

THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

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Peter Richards's Legacy of Blocks Grows

It was his own childhood experience that inspired **Peter Richards** to build the original big blocks for the elementary playground. "I had blocks like these at my school when I was growing up. That's where I got the idea," he said on a recent visit back to Paideia. Peter taught fourth and fifth grade for many years. He retired in 2011 and now lives in Maine with his wife and fellow former Paideia elementary teacher **Kelly Richards**.

On his recent visit he made his way to the block area on the playground on side of the MAC building. The block platform is now inhabited by a new set of

big blocks built by **Ben Davis '06** that replaced the old set of red and blue wooden blocks built by Peter many years ago. "These are great blocks," Peter said admiringly, and like a Pied Piper of playground blocks, suddenly he was surrounded by a small group of soon-to-be builders eager to show him what they could do with the blocks. Peter looked on smiling and noted "they need more." So to accomplish that he has donated money to the Big Block Fund to build 50 more big blocks, 25 half-blocks and slanted boards for roofs.

The additional blocks will be part of the renovation of the elementary playground



this summer, part of the Paideia@50 Campaign. Thanks to Peter and the campaign the block building goes on for future generations of Paideia students.

50 Blocks for Paideia@50

Paideia@50 is a three-year comprehensive campaign to build on and improve our school's facilities and endowment. You can already see some early progress underway on our three campus playgrounds. The half-day playground was renovated last summer and the two elementary playgrounds will undergo extensive renovation this summer.

Current parents and faculty/staff will celebrate at a campaign kick-off party Saturday, Jan. 25. In addition to hearing details on our new play spaces, you will also hear the latest information on the new junior high building, campus-wide renovations, Python Park upgrades, and efforts to bolster the school's fiscal wellbeing through the annual fund and endow-



ment. Many volunteers, led by campaign co-chairs **Louisa D'Antignac** and **Scott Schnell**, have been working hard behind the scenes to bring about these exciting developments for Paideia's future. Please plan to join us on January 25th.

Two Seniors Honored for Service Work By Atlanta Intown

Seniors **Mary He** and **Sophia Yang** are *Atlanta Intown* 20 Under 20 honorees for 2020.

The two were nominated by **Natalie Rogovin**, director of service learning and civic engagement for their work with students on the debate team at Sequoia Middle School and work with imPACT, a high school volunteer club. Both Mary and Sophia have also participated in Paideia's AltBreak program, in which students do service on school breaks.

Mary and Sophia attended Sequoia

Middle School and were active members of the school's debate team. After they began attending Paideia, they continued to work with students at their former school, coaching and traveling with the middle school debate team.

"I began instructing debate in order to help our students develop the confidence necessary for self-advocacy," Mary says. "While it is nice to cheer for our students as they claim the medals they worked so hard for, beneath their looks of shock are children who are finding their voice and



reclaiming their position in the world. Realizing their value and strength, they find pride, smiling as they descend from the

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Feast 2019

The annual all-school feast took place on Tuesday, Nov. 26. Students from the half day to high school gathered in the gym to enjoy the community meal. Alumni also dropped in to enjoy the meal. The members of the high school Climate Action Committee directed students how to dispose of their waste in the proper bins to ensure a zero waste feast once again.



Slither 2019

Rain did not deter runners in the Slither, Paideia's annual fun run that benefits the financial aid program at Paideia. A strong contingent of the high school and junior high school cross country teams were among the runners. At the end of the big race, the littlest runners took to final stretch of the course down South Ponce de Leon in the Tot Trot.



The Value of an Invaluable Resource

If we do not protect and conserve our water soon, our world will fall apart. Water is essential to our well-being. So why do I value water? I value water in my daily existence, for recreational activities, and for the well-being of the planet. Pure water improves the living environment for everyone.

First and foremost, without water our daily living would go completely bonkers. Many people take showers on a daily basis, the average shower using about seventeen gallons of water. To articulate, the average person uses about 6,000 gallons of water a year in showering. Additionally, around sixty percent of a human is made up of water, hence the urge to stay hydrated. A human being can go up to three weeks without food, but can survive only four days without water. Water is essential to brain function, regulates body temperature, flushes out waste, protects cells, tissues, and organs, and even helps improve mood. The list goes on and on, but the gist is that water keeps you alive. Water keeps people sane, the glue that holds us together.

We all need to value conservation of water. For the reason that throughout the world, saving water saves energy, and saving energy saves water. In the process of the water cycle comes precipitation, summoning rain. Rain is needed for many things, and plays a big part in agriculture. In addition, we need to work together to

maintain the health of gardens all around the world. Using native plants that necessitate fewer chemicals rather than ones with pesticides can help naturalize the environment. Furthermore, fertilizer and pesticides in your lawn can wash into the drains and pollute nearby rivers and lakes. The quality of our water is determined by how we decide to treat our planet. Although much of the pollution in our waters has been brought about from storm water runoff, garbage dumping, and littering, an abundant amount of our water pollution is caused by point sources. The single obvious source usually being discharges from wastewater treatment plants, operational wastes from industries, and sewer outfalls. We need to obligate ourselves to saving our water on Earth.

One of the first things that comes to mind when I think of a day without water is Lake Michigan. An abundance of recreational activities are provided there, and without water, the lake would be a dry crater in the ground. In the summers I spend my days on the boat. Although, my concern is that the fresh water in Lake Michigan will not stay fresh and clean for



*Eighth grader **Emily Garrard** was the winner of the Metro District Middle School Essay contest for the City of Atlanta. One city of Atlanta (Emily) and 15 county winners received a \$100 prize. An awards reception was held at the Georgia State Capitol on Dec. 11. Emily's essay was written for junior high teacher Tom Painting's creative writing class.*

long. Already, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario have many unswimmable days due to contaminated water. Another recreational activity I find joy in is swimming. However, pollution is making the water unhealthy, killing the ecosystem. Who wants to go swimming in a lake with the potbelly of a fish floating in the water? To sum up, without pure water my days would be deprived of enjoyment, amusement, and pleasure.

Overall, it may be said that a day without water is a day not worth living. I value being able to shower every day, drink water, and have uncontaminated food, privileges which may not be around for generations to come. I enjoy exploring the outdoors, boating, swimming, and fishing. I am hoping that the human species as a whole can help Earth thrive by saving our environment and cleaning our waters. If we do so, maybe our world will not fall apart.

Biology Research on Display

The 2019 AP Biology Poster session took place in the art lobby on Monday, Nov. 25. Students presented their interpretations of recent research in fields relating to cellular respiration and metabolism. Some of the posters featured topics included findings on Alzheimer's and Depression and the role nutrition may play in their development.

School Year 2020-2021 Calendar Highlights

Thursday, Aug. 20 – First day of school

Thursday-Friday, Oct. 15-16 – Fall Break

Friday, Dec. 18 – Holiday break begins

Monday, Jan. 4 – School resumes after holiday break

Thursday-Friday, Feb. 25-26 – Winter break

Monday-Friday, April 5-9 – Spring break

Friday, June 4 – Last day of school

Why I Teach

Kirsty Lubicz-Nawrocka is the elementary science coordinator. Below is an excerpt from her “Why I Teach” speech at the faculty retreat at the beginning of the school year.

I’d like to share a quote I came across earlier this summer by writer Emily Levine. She said, “Reality comes into being through an interaction.”

It took the writing of this story to fully recognize how my own reality, *being* a teacher, actually evolved. You see, teaching was never *REALLY* my game plan.

The journey of sifting through the interactions I have experienced in my life so far has brought me to a deeper understanding of literally, *Why I Teach*.

This exercise has exposed how I have really come full circle, right back to the kinds of interactions that first inspired me.

I was born outside of Liverpool, England, the second daughter to my parents. My father was finishing up his PhD in “The Endocrinology of Male Reproduction,” and my mother was a primary school teacher. From day one my world was filled with a diverse crowd of young scientists milling about our small house discussing and writing up their research.

In 1972, we four boarded a ship in Southampton with all of our belongings and a Renault and landed in Canada. From here we made our way to Massachusetts to the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology. My father acquired a grant to work with a team led by Dr. Chang, one of the leading scientists who developed the birth control pill.

In this new life in America, once again our family’s direct social interactions were with an international arrangement of scientists. At that time I knew no more than, “Daddy works with animals” and I adored visiting the shelves and shelves of rats, mice and rabbits.

My first school memories are of kindergarten in a small private school in Boylston, Mass., called Shepard Knapp.



It was an old farm house set on a maple syrup farm. Private school because I was too young to go to the public school and my mother tells me I flat out refused to do pre-k again. It was here at Shepard Knapp I can clearly remember an interaction with Mrs. Dumas, my teacher.

It was winter, and it was time to go out into the tundra for recess and every child needed to be outfitted in their snow gear. Coming from a home where self-sufficiency was taught and expected (my little brother was born that year) I could execute the snow-suit procedure all by myself:

Lay hand-me down brown snowsuit down flat on the floor.

Put Wonder Bread bags over my cotton socks. Push both feet into the foot holes.

Pull on knitted mittens (my mom made them with extra-long wrists so snow would not get in the cuffs.)

Sit up, pull zipper that started at the ankles up to my chest.

Pull balaklava onto head (again, knitted by my mother and modified with an extra-long neck for the snow.)

Finish zipping up.

I remember I felt surprised at Mrs. Dumas’ excitement and praise about my snowsuit abilities, something that felt so routine to me. It made me stand a little

taller.

In first grade I attended the local elementary because private school was not in the budget of a research scientist and social worker. My father drove a school bus part time to help make ends meet a bit better. During the summers we were tossed into the back of the huge station wagon – yes, a white one, complete with fake wood paneling along the sides – and on a dime, went camping and visited the National parks. I loved the adventures, camping and the evening Ranger programs. So much so that I told my parents that “That’s what I wanted to be when I grow up!”

It could have also been my fascination with the Rangers’ hats...

And then my parents’ Visas ran out.

They did all they could to stay but to no avail. My little brother, having being born in the U.S. *could* stay, which sounded fabulous to my sister and I but apparently, that was not an option.

Our animals, including a pony, were given new homes.

Our furniture was put in storage save a few toys we could bring with us. Off we went to where my father got another grant to continue on in his line of research— Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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We spent about two years in Buenos Aires, living in a small apartment. My parents' love of travelling, thankfully, was still strong and on school breaks we three were tossed in the back of our old Fiat wagon and drove to some remarkable and remote places, camping on a dime again the entire time. We went to La Paz, Cuzco, and Machu Picchu where, in those days you could freely clamber all over the ancient Incan ruins. Somewhere there is a picture of me "sacrificing" my 5-year-old brother on an ancient Incan altar.

On these wild road trips I got to explore the hidden worlds of the most beautiful tide pools, see enormous elephant seals sunbathe on rocky beaches and walk amongst Magellenic penguins as they guarded their burroughs. Being so close to these creatures made my heart sing and a dedicated interest was growing.

By the time I reached the fourth grade we were all back in the States.

Under our small belts, my siblings and I experienced over five school changes, lived on three different continents, had learned a second language, obtained shiny new green cards, and had had innumerable life interactions. It was also at this time we got a place we could all call, and still do call, our hometown, Ashland, Mass.

My love for the oceans and animals grew over the years. I wanted to be the Shamu trainer at SeaWorld who would ride the orca around the pool chattering away over the headset. Jacques Cousteau's gig with his gorgeous French sons also seemed appealing. Maybe even become a dolphin trainer at the New England Aquarium.

I've included all of these experiences I had throughout this time in my life because I believe they were the foundation that gave me the confidence and skills to welcome new interactions without fear as I wandered through the next phases of my life.

I went to the University of Rhode Island with my major in mind, marine biology. I

eventually graduated with a B.A. in Marine Affairs (Coastal Zone Management) and a minor in Spanish but I really had no idea what I was going to do. What I did know was that I loved being outside, science, and teaching swimming.

"Reality comes into being through an interaction."

This part of my story would not be complete without giving credit to a relationship that truly set me on the course to where I stand today. Her name was Lynn Wilson, and we met our senior year when a mutual friend got us all a place to live in an old beach house in Rhode Island. She had been on a NOLS course and I had been in Spain and we needed a place to live. Our first real interaction happened when she asked if I wanted to go for a walk one evening around dusk; she needed specimens for her taxidermy class.

She needed roadkill.

A couple of hours later there was a small snake and a twisted squirrel wrapped in aluminum foil in our freezer next to the ice cube trays.

We became fast friends, and our adventures continued *long* after college.

After her memorial service a handful of years ago, a childhood friend of hers told me, "Lynn had the ability to sense things about people that they didn't recognize in themselves." I believe that Lynn sensed my path long before I did, which is why I feel so strongly about her role in *Why I Teach*.

We both joined the Student Conservation Association – she landed in Moab, Utah, while I was sent to the Everglades after Hurricane Andrew. Later, Lynn got me to apply to an outdoor education center in North Adams, Mass., that served kids from NYC. After finishing a couple of seasons there she asked if I would do her a favor and drive the car she had purchased for \$50 from Connecticut to Saint Simons, Ga., where she was working with the coastal Department of Natural Resources.

I never went back north. I got a job at

the Jekyll 4-H Center as an instructor, and during the summers worked the sea turtle tagging project with the DNR. Teaching and being outside was becoming my reality. I hunkered down and started taking courses in education while teaching out in San Jose, Calif. I later moved back to Atlanta and continued the pursuit of "The Piece of Paper."

I finished up a position in Rockmart leading wilderness trips for adjudicated young men (yes, another Lynn push) and headed "indoors."

It was Inman Middle School for a year, and then I moved on to become a founding teacher at KIPP South Fulton. This was the deepest immersion into the teaching world I'd had so far—standardized testing, long hours, a focus on behavior modification and Saturday school and summer school duties. New teachers joined each year as the school grew and I will always be grateful to them. They helped shape me into a stronger, more mature and academically dedicated teacher.

Four years into KIPP, Paideia and I were brought together.

I used to believe that I wanted to teach, or was meant to teach, because I had the privilege of experiencing such a range of early-life interactions. I felt like I should "give them back" somehow.

What I have learned is that it's not about me *giving* my experiences to students, or anyone for that matter. It is about sharing my experiences and having meaningful interactions with others. Sharing them through conversations, teaching science, and reflections. The interactions I have on a daily basis within this community and the connections I have made through it, are why I teach.

I'd like to close with another quote by Emily Levine:

"My life has been enriched by other people and I feel a gratefulness in that."

Student Achievements

One of Paideia's four high school robotics teams competed against 50 teams at the Vex Tower Takeover tournament at North Forsyth High School on Saturday, Dec. 14. The team won the Judges' Award for the quality of their engineering notebook, design process, and interviews. The team members are **Rakibul Chowdhury, Alec Harris, Max Stein, and Nikhel Krishna**, with **Javier Pardo** helping out on the day of the tournament.

Senior **Sagan Hartley** was selected as the baritone saxophonist for the All-State Jazz Band. He will perform with the group at the Georgia Music Educators' Association convention in January.

Five Paideia high school received awards at Georgia National Association of Teachers of Singing student auditions held at Clayton State College on Nov. 23. The students awarded were: **Charles Eastman**, first place 9th/10th classical and second place 9th/10th Music theater; **Elena Mavromatis**, second place 11th/12th treble Music Theater; **Sophie Lyman**, first place 9th/10th treble music theater; **Josie Bond**, second place 9th/10th treble music theater; **Cameron Walls**, third place, 11th /12th 11/12 Music theater.

CeCe Yarbrough and **Emma Schulder** also competed and got very high scores as well.



From left: Charles Eastman, Elena Mavromatis, Emma Schulder, Sophie Lyman, Cameron Walls, Cece Yarbrough, Josie Bond and Beverly Blouin at the Georgia National Association of Teachers of Singing auditions.



A Green Thank You to Fire Fighters

The urban agriculture program produces hundreds of pounds of produce each year and Paideia was happy to share some of the bounty with the fire fighters of Engine 12, the Atlanta fire station that serves the school. **Tania Herbert**, the urban agriculture coordinator, delivered baskets vegetables as well as thank you cards made by the students in **Isabel** and **Kristin's** classrooms.

Cross Country Coach Dan McCauley Given Coaching Award

Cross country coach **Dan McCauley** received the Jerry Frasier Award for Outstanding Coaching Dedication. The award is based on submissions from the community and other coaches in the metro Atlanta area, and criteria for selection includes consideration of years of service and overall impact on the sport and its athletes. In addition to his outstanding work with Paideia's athletes, Dan helped to found and is on the board of the Georgia Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (GATFXCCA), and puts in countless volunteer hours for MileSplitGA, the premier running website in the state, as well as the Atlanta Track Club.



Alumni Return for Feast

Students, faculty and staff gathered for the annual all-school feast on Tuesday, Nov. 19. Students from the half day to high school gathered in the gym to enjoy the community meal. As always, some alumni dropped in to enjoy the meal. The parent and student green team members directed students how to dispose of their waste in the proper bins to ensure another zero waste feast.



Meet Sadie Burbank '08

Sadie is the new manager of alumni relations at Paideia. After graduating from Paideia in 2008, she attended the University of Georgia where she majored in textile design and with a passion for fashion. After college she says, "I moved straight to Los Angeles! I have recently relocated to Atlanta after working there for over five years as an event planner. I am absolutely thrilled to be back on campus and I look forward to strengthening connections within Paideia's mission and its community."



- **Meghan Pearson '07** lives in New York City where she works as an art collections manager at Cohen Private Ventures. She also volunteers with the East Harlem Tutorial Program through which she tutors middle school students in math and English. A devoted running enthusiast, she completed the London Marathon last April.
- **Maddie Gunter '08** is working in New York City as an associate costume designer on the new Fox series "Almost Family." Fellow Paideia alum **Stephanie Levin '07** is also working on this show as the assistant costume designer. Maddie has previously worked on the Showtime series "Billions."
- **Gaby Gonzalez-Smith '09** has been living in Greenpoint, Brooklyn since she graduated from the University of Georgia in 2013. She is currently working in Macy's corporate headquarters, where she completed the executive development program, as digital manager of marketing and site execution in the mattress division. Aside from spending time with fellow alums in the city, she has taken up drawing and is looking forward to hiking the Andes in Patagonia over the New Year.
- **Adair Garrett '17** and **Mira Kaufman '17** are currently attending Georgia Tech and working with the RCE Greater Atlanta Network. This network was recently acknowledged by the United Nations University and is devoted to promoting the United Nations' sustainable development goals. Adair and Mira work in the "Youth Network" which focuses on connecting students to employers who value making our communities more equitable and sustainable in the Metro Atlanta area.

THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL

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THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL is nonsectarian, serving families with children ages three through 18. Paideia does not discriminate in employment or in admissions. It actively seeks racial, cultural, and economic diversity in its student body.

The ancient Greek word *Paideia* conveys the concept of a child's total education: intellectual, artistic, and social.

The Paideia School Newsletter is published 10 times a year. The deadline for the newsletter is the 1st of the preceding month. Send all correspondence to Jennifer Hill, Editor, at Paideia School, 1509 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307. Phone number is 404/377-3491, ext. 339; e-mail address is hill.jennifer@paideiaschool.org. For information about sports schedules and upcoming events visit our web site at www.paideiaschool.org

Two Seniors Honored

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stage. This is the most rewarding part of instructing debate."

Sophia said, "My family has always said that education was the cornerstone of creating a better future. Never would I think to challenge that concept until I moved multiple times in middle school. The three different middle schools were vastly different in terms of funding and student demographics. Each experience was completely different and when I moved to Georgia in the fall of 2014, I would have never realized the impact that my school's debate program would have on me. I went to a Title I school in eighth grade where the debate program helped foster connections and friendships that I treasure and value so much. When I transitioned from a public school to a private school, I longed to give back to the community that not only gave me love and acceptance, but

also opportunity. Going to tournaments and seeing students earn their medals after hours of practice made me realize just how important it is to continue programs for students who don't have access to opportunity."

At Paideia, Mary and Sophia have led imPACT since they were sophomores. In her nomination, Natalie wrote, "They have taken the club from simply organizing a few small projects a year, to a service leadership team that organizes both projects and events campus wide, including two American Red Cross blood drives, a Thanksgiving canned food drive and food rescue program, a toy drive, a hygiene kit making project, a Hunger Walk Team and a community partner thank you project. Their efforts reach many community non-profits as well as provide aid and comfort to hundreds of Atlantans."

"Transferring to Paideia, I was worried about finding a place where I fit in,"

Mary says. "However, in my freshman year, I joined imPACT, previously called "Volunteer Paideia," and it was one of the first clubs I ever joined. The first volunteer project I ever did was with the club, and we cooked a meal for a group of disadvantaged individuals, something that became a tradition for imPACT. Despite being surrounded by a group of people I had never met before, I gained many new connections, and fostering these connections, I realized that volunteering helped me create a sense of belonging in my new environment. Working with the service learning program and students who want to be leaders in their community, I gained friendships that I do not believe I would have gained otherwise. I know my work is not "changing the world," whatever that means, but as a leader of imPACT, I hope to recreate this sense of community, activism, and leadership for my fellow club members."