



THE FRIENDLY LIGHT MAGAZINE

2018-2019



THE FRIENDS SCHOOL
OF ATLANTA



On Friday, February 1, FSA once again welcomed guests for another fantastic **Grandparents and Special Friends Day**, a beloved event for young and old and all those in between!



The theme of the **5th Annual Variety Show**, held on March 22, was *Light Up the Night*. And our performers did indeed light up the Community Meeting Room with their songs, dance, magic tricks and so much more!



Drones for the Good Competition



Math Competition



Girls Basketball Team



Track Team



Ultimate Team



Boys Basketball Team

Whether competing on the basketball court, the Ultimate field, the track or the tournaments for math or Drones for the Good, FSA's students are always noted for their great ability to challenge themselves and to collaborate with teammates while respecting other competitors.

Congratulations to all of the Quakes on a great year!

SEEKING TRUTH, BUILDING COMMUNITY

By Waman French, Head of School



“Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one...” is perhaps the most frequently quoted writing of George Fox, Quakerism’s founder. For many Quakers, it speaks to an intention to seek Truth and Light in the world and to engage with others in hopeful and productive ways. In a time when Friends education aspires to lead a dialogue about engagement with all people and offer students experiences in the art and science of building beloved community, it is natural that The Friends School of Atlanta teaches skills that help connect us with others so that we might learn together. After all, old George Fox didn’t implore Quakers to seek truth and keep it to themselves! No, he urged a union with others in a belief that such collaboration would produce a better world, a community based in love, equality and a mutual understanding.

At The Friends School of Atlanta we seek to create a school that resembles the community in which our families reside and not a bastion of sameness. In doing so, it becomes necessary to reflect deeply about how to go out into the world, as our school’s mission statement calls upon us to do, “with conscience conviction and compassion.” How do we engage with others in our school community and in the wider world in ways that strengthen our connection with that guiding love that will bring about a better tomorrow? What does this collaborative experience entail and how should we model this process of collaboration for our young learners? That process of collaborating and honoring each voice is the heart and soul of FSA.

In these pages you’ll learn about some of the engaging ways our school is collaborating with others. You’ll learn a bit about the amazing work of teachers in both honoring the individualism and truth of students while building a compassionate community. To our alum families and longtime friends, I hope you’ll reflect on these current bridge builders and peace makers and remember all the ways your family engaged in similar acts during your time at FSA. Know that we all remember those collaborations and continue to build upon that legacy of Light that shines outwardly and joins others in creating a more peaceful future.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

and a Flourishing Campus



Georgia Tech students and fourth graders proudly display colorful new signs for the garden.

The Friends School of Atlanta (FSA) is lush with gardens and wildlife habitats throughout the campus thanks to an ongoing vision for environmental education, conservation and campus beautification. Bees, Monarch butterflies, rare bog plants, vegetables, flowering vines, pollinator plants and so much more bring learning vividly to life across the disciplines. The campus landscape also creates opportunities for students to serve as community scientists, reporting scientific data for the sustainability of the environment far beyond FSA. A key element of FSA's environmental program has been collaborations with community partners like East Decatur Greenway (EDG) and Georgia Tech, among many others, whose contributions have enriched the teaching and the campus in immeasurable ways.

Most recently, several groups of students from Georgia Tech worked on educational and garden projects throughout the year. It all started with a

\$30,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, awarded in July, 2018, to East Decatur Greenway, the organization that created the beautiful rain garden and green space adjacent to the Friends School campus to the south. EDG provides FSA extended grounds for outdoor learning. EDG Director Michele Ritan explained that Camilla Warren, an EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) project officer, brought the grant to Michele's attention and helped her develop a winning proposal. The grant's purpose is primarily to remove invasive plant species from the green space. (FSA students loved watching the goats that were brought in to clear kudzu earlier in the year!) In receiving the grant, EDG agreed to match the \$30,000 with an equal amount of in-kind services, including volunteer service.

That's where Georgia Tech came in. Georgia Tech requires all of its undergraduate students to take a course called *Scientific Foundations of Health*,

which is a part of the University's Serve-Learn-Sustain program, "an institutional effort to equip Georgia Tech students to learn and serve around a theme of creating sustainable communities." Instructor Teresa Snow, recognizing that today's students are "stressed and often socially isolated," uses the course to help students focus outside of themselves and do something useful for community. Again, Camilla Warren of the EPA, connected Teresa with the volunteer needs at EDG and FSA.



Leah Miller (FSA '11) working with the third grade



Young students painting stones to line garden paths.

Friends School was delighted to accommodate! Overseen by Joanna Gerber, elementary school environmental science teacher, and Dennis Bauer, middle school science teacher, the Tech students, working in small groups, participated in the following projects:

- Helped PreK4/K/first grade paint stones to line garden paths
- Created a Tree Identification booklet for the second grade
- Taught first and second graders a class on the Eleven Steps to Happiness
- Moved granite slabs to open up a path through the Circle Garden
- Painted 24 colorful signs to identify various plants
- Dug and potted canna lilies
- Helped the fifth grade environmental science class with stream monitoring
- Helped with stream clean up day

Older and younger students alike enjoyed the collaborations, and FSA's campus is the better for all of their involvement. To borrow from environmental science, just as healthy ecosystems are characterized by a complex network of interdependent organisms, environmental education at FSA and elsewhere can best be accomplished through a network of interdependent organizations who share the goal of establishing greater sustainability in today's challenging and challenged environment.

"**At our old campus** on Sams Street," remembers Joanna, "our gardens were limited to a few planter boxes." Now, after ten years in residence on Columbia Drive, the work of Joanna, Dennis and so many other teachers, staff, students, parents and community volunteers has created a campus that is alive with biodiversity, beautiful gardens and students excited about how they can make a positive impact on the natural world.

FSA wishes to thank the following Georgia Tech students for their help:

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- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Salmata Barrie | Swagath Saraogi |
| Andrew Chyong | Komal Shrivastava |
| Ross Dixon | Dillon Smith |
| Daniel Duke | Soham Sonthi |
| Jessica Jiang | Solomon Takan |
| Hannah Li | Michael Trainer |
| Leah Miller | Katie Wyers |
| Arthur Miltner | |

TEACHING COMPASSION

to Second Graders



FSA second grade teacher Jillian Minarich at the Global Launch of SEE Learning in New Delhi, India.

The Friends School of Atlanta strives to always be a dynamic laboratory of learning, enhancing time-tested Quaker pedagogy with curricula that incorporate today's best practices in and out of the classroom. To that end, second grade teacher Jillian Minarich brought a newly developed curriculum for teaching compassion to her classroom this year. The results have been striking.

As part of her professional development earlier in the year, Jillian attended a cognitive-based compassion training for adults offered through the Emory-Tibet Partnership. She caught fire with the idea that compassion can be deliberately and systematically cultivated and wanted to adapt what she learned for her young students. Emory

was a step ahead. It turned out that the Dalai Lama had joined with the university to develop a curriculum for students called SEE Learning, standing for Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning.

SEE Learning builds on the innovative work of Social Emotional Learning (SEL), which has been guiding educators in such areas as peace education and mindfulness for 40 years. SEE Learning, also brings in the element of ethics across a framework of awareness, compassion and engagement. The curriculum leads students from received knowledge to critical insight and then to embodied understanding.



Student taking a short reading break.

“**SEL tells kids** you should be nice,” explains Jillian. “SEE Learning teaches kids why they should be kind, and then helps them become kind people.” The curriculum is designed to allow students to explore their emotions, self-regulate and practice reflection. Jillian’s students, who at ages seven and eight are experiencing developmental leaps in empathy, were fascinated to learn how the brain works and to realize that when they are upset, their brains aren’t able to

make good decisions. The second graders, per the curriculum, have also taken responsibility for how to manage their own emotions with short “space breaks” of mindful breathing, reading or other resourcing techniques. These practices enable the students to come back to class more focused, less disruptive and ready to learn.

The Dalai Lama is on a mission to spread this new curriculum internationally to create “a compassionate and ethical world for all!” Jillian was able to attend the Global Launch of SEE Learning at a conference in New Delhi, India, in April. There were heads of state from around the world, secretaries of education and many educators. Jillian presented a poster of her experiences applying SEE Learning at FSA.

Friends education has long built in time for reflection as a classroom practice that enhances focus and retention of knowledge. It is a skill that is mastered over time. For many years, FSA has also employed the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching, which is based in social emotional learning. The SEE Learning curriculum is one more tool in the school’s efforts to help the children grow into their own goodness and to go out into the world with conscience, conviction and compassion.

Let Your Life Speak




SEE Learning at a Quaker School in Atlanta, GA,
USA

From Jillian’s poster presentation at the Global Launch in India.

THE QUAKER INFLUENCE

on Teaching Science

We asked five Friends School of Atlanta teachers how Quaker values influence their teaching of science and received answers unified most of all by the thoughtfulness and individuality expressed in the responses.

Joanna Gerber, Environmental Science

Teacher in Elementary School: At FSA we are encouraged not only to seek knowledge in science, but also truth. We start from where we are, aware of the influence of our individual personalities, beliefs and biases. Just as Quaker spiritual practice encourages each person to listen within for their truth to be revealed, I am allowed to look for that of God or goodness within science and bring a sense of spirit, wonder and respect for this concept into our curriculum, discussions and work.

Dennis Bauer, Middle School Teacher of Chemistry, Physics and Environmental Science:

I try to help my students participate in science rather than just explain science to them. They have many opportunities to collaborate and experiment. A guiding goal for me as a teacher is to help students understand that science impacts the world; science is not done in a vacuum. That is where Quaker values come in. Students are encouraged to reflect on what they are learning, to understand the data, to analyze for accuracy and to be mindful of their own biases as they interpret results. They also look at the implications of how science is applied in the world, such as the use of nuclear weapons, and to form thoughtful opinions. The Quaker notion of the “way opening” is also compatible with the idea that science is as always changing, adapting, growing.

John Grijak, Fourth Grade Science Teacher:

When teaching science to fourth graders, I often have them collaborate, where every member of the group has equal say, drawing on the Quaker values of equality and integrity. As a lesson in stewardship of the FSA buildings and grounds, each year we do a unit on weathering, looking

at the importance conserving resources and taking care of our campus. We also find that sometimes the simplest solution to a problem is the best starting point for testing a hypothesis or creating a design. We test the simple idea first, then elaborate. And, of course, part of science is to learn from failure. FSA creates a safe learning space to fail forward.

Fatimah Hinds, Middle School Science Teacher:

Appreciating the emphasis on diversity at FSA, I am always seeking to add diversity, equity and justice into the science curriculum. In studying natural disasters, for example, we don't just look at the impact on the environment, but also overlay maps of family wealth over maps of flood zones. This leads to deep discussion about how flooding affects more poor people than wealthy. Good science work happens in relation to a community at large. I also encourage the students to consider the impact of multiple voices on scientific observation. Are the scientists diverse? How does the culture of the scientist influence the expectations? FSA students are very adept and making those kinds of connections.

Doreen Allen, Middle School Science Teacher:

Science crosses all boundaries. Friends School students are encouraged to be open to ideas about themselves, what is in the world and what they don't know yet. The study of science at FSA is inclusive of many ideas and many dynamics. In terms of classrooms as community, there is a lot of cooperative, student-centered learning. The students really listen to one another and feel confident enough to speak their truth.

Science is just one of many disciplines FSA that encourages deep, personal thought; creates a dynamic, collaborative learning experience; and places high value on the individuality of the students ... and teachers.

ALUMINATIONS

Emily Strasser (FSA '02) Emily served as an Olive B. O'Connor Fellow in Creative Writing at Colgate University for the 2018-19 academic year. She'll be returning to Minneapolis in the fall, where she'll be teaching creative writing at the University of Minnesota. She was also awarded a McKnight Fellowship 2019-2020.



Olivia Shellman (FSA '05) Olivia just graduated from Georgia State University College of Law and will start her career as a staff attorney at the DeKalb County Public Defender this summer. She also recently got engaged to her partner, Michael, and is looking forward to planning a wedding after taking the July bar exam (fingers crossed!).

Ben Strasser (FSA '05) Ben is completing a PhD in Mathematics at the University of Minnesota (UMN) and will defend his dissertation this summer. His thesis title is, tentatively, *A Hecke Algebra Approach to p -Adic Functionals*. This work is at the intersection of number theory (the study of integers) and representation theory (the study of natural numbers). As part of his graduate assignment, he taught math courses at UMN in the whole calculus sequence as well as courses in precalculus, advanced linear algebra and proof-based mathematics. He completed a MS in Mathematics in 2016 concurrently with his PhD work.

Gabriel Leventhal-Douglas (FSA '07) Gabriel is currently a graduate student at Georgia Tech pursuing an MS in Bioinformatics (data science of biological information, primarily genomics). Prior to this he finished his BS in Psychology at Georgia State University in 2015 and worked for several years in psychiatric behavioral health. He primarily worked with teenagers with a wide range of hospitalized emotional/behavioral disorders. After some time, he became the on-site APS accredited school's high school mathematics teacher. Currently, he is about to intern for a major bioinformatics cloud computing company in San Francisco for the summer.

Hamilton Jenkins (FSA '10) Hamilton is enjoying life in New York City. He works for Accenture as a Strategy Consulting Analyst, where he helps large companies by using advanced analytic capabilities and human-centered approaches to help shape their business strategies and drive growth. His job has taken him across multiple cities in the northeast and given him the chance to work with a lot of different people from around the world.

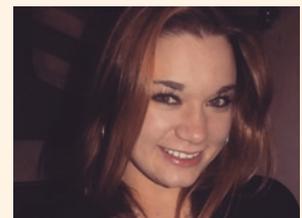
Kai Brooks (FSA '11) Kai graduated in December 2018 from the University of Georgia with a BA in International Affairs. During her studies at UGA she completed two study abroad trips that took her to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hawaii, Singapore, Malaysia, Italy, Germany, Spain, Ireland and the Czech Republic. Kai is finishing up a user experience design apprenticeship and plans to work as a product designer within a global company.

Jordan Brown (FSA '11) Jordan is graduating this June from Princeton University, majoring in Economics.

Lydia Brown (FSA '11) Lydia just graduated from Agnes Scott College with a BA in Religious Studies. She was in the Theta Alpha Kappa National Religious Studies Honor Society.

Leah Miller (FSA '11) Leah just graduated with honors from Georgia Tech, with a BS in Finance. She also delivered the Student Reflection at Commencement. Leah will leave for New York City in July to take a position as financial analyst at Black Rock Financial.

Lillian Paris (FSA '11) Lillian is living in Marietta, GA, with friends following a time of caregiving for her grandmother and nannying for two years prior. She is currently working at Georgia CORE (Center for Oncology Research) as a project assistant, where she provides operational support and helps streamline office systems. She is also helping to develop a database for patient codes with genetic mutations. Lillian is still singing, both in her church choir and at other opportunities to perform.



James Weigel (FSA '11) James will be graduating from the University of Chicago in June with a major in Russian and East European Studies and a minor in Computer Science.

Benson Gathany (FSA '13) Benson is continuing his studies at the University of Georgia through the Zell Miller Scholarship. He will be a Junior this fall and is majoring in History.

Gabe Boortz (FSA '14) Gabe just finished his first year at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC, where he is a Forestry major. This summer he is headed to Borneo to study water rights and sustainable agriculture.

Henry Averitt-Mackenzie (FSA '15) Henry just graduated high school from The Walker School and has accepted the offer of a place at University of St. Andrews, Scotland, reading Economics.

Arthur Ayers (FSA '15) Arthur just graduated from Drew Charter School and will be attending Lafayette College in Easton, PA, this fall to study Mechanical Engineering.



Qiu Qing Beidler Neiditz (FSA '15) Qiu-ee just graduated from Academe of the Oaks, where she earned the Firebird Award for excellence in academics, athletics and community spirit. Qiu-ee will attend Agnes Scott College in the fall. She is a recipient of an Elizabeth Kiss Trailblazer Scholarship. Green Class of 2023!

Karina Bidwell (FSA '15) Karina just graduated from Woodward Academy and will be attending Southern Methodist University in the fall and majoring in Accounting.

Nola Boortz (FSA '15) Nola just graduated from Decatur High School and will attend the University of Georgia this fall. Her intended major is Biology with a pre-med focus.

Leah Crider (FSA '15) Leah just graduated from Woodward Academy and will be attending Agnes Scott College in the fall.

RJ Compton (FSA '15) RJ will graduate from Cheltenham Township High School in Wyncote, PA, this spring. Before beginning college, RJ has decided to take a partial gap year to spend five months in Idaho volunteering with the Student Conservation Association at the Salmon-Challis National Forest.

Jared Druss (FSA '15) Jared just graduated from St. Pius Catholic High School. He is a National Merit Scholarship Finalist and will be attending Emory University this fall.

Scott Johnson (FSA '15) Scott just graduated from Decatur High School. He plans to attend Furman University in the fall, double majoring in Vocal Performance and Political Science. This summer he will be one of the coaches for the Venetian Swim Team and is going on a mission trip to Jamaica in July.

Connor Lisi (FSA '15) Connor just graduated from Academe of the Oaks.

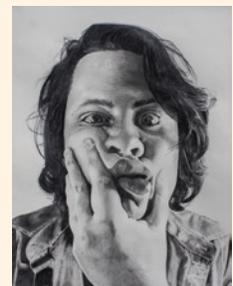
Will Rosenblatt (FSA '15) Will just graduated from Lakeside High School. He will be attending Penn State University in State College, PA, in the fall.

Alex Woodroffe (FSA '15) Alex is graduating from Saltus Grammar School in Bermuda this spring and plans to attend university in England in the fall.

Nia Brown (FSA '16) Nia is a rising senior at Atlanta International School, participating on its varsity girls' soccer team for the most recent two seasons.

Walker Moore (FSA '16) Walker just graduated from Ben Franklin Academy. He finished high school a year early on an expedited plan, so he is taking a gap year to travel with Outward Bound and to work film and photography internships. The following year he'll attend Virginia Commonwealth University' School of the Arts.

Marina Woodroffe (FSA '16) Marina is a rising senior at Decatur High School and enjoys working at Butter Creme, an ice cream shop in Decatur.



Self-portrait in pencil.



This year's Annual Appeal has a unique twist. A donor family has issued a challenge: **once we reach our \$120,000 goal, they will donate an additional \$25,000!** We are calling this the Change the World Challenge because FSA is indeed changing the world one confident, compassionate student at a time. (See Aluminations for proof!) Our \$120,000 goal is an essential line item in our budget, providing operating support to help make up the difference between tuition and the actual cost of educating each student. An additional \$25,000 provides funding for such additional support as financial aid, class trips, speakers and more.

We appreciate all who have already given to this year's Annual Appeal. At the time of printing, we had raised \$108,550 toward our goal. If you have not yet made your gift, there is still time! You can either donate online via our website at friendsschoolatlanta.org or use the enclosed envelope to send a check payable to FSA, noting Annual Appeal in the memo line. Thank you!

The Georgia Student Scholarship Tax Credit Program, Supporting Financial Aid at FSA.

If you or your business pays income taxes to the state of Georgia, you can add significantly to the financial aid FSA has to offer each year by redirecting taxes you would owe anyway to a scholarship fund designated for The Friends School of Atlanta. Working through a administrative organization called Apogee, FSA has been able to raise hundreds of thousands of additional financial aid funds over the last seven years. To participate for a 2020 tax credit or to learn more about this program, visit Apogee's website at apogee123.org. The online application process is easy. Once you are approved by the state, you pay the funds to Apogee, who distributes them to FSA. When you go to pay your 2020 state income taxes, you will have a tax credit for the amount donated. For more information, contact Nancy Bent, Director of Advancement, at nancy.bent@friendsschoolatlanta.org; 404-373-8746 x8135.

Summer Camp Program Gathering STEAM

The Friends School of Atlanta has one of the most enriching and fun summer camp programs in town, emphasizing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) curricula. This summer's offerings include Visual and Digital Arts, Innovation (Makers, Coders and Game Design), Math, Robotics, Drama, Digital Storytelling, Environmental Science and so much more! There are still some openings in select sessions! For more information and to register, visit the Summer Camp Program page of the website at friendsschoolatlanta.org. But hurry!





THE FRIENDS SCHOOL
OF ATLANTA

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SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT ART



Gabriela and Kira, 7th Grade



Katy, 7th Grade



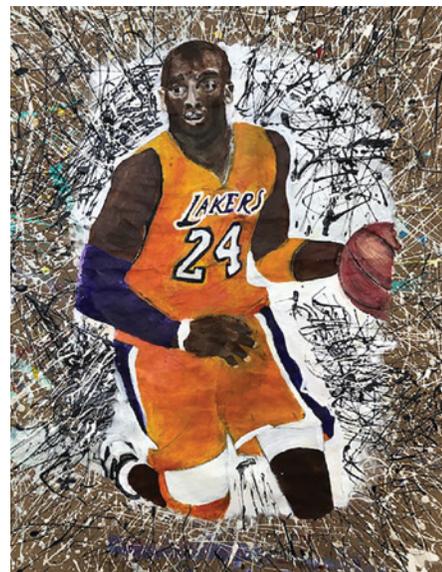
Peyton, 8th Grade

Stereotypes

By Nayan, 7th Grade

*I cannot change your views
You can only see what you think is there
That is the problem that you must overcome
The only way to know someone fully is to become
friends with them*

Inspiration for poem: Hearing 7th/8th grade social studies teacher Alex Zinnes say, "Exposure is the enemy of bigotry," in a conversation about bigotry against Muslims.



Israel, 7th Grade