Anastasia's growth.

For Middle School teacher and choreographer Melissa Wood, this was an opportunity to take on a movement-driven approach and bring her stylistic flair to the stage. In the past, she danced, sang, and acted in the national touring cast of the Broadway show *The Phantom of the Opera* for 10 years, and performed on Broadway as well. After performing with the Cincinnati Opera, Cincinnati Symphony, and Tulsa Ballet, she retired from performing to raise a family, and her years of experience were incredibly valuable to the theater production: "I had a Russian character teacher when I attended the School of American Ballet, and I was able to put in some of the moves that I learned as a student," says Ms. Wood. "Of course, I did my research on the music and the Broadway show, as well as other Russian dance moves."

Ms. Wood had the opportunity to work with the cast members on numerous dance numbers over the course of a couple of weeks. One of the most ambitious challenges came in teaching the cast to embody Russian character dance – a style known for its footwork. Rehearsal scheduling made the task even more complex. With the busy lives of Country Day students – including athletic commitments and rotating conflicts – Ms. Wood rarely had a full cast in the room at once. "There was not one practice where everyone was there at the same time. That was a big struggle - people had to guess where their partners were, and we had to adapt one of the dances last minute because they couldn't all fit on the stage when the cast was all together!"

One of the most memorable dance moves of the musical was the Charleston in act two, symbolic of the 1920s Parisian setting. "I knew the majority of Anastasia takes place in 1926, and so I researched dance moves of the 1920s," says Ms. Wood. "That is why I decided the Charleston would be the featured dance step of "Paris Holds the Key to Your Heart," one of my favorite numbers. It was really cool to throw in some Russian character moves, and everyone seemed like they were having a lot of fun."





For many students, the choreography presented both an exciting opportunity and a new challenge. Ava Lewis '26 reflected on her experience playing Lily, saying, "I was very nervous, especially since my solo number was the big Russian dancing song. I am not a dancer, so it was a very new experience." Some moves, while appearing simple on stage, proved deceptively difficult to master. "There was one where I had to skip backwards and bring my knees out sideways," recalls Ava. "I never truly mastered it—so I was lucky to be wearing a long dress in the production!"

Despite these challenges, Ava shared that the energy of numbers like "Land of Yesterday" made it all worthwhile. "It was the most Russian-dance heavy number of the show, and the moves were so energetic – I had a lot of fun with them."

Through it all, Ava believes that Ms. Wood's support made a difference. "She was very gracious with my limited dancing abilities and helped me to look and feel my very best on stage, even if I was initially uncomfortable." In the end, the experience left lasting lessons: "I had never had to dance that much while singing before, and it took me a while to adjust. But I was proud of myself for eventually being able to sing strongly in "Land of Yesterday" while energetically dancing. I did not think I would have enough breath for the longer notes, but I did it!"

The most rewarding part wasn't just the final bow, but the joy radiating from the students as they danced with confidence and pride, along with the audience's reaction. "It's always nice when you can hear the 'oohs' and the 'aahs' from backstage," says Ms. Wood. "That, along with seeing the kids on stage having a blast, is the most rewarding part of choreographing."

As the curtain closed on Anastasia, the choreography left a lasting impression – not just on the audience, but on every student who helped bring the story to life through movement.



KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE STUDENTS TAKE THE STAGE WITH CHARM, COURAGE, AND CHARACTER IN HEARTFELT SPRING PERFORMANCES

This year's Lower School spring performances were heartwarming and inspiring celebrations of our students' creativity and growth. Our kindergarten and first-grade students charmed the audience with their "Pajama Party"-themed performance, dressed in cozy pajamas and singing with confidence and joy. Then, our second and third graders took the stage for "Great Expectations," a powerful showcase of bravery, perseverance, and the Country Day character virtues. From stuffed animals to three-part harmonies, these young performers gave it their all—and we couldn't be prouder.



SKETCHBOOKS AND SCULPTURES: THE ARTISTIC JOURNEY OF JIM TAYLOR '77

How a Country Day education gave Jim Taylor '77 the confidence to pursue a nontraditional path and a lifetime of creative success.



Jim playing a jam session with a local jazz band in his new home of Eugene, Oregon.

When Jim Taylor '77 reflects on his time at Cincinnati Country Day School, he remembers the spark that lit the fire for a lifelong journey of creativity, craftsmanship, and purposeful work. A retired educator and full-time artist based in Eugene, Oregon, Taylor credits his Country Day experience with giving him both the confidence and the foundation to build a career that defied convention.

"I really found out what academic rigor was at Country Day," says Jim. "We were challenged to think critically, to speak our minds, and to make connections across disciplines. That was a big deal for me."

Jim transferred to Country Day in the fall of 1972 for his eighth-grade year. Coming from a very large public junior high school, he was drawn to the school's small class sizes and felt that it was exactly what he needed to move forward in his educational experience. One of his earliest affirmations as an artist came when he won the school's short story award, a moment that showed him that creativity could be recognized, even rewarded. Encouraged by thoughtful teachers and an environment that supported curiosity, Jim began to explore the arts more seriously, taking up oil painting in the makeshift art studio under the theater stage and diving into art history with legendary Country Day educator Tony Strauss.

One vivid memory, emblematic of his journey, is the day a bronze sculpture of a torso by the French sculptor Auguste Rodin caught his eye while visiting the Cincinnati Art Museum with his mother. The form struck him so deeply that he returned to Country Day and asked former Upper School Fine Arts program founder and teacher Phyllis Pierce for some clay.



Jim working on paintings in a studio in Corciano, Italy.

"That moment stayed with me," he says. "I still reference the human torso in much of my work today."

Those early explorations bloomed into a career that combined his talents as a sculptor, painter, and educator. He worked in the prestigious Johnson Atelier sculpture foundry for a decade, collaborating with renowned artists from around the world before transitioning to education, where he inspired college and high school students to see themselves as problem-solvers through creative expression.

But the story Jim is most passionate about telling, one he shares often with students and young artists, is that of the working artist who not only survives but thrives.

"I've spent my whole life disproving the 'starving artist' myth," he says. "There's always opportunity out there. If you invest in your skills, think creatively, and, when necessary, also more like a businessperson, you can survive as an artist."

One of the biggest challenges Jim believes that artists can face, especially early on in their careers, is when they may find it tough to find the time to be in the studio, creating and practicing their craft. In the early 1990s, Jim faced this same dilemma when he was working five jobs to simply earn a living.

"I was teaching part-time at three different schools, working as a welder for an air conditioning company, and carving Styrofoam model airplanes for an aviation company," says Jim. "The smartest thing I did was carry a small sketchbook everywhere I went. Whenever I had time, I would sketch an idea for a sculpture or painting. Or, if I had my small watercolor kit with me, I would paint the landscape."

As a visual arts educator, many of the projects he assigned to his students often involved a lot of problem-solving. In his 3D design class, his students would have to make giant-sized versions of the food they ate or design an entire city together as a class. They had to think critically about how they could pull off these challenging assignments.

"Watching students solve creative problems was one of the greatest joys of teaching," he says.

Jim loved helping students discover their creative voice, especially those who didn't consider themselves artistic.

"Create for yourself first. Don't worry about what others think. What matters isn't what you've done – it's what you're going to do next. Stay humble, stay curious, and above all, keep going."

Even now that Jim is retired, he continues to sculpt, paint, and play music with local jazz ensembles. His days are full, his hands are rarely idle, and his joy is evident.

"There's always been a lot of grunt work in art," he says, laughing. "But I'm still having a great time. When I'm in the studio, I don't think about anything else. I'm just having fun."



Jim at the Coachella Valley Art Center in Indio, California during his solo exhibition of "Improvisations, Reconstructions, Relative Actions."

Honoring Achievement in the Arts

Coming together for a community celebration marked by the Arts Hall of Fame induction and the debut of the Young Alumni Recognition Award.



From left to right: Carlton Monroe (Arts Alliance president), Nick Rose (arts department chair), Rebecca Honig ’95, Alan Light ’84, Christian Fitzpatrick ’22, H. Miller Lyle ’19, Malcolm Dalglish ’71, Rob Zimmerman ’98 (head of school).

This spring, Cincinnati Country Day School welcomed the fourth class of inductees into the school’s Arts Hall of Fame: **Malcolm M. Dalglish ’71**, **Alan D. Light ’84**, and **Rebecca M. Honig ’95**.

The school’s Arts Hall of Fame celebrates the school’s strong and vibrant tradition in the arts. Former students and community members are recognized for their contributions to the fine, musical, performing, and literary arts at CCDS and beyond. This year’s class have all achieved international recognition and were honored for their career achievement.

During the event on May 3, the school also celebrated the inaugural recipients of the Young Alumni Recognition Award: **H. Miller Lyle ’19** and **Christian Fitzpatrick ’22**. With recipients selected by the arts faculty, this award is presented to recent Country Day graduates who were standouts in the arts during their student days.

“In celebrating alumni who have earned international recognition in the arts, as our honorees have, the Hall of Fame reminds us of the legacy of excellence we all must continue to steward at CCDS,” said Head of School Rob Zimmerman ’98 at the ceremony. “And in showcasing the achievements of our alumni legends, we raise the ambition of our current students, the stars of tomorrow.”

“As arts department chair and as someone who has spent five years teaching at Country Day, I have had the profound joy of witnessing students transform ideas into action and self-expression,” said Nick Rose. “Here at Country Day, the arts are not simply extracurriculars – they are an essential part of our identity. They allow students to explore their passions, push boundaries, and discover new ways to express themselves and connect with others.”

All five of the graduates who were recognized during the ceremony spoke about how their experiences at Country Day were foundational to the lives they now lead.

"I don't only remember the projects and grades, I remember being encouraged to take risks, to question, and to find new ways of seeing doing," said Miller. "I still carry the habits I formed here, most of all staying open to discovery."

Alan shared that sentiment, explaining that Country Day was influential in giving him the skills and experience necessary to succeed in his career today.

"So much of my thinking about music and writing and the relationship between the two happened while I was a student here [at Country Day]. That is the opportunity that a school like this allows its students – you can do a lot of stuff and you have access to a lot of things, and that is not possible at a lot of other schools. This was a place where I could be on the basketball team but also write for *The Scroll* but also work in the student government but also do so many other things; where if there was something you were interested in and didn't exist, it was very easy for you to figure out a way to go and do it .... My time at Country Day is when everything came together in precise and sporadic ways."

In providing advice for current and future Country Day students, Christian felt it important to remind them that "it's an easy trap to ask, 'Is everything I'm learning really going to come up in the work I do in my career?' And my answer is yes, it definitely does. Every experience, every teacher, every class, every friend; it will come back again and again in every pursuit."

The inductees also reflected on their experiences in the arts while they were students as well as how they could see the arts booming at Country Day today.

"I had an exciting life here at Country Day, and what I saw here yesterday during my visit with students in music classes and on the walls was a different, even more creative version of the prep school I left in `71," commented Malcolm during the ceremony. "The school is an immersive community of incredible mentors and inspired student makers, not just frontal lobe test takers; a place where the art of education and the education of art thrived."

Rebecca could not agree more, citing her experience in the first grade Nativity play as the moment it all clicked into place for her. "I knew in that moment that this was my vocation, to be an actor.... From then on, I was singularly focused on a life of pursuing the arts, especially theater, and took advantage of ever opportunity the school had to offer.... Country Day helped me cultivate the future life I wanted to build."

She continued, speaking about how influential her teachers were on her creating the life she wanted, including her own mother, Betsy Honig, who was a kindergarten teacher at Country Day for 15 years.

"Her passion was infectious. I saw what it meant to love what you do, which I know was and still is a sentiment shared by countless Country Day teachers.... More than anything that is the thing that gave me a vision to aspire to: A career in the arts that made me feel like she felt every day."

Alan also expressed gratitude for the teachers who "stay with you for the rest of your life." He also encouraged students to not only lean into the expert educators at Country Day but also to try new things. "These are the years to explore, to take chances, to do something that you may not be the best at. Don't avoid those risks. And then don't be afraid to commit to the things you love."

"In a time of fragmented attention, frayed social ties, political chaos, and AI slop churned out by so-called content creators, arts education has never been more vital. And here at Country Day, I am pleased to report that the arts are still thriving. Since Covid brought the arts to a standstill five years ago, we've witnessed a remarkable flowering of artistic life on our campus. On stage and in the studio, there is a new energy, from our red-hot choir program ascending to heights never seen before in terms of artistry and participation, to our theater department building a robust cross-divisional program with future stars throughout the three divisions, to national award-winners in the visual arts heading to Carnegie Hall this spring, while their peers are starring on prominent stages outside of school, including the Children's Theater, the Cincinnati Ballet, and the Cincinnati Youth Orchestra."

– Head of School Rob Zimmerman '98



Malcolm M. Dalglish ’71 is a widely acclaimed musician (a player of hammer dulcimers, primarily, but also of spoons and bones!), singer, choral director, and composer. As a child, he traveled the world with the American Boychoir. After graduating from CCDS, he was in residence with a new theater troupe at Oberlin College then attended UC’s College Conservatory of Music. Malcolm was a founding member of the popular folk trio Metamora. Choirs throughout the world have commissioned him to create music for them, and he performs with them everywhere from schools and festivals to Carnegie Hall. Malcolm’s folk choir, The Ooolites, is known for a sound that is both earthy and ethereal. Malcolm also runs a singing camp in the Sierra Mountains called Ooolation.



Alan D. Light ’84 is one of America’s leading music journalists and a popular radio and podcast host. He was a senior writer at *Rolling Stone*, founding music editor and editor-in-chief of *Vibe*, and editor-in-chief of *Spin*. He is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Esquire*, among other publications. Alan is the author of numerous books, including *Let’s Go Crazy: Prince and the Making of Purple Rain*; biographies of Johnny Cash, Nina Simone, and the Beastie Boys; and was the co-writer of *The New York Times* bestselling memoirs by Gregg Allman and Peter Frampton. Alan was the long-time co-host of the music talk show *Debatable* on SiriusXM and his discussions about music can currently be heard on the *Sound Up!* podcast.



Rebecca M. Honig ’95 is a highly accomplished writer for children’s educational programming as well as a very successful voice actress. Rebecca is the chief content and curriculum officer at ParentPowered, an organization that provides early childhood educational support for underprivileged families. She has authored numerous curricula, parent guides, and children’s storybooks for Sesame Workshop, Scholastic, Disney, Compass Learning, PBS, WGBH, Hispanic Information & Telecommunications Network, Nickelodeon, Mo Willems, and the Norman Rockwell Museum. As an actress, Rebecca has a long list of credits voicing dozens of characters on a variety of anime series and video game franchises.



H. Miller Lyle ’19, who was an outstanding photography student at CCDS, recently graduated from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts with a BFA in photography. He is pursuing a photography career in New York City.



Christian Fitzpatrick ’22, who was a multitalented performing artist at CCDS, excelling in band and theater, is studying software development and game design at Northeastern University in Boston.

PARTING WORDS

FROM STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT JACK MONROE ’25





For college, I will attend... Louisiana State University, which is my dad's alma mater. I was choosing between LSU and the University of Kentucky, which is my mom's alma mater. But I was accepted into LSU's Ogden Honors College, which is an incredible opportunity. Their engineering facility is only a few years old, so it will be great to have access to new, state-of-the-art equipment and classrooms. When I visited the campus, I could feel myself walking around as a student. And I'm a huge sports fan, and there is a big sports culture at LSU, so I like that.

It will be weird... not to be at school with my [twin] sister and being so far away from each other. Kindergarten was the only year that Catherine and I were in the same classroom, and when they broke the news to us that we were going to be in different classrooms for first grade we both cried. I will miss her for sure.

Being at Country Day is... awesome. I know that sounds simple but it's true. I was unsure about the decision to transfer to Country Day in eighth grade because I had spent my whole life to that point with the same friends at the same school. But coming to Country Day has been one of the best decisions I've ever made. The community…the friends I've made…the classes I've taken…every experience has had a positive impact on my life and who I am. I'm really grateful to be here.

I definitely stressed about... running out of time to do everything, to experience every part of high school I wanted to experience.

My favorite thing about senior year is... making so many awesome memories with my friends. Every single day has a new adventure. From hanging with my friends in the senior pit to just going to classes; it's all something special.

My favorite meal in the dining terrace... bang bang chicken. Some people say it's overhyped, but it's not.

Covid impacted me because... it shut down everything in the end of my seventh grade year and so when I transferred here in eighth grade my first interactions with people were through masks and plexiglass. I definitely felt disconnected, as I think our whole class did. But by the end of our freshman year, we had taken off the masks and we've grown closer each year since. I'm really proud of our class; Covid could've hurt the connections we have but we overcame that.

My favorite Country Day memory is... the French exchange I did last year. I got to host a French student for a week in the fall and then in the spring I went to France for two weeks. Every part of that experience really changed me – from the cultural differences to traveling alone in another country.

I'm looking forward to... getting to spend one last summer with my friends before we all go off to college. And then experiencing life in college.

My best advice for next year's senior class is... try to be present and live in every moment. I remember freshman year like it was yesterday, thinking senior year was so far away. It's going to fly by; I know everyone says that, but it's true.

One of my favorite classes at Country Day was... Mr. [Merle] Black's Honors Modern European History class because that was the first unique class I had here at Country Day. It opened me up to interdisciplinary learning and a multifaceted class structure. I learned how to learn better in that class. I learned there are more fascinating details beyond what's in the textbooks.

In 25 years, I hope to... you know, I'm not sure yet. I'm thinking of doing pre-med and becoming a pediatrician. The field [of bioengineering] is going to set me up with a lot of options, and I imagine I'll do something in the STEM or health field. I absolutely love Cincinnati, and maybe I'll go somewhere else, but I could totally imagine myself coming back and settling here.

To me, leadership means... being dependable. It's something I've learned a lot about as Student Council president. I've definitely felt like people turn to me more, so I need to be there for them. Once people identify you as a leader, that's your label and your responsibility. Leading by example is more powerful than you realize.

I would absolutely... go back and do it all over again.

Senior year in three words: Something truly special.

TWO SENIORS AWARDED NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

By: Chelsey Combs, College Intern



Seniors Louisa Joy and Ayaan Arif were selected as winners of a prestigious and highly competitive $2,500 scholarship, underwritten by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). This award recognizes only a small number of students for their outstanding academic achievements.

"I am incredibly grateful to receive this scholarship, as it represents the culmination of the hard work I've put into my academic journey," says Louisa. "From academics and extracurriculars to work and personal projects, this scholarship reminds me of all the opportunities that I've had to pursue my interests throughout high school."

Each year, over 1.5 million high school juniors take the PSAT, with the top scorers advancing to the Semifinalist and Finalist levels. From there, the pool of potential winners is narrowed even further, and only about 7,500 students nationwide are chosen to receive National Merit Scholarships. Of those, fewer than half, or less than 0.2% of the initial participants, are awarded the National Merit $2,500 Scholarship, making this distinction particularly meaningful.

"Winning this scholarship affirms the resilience and curiosity that have shaped my academic development," says Ayaan. "It recognizes not only my academic achievements but also my commitment to applying knowledge with purpose – whether through engineering projects, literary analysis, or collaborative problem-solving."

Louisa and Ayaan are both preparing for the next steps in their academic journeys. Louisa will attend Princeton University this fall as a French major, with plans to pursue a career in international business law. Ayaan is attending Vanderbilt University with the goal of developing healthcare technologies that promote equity and accessibility. Their selection for the National Merit $2,500 Scholarship highlights their academic dedication and achievement, and their continued success is a testament to the hard work they've demonstrated throughout their high school careers.

"Both Louisa and Ayaan have made lasting impacts on our community through their creativity, intellectual curiosity, and commitment to social good," says Charles McGivern, associate director of college counseling. "Louisa's dedication to the arts and advocacy for marginalized voices, along with Ayaan's drive for academic excellence and innovative contributions, reflect the very qualities that make them deserving of this prestigious recognition. Their hard work and passion are sure to continue shaping the world for the better."

2024-2025 WINTER SPORTS RECAP

BOYS BASKETBALL: Record 14-11
District Runner-Up

Miami Valley Conference Awards
First Team: Bryce Snell '25
Second Team: Elijah Guttman '25
Honorable Mention: Levi Guttman '27, Evan Robinson '26

District 16 Awards
First Team: Bryce Snell '25 (Player of the Year)
Second Team: Elijah Guttman '25

All City Awards
First Team: Bryce Snell '25 (Player of the Year)
Second Team: Elijah Guttman '25

All State Awards
First Team: *Bryce Snell '25
(Finalist for OHSBCA Player of the Year)

**Bryce Snell '25 broke 13 school records, including most points in a game with 46, and ended his career with 1,223 points.*

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Miami Valley Conference Awards
Second Team: Nicole Hardesty '27
Honorable Mention: Audrey de Alarcon '27, Roxy Vollmer '27

District 16 Awards
Second Team: Nicole Hardesty '27

All City Awards
Honorable Mention: Nicole Hardesty '27

CHEER

Miami Valley Conference Awards
Cheer Award: Lilly Shafer '26

GYMNASTICS

All City Awards
Honorable Mention: Hayden Zimmerman ’26

SWIMMING

Miami Valley Conference Awards
Boys Co-Coach of the Year: Katie Slovacek ’12

All City Awards
First Team: Weichu Wang ’26
Second Team: Delaney Gorman ’26, Jason Staro-dub ’26

State Qualifiers
Delaney Gorman ’26: 100 Meter Backstroke (10th Place), 100 Butterfly (17th Place)
Jason Starodub ’26: 100 Meter Backstroke (13th Place), 200 IM (19th Place)
Weichu Wang ’26: 100 Meter Breaststroke (4th Place), 500 (9th Place)
Alex Back ’25, Oliver Jeffries ’27, Jason Starodub ’26, Weichu Wang ’26: 200 Meley Relay (22nd Place)
Delaney Gorman ’26, Greta Varga ’26, Zsofia Varga ’26, Katherine Connelly ’26: 200 Freestyle Relay (22nd Place)

School Records Broken
Jason Starodub ’26: 100 Meter Backstroke (53.19)
Weichu Wang ’26: 100 Meter Breaststroke (57.55)
Jason Starodub ’26, Weichu Wang ’26, Alex Back ’25, Oliver Jeffries ’27: Boys 200 Medley Relay (1:41:33)

INDOOR TRACK

State Meet
***Luke Schnieber ’27:** 2nd Place in the Pole Vault
William Lothman ’26: Qualified in the 400M

**Luke Schnieber `27 broke his own school record in the Pole Vault (with a 16’ jump).*

THE ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT RESTRUCTURES TO ENHANCE THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE





As part of a strategic effort to streamline operations and better support student-athletes, the school’s athletics department will implement a few key changes beginning the 2025-26 school year.

Brady Brandt’s current role will be expanded to serve as associate athletic director for grades K-8. Stepping away from the classroom, Brady will oversee athletic programming from the earliest grades through middle school, providing a more cohesive developmental experience for all students in youth sports.

In addition, CCDS has created a sports information director (SID) position to enhance communications and celebrate the accomplishments of the school’s teams and student-athletes. Madison Conley, who brings experience from the University of Cincinnati, St. Ursula Academy, and Northern Kentucky University, was selected for the role from a competitive pool of over 60 applicants. As SID, Madison will manage athletics communications, media relations, and digital storytelling.

“These changes are rooted in a clear goal: to elevate and provide a first-class experience for everyone involved in our athletics program,” says Dennis Coyle, athletics director. “With a strong tradition of multi-sport participation and academic excellence, Country Day continues to champion well-rounded student-athletes.”

COUNTRY DAY CELEBRATES COLLEGE SIGNINGS AND 12-SEASON ATHLETES



Signing Day Athletes (*from left to right*): Bryce Snell, Zach Pavlisko, Elijah Guttman, Nikiah Walker, Lee Thomas

In the North Gym of the Leonard Family Athletic Center, five more Cincinnati Country Day School student-athletes announced their college commitments. Surrounded by family members, teachers, staff, coaches, teammates, and the entire second-grade class, they shared this exciting milestone with the school community.

Elijah Guttman will play football at Elon University; Zach Pavlisko will continue his baseball career at Hanover College; Bryce Snell has committed to Mount Vernon Nazarene University for basketball; Lee Thomas will join the football team at Wittenberg University; and Nickiah Walker will play volleyball at Oberlin College.

2025 SPRING SPORTS RECAP

BASEBALL

Miami Valley Conference Awards
First Team: Elijah Guttman '25
Second Team: Nate Paumier '26, Zach Pavlisko '25, Evan Robinso '26
Honorable Mention: Jaemeson French '26, Ryan Pavlisko '28

SOFTBALL: Miami Valley Conference Champions

Miami Valley Conference Awards
Pitcher of the Year: Riley Williams '25
First Team: Maddie Ebbing '27, Kylee Hirschauer '25, Caroline Ochterski '25, Riley Williams '25
Second Team: Alessandra Garcia-Altuve '25, Jossi Johns '25, Lana Miller '28
Honorable Mention: Nia Irby '26, Liv Sweeney '27

TENNIS

Miami Valley Conference Awards
First Team: Nik Shah '25 (Player of the Year), Adam Arebi '25, Trevor Gregorsok '25
Second Team: Sanjay Cherukuri '26, Shayon Choudhury '25
Honorable Mention: Ved Deshmukh '28, Aarnav Narayanan '27

OHSAA District Qualifiers
Sectional Champion (Singles): Nik Shah '25
Section Champion (Doubles): Adam Arebi '25 & Trevor Gregorsok '25

OHSAA State Qualifiers
Nik Shah '25

TRACK

Miami Valley Conference Award
First Team: Luke Schnieber '27 – Pole Vault

OHSAA District Champions
4x100m Relay: Gabrielle Gonzalez '28, Nicole Hardesty '27, Josie Hyden '27, Maria Steppe '25
4x400m Relay: Gabrielle Gonzalez '28, Nicole Hardesty '27, Josie Hyden '27, Catherine Monroe '25
***Pole Vault:** Luke Schnieber '27

**Broke the school, regional, and D3 state record with a 16'7" jump.*

GIRLS LACROSSE

Miami Valley Conference Awards
First Team: Marin Lange '25, Roxy Vollmer '27
Second Team: Zoe Doerger '28, Jordan Lowe '25
Honorable Mention: Katerine Connelly '26, Abby Falkingham '25

Spring athletics all-city, all-district, and all-state elections are not announced until after publication deadline, as is the case with state tournament results. We will share this information with our community in the fall.



12-Season Athletes (*from left to right*): Maria Steppe, Jack Monroe, Catherine Monroe, Jessi Johns, Elijah Guttman, Ryan Coyle

"Today, your dreams come true," said Dennis Coyle, athletic director. "You have earned the opportunity to continue to play a sport you love in college. All your hard work, all the traveling, all the sacrifices, all the long hours of practice and training – it finally pays off."

Dennis continued, "Be prepared, and know that being a college athlete will challenge you – you must continue to work hard, develop your skills, and persevere. As you move on from CCDS, please remember that your coaches, teachers, and classmates will be cheering you on from afar."

After the five seniors announced their college commitments, six seniors were recognized as "12-Season Athletes" – an impressive distinction awarded to those who played a sport during every athletic season of their high school careers. Ryan Coyle, Elijah Guttman, Jossi Johns, Catherine Monroe, Jack Monroe, and Maria Steppe all earned this honor.

"We believe it's a special experience for students to be multisport athletes, and at Country Day, we try our best to make that possible," said Greg Ross, associate athletic director for Upper School. "The academic rigor is intense at this school, and our students are typically involved in a lot of extracurricular activities in addition to sports. The fact that these six students were able to compete athletically in 12 seasons across their high school careers is a huge accomplishment and is a testament to their dedication."

Below is the complete list of Country Day student-athletes who have committed to playing a sport at the collegiate level:

Ethan Argus (Loveland):
Golf – Kenyon College

Ryan Coyle (Evendale):
Football – Centre College

Teagen Davis (Loveland):
Lacrosse – Otterbein University

Elijah Guttman (Amberley):
Football – Elon University

Zach Pavlisko (Maineville):
Baseball – Hanover College

Bryce Snell (West Chester):
Basketball – Mount Vernon Nazarene University

Lee Thomas (North Avondale):
Football – Wittenberg University

Nickiah Walker (Roselawn):
Volleyball – Oberlin College

Kenzie Zimmers (Symmes Township):
Soccer – Lincoln Memorial University


ON YOUR LEFT! RYAN is FLYING
GO GO GO MONROE
MARIA has the fastest STEPPE
DONOVAN UP T AND OVER
JACKS SPEED IS PRETTY SUS
CINCINNATI COUNTRY DAY


CCDS
TRACK & FIELD
NIGHTHAWKS
5
14
1
13

RYAN COYLE ’25 NAMED FINALIST FOR PRESTIGIOUS “THAT’S MY BOY” AWARD



Ryan Coyle of Cincinnati Country Day receives his scholar-athlete award from Ron Corradini of the Greater Cincinnati Chapter of the National Football Foundation at their 58th annual scholar-athlete banquet in February. (Provided By Barbara B. Photography – Photo taken from *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.)

With 453 tackles, academic excellence, and unmatched leadership, Ryan’s impact goes far beyond the field.



Ryan Coyle with his sisters Sarah ’22 and Leah ’26, who attended the banquet to support him.

Ryan Coyle ’25 was named a finalist for the prestigious “That’s My Boy” award, presented by the Greater Cincinnati Chapter of the National Football Foundation. As one of 10 finalists, Ryan was selected for his outstanding achievements in football, academics, and community involvement.

A two-time captain and four-year varsity starter, Ryan made a significant and lasting impact at Country Day. From his freshman year onward, he set school records with 453 career tackles and 160 tackles in a single season, rushed for 2,000 yards, and earned multiple Defensive Player of the Year honors. During his senior year, Ryan’s exceptional talent and work ethic earned him multiple individual honors such as the Iron Man Award, Outstanding Defensive Player Award, and the Perry Award for best teammate.

“As a freshman, I knew I wanted to be the best player and teammate I could be,” says Ryan. “I’ve worked hard both on and off the field, and it’s really rewarding to see that hard work recognized.”

His leadership helped steer the Nighthawks to 40 wins (making them the winningest senior class in program history), multiple league championships, and deep playoff runs. Off the field, Ryan balanced athletic success with academic excellence and served as a respected leader in the school community.

Ryan credits the school in general and the football program specifically for shaping him as both a player and a person.

“Being part of this football program has meant everything to me. My dad [Coach Dennis Coyle] and the other coaches have built a culture where you’re expected to be your best every day. Watching how much we’ve grown—not just in stats but as a team—has been really special.”

Ryan was recognized as a “That’s My Boy” finalist at the 58th annual scholar-athlete banquet, which was held at Montgomery Inn. He was celebrated alongside other top student-athletes from across the Greater Cincinnati area.

“I’m incredibly proud to be both Ryan’s coach and father,” says Coach Dennis Coyle. “It’s not just his performance on the football field that makes me proud, but the way he carries himself with character and integrity in all aspects of life. Ryan is a truly good person, and I’m honored to walk alongside him on this journey.”

Country Day has proudly celebrated three “That’s My Boy” award recipients over the years: Rodney Vincent ’87 (Brown University), Andrew Willis ’01 (Colgate University), and Connor Pohl ’18 (University of Miami, Florida).

For Ryan, being named a finalist for the “That’s My Boy” award is the perfect ending to an exceptional high school career – and the exciting start of what’s next. He signed with Centre College to continue his football journey and is looking forward to training this summer as he prepares for the next level of competition.

RISING FAST:

FROM STATE TO TOP 3 IN THE NATION

Luke Schnieber ’27 is clearing new heights and making his mark in pole vaulting.

By: Chelsey Combs, College Intern

When Luke Schnieber ’27 first picked up a pole, he had no idea how far the sport would take him. Now a sophomore, Luke has vaulted into the national spotlight, clearing 16’7” this season, earning him the third-best mark in the country for his grade level and breaking the OHSAA Division III state record.

His competitive journey began in eighth grade, when he qualified for the OHSAA Middle School State Meet with an 11’7” vault and then placed third at the state meet with a 12-foot jump. “I didn’t really realize I could excel in pole vaulting until my science teacher told me I was ranked in an article about the top jumps in Ohio,” says Luke.

Luke went on to break the CCDS high school record at his very first meet as a freshman (14’) and steadily built on that success. This year, he hit his long-awaited goal of 16 feet at a meet hosted by Mount St. Joseph. “I didn’t think I was going to make it,” he says. “I was on a smaller pole and didn’t think I’d get high enough, so I was really surprised.

“It took me a while to build up to that.” He now competes in both indoor and outdoor seasons for Country Day as well as with his club team, using a 15-foot 7-inch, 170-pound rated pole.

Luke credits Country Day for helping support his rapid growth. “They supply my poles, which is a big help, and they recently upgraded the pit, which has made a big difference.”

Pole vaulting runs in the family – his father (who is also a teacher at Country Day), Casey Schnieber, vaulted in school, his older sister, Emma Kate ’24, holds the Country Day girls record, and younger sister, Mia ’30, recently won the MVC middle school league meet. His mother, Stacy, was also an Ohio state placer in 100m hurdles.

His friends are impressed, though most say they’ll stick to watching from the sidelines. “It can be scary when you make a jump but don’t clear the bar, or you’re sent back down the runway,” says Luke. “It’s fun to come down, but you have to get up there first.”

When asked what most people don’t realize about the sport, Luke didn’t hesitate. “It’s not really about the jump; it’s about the approach. If you aren’t fast enough or if your form is off, you won’t get on big poles, which means you can’t go as high.”

Looking ahead, he hopes to clear 17 feet this season and eventually compete at the collegiate level. “D1 would be awesome, but honestly, I’d be happy pole vaulting anywhere.”

His advice for others? “Just do it. It’s fun and it’s really rewarding to see how much you improve.”



At the Mason Invitational in early May, Luke went 16’5” in the pole vault to break his own school record. Three weeks later at the regional meet, Luke was able to break the school, regional, and D3 state record with a 16’7” jump. He then topped off a record-setting year by placing 3rd at the OHSAA D3 state meet!

BREAKING RECORDS, BUILDING LEGACY

With 1,200+ points and a 46-point game, Bryce Snell '25 redefines excellence on and off the court.



From breaking school records to dominating the court, Bryce Snell '25 has made his mark on Cincinnati Country Day School's basketball program. With over 1,200 career points, including a record-breaking 46-point game, and averaging 23 points plus 5.7 assists and 5.3 steals per game, Bryce's performance sets him apart and is a testament to his exceptional talent and skill.

"Playing sports at Country Day has shaped who I am today, and I've made some of my closest friends through these experiences," says Bryce. "While records and accomplishments may eventually be surpassed, the memories I've created with my teammates and coaches will always stay with me. I strongly encourage everyone to get involved in sports at Country Day—I truly believe it's something no one will regret. I'm grateful for all that Country Day sports have given me."

Recently, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* announced Bryce as both All-City and Player of the Year in basketball, further cementing his legacy in the local sports scene. He was also named District 16 Player of the Year, setting the bar high for what it means to be a true competitor. With a work ethic as relentless as his game, Bryce is making his mark.

"Bryce is the best all-around player I've coached in my 24 years at Country Day," says Greg Ross, varsity basketball coach. "Bryce has a high basketball IQ and shines in big moments, always making those around him better. Beyond his talent, he's a high-character individual, coming from a great family with strong values. I've watched him grow up here, and it was clear early on that he was going to be a standout."



GETTING TO KNOW NIK SHAH '25

Scholar. Athlete. Mentor. Future World-Changer.

By: Chelsey Combs, College Intern

1. He's a U.S. Presidential Scholars Candidate.

Nikhil Shah '25 is one of only 214 students in Ohio selected for this prestigious academic honor. He was chosen based on his impressive SAT score of 1580. Being named a candidate for the U.S. Presidential Scholars program is among the highest honors a high school senior can receive. This recognition is given to students who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement, leadership, service, and personal character. Over the years, several CCDS alumni have been recognized for this award, two of whom were named Presidential Scholars: Hema Magge '97 and Colin McSwiggen '07. Past candidates include Eashwar Kantemneni '20, Lorae Stojanovic '18, and Zhaoyu "Joe" Lou '16, while finalists have included Elizabeth Johnson '17, Elizabeth Miller '15, Brian McSwiggen '14, Holly Dayton '13, and Henry Pease '12.

2. He's a tennis captain with serious drive.

Nik has played tennis since age five, made it to the state tournament as a sophomore, and served as team captain for two years. During his senior year, he finished 4th in districts to qualify for the state championship tournament. He will be attending Vanderbilt University in the fall with hopes of walking on to the tennis team. While he hasn't made a final decision about his major, he is leaning towards studying economics and business.

3. He's passionate about nonprofits.

Through his work with the Cincinnati Tennis Foundation, Nik founded a junior board of ambassadors to help promote, plan, and organize fundraisers, sparking his interest in nonprofit operations.

4. He spent a summer doing economics research.

After initially cold emailing professors to explore opportunities, Nik learned of a research internship with Dr. Michael Jones, a crypto-economics professor at the University of Cincinnati. During the internship, he worked on Reach, an app designed to help nonprofits efficiently track volunteers. His work included in-depth data analysis and culminated in a research paper that was accepted for publication in the *Journal of Student Research – High School Edition*, this summer.

5. He's a mentor and leader.

As one of four presidents for Student Helping Students, Nik helps connect younger students with academic mentors. For the past four years, he's personally mentored the same student, building a meaningful and consistent connection. "When I first met the student I mentor, he was a third grader, and now he's in sixth grade. We've built a strong bond over the years, and I'm fully confident that he'll continue to thrive with another mentor who will support him just as much as I have."

6. He's a chess champion.

While he considers chess a hobby, Nik plays a leadership role in the chess club and won the 2024 CCDS Chess Championship this past fall. While he helped plan and organize the tournament, he says he was primarily there to mentor the middle school students. "Being a senior, it was a great opportunity to meet the middle school students who would be playing, and I even had the chance to play against a few younger kids I had played chess with before."

7. He's all about time management.

Between academics, research, and sports, Nik says making the most of his time at school and meeting with teachers has helped him balance it all. "Connecting with my teachers and prioritizing my free bells has been huge for me. I try to get as much as possible done at school so I can play tennis when I get home."

8. His favorite subject? Math.

Nik enjoys math and credits Corey Flick as his favorite teacher. "I've always enjoyed math and have been good with numbers, but it really helps when you have an awesome teacher who inspires you."

9. He values CCDS for its community.

"I think the best thing about Country Day is the community. It's a small school with so many different types of people who have different hobbies, personalities, and interests."

10. He's got big plans.

Nik is leaning toward a future in economics, possibly consulting or banking, but with two doctors as parents, medicine is always in the back of his mind. With a future as bright as his, he's keeping his options open and embracing the possibilities ahead. "I'm really grateful to my mom for always encouraging me to follow my passions, no matter where they take me."

On May 10, Cincinnati Country Day School welcomed back four outstanding alumni for induction into the Athletic Hall of Fame, not only for their excellence on the field, court, and track, but for the legacy they have carried forward through lives rooted in character, humility, and community.

This year's ceremony honored **Katherine R. Brooks '89**, **Brad Jones '96**, **Cassidy Sachs Masters '13**, and **Shelley Menifee Rose '14**.

"Their statistics already fill our record books, but their accomplishments now earn them a more permanent place in the pantheon of Country Day athletics," said Rob Zimmerman '98, head of school. "It's enormously beneficial for those of us who still work at Country Day to hear these stories. It is so reaffirming to the work that we do, and it spurs us to continue to do it. Athletics gives us not simply a training ground for competition, but for life. The lessons delivered today are timeless and inspiring for a lot of people."



TIMELESS LESSONS, LIFELONG IMPACT:

HONORING THE 2024 ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Country Day celebrates four alumni whose stories show that character is the ultimate legacy.

Katherine R. Brooks '89

During her time as a Country Day student, Katherine Brooks was a record-setting swimmer, student leader, and scholar. She began her Country Day journey in second grade, and by the time she graduated, she had earned academic honors every year, served as student council president, and qualified for the state swim meet during each of her four high school years.

She went on to swim at Columbia University, where she was team captain and winner of the prestigious Tina Steck Award, which is awarded to the women's swimming and diving team member who has the strongest impact on the success of her team. Post-college, she competed in triathlons and ran the New York Marathon twice before returning to Cincinnati to work for Procter & Gamble.

But perhaps the most poignant chapter of Katherine's journey came years later, when she suffered a stroke in her 30s that left much of her body paralyzed and took her ability to speak. Her recovery has been defined, in part, by a return to the pool.

"Progress is hard won and sometimes fleeting," shared Katherine during the ceremony. "I move forward and inevitably backslide. And then I make progress again. And day by day it becomes easier to make that splash, plunging back into the pool."

She says it's not just about competition anymore, it's about strength, healing, and the enduring comfort of something she's loved since childhood.

"Katherine is nothing less than a marvel," says Jamie Bryant, Katherine's longtime friend, who introduced her during the award ceremony. "She is an amazing athlete, a devoted friend, and a constant source of inspiration."

Brad Jones ’96

Brad Jones did not spend his acceptance speech reciting statistics – though, as one of the best running backs the school has ever had, he could have pointed to his 1,000-plus rushing yards his senior year and to the key role he played leading the football team, one of the most successful in school history, to a regional championship that year. Instead, he chose to talk about perspective, growth, and that attending Country Day taught him to see the world differently and not to take the people that you meet for granted.

“I want to thank all of the teammates that I’ve ever had,” says Brad. “I played a team sport, and I just happened to be recognized for what I did with the help of my teammates.”

Brad spoke with emotion and honesty about the culture shock of arriving at Country Day from the inner city, and how the school expanded his understanding of people, opportunity, and potential. In a powerful moment, he reflected on a phrase he used to hear growing up: “You’re going to school with a bunch of rich kids.”

He now sees it differently.

“I attended school with kids from different backgrounds. With kids whose parents invested in their education, who knew Cincinnati Country Day would challenge their kids scholastically, socially, and physically. Kids like me, whose parents put them in the best possible position to succeed.”

Jones closed with heartfelt thanks to his parents and to the coaches and mentors who believed in him from the very beginning.

Cassidy Sachs Masters ’13

A 12-season varsity athlete, Cassidy Sachs earned accolades in soccer, basketball, and lacrosse, scoring more than 1,000 points on the basketball court, captaining all three of her teams, and being named the 2013 Cincinnati Country Day School Female Athlete of the Year.

But when she stood to speak, it was not about stats; it was about people.

“My accomplishments would be nothing without the people I played with,” said Cassidy. “Anyone who knows team sports knows it has just a tiny bit to do with what you contribute, and everything to do with how the team works together.”

Now residing in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and working as a senior editor at Dutton, a publishing company under the umbrella of Penguin Random House, Cassidy credited Country Day with giving her the space to be more than just an athlete. She spoke about balancing sports, piano lessons, student council, and academics – something she said prepared her just as much for life as any game or meet ever could.



Shelley Menifee Rose ’14

The fastest female runner in Country Day history, Shelley set four school records, qualified for track regionals in 16 events in four years, and earned nine appearances and one podium finish at state track championships. She also played soccer and basketball with the same fire she brought to the track, winning the Heinichen Award as the school’s top female athlete in 2014.

As her former soccer and track coach, Brittany Woods shared, “Shelley was not just a star athlete, she was a quiet force of determination and grace.”

Brittany continued, “From the very first day, I knew there was something different about her. It wasn’t just talent – it was her focus, her heart, her smile, her quiet determination.”

In a full-circle moment, Brittany reflected on Shelley’s breaking the school’s 100m record Brittany had set several years earlier in her student days.

“People asked if I was upset. I wasn’t. I always hoped someone would come along and push the limits. I just didn’t expect to be blessed enough to coach that person.”

Now a mother and a role model to many, Shelley continues to pass the lessons of integrity, hard work, and the value of being a well-rounded person to her son and other young people.

“I want them to know that you should do the best in everything that you do, and you should push yourself and challenge yourself,” said Shelley. “But at the same time, there are bigger things in life than athletics.”

Shelley’s words captured a theme that resonated throughout the ceremony – that the value of athletics extends far beyond competition.

THE EIGHTH GRADE MUSICAL ROARS!

Keeler Theater came alive with the sights and sounds of the savannah as the incredible Class of 2029 lit up the stage in this year's production of The Lion King JR. With unforgettable performances, powerful vocals, and a vibrant stage design, their dedication, passion, and hard work shone through in every scene. Bravo to the cast and crew for delivering a truly magical show!







SECOND GRADERS SPREAD JOY WITH THE NEWS: REAL-WORLD LEARNING, ONE SCRIPT AT A TIME

Rooted in the second grade's social studies curriculum, which focuses on learning about community, the student-created news program, WJOY, gives students a meaningful way to explore the roles and relationships that help the Country Day community thrive. "We hope to inspire our students to be strong, independent leaders of our community," says lead second-grade teacher Prissy Schoeny. "This project allows them to connect with members of the CCDS community while developing real-world skills."

Each WJOY broadcast covers timely topics relevant to the student body – from birthday announcements, schedule reminders, weather updates, information about special events such as Giving Day, and even interviews with Upper School students about the types of classes they are taking. But behind the scenes, the learning is just as rich as the content. Students take on scriptwriting, editing, practicing fluent reading, boosting vocabulary, and collaborating with peers – all while developing essential soft skills and confidence in public speaking.

Prissy emphasized that WJOY is more than just a fun project; it's a source of empowerment. "Students have found a sense of joy," she says, referencing a sentiment from fellow second-grade teacher Tresonne Peters. "They see their growth, they reflect, and they're able to modify and improve along the way."

Perhaps most importantly, students are stepping into leadership roles and seeing themselves as contributors to the broader school community. They've worked collaboratively with classmates and connected with faculty and staff they might not otherwise interact with. "They see themselves as leaders," says Prissy. "And so do we."

75 COUNTRY DAY STUDENTS EARN REGIONAL HONORS AT THE 2025 SCHOLASTIC ART AND WRITING AWARDS



The 2025 Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Awards have recognized the exceptional talents of young artists and writers in our community. This year, an impressive 75 Upper School students were honored with awards. The Art Academy of Cincinnati facilitated the judging, with the goal of recognizing the exceptional talent of our region's young visual artists and creative writers, emphasizing the indispensable role of a creative mind.

Among the standout achievers are the Gold Key winners, whose exceptional works earned them this highest honor. In the writing category, Elijah Guttman '25 was recognized for his compelling personal essay and memoir, "Two Worlds." Vic Quintero '25 also excelled, receiving a Gold Key for her poem, "School Doesn't Stop for Life." Notably, Vic was further honored with seven Silver Key awards and 14 Honorable Mentions for her diverse and evocative poetry portfolio.

Altogether, Country Day students demonstrated exceptional achievement in the writing category, securing a remarkable 23 Silver Key awards and 47 Honorable Mention awards.

"The Scholastic Awards provide an excellent platform to showcase our students' work, offering them an authentic audience that not only appreciates their skills but also acknowledges their excellence," says Christine Bridge, Upper School English teacher.

In the art category for Gold Key winners, Abigail Falkingham '25 captured the judges' attention with her striking photograph, "Back to Back," while Yuhe "Sarah" Fu '25 impressed with her nostalgic painting, *Childhood Memories*. Country Day students received an additional nine Silver Key awards and 14 Honorable Mention awards in the Art category.

"Encouraging our students to participate in the Scholastic Art competition each year is essential. Winning an award provides an invaluable confidence boost, and witnessing their peers' successes motivates and inspires others in the program," says Amy Brand, Upper School art teacher. "As part of the experience, each year we visit the regional Scholastic Art exhibit, which gives our art students the opportunity to draw inspiration from the broader community and explore diverse artistic approaches."

We look forward to seeing how these talented individuals will continue to shape the world with their artistic and literary contributions. Congratulations to all our award winners!



4TH GRADERS BRING BROADWAY TO KEELER THEATER

Our 4th graders lit up Keeler Theater with their incredible performance of "I Love Broadway." The show truly captured hearts, and the students poured their passion and energy into every moment on stage. The 4th grade play is a great tradition at Country Day, giving students the chance to experience what goes into making a production come to life.



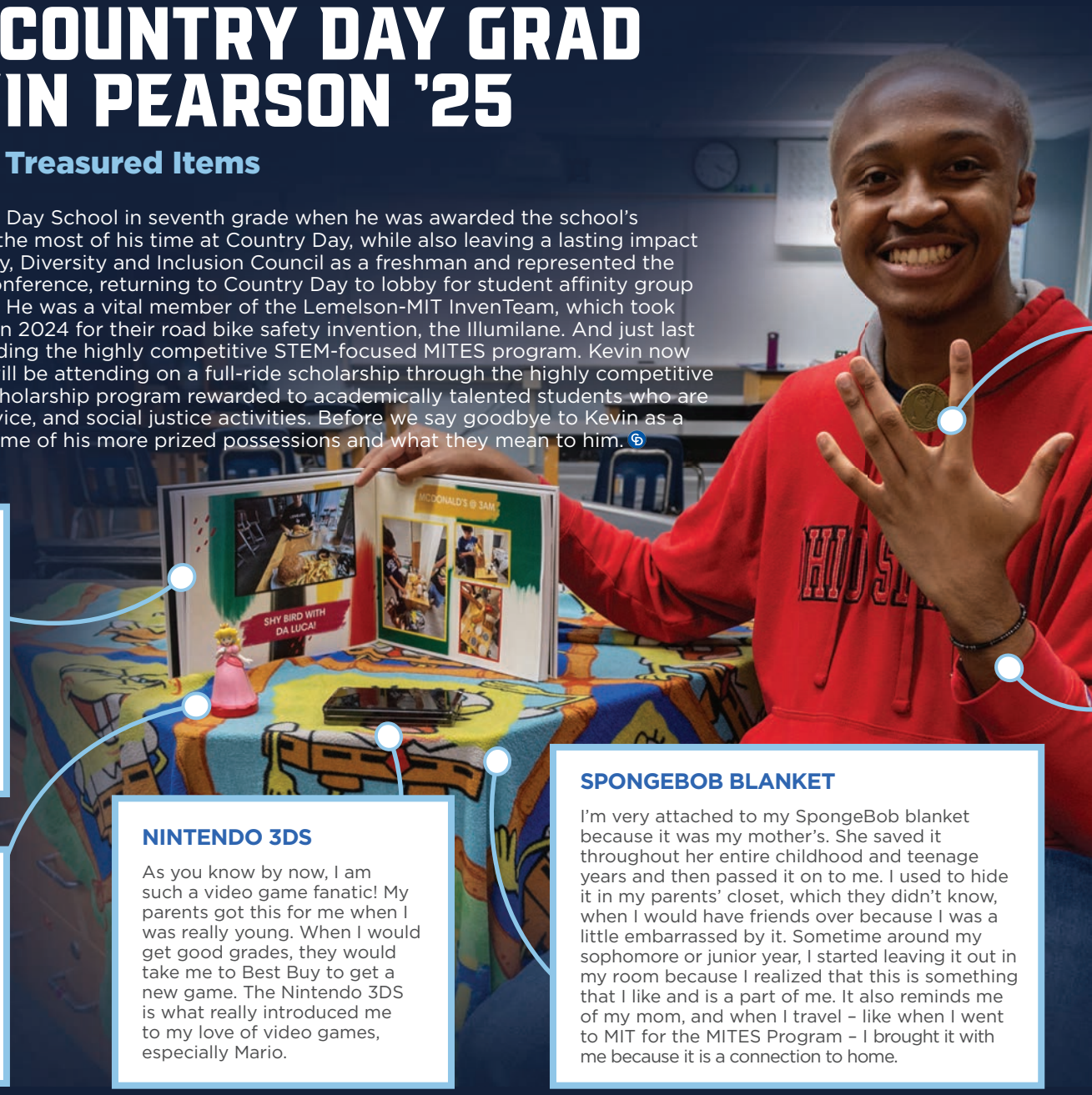
CELEBRATING OUR 2025 RETIREES

The community gathered to honor five retiring faculty and staff members whose impact has shaped Country Day (from left to right): **Tina Peterson, Patti Hodges, Ully Marin, Molly Petre, and Christine Scheadler** have collectively dedicated 90 years of service to our school. Head of School Rob Zimmerman '98 put it best: "Country Day is a better place because of all of you."

PORTRAIT OF A COUNTRY DAY GRAD FEATURING KEVIN PEARSON '25

The Stories Behind Kevin's Most Treasured Items

Kevin Pearson started attending Cincinnati Country Day School in seventh grade when he was awarded the school's Triumphant Scholarship . Kevin has certainly made the most of his time at Country Day, while also leaving a lasting impact on his classmates and teachers. He joined the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council as a freshman and represented the school at the NAIS Student Diversity Leadership Conference, returning to Country Day to lobby for student affinity group time, which is now included in the weekly schedule. He was a vital member of the Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam, which took home two of the three major awards at Eurekafest in 2024 for their road bike safety invention, the Illumilane. And just last summer, he spent six weeks on MIT's campus attending the highly competitive STEM-focused MITES program. Kevin now has his eyes set on The Ohio State University and will be attending on a full-ride scholarship through the highly competitive Morrill Scholarship, which is OSU's premier merit scholarship program rewarded to academically talented students who are actively engaged in diversity-based leadership, service, and social justice activities. Before we say goodbye to Kevin as a Country Day student, he agreed to share with us some of his more prized possessions and what they mean to him.



MITES PHOTO ALBUM

I love taking photos and videos, and I probably took over a thousand photos and videos while at MITES. I spent hours upon hours trying to make this album perfect. It represents my favorite moments from last summer, and it also reminds me of all the great friends I made. They truly feel like a second family. I also want to give a special shoutout to Mrs. [Sarah] Beyreis [director of college counseling and external opportunities]. She helped me choose the MITES Program last summer, and it changed my life.

PRINCESS PEACH AMIIBO

This was bought by my dad for my sister because I had my own Mario Amiibo. When I was younger, I didn't have many people to play video games with, so I would play with my sister. This represents our love of video games and our bond as brother and sister. It always brings me back to the fun time we had playing video games together.

NINTENDO 3DS

As you know by now, I am such a video game fanatic! My parents got this for me when I was really young. When I would get good grades, they would take me to Best Buy to get a new game. The Nintendo 3DS is what really introduced me to my love of video games, especially Mario.

SPONGEBOB BLANKET

I'm very attached to my SpongeBob blanket because it was my mother's. She saved it throughout her entire childhood and teenage years and then passed it on to me. I used to hide it in my parents' closet, which they didn't know, when I would have friends over because I was a little embarrassed by it. Sometime around my sophomore or junior year, I started leaving it out in my room because I realized that this is something that I like and is a part of me. It also reminds me of my mom, and when I travel – like when I went to MIT for the MITES Program – I brought it with me because it is a connection to home.



SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY COLLECTORS COIN

When my dad was working at Best Buy, I would go there just about every day after school and try out the newest video game system that they had available to play. I would also look at all the latest collectables that they had on display. One day, my dad surprised me with this coin. I carry it with me everywhere I go. I believe it brings me good luck. It was such a loving gift from my father.

MITES BRACELET

Attending Country Day allowed me to become fully invested in engineering, which then prompted me to join the CCDS InvenTeam. Everything I did with the InvenTeam led me to attend the MITES program at MIT. By the end of the summer program, I had met people who truly valued me and bonded with people who I felt like I could be my authentic self around. We all just became a family, and I believe that God brought these people into my life when I needed them. The bracelet says, "Always by your side" in Morse code, and I wear it every day.

The Triumphant Scholars Program

The Triumphant Scholars Program awards full tuition scholarships to newly enrolled students, entering grades seven through 10, whose financial need exceeds the limitations of our Tuition Assistance Program. Students must have a proven record of academic excellence, a desire to contribute to the school community, and a history of living Country Day's virtues of responsibility, respect, integrity, courage, and compassion.

The scholarship covers 100% of tuition and the cost of books, a computer, and required field trips, as well as discretionary funds to cover expenses deemed essential to the student's experience.

The program, made possible by a generous gift from an alumnus and grown through additional gifts from others in our community, supports up to 10 students at a time. Between one and three new awards are given each year, depending on the applicant pool for the scholarship and the number of graduating recipients.

For information on how to support the program, please contact Louise Vaughan, director of advancement, at vaughanl@countryday.net or 513-979-0284. If you know a student who you think would benefit from this program, please contact the Country Day Admission Office at 513-979-0220.

EIGHTH-GRADE WRITERS EARN 2ND PLACE AT REGIONAL POWER OF THE PEN TOURNAMENT



Country Day's eighth-grade Power of the Pen team placed 2nd out of 33 teams in the regional Power of the Pen tournament held at Cincinnati Country Day School in February.

Congratulations to Automne Beauchamp (North College Hill), Bea Collett (Madeira), Ethan Kern (Symmes Township), Dominique Makasiar (Symmes Township), Melanie Young (Loveland), and Delle Zamary (Indian Hill).

"This is a first in the history of Country Day's participation in the program," said Emily DiMatteo, Power of the Pen coach and Middle School English teacher. "These team awards are often secured by larger-school competitors. What's even more impressive is that only two of these six writers were on the team last year!"

In addition, Ethan placed 3rd and Dominique placed 10th out of 88 eighth grade writers in the individual writing portion of the competition. Dominique also won a best-of-round award at the district tournament earlier in the year for her third-round piece, which was a prompt asking students to write a story about their arch-nemesis. She wrote a story – titled "The Battle of the Bladder" – about a protagonist whose antagonist was her own bladder – she was desperate to go to the bathroom!

"Judges loved the use of humor and creativity in the piece," says Emily.

Also landing in a top spot at the regional competition was Melanie Young, who placed 10th among the eighth-grade writers.

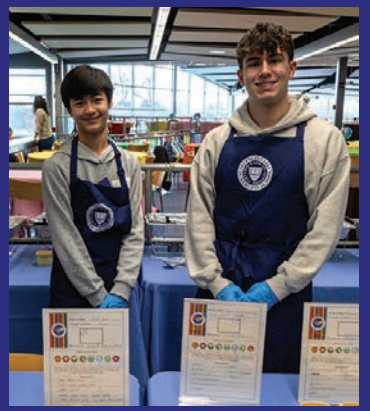
"I would attribute the team's success to a few unique conditions: our Middle School faculty, a competitive peer pool, positive peer pressure, and reading," says Emily. "The teachers have made space and time for creative and low-stakes writing in their classes, allowing students to find and fine-tune their writerly voices. And with this team specifically, they all are, first and foremost, readers with voracious reading appetites. Also, these writers enjoy each other's company and offer each other real feedback to hold each other to high standards."

Bea Collett, Ethan Kern, and Dominique Makasiar competed at the state tournament, held at Ashland University in May.



MULTICULTURAL NIGHT:
COMMUNITY UNITES FOR CULTURE, CUISINE, AND CONNECTION

We loved gathering as a community to celebrate and connect through this special evening of culture! With 431 guests, 60 entertainers, 63 volunteers, and 55 dishes – thank you to everyone who brought food, volunteered, and supported Multicultural Night. A huge thank you to the Parents' Association and Office of Belonging and Wellbeing for making it all possible.





FIFTH GRADERS BRING ANCIENT GREECE TO LIFE WITH IMMERSIVE NASHVILLE ADVENTURE

Parthenon visit, mythology-inspired cave tour, and campus exploration make for an unforgettable educational journey.

As the culmination of their in-depth study of ancient Greece's history, art, literature, science, engineering, architecture, and mythology, fifth graders headed to Nashville, Tennessee to see the world's only life-size replica of ancient Greece's Parthenon. From there, they explored Centennial Park and visited the Vanderbilt campus ("It was so beautiful!"), before tucking in for the night to rest up before their next adventure: Mammoth Cave National Park! On their way back to Cincinnati, they stopped for a historic tour of the cave complex as an experience of the "Underworld" often referred to in Greek mythology. This brief, overnight trip not only brought their academics to life, but it also fostered an even stronger class bond. What an unforgettable immersive learning experience!











CELEBRATION OF CITIZENSHIP

Naturalization Ceremony Held on Country Day's Campus

By: Shiva Shyam '26

On the morning of May 1, Cincinnati Country Day School proudly hosted a naturalization ceremony for the third consecutive year, welcoming a new group of 49 American citizens in a moving celebration of democracy and community. While traditionally held in the outdoor amphitheater, this year's ceremony was relocated to the North Gym of the Leonard Family Athletic Center due to inclement weather; however, the shift in location certainly did not dampen the spirit of the day.

The ceremony was made possible through a partnership with the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio and presided over by Judge Susan J. Dlott. Judge Dlott, her staff, and the candidates for citizenship were warmly welcomed by the Country Day community. Judge Dlott shared that, in her 30 years of presiding over naturalization ceremonies, this one stood out as the most joyful she'd ever witnessed.

The gym was filled with students, faculty, families, and guests, all gathered to witness a powerful moment. Head of School Robert Zimmerman `98 opened the ceremony with a speech that reflected on the meaning of citizenship and the enduring strength of the American identity, especially in times of national division. "My hope is that today's ceremony will pluck the mystic chords of memory for all of us here and remind us of what it means to be Americans." He reminded the audience that the naturalization ceremony is not only a legal formality but a moment of deep emotional and historical resonance, one that reaffirms what it means to be an American.

This year's ceremony also coincided with a meaningful historical milestone: the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Zimmerman reflected on how those early sacrifices connect directly to today's celebration, a testament to the ever-evolving story of American democracy. "As we remember this revolutionary moment, it is important for us to consider just what kind of country our forefathers founded. They fought not for land, not heritage, not blood and soil, but for a radical idea – democratic self-government."

The ceremony concluded with middle schoolers leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. For the new citizens, the ceremony marked the end of a long journey and the beginning of a new chapter. For our students, it offered a firsthand glimpse into the civic process and a chance to reflect on the meaning of national identity. The ceremony was a celebration not just of new beginnings, but of the values that continue to unite us.

A LEGACY OF DEDICATION AND INNOVATION AT COUNTRY DAY:

From Lifer Parent to Beloved Staff Member, Kathy Paff Helps Shape the Country Day Experience

Kathy Paff's connection to Cincinnati Country Day School started when the first of her three "lifer" children, Victoria '14, began attending the school. But her role quickly grew from parent to active contributor within the community. In 2003, she became the volunteer manager of the former school spirit shop, the Country Cottage, and later began substitute teaching in Lower School, especially enjoying her time with the Pre-Kindergarteners. She went on to serve as the welcoming, friendly face at the main reception front desk for eight years before stepping into her current role as advancement coordinator in 2022. No matter the role, Kathy has left her mark on Country Day in meaningful ways. Here's a closer look at some of the standout moments and accomplishments from her time on campus:



Country Cottage ↑

Prior to Kathy taking over as manager, you couldn't walk into the store; instead, someone stood at the door and brought things to you. Well, Kathy was inspired to change things. "My mom used to say, 'People want to touch and feel things that they want to buy.' So, I opened the store completely so that it would be like a natural shopping experience."

Front Desk Receptionist →

Did you know Kathy played a key role in shaping one of Country Day's most important safety measures? In 2014, when the school began locking all building doors on campus, she helped roll out a new sign-in system for campus visitors. Kathy not only helped implement the process but also took the lead in educating faculty, staff, and families on what the new system meant: a blue nametag signaled a trusted guest free to move about campus, while a red nametag meant the visitor should be accompanied, usually because they weren't yet familiar to the Country Day community.





CountryDate ←

CountryDate has become one of Kathy's favorite events to plan, and it shows! Since joining the Advancement Office, she's played a major role in transforming the event from a formal black-tie fundraiser into a more relaxed and inclusive community celebration. Sally (Dwyer) Hernandez '05, who's worked alongside Kathy for the past two years as an event co-chair, says, "Kathy is wonderful at planning events because she's super creative and never afraid to think outside the box. No idea is out of reach for her, and that makes it a blast working with her."



Hall of Fame Inductions ↑

Kathy has also become an essential part of planning the school's Athletic Hall of Fame and Arts Hall of Fame induction ceremonies. She puts great care into making each ceremony feel distinct and meaningful. "One of my favorite things about these events is learning the stories of each alum," Kathy says. "I try not to make any two ceremonies the same. I want every class of inductees to feel special when they return to campus to be honored."



Homecoming ↑

When it comes to Homecoming, Kathy truly goes above and beyond to ensure a fantastic experience for returning alumni. "I love Homecoming weekend because we get to welcome back so many alumni, and we all get to celebrate Country Day together. It is so wonderful to listen to all their amazing stories and how much of an impact Country Day had on them." And with the Centennial just around the corner, we can't wait to see what thoughtful and creative ideas Kathy has in store for the upcoming celebration – stay tuned!

A Day of Diversity:

CELEBRATING CULTURE, CONNECTION, AND COMMUNITY AT COUNTRY DAY





We kicked off our 8th annual Diversity Conference with an engaging and interactive presentation by Dr. Whitney Gaskins, the associate dean of professional development and community impact in UC's College of Engineering and Applied Science, about the importance of authentic connections and the platinum rule, which emphasizes treating others how they would like to be treated. Upper School students then attended sessions led by their peers on topics ranging from Greek dance and cuisine to being a mental health advocate to car culture before participating in a special film screening of "Namba: A Japanese American's Incarceration and Life of Resilience" about incarceration camps in the 1940s and a Q&A with the filmmaker, Emily Hanako Momohara. A perfect end to the day was a Holi-inspired celebration of colors, love, and spring. What an incredible day! This conference exemplified the community, leadership, and cultures that make Country Day the place to be.





Johanna and her husband, James, at the premiere of *Praise This*, a film she executive produced.

A ROUND OF "DID YOU KNOW" WITH MOVIE EXECUTIVE JOHANNA BYER '05

From Cincinnati to Los Angeles to Italy, Johanna has followed her cinematic dreams wherever they've led.

Johanna Byer '05 is a Country Day lifer who moved to Los Angeles right after graduation to pursue her dream of bringing movies to life. She attended the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where she studied the business of cinematic arts. After completing her first internship, she knew that producing movies was what she was meant to do. And now, as the executive vice president of motion pictures at Will Packer Productions, she oversees every aspect of their slate of films, including producing their latest movie, Italianna.

Just before she and her family packed up to spend a few months in Italy filming the movie, we caught up with Johanna to find out more about her career in the movie industry.

DID YOU KNOW... she produced her first film at the age of 25?

When I was an assistant working at a production company called Working Title Films, I had the idea that we should make a movie about a DJ. It was a time when electronic dance music was just beginning to go mainstream, music festivals were popping up everywhere, and I realized that most people would never have the opportunity to actually go to a music festival, so I thought, "Why not bring that experience to them?" That movie ended up being *We Are Your Friends* starring Zac Efron.

It's one of the proudest moments in my career. I had achieved what I had set out to do – produce a theatrical movie. We had the rare wide release, where the film would play at over 3,000 theaters, we traveled the world on a press tour and then crickets... nobody went to see it. It was an epic failure financially but so influential to my career. I learned the very important lesson that we learn more from failure than our success. I was lucky though, that film really jump started my career, because at 25 I had on-the-ground experience of producing a Hollywood film, and once you have that you have it for the rest of your life.



Johanna and her son, Bowes, on the set of *Dashing Through the Snow.*

DID YOU KNOW... being a producer is a lot like being a CEO?

I like to compare the roles of a producer to that of a CEO. They build the movie. They find the story. They hire the crew. They pull all the pieces together, and then they trust and oversee the process. Once the team is in place, we shift to becoming the ultimate problem solver; we may not have the expertise in every department but we steer the ship and move the icebergs so the brilliant people on the crew can do what they do best.

DID YOU KNOW... Johanna's new movie, *Italianna*, is inspired by rom-coms from the 90s and early 2000s?

Growing up, I loved movies, especially romantic comedies like *Notting Hill, Love Actually, How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*. But with the advent of streaming, the industry stopped making them for movie theaters. Gen Z hadn't had their generation-defining rom-com until *Anyone But You* [2023 movie featuring Glen Powell and Sydney Sweeney]; so, we're hoping to target a similar audience with our nostalgic story, our beautiful Italian backdrop and a wonderful, present-day twist.

Italianna, which stars Halle Bailey (*The Little Mermaid*) and Regé-Jean Page (*Bridgerton*), is about a directionless young girl who finally follows her dream to Italy. Once there she not only finds herself, but also love and the stepping stones to her future.

DID YOU KNOW... Johanna thinks a career in the film industry might not come easily but is attainable?

If you really, really want to work in the film industry and there's nothing else you can see yourself doing, then never stop fighting for it. It is a long, difficult, and competitive journey. You have to outwork and have more grit than everyone else around you. Most people have the talent, but very few have the work ethic that it takes to succeed.

DID YOU KNOW... Country Day prepared her to succeed in Hollywood?

More than anything, Country Day grounded me. Without that, I never would have been able to go out and succeed in Hollywood. I left Country Day with an unwavering sense of who I am, what I want, and what is important to me. I learned the importance of showing up every day and working hard, to have empathy, and the power of personal responsibility. When you're dealing with an industry that's as Wild-Westy as Hollywood is, I probably would have lost myself if I didn't have those values firmly established.



Johanna with her husband James, and their two sons Bowen (right) and Hodge (left).








CLASS OF 2033

"I encourage you, fourth graders, to continue to be grateful for the people in your lives and also be grateful for our five character virtues that you can continue to use as a guiding light as you move on to the fifth grade. Be compassionate! Be courageous! Act with integrity! Be respectful! And be responsible! Be grateful both for the guidance those people in your life offer, as well as the guidance that our character virtues will continue to provide."

-Mark Morawski, Head of Lower School

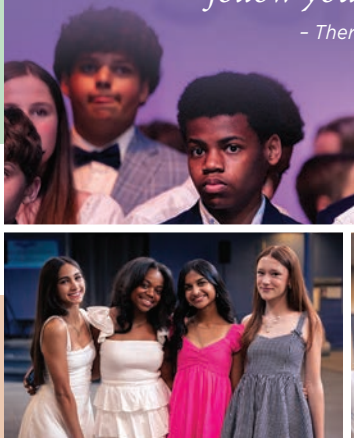




CLASS OF 2029

"As I look at this group, I see a group of individuals who come from various backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. There are twenty students who joined this class in the last four years. Each of you contributes a unique perspective that enriches Country Day and is one of the most powerful pieces of our community. Your diversity is not just something to be acknowledged; it is something to be celebrated. In a world that can be divided, your diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation. Each of you has brought your unique voice to the table, enriching our classroom discussions, your friendships, and the Class of 2029's shared experiences…. Please know that I love you and I'm proud of you and I can't wait to follow your journey in the coming years."

– Theresa Hirschauer, Head of Middle School





CLASS OF 2025

"As we finish this chapter in our lives, another chapter is being written. This is only the beginning. As we look toward the future, I cannot help but express the excitement I feel anticipating what we will go on to do next. The Class of 2025 is a very special and impressive class for many reasons, and the list of our accolades is long. We have innovators, business owners, patent-holders, service workers, and beyond. However, what I find most impressive about us is how well every one of us represents Country Day. In my time at Country Day, I've noticed that at a school like this, it is essential for all students to be academic achievers, athletes, and artists. I can think of no class that better reflects these values than the Class of 2025…. We have had the great privilege of being able to attend Country Day, and we have been well-equipped for this next chapter in our lives. When I look towards the future, I have no doubt that this class will continue to accomplish impressive feats and change the world. I know that, amidst the largest overall graduating class in US history – nearly four million seniors – the individuals behind me will have no trouble standing out."

– Jack Monroe '25, Student Council President

















100 CENTENNIAL SPOTLIGHT

THE EVOLUTION OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AT COUNTRY DAY

Computing at Country Day began in early 1967 and since then we haven't looked back. Here is a timeline of key events that have put the school on the global map of technology integration in education. Today, tablets have been integrated into the curriculum at every level and are used to create, synthesize, analyze, calculate, collaborate, and communicate. There are more than 700 working tablets on campus during a typical school day. Country Day continues to be a leader in seamlessly integrating technology into the curriculum.

SUMMER 1967

General Electric Company began a time-sharing computer service, which made it possible for one to access their computer using a remote Teletype connected through a telephone line. Through the initiative of David Laird, Country Day's "founding father of technology" and science teacher, a terminal was installed at Country Day, one of the first in any high school across the country.

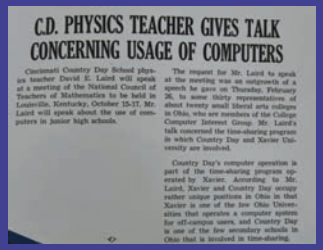
FALL 1967

Computing was introduced into the curriculum with David Laird teaching computer programming to his senior physics students.

1970

The significance of Laird's pioneering efforts was acknowledged by the students, as is underscored by their description of him in the 1970 Archive: "He has put Country Day on the map as something of a center of knowledge of science and technology. David Laird is the center of the center."





C.D. PHYSICS TEACHER GIVES TALK CONCERNING USAGE OF COMPUTERS

Cincinnati Country Day School physics teacher David E. Laird will speak at a meeting of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics to be held in Louisville, Kentucky, October 15-17. Mr. Laird will speak about the use of computers in junior high schools.

The request for Mr. Laird to speak at the meeting was an outgrowth of a speech he gave on Thursday, February 26, to some thirty representatives of about twenty small liberal arts colleges in Ohio, who are members of the College Computer Interest Group. Mr. Laird's talk concerned the time-sharing program in which Country Day and Xavier University are involved.

Country Day's computer operation is part of the time-sharing program operated by Xavier. According to Mr. Laird, Xavier and Country Day occupy rather unique positions in Ohio in that Xavier is one of the few Ohio Universities that operates a computer system for off-campus users, and Country Day is one of the few secondary schools in Ohio that is involved in time-sharing.



COMPUTER CLUB

G.E. workers went out on strike this year, but ol' C.D.'s computers were as hot as ever. One of the school's lesser known organizations, the Computer Club handled the most highly trained Ohio State computer experts a digital disaster. The Indians' sophisticated programs humiliated the best of the Bucks.

COMPUTER CLUB

Sitting: Steve Schuster, Bob McLaurin, John Scherz, David Stutz, Jeff Spain, Gary Gibbs Standing: Tom Carter, Kim Spain, Charles Feuse, Geoff Sutton, Craig Cleveland, George Gibbs, Black Selnick, Fred Schmitt, Lawrence Williams, Mark Korman

1971



With the discontinuation of other local time-sharing services, Country Day purchased its own Hewlett-Packard 2114B minicomputer for about $25,000 (equivalent to $197,000 today).

1973

David Laird received a $4,000 grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation to purchase data acquisition and control hardware for the minicomputer.

MAY 1975



The demand for computer time exceeded the available facilities so the school purchased its own Hewlett-Packard 2000F time sharing system for $60,000 (equivalent to $365,000 today).

"I was initially frustrated by the Intro to Computer Science requirement at Country Day because I had never considered computer science before and honestly felt pretty intimidated by it. A lot of that came from the broader gender gap in STEM, the lack of visible female tech leaders in the media, and the fact that my previous middle school didn't even have computers. But once I started coding in Ms. [Jamie] Back's class, I felt like I had discovered a new passion. Ms. [Laura] Corrigan had always encouraged me to take AP Computer Science, and I used to laugh it off. But after Intro, I signed up for her AP course the very next semester and loved it. Having strong female role models at the beginning of my computer science journey was incredibly impactful and gave me the confidence to continue. Although the gender gap in technology is slowly improving, I still often find myself with male managers and leadership in the workplace, which makes me even more grateful for the early encouragement I had from the incredible female teachers at Country Day. I continue to reach out to them for advice and mentorship to this day."

– Terre Virzi '22, student at Columbia University in the School of Engineering & Applied Sciences, majoring in computer science with a minor in linguistics

1976

The school obtained another grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation to construct a microcomputer data acquisition system for the physics lab.

NOVEMBER 1979

David Laird died tragically of acute leukemia, one month after entering Christ Hospital "feeling tired."

1980

The school purchased six Apple II and three Commodore Pet computers.

FALL 1980

Joseph Hofmeister, a math teacher and close friend of David Laird's, assumed leadership of computer education at Country Day.

EARLY 1980s

Computer science education became a formal part of the curriculum at Country Day. Instruction in Basic and Pascal programming languages was instituted from the introductory to the Advanced Placement levels.



1982

On a maintenance budget set up by David Laird, 10 Apple II Pluses were acquired and housed in a computer lab on campus.

1987

Apple published a program called Hypercard, which was meant as an executive's personal assistant, but because it also included a multi-media feature it became useful as an educational application. Joyce Rudowski, who was then working in the computer department, and Joseph Hofmeister helped the school faculty begin to make broad use of the program...which caught Apple's attention.



JULY 1984

Apple Computer, Inc. introduced its first Macintosh computer in January 1984. The introduction of the Mac is what really initiated the transition to the Microcomputer Age at Country Day. Using funds from the David E. Laird Computer Endowment, seven more Apple II Pluses and five Macintosh computers were purchased, with the specific purpose of introducing the Advanced Placement Computer Science course into the curriculum.



1987-1994

Apple Computer, Inc., Hypercard, and Country Day became very closely linked. Apple executives and salespeople were regular visitors on campus. CCDS was nicknamed "The HyperSchool."

1996



After being invited to Seattle by Microsoft and Toshiba to investigate an Australian program of one-to-one access, the school initiated a laptop program. Dr. Jeffry Spain '71 joined the school's staff and became the school's network administrator. Dr. Spain had been a consistent consultant and "adjunct professor" since his days as a student when he worked as an assistant to David Laird.

1997

Wireless networking was installed throughout the high school with coaxial cables, running the school's first Ethernet protocol.



1998

The school was the only school in the country to initiate a laptop program on the scale it did, with all students from grades 5-12 and all teachers receiving laptops at the same time. The laptopprogram began drawing national attention and generating interest from other schools; to accommodate that interest, Country Day began a series of workshops for visitors from other schools who wanted to explore the program.

2000

After the move to the new building, a new and 10x faster wireless network was installed and extended to the entire campus so wireless networking was available everywhere in the school. Computer science became a required class for high school students.

SPRING 2002

The school experimented with video streaming and conferencing through new ISDN telephone lines.

2001-2002

Groups of Country Day teachers visited schools in Kansas and Georgia to do consulting. Workshops for teachers and administrators from other schools continued throughout the school year and summer.

2003

The school transitioned to tablets, becoming one of the first schools in the world to take advantage of the power of digital ink.

2007

The school helped Microsoft invent OneNote Class Notebook, which has since found its way to users worldwide, with over 300 million class notebooks created as of 2023.

2015

The school was the first educational institution to deploy Surface Pros.

1993

The school began experimenting with wireless connections to the network, using donated equipment from a small California company called Metricom.

1991

The school installed its first connection to the Internet with a 56 kilobit per second leased telephone line.

"The idea of having a one-to-one program for each student was revolutionary. With a laptop computer, you had your own digital world that was organized the way you wanted it to be, as opposed to a shared computer lab where everything you did maybe got saved and you might not even have access to the same computer from one time to the next… And then the advent of digital ink transformed computer technology in schools. The fact that the handwriting is searchable – along with videos and images all in OneNote, unlike a physical piece of paper – is extraordinary. It's like a spiral-bound notebook with as many pages as you want, organized how you want, with every page the size you want. This is the logical extension of what school kids have used for decades to save their work products…. I wouldn't be surprised if there were a handful of other schools in the United States that are in line with what we can do, but I'm fairly confident that we do it better than almost anyone else."

– Dr. Jeff Spain '71, network administrator 1996-2024

"What's next is AI. We remain committed to student agency and empowering our kids to use AI – as well as other tools – to help them authentically learn and master the skills they need to learn and master. Unlike most schools, we're not running from AI and, instead, we're teaching kids how to use it effectively and morally because the great leaders of tomorrow will be using AI in some fashion. We also want our students to succeed out in the world from a functional perspective. It's why they're using Microsoft and they've always had email accounts and use Teams too… It's why we helped develop elements of that program before they were available to the public and why we were the first school in the nation – maybe the world – to have Teams."

– Rob Baker, director of technology

2020

When Covid-19 disrupted traditional classroom learning, Country Day was uniquely prepared to make a nearly seamless transition to fully remote instruction. As early adopters of Microsoft Teams and OneNote Class Notebook, we had already integrated a robust digital infrastructure that supported all learning modalities—typing, images, video, and most importantly, digital ink. Because these systems were already in place, we didn't miss a beat. The only real shift was teachers sharing their screens remotely rather than from the front of the classroom. Instruction and collaboration continued at a high level without the need for major adjustments.

2022

The school earned the College Board AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award, which recognizes schools that are closing the gender gap and expanding access to AP Computer Science classes and coursework to young women.

2023

The school was one of only eight high schools nationwide to be awarded a Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam grant. The CCDS InvenTeam spent the next year and a half creating a patent-pending invention geared towards improving road bike safety.

2024

Jamie Back, director of makerspace and innovative design, was selected to receive the Outstanding STEM Educator Career Achievement Award for 20-29 years of service at the Tri-State STEM+ Conference.



2025

The school was recognized with the College Board AP® Computer Science Female Diversity Award for achieving notable female representation in AP Computer Science A. Twenty-two percent of the school's high school students took an AP Computer Science course, reflecting the school's commitment to STEM education.



WHILE COUNTRY DAY CONTINUES TO BE ON THE LEADING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY, THE SCHOOL ALSO RECOGNIZES THE POWER OF PURPOSEFUL SCREEN-FREE LEARNING.

Hands-on learning is central to our commitment to instilling intellectual curiosity and a lifelong appreciation for learning in our students. Through outdoor activities, student-led learning, and interdisciplinary projects, students build essential skills like creative problem-solving, resilience, and collaboration that connect them to their community and their own learning.

In Lower School, where the curriculum is largely screen-free, experiential learning shapes daily activities. Middle School students engage in outdoor experiments, lab work, and journaling to refine observational skills, all of which "provide dynamic, hands-on experiences that extend beyond the screens," says Theresa "Hirsch" Hirschauer, head of middle school. Many Upper School classes, like AP Physics, balance digital use to foster a well-rounded focus and mastery of the subject at hand. "Students set aside laptops for paper and pen, leading to higher focus and likely greater understanding," says David Mavricos, science teacher. "My fellow Upper School educators and I are constantly evaluating how technology supports – or hinders – deep engagement in our subject areas." In addition, initiatives like Screen-Free Week – which features interactive games with engaging offline challenges like reading books, building forts, exploring the outdoors on our 60-acre campus, and adventurous scavenger hunts – spark creativity, sharpen focus, and deepen learning.

Collectively, these thoughtful initiatives at Cincinnati Country Day School balance technology use, enriching the educational experience.

Class Notes

UPDATES ON ALUMNI NEAR & FAR

1971

1 Class of 1971

On May 3, members of the Class of 1971 gathered on campus to celebrate their classmate Malcolm Dalglish's induction into the Arts Hall of Fame. Joined by two faculty members from the era – Sean Mitchell and Charlie Goetz – the group enjoyed lunch, memories, and moving presentations by Malcolm and the other inductees. (For a more complete story about the ceremony, see page 30.) Malcolm was his usual entertaining self and delighted the crowd with his energy, antics, and musical performance.

Pictured (left to right): Dick Westheimer, Sean Mitchell, Ed Stewart, Fred Schmitt, Sam Lowry, Malcolm Dalglish, Mike Pogue, Charlie Goetz, Bill Hopple

1976

Jeffrey Harrison '76

Jeffrey Harrison '76 has published many collections of poetry and received many awards for his work. Most recently, the importance of Jeff's work has been recognized by the selection of two of his poems for inclusion in the 2024 and 2025 editions of *Best American Poetry*. For more than 35 years, the *Best American Poetry* series has reflected the mood and shape of American poetry, presenting essential American verse and the poets who create it. Jeff's poem "A Message from Tony Hoagland" was included in *Best American Poetry* 2024, and his poem "Amnesia" will be included in *Best American Poetry* 2025, scheduled for publication in September of this year. Congratulations, Jeff, on this wonderful acknowledgement of your work!

1977

James J. Taylor III '77

James J. Taylor III '77 and Brooke Chang have moved from the California desert (Desert Hot Springs) to Eugene, Oregon. The move closes a major chapter in Jim's life: For 36 years, he pursued his artistic passion in Southern California – sculpting, painting, and teaching at the secondary and university levels. In Eugene, Jim and Brooke continue to ski, Jim continues to play guitar with various jazz ensembles, and Jim is busily working to get his new sculpture studio up and running by summer. (Read more about Jim on page 28.) Best wishes to Jim and Brooke on their new adventures in Oregon!

1978

2 Jane Fritz '78

Jane Fritz '78 recently joined her son **Joey Fritz '10**, who lives in Singapore, for an adventure in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Siem Reap, Cambodia's second city, has a rich history and is a convenient jumping off spot for exploring Northwestern Cambodia – including the ancient temple complex of Ankor Wat, from which Jane and Joey sent the school a delightful picture.

1980

3 Daniel Barach '80

Daniel Barach '80 has shared a photo from the beach in Tel Aviv along with the following message: "I made Aliyah and moved to Israel Nov[ember] 20, 2024." All the best, Daniel!

1990

4 Michael Strauss '90

Michael Strauss '90 and his wife Leslie Thompson recently welcomed Peter T. Strauss to their family! Mike, Leslie, and Peter live in London, where Mike is General Counsel of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Congratulations and best wishes to the Strausses!

Pictured: Peter with his grandmother Kitty and mother Leslie.

2003

5 Danielle Mendelson '03

Danielle Mendelson '03 and Will Kronenberger were married on October 26, 2024, in Nashville, TN, after a four-year courtship. Several of Danielle's Country Day classmates – Erin Tapke '03, Jeremy Guttman '03, and Amelia (Alpaugh) Hayden '03 – helped the couple celebrate, as did Danielle's brother Matt Mendelson '08 and her mother Nancy Mendelson, a past member of the Country Day faculty. The couple will reside in Nashville, where Danielle is the long-serving director of human resources at Best Brands, Inc., a beverage distributor, and Will is a graphic designer for the same firm. We wish Danielle and Will all happiness in their life together!



1



2



3



4



5

2006

Kevin Dunn ’06

Kevin Dunn ’06 and Arianna Torres Alvarado, who met in Mexico City, were married in Tepoztlán outside of Mexico City in April. Fellow alum Simon Gluckman ’93, founder of Intrepid Explorations – a leading safari planner and outfitter – helped Kevin and Arianna plan their honeymoon in Africa. Congratulations and all happiness to Kevin and Arianna!

2008

6 Peter Dayton ’08

A musical composition **Peter Dayton ’08** wrote for the Shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute) was recently premiered at the World Shakuhachi Festival 2025. Peter’s piece, “The Demonstration” (a musical setting of a 1964 poem of the same name by the American poet Cid Corman), was selected for performance at the festival in a highly-competitive process that saw nearly 100 pieces submitted from 24 countries. In selecting Peter’s piece, the judges praised its beauty and skill. Peter is an accomplished composer whose pieces for voice and instrument have been performed throughout North American and Europe, but this is the first piece he has written for the Shakuhachi. The World Shakuhachi Festival, first held in Japan in 1994, is an international festival showcasing the shakuhachi, a traditional Japanese instrument that has gained world-wide popularity for its versatility. The 2025 festival was hosted by the College of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts at Texas A&M University. Peter’s piece was performed before 300 guests on April 20 in the university’s Rudder Theater. This is quite an accomplishment!

2012

7 Kendall Toerner ’12

Kendall Toerner ’12 has been on quite an adventure since graduating from CCDS. After earning a degree in industrial and product design from the University of Cincinnati’s College of Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning (DAAP) – where he won the Director’s Choice Award in Industrial Design for a collection of air-powered communication, orientation, and safety equipment he designed for outdoor adventurers as his capstone project – Kendall moved to Seattle, Washington, where he worked for Oracle VR and an electric vehicle startup. With those experiences under his belt, Kendall started his own firm, Offset Inventions, through which he provides design and invention consulting services to individuals, startups, and established companies. Some significant health challenges prompted Kendall to engage in extended research into biophysics; that research led not only to improved health but also to a book: In October of 2024, Kendall published the results of his research in *The Sunlight Cure*, a book discussing the role light plays in maintaining health and wellbeing. Over the last few years, as he has pursued his design and invention work and his research, Kendall has done much travelling to find the ideal place to settle down – and he believes he has found it in St. Remy de Provence, in the south of France, where he and his girlfriend Felicity live: Kendall finds the food, the climate, and the culture of southern France the ideal environment for living and working. What an adventure!

2013

Michael Barton ’13

Michael Barton ’13 has been selected to Forbes’s “30 Under 30 North America 2025: Finance” list. As a teenager, Michael considered investor Philippe Laffont one of his idols. Today, Michael works with Laffont as a sector head at Coatue Management’s $17 billion technology hedge fund. He focuses on public market investments in internet companies and has led Coatue’s investments in businesses like Meta and Applovin. Before joining Coatue, Michael worked as an investment banking analyst at Moelis and Company and at Melvin Capital Management for investor Gabe Plotkin. Congratulations on this recognition, Michael!

8 Elliot Cofer ’13

Elliot Cofer ’13 and Geneveive Miller were married in North Carolina on December 28, 2024, in front of their families and a few friends. They both serve as active-duty members of the United States Air Force. Elliot’s brother, Brian ’10, stood as Elliot’s best man. Best wishes to the couple!

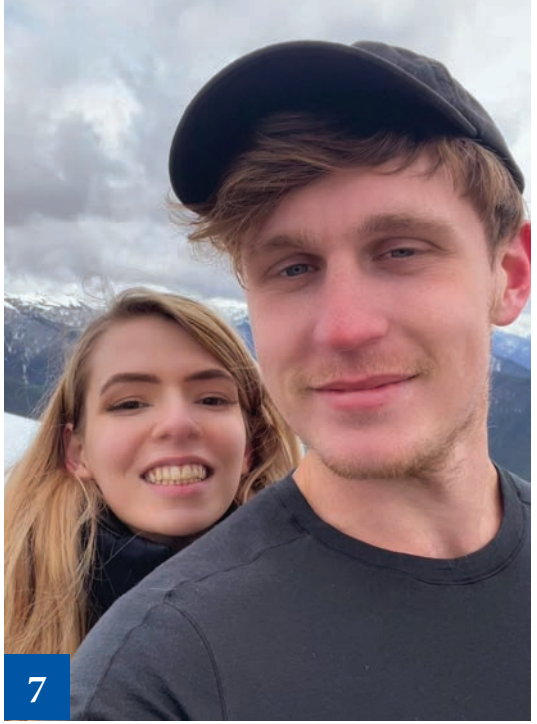
2014

9 Emma Hoenemeyer ’14

Emma Hoenemeyer ’14 and Kevin Neltner were married February 16, 2025, at St. Xavier Church in downtown Cincinnati. Tess Hoenemeyer ’17 was the maid of honor, and CCDS classmates Lauren (Wiley) Seymour ’14, Annalise (Tereck) Webb ’14, and Sofie DiFrancesco ’14 helped the happy couple celebrate. Emma and Kevin will reside in Cincinnati, where Emma is a business analyst at Fifth Third Bank and Kevin is a technical product manager at the Great American Insurance Group. The couple honeymooned in Strasbourg and Paris, France. Congratulations, Emma and Kevin!



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2017

10 Olivia Robinson ’17

Olivia Robinson ’17 married Sam Campbell on November 30, 2024, at St. Rose Church in Cincinnati with the reception immediately following at The Monastery Event Center in Mt. Adams! The venue was packed with Country Day friends and family including Deidre Mohan ’17, Hannah Guttman ’17, Katie Deacon ’17, Emma Robinson ’22, Ashton Snell ’22, Sarah Zimmerman ’22, Will Robinson ’26, Evan Robinson ’26, Liz Dohrmann ’01, Brittany Woods ’04, Brady Brandt, Theresa Hirschauer, and the Snell family (Sonny, Ashley, and Bryce ’25). We wish Olivia and Sam all happiness.

2018

11 Alex Chantilas ’18

Alex Chantilas ’18 has finished his graduate studies at the London School of Economics, earning his Master of Science degree from the Environment and Development program and has been awarded a Fullbright scholarship. Alex’s Fullbright has taken him to Hannover, Germany, where he is working with the Department of Physical Geography and Landscape Ecology in the Institute of Earth System Sciences of the Leibniz University Hannover to study how emergent urban planning strategies can offer climate mitigation while benefitting human and ecosystem health. Well done, Alex!

2019

Alexandra Pohl ’19

Alexandra Pohl ’19 has been selected to Forbes’s “30 Under 30 North America 2025: Music” list. Xandra, who lives in Florida, has been earning much attention as a DJ. In its profile of Xandra, Forbes lists some of her accomplishments: “Xandra Pohl has been seen jogging wheels on the DJ controller at the F1 Miami Grand Prix, the 2023 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Runway Show at Miami Swim Week (where she also walked the runway), and Spotify’s Women in Music Event during Miami Music Week. She’s shared stages with the likes of The Chainsmokers, Calvis Harris and Kygo – who also signed her on talent roster for his artist management firm Palm Tree MGMT. Pohl has sold out multiple nightclubs like Marquee in New York City and LIV Miami, and this August made her Lollapalooza debut.” Congratulations, Xandra!

12 Sterling Snell ’19 & Morgan Pfister ’19

Sterling Snell ’19 and **Morgan Pfister ’19** were married at The Manor House in Mason on July 26, 2024. The wedding party included Sterling’s three brothers and fellow CCDS alumni Schuyler ’16, Silas ’22, and Shepard ’24. Sterling is the Student Pastor at New Life Chapel and Morgan is working in microbiology. Congratulations and all happiness to Sterling and Morgan!

2020

Jack Flynn ’20

After graduating from Colgate University, **Jack Flynn ’20** joined the U.S. Coast Guard. Following initial training in Cape May, NJ, Jack was assigned to the Naval Engineering Department of the Coast Guard base in Seattle, WA, where he and his unit keep the Coast Guard’s polar ice breaking fleet in tip-top working condition. What an adventure!

Sylvia Nica ’20

Sylvia Nica ’20 is on an exciting adventure! Sylvia has graduated from Wellesley College with a double major in English and Italian studies and is spending the summer in Prague as an intern at the House of Lobkowicz. The House of Lobkowicz is dedicated to preserving and sharing centuries of Bohemian culture and history through several cultural heritage sites it maintains in the Czech Republic. Sylvia’s internship in Prague is part of an Albright Fellowship she was awarded by Wellesley College. During her internship, Sylvia will help the House of Lobkowicz with its marketing, fundraising, and museum management – which will include working with a wide array of historical artifacts. After her summer in Prague, Sylvia – who was also awarded a Chandler-Ott Fellowship by Wellesley for graduate studies in the history and culture of Western Europe – will begin a master’s degree program in comparative literature and critical translation at Oxford University. Congratulations, Sylvia!

2021

Jonathan Dawson ’21

Jonathan Dawson ’21 will attend Howard University College of Medicine starting in the fall. Jonathan graduated from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill as an Honors Carolina Laureate with a degree in neuroscience. Congratulations, Jonathan!



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ATTENTION!

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Please help us stay connected by going to www.countryday.net/alumni/alumni-news or scanning the QR code below.

WITH CHEERS AND TEARS:

A FAREWELL TO THE CLASS OF 2025

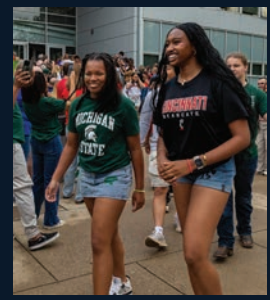
A beloved Country Day tradition continued today as the Class of 2025 walked the Clap-Out route, concluding in the Carey Family Amphitheater. Just as the rain cleared, parents, students, faculty, and staff from every division lined the sidewalks to cheer on our seniors, who wore their college spirit wear with pride. The walk ended with one last group photo and plenty of meaningful moments with friends and family. There were hugs, happy tears, and lots of smiles as the entire Country Day community wished them well on their next great adventure.

Scan here to watch the Class of 2025 Clap-Out

















IN MEMORIAM

Submitted by the loved ones of those we will never forget.

William D. Baylis ’84

William D. Baylis, age 58, passed away unexpectedly on February 20, 2025, in Clearwater, Florida. Born on March 17, 1966, in Cincinnati, Billy was the youngest of five children. A member of the Class of 1984 at Country Day, he attended the University of Colorado Boulder for his BA, then continued his education at the University of Cincinnati, where he earned his JD and MBA. He was a proud Bearcat and avid scuba diver. Billy was the treasured brother of Charles (Cynthia) Baylis, Cary (Brent) Powell, Richard Baylis, and John Baylis, and the beloved uncle of many nieces and nephews.

Mitchell Block ’68

Mitchell Block, the executive producer and Oscar-nominated documentarian who was behind such powerful films as *Poster Girl*, *Big Mama* and *The Testimony*, and who was a member of the Cincinnati Country Day School Arts Hall of Fame, died May 30, 2024, at his home in Eugene, Oregon. He was 73.

Born in Cincinnati, Mitchell attended Cincinnati Country Day School through the 8th grade and then attended the Hun School of Princeton, from which he graduated in 1968. Mitchell earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts and a master’s in business from Columbia University and studied at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles.

While at NYU, he wrote, directed and produced No Lies (1973), a 16-minute cinéma verité-style film about a rape and its aftermath that was selected for preservation by the National Film Registry in 2008. In 2016, critics polled by *IndieWire* picked *No Lies* as one of the 10 best short films ever made.

Mitchell received his Oscar nomination for producing HBO’s *Poster Girl* (2010). The 38-minute film follows the struggles of Robynn Murray, who battled PTSD after returning from the Iraq War.

Earlier, he was an executive producer on the Oscar-winning short documentary *Big Mama* (2000), about Viola Dees, an 89-year-old woman fighting to retain custody of her rebellious grandson, Walter.

Two other short documentaries he worked on, *The Testimony* (2015), about the largest rape trial in the history of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and *Women of the Gulag* (2018), revolving around survivors of Soviet labor camps, were shortlisted for Academy Awards.

Mitchell also co-created and executive produced *Carrier*, set on the nuclear aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz*, and its one-hour companion piece, *Another Day in Paradise*. Both aired in 2008 on PBS.

His résumé included 2008’s *Stealing America: Vote by Vote*, 2014’s South by Southwest double winner *Vessel*, 2018’s *The Lost City of the Monkey God*, 2021’s *Surviving Sex Trafficking* and 2023’s *My People*.

He was a consulting producer on the insightful TCM docuseries *The Power of Film*, which aired in 2024.

Mitchell loved working with students. He spoke at more than 50 colleges and universities worldwide; lectured in Beijing, Shanghai and other cities in China; taught classes in independent film production at USC’s School of Cinematic Arts from 1979-2017; and was a professor of documentary and film studies at the University of Oregon at the time of his death.

Preceded in death by his wife, Joan, Mitchell is survived by his daughter Anja and his son Pieter.

Mary B. Hopple

Mary B. Hopple, wife of Bill Hopple III ’71 and mother of Bailey Edelson ’02 and Casey Hopple ’09, died peacefully on Friday, May 9 at The Marjorie P. Lee Home after a ten-year battle with dementia.

Mary was born to Helen Bailey Benning and Richard Burton Benning in Orchard Park, NY on February 21, 1954. Mary loved growing up in OP with many close friends. She was a straight A student, which earned her a NY State Regents scholarship to Cornell. She started playing tennis at a young age on the public courts across from her house. She taught tennis many summers in the OP Rec Dept. Her love of and devotion to the game led to her earning a spot on the boys’ varsity team during the pre-Title IX era when there was no girls’ team. She went on to play doubles on the women’s team at Cornell for all four years.

At Cornell, Mary had an independent major in retail and textile chemistry in the College of Human Ecology. Mary met the love of her life, Bill Hopple, in her Junior year at a FIJI-Kappa champagne dinner. She always said she saw his needlepoint belt and knew that night he was the one - and she was right!! Mary and Bill were married in August 1976 after graduating and moved to Chicago.

Mary was an Assistant Buyer in stationery for Marshall Field & Co. at the State Street store. She then worked for a retail catalog company before moving to Cincinnati in 1979. Mary was the lamp buyer at A.B. Closson Co. She quickly realized no one in Cincinnati was selling the fun and exciting paper products she had seen in Chicago and she knew all the sales reps as Cincinnati was in the same territory as Chicago. In May of 1981, Mary realized her dream of owning her own store and opened M. Hopple & Co. in the new Westin Hotel.

While the store continued to grow, including a second location in Kenwood, Mary continued to play tennis in a 5.0 women's business league. Most of all, Mary was devoted to and proud of her three children. She was involved in their activities, but it was their responsibility to take advantage of the opportunities and learn from them. They each worked at M. Hopple & Co learning how to count using the cash register and developing a strong work ethic.

Since 1989, Mary's favorite place was the family's cottage at Point Chautauqua on Lake Chautauqua in western NY. The kids grew up going every Memorial Day, Labor Day, summer and winter weekends. They learned to ski at nearby ski areas and daughter Bailey was married there. Most of all, Mary loved sitting in the Adirondack chairs at sunset with a glass of wine. Her favorite pastime was needlepointing. She created many original designs for special occasions and gifts for close friends and family. And she also loved to sew. She and her mother made Mary's wedding dress and all the bridesmaids' dresses.

Over the years, Mary gave back to the community in many ways. Through M. Hopple & Co., she supported a great number of schools and charitable causes. Her favorite volunteer work was in the child life department at Cincinnati Children's Hospital and at the Children's Creative Corner of Over the Rhine Community Housing. In retirement, Mary made children's aprons for family, Cincinnati Nature Center Preschoolers and children at Tikum Farm in Mt. Healthy.

Mary is survived by her devoted husband of 48 years, William H. Hopple III; her children Bailey Edelson (Alex) of Bethesda MD, Jess Hopple of Cincinnati, and Casey Hopple of Los Angeles; grandchildren, Leo, Benning and Harold (Hank) Edelson; and her sister Betsey Benning Dewey (Bill) of Rochester, NY. The family wishes to express deep appreciation to the numerous incredible medical professionals who provided superb compassionate care over the past ten years, the staff of Marjorie P. Lee and the nurses from Hospice of Cincinnati.

William Hoskins '52

William "Bill" Hoskins, age 89, of Vineyard Haven and Lincoln, MA, passed away peacefully in his sleep, at his home in Lincoln, on February 5, 2025. He was preceded in death by Elizabeth "Bette" Grimm Hoskins, his beloved wife of 59 years. He leaves son, Bruce Hoskins Barlag and wife, Kathy; son William "Andy" Hoskins and wife, Megan; son, John Hoskins and wife, Wendy; daughter, Elizabeth "Lissa" Hoskins Dow and husband, Robert; and daughter, Allison Hoskins Levit and husband, Lev. He was blessed with 15 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren who loved him dearly.

Bill was born February 22, 1935, in Cincinnati, Ohio, the son of John and Gertrude Keller Hoskins and brother to John and Robert Hoskins. He was raised in nearby Glendale and attended Cincinnati Country Day School. Bill attended Yale University on a Naval ROTC scholarship, graduating in 1956 with a bachelor's degree in political science. Upon graduation, he served in the Navy for three years, much of the time as operations officer on the destroyer USS *Brown* deployed in the western Pacific, attaining the rank of Lieutenant JG.

Following the Navy, Bill attended Harvard Law School. While living in Cambridge, he met his guiding star, Bette, who he married in 1961. Upon graduation from Harvard in 1962, Bill and Bette moved back to Cincinnati to raise their family. Bill joined the Frost and Jacobs law firm, specializing in corporate law. In 1966, Bill took a position as General Counsel for the Drackett Company, a subsidiary of Bristol-Myers, rising to Associate General Counsel of Bristol-Myers in 1981. In 1982, Bill moved his family to Kansas City and signed on as General Counsel for the smaller and more entrepreneurial Marion Laboratories, guiding it through mergers to create first Marion Merrell Dow and ultimately Hoechst Marion Rousell, the world's second largest pharmaceutical company at the time.

Bill retired as General Counsel in 1997 and moved with Bette to Boston, with a summer home on Martha's Vineyard, where they hosted epic annual reunions with their rapidly growing clan of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In 2001, Bill came out of retirement to form Resolution Strategies, the first law firm solely committed to the practice of early dispute resolution as settlement counsel, in which a client is guided to an early and equitable settlement, avoiding lengthy and costly disputes in the courts. His pioneering work is now a standard practice in many prominent law firms.

Throughout his accomplished professional career, Bill was active in local and national leadership of the Republican Party. He was an avid tennis player, golfer, sailor and skier, even picking up wind surfing in his 50s and skiing into his 80s. Most of all, Bill was a kind, generous and thoughtful father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Timothy H. Marvin '55

Timothy Haigh Marvin, 86, of Kure Beach, N.C. passed away April 26, 2024, at his home. He was preceded in death by his parents, Stephen Carr and Louise Scherl Marvin; his brother, Stephen Dale Marvin; and his sister, Frankie Marvin Peirce. Tim is survived by his loving wife of six decades, Anne Hope; his brother Terrence Carr Marvin of Milford, Ohio; and his children Timothy M. (Ellen) of Raleigh, N.C., Elizabeth Brame (Jay) of Boca Raton, Florida, and Bruce K. (Janet) of El Cerrito, California, who will miss his guidance, support and unfailing love. Tim will also be missed greatly by his grandchildren Scott, James, Sadee and Isla.

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio on March 8, 1938, Tim graduated from Cincinnati Country Day School in1955. Appointed to the United States Naval Academy, He graduated in June, 1959. Ensign Marvin began his naval career aboard the USS *Roberts*, a destroyer. He earned his submarine warfare dolphins serving aboard both fast attack and nuclear ballistic submarines.

Reporting as Executive Officer of USS *Sylvania*, a supply ship, Tim also completed qualification as a surface warfare officer. During his military career he

was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation medal (2), Navy Commendation medal (2), Battle Efficiency award, Meritorious Service medal, and National Defense medal. During his U.S. Navy career, Tim completed his master's degree in international relations at Georgetown University. Commander Marvin's last tour of duty was Executive Officer, NROTC Unit, at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI.

Transitioning to civilian life, Tim graduated from Eastern Michigan University and earned a second master's degree in education focusing on mathematics and physics. He taught at Romulus, MI, high school and served as NJROTC Commander. He developed long-term friendships with students and colleagues as an educator. After retiring to North Carolina, Tim continued to teach as a substitute teacher, enjoying his high school students' zest for life in New Hanover County.

A lifelong reader, Tim volunteered at Cape Fear Literacy Council. Volunteer time enriched his life. He especially treasured his time with the members of the Eastern North Carolina Chapter of the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association. Tim also enjoyed gardening, opera and literacy jokes.

A devoted husband and father, a patriot, a strong quiet good man – Tim's spirit remains within us.

George A. Moerlein '48

George Augustus Moerlein (March 15, 1930 – February 9, 2025) was an epic Ernest Hemmingway/Jack London sort of character. Out of the ordinary and plainly human, he was known by all as gruff, terse, and adorable.

Dad was born in Hamilton, Ohio, and grew up on the family farm with a love of the outdoors and adventure. He went to Cincinnati Country Day School, often walking the eight miles to continue seeing his middle school sweetheart Judith Straub. During the summer he attended camps in Maine and Ontario where long distance canoeing was the curriculum. At Dartmouth College in NH, he continued to find fast water canoeing and even time for bow hunting. Judy attended college in Cincinnati for a year, but their love drew them to the altar and subsequently the Married Student dorms, where the family began.

Graduating with a geology major, Dad tried graduate school at Stanford University for a year but soon skedaddled back north with his family to the thick forests of Wisconsin for a job. There, the last three of five boys were born. (All this to a man who professed an allergy to kids!) When Dad was offered a new job in Alaska, the family drove up the Alcan Highway in 1961 with five boys, two in diapers. Dad and Mom were quite undeterred by the challenges. Their next home on O'Malley Road in Anchorage came complete with an old swaybacked horse and barn, a lake, and a first-class yard. They never moved again.

Dad spent his career as an independent geologist, consulting for a diverse clientele throughout Alaska. He fit hunting and fishing adventures into his field trips and mapping expeditions. All five boys and Mom spent many a frosty fall chasing caribou and moose for the freezer or standing in frigid streams hauling in salmon. Dad knew how to set up a great camp and lead long hikes to the perfect ambush spot.

Bow hunting was Dad's childhood passion. He crafted his own arrows and bowstrings and hunted with the best. And he made sure all the kids and grandkids had many opportunities to harvest wildlife by bow. We enjoyed frontier adventures involving planes, canoes and miles and miles of climbing. Dad was a powerful man.

Dad was more than a participant. He was a founding member of the Anchorage Nordic Ski Association, helping clear and mark many of the first trails about the city. When skiing before school, racers often smelled the residual pipe smoke from his 5am trail grooming jaunt. Dad was a lifelong member of the Pope & Young Club, a renowned organization promoting ethical bowhunting and wildlife conservation in North America. He wrote for the club's magazine and served as president. Dad and Mom joined the Northern Scottish Highland Dancers, traveling to perform in Canada and the lower forty-eight. Dad on bagpipes and Mom, knees high, dancing a jig.

Dad's passion for birding started in childhood and drew him to exotic places. His deep friendship with James R. Scott, DVM, led to our family's participation in wild bird rehabilitation. We often had an odd collection of injured birds throughout the house – eagles, ducks, sandhill cranes or owls. The Bird Treatment and Learning Center (Bird TLC) was founded from this early volunteer effort and today it is a treasured organization.

Dad showed his love in hunting and fishing adventures. Well into his eighties he would strap into snowshoes for a rabbit chase with sons and grandchildren or invite us birding just as spring brought the flocks back. He was thrilled seeing his first-of-the-year Yellow Rumped Warbler. When any one of us managed to see an elusive bird or land a hard sought fish, Dad would be cheered and reminded us often of the accomplishment. Sharing these trips was his best hug.

George is predeceased by his equal in life, Judith (Straub) Moerlein, brother Carl Hilker Jr (Cathryn), sons Michael (Cathy Frost) & Gilbert (Gwin McGee) and Daughter-in-law Kristine. He is survived by sons Andrew (Donna Dodson), Timothy (Kristine d. 2024), and Douglas; eight grandchildren, and thirteen great grandchildren.

Emily E. Morgan '18

Emmy Elisabeth Morgan, passed away at the age of 25, March 17, 2025. She was born on September 16, 1999, in Cincinnati, OH, a daughter of Mike and Jenny Morgan, little sister to Kaitlyn (Taylor) Kimmel, Michael Morgan, and Kit Morgan. Loving partner to Kyle Gockel, and dog mom to Votto.

Emmy was a beloved granddaughter to the late "Nana" Beth Morgan and surviving "Poppa" Richard Morgan and late "Grandpa" Felipe Tejano and late "Grandma" Linda Tejano.

A graduate of CCDS and Northwestern University, she was an engineer for the City of Cincinnati, and found joy in music, puzzles, gardening, animals, escape rooms, geocaching, and any other adventures with loved ones. Emmy was known for her inquisitiveness, meticulous organization, and conscientiousness. She had deep compassion and an open heart. Emmy will be dearly missed and lovingly remembered by family and friends.

William Schneebeck '46

William Harding Schneebeck passed away at Somerset House in Vero Beach, Florida, on May 28, 2024. He was born November 3, 1928, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to Walter William and Dorothy Mathis Schneebeck. Bill was preceded in death by his wife of thirty-three years, Nancy Parry Schneebeck, and his wife of thirty years, Judith Parker Schneebeck. Bill was devoted to his family. He is survived by his four daughters, Lisa S. Hewett (Jim), Kathryn S. Ottenjohn (David), Anne M. Schneebeck and Lynne A. Schneebeck; his step-daughters, Kimberly V. Monroy and Jennifer H. Velde; and seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his younger brother, Robert W. Schneebeck (Carolyn) of Englewood, Florida.

Bill attended Cincinnati Country Day School and Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati where he was senior class president, co-captain of the 1945-46 Cincinnati City Basketball Championship Team, and for two years, ranked number 2 in Ohio High School Tennis Association behind Tony Trabert. Bill was a 1950 graduate of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. He played three years of Varsity basketball, won the Ohio Conference Championship in tennis on two occasions, and is a member of the Kenyon Athletic Hall of Fame. He also served a number of years on the Kenyon College Alumni Council.

After college, Bill spent three years in the U.S. Army Intelligence Corps serving in Japan and the U.S. during the Korean War and was discharged as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1953. Bill was employed by Midwestern Fidelity Corp of Cincinnati from 1954 until it was sold in 1980. While at Midwestern, he was very active in the financial community, serving on the boards of The Ohio Insurance Institute and The National Association of Independent Insurors. He also served for many years on the board of Gateway Mutual Fund and the Springer School, including several years as board chairman.

At age 47, Bill took up platform tennis and won five Senior National Doubles Championships in the 50 and over group. He continued to enjoy tennis into his late 80's and was an avid golfer, playing into his 90's. He loved his regular games with his many friends and had his last of three holes-in-one at age 91.

He was a member of the Commonwealth Club Cincinnati, The Camargo Club, The Grand Harbor Club and The John's Island Club, where he served as a board member for many years.

The family would like to thank the incredible staff at Somerset House for their love, care and devotion to our father and our family in his last months.

Samuel R. Sommers '93

Samuel Ross Sommers, beloved husband, father, son, brother, uncle, professor, and mentor, died unexpectedly on March 16, 2025, at the age of 49. He passed away after complications of neurosurgery for a ruptured blood vessel in his brain. He will be missed terribly. Sam is survived by his wife Marilyn; his daughters Abby and Sophie; his parents Lynn and Jeff; his brothers Ben '96 and Zach '07 and their wives Melissa and Jillian; his brother-in-law Charles; his nephews and nieces Joshua, Jonah, Alex, Ari, and Maya; the 2023 college football national champion Michigan Wolverines; and countless friends, colleagues, and students.

Born in New York City, Sam was raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. After graduating from Cincinnati Country Day School, he attended Williams College as an undergraduate, where he met his wife Marilyn, and completed his PhD in social psychology at the University of Michigan. He later moved to Lexington, Massachusetts, and was a professor of psychology at Tufts University for 22 years. An amazing teacher who truly cared for his students' learning, Sam taught Introduction to Psychology, Social Psychology, Experimental Psychology, and upper-level seminars in social psychology and psychology and law. In 2007, he won the Lerman-Neubauer Prize for Outstanding Teaching and Advising at Tufts; in 2009, he was named Gerald R. Gill Professor of the Year by the Student Senate; in 2023, he received the Lillian and Joseph Leibner Award for Excellence in Teaching and Advising. He was also a mainstay of almost every Parent and Family Weekend and Jumbo Days, where his lectures were popular and engaging.

In addition to authoring many scholarly articles with his colleagues and lab members, Sam wrote two general audience books: *Situations Matter* (2011) and *This is Your Brain on Sports* (2016) with co-author L. Jon Wertheim. He was also a co-author of textbooks for Introductory Psychology and Social Psychology.

Beyond his highly accomplished professional career, Sam was a devoted husband and the ultimate girl dad who cherished his time with his wife and daughters. He was a softball coach, duet partner, regular audience member at a cappella shows and musical theater, and fierce proponent of trying "one of everything." Sam was one of the funniest people anyone could meet, quick with a joke, but equally generous with his love for family and friends and deeply committed to equality and social justice. He loved his family, the New York Yankees, University of Michigan sports, Seinfeld, movies, children, trivia, nachos, and donuts. The world shines less brightly without him.

Congratulations!

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