

THE GAVEN STREET GAZETTE

SUMMER 2017

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TOGETHER WE GROW

BY STEVE MORRIS, HEAD OF SCHOOL



IT WAS A GREAT YEAR at 300 Gaven Street! I say that, however, fully acknowledging that it has been a complicated year for our country and the world as a whole. In a year where many felt a loss of control and backwards movement, at The San Francisco School there was a spirit of solidarity, celebration, activism and growth.

This spirit was truly inspiring and provided optimism for the future. For example, this fall, the School hosted a benefit concert to raise funds for the Nunya Academy of Music and Dance in Dzodze, Ghana. A group of hard-working SFS 6th and 7th graders, along with our music teachers and Dr. Kofi Gbolonyo, a Ghanaian musician and Orff colleague, put on a lively performance to help fulfill the dream of building the Academy in Africa. In the winter, our student-led celebration honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which featured spoken-word poetry, song and dance by students spanning 1st-8th grades, reminded us of the power of young voices. This spring, a group of Middle School students crafted another moving and insightful ceremony honoring Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. These student-driven events demonstrated compassion and appreciation for others and provided profound lessons and hope for the adults who witnessed them.

Our faculty and staff spent a lot of energy this year getting grounded in our academic program and professional learning visions. We reimagined and strengthened our school's Educational Philosophy, as you will see in the piece written by Lower School Head, Maggie Weis. We also crafted a Mathematics Philosophy statement that reflects how we believe students best learn

math and guides our instruction. We created an Instructional Leadership Team – made up of five teachers and our Division Heads that aims to ensure teacher coaching, observation and support with regard to curriculum. Looking back at 2016-2017, I am proud of how our faculty and curriculum have grown.

Much of our future growth will be guided by our new Strategic Plan that has been in development for the past year. A dedicated group of community members conducted research and interviews, collaborated and envisioned the possibilities for the School. The result is a plan entitled, *Living Our Humanitarian Promise*, which will be launched in the fall. Below is a sneak peek at the overall vision:

SFS is committed to humanitarian promise. We are extraordinary in our empathy, our relationships within our community and our regard for humanity. In this age of rapid acceleration and growing inequities, we resolve to create a strategic plan that stays focused on people, including our students, faculty, staff, families, alumni, neighbors and community partners. We embrace technology as a tool for creativity, innovation and productivity. We accept the challenge of financial stewardship and growth at the forefront of all we do while preserving our fundamental tenets of mutual respect and social justice.

I can't wait to share the plan with our community, including the priorities and initiatives that will help us achieve our goals. We are living in complicated times, and we have crafted a plan that ensures this generation of SFS students will have the necessary tools to make the world better. Have a wonderful summer!





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The Gaven Street Gazette is published two times annually by the Office of Advancement of The San Francisco School. We always welcome feedback and story ideas through this email address: advancement@sfschool.org.

Accreditation and Membership

The San Francisco School is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

SFS EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AFFIRMED

BY MAGGIE WEIS, LOWER SCHOOL HEAD

In April 2016, the California Association of Independent Schools awarded The San Francisco School a full-term, seven-year accreditation. In addition to honoring SFS with many commendations, the accreditation came with recommendations to help the School grow in those seven years. One such recommendation was:

"Noting the almost universal admiration for the school's mission statement, the committee recommends that the school develop a supplemental educational philosophy statement to bring direction and clarity to the critical area of academic expectations and programming."

When I began teaching at SFS in 1989, the guiding philosophy for teaching here was abundantly clear: Montessori Methods in the Preschool and experiential, hands-on learning in the Elementary and Middle Schools. While many of these approaches to teaching are still relevant and practiced

at SFS, there are many other principles involved in 21st Century teaching and learning that our faculty has embraced.

The task of putting our Educational Philosophy "on paper" provided an opportunity for faculty and staff to engage in generative and engaging conversations around educational philosophers, practices that apply or vary across developmental ages and stages. It also allowed us to clarify, unify and articulate our collective beliefs around how to best engage students, elicit their love of learning, and stretch their thinking beyond themselves and 300 Gaven Street.

In August 2016, we rolled up our sleeves to begin work on this Educational Philosophy Statement. First, we convened a Task Force composed of me, Carla Morris, South Class Head Teacher, Doug Goodkin, Preschool through 8th Grade Music Teacher, Talia Goodkin, 5th Grade Head Teacher, Araceli Quezada, 7th Grade Humanities Teacher, Chris Mader, Middle School Head, and Steve Morris, Head of School.

GUEST SPEAKERS AT SFS



ROSALIND
WISEMAN

The San Francisco School was proud to welcome Rosalind Wiseman, celebrated author of *Queen Bees and Wannabees* and *Masterminds and Wingmen* to campus in February. Wiseman is widely-respected for her work as a parenting educator and media spokesperson on bullying, ethical leadership, and the use of social media. The event was hosted by SPEAK, a coalition of San Francisco PreK-8 schools that have joined together to enhance parent education. This was the first event that SFS hosted as part of our SPEAK membership. We were pleased to welcome 350 attendees to the informative and engaging presentation and book signing.



Next, we reviewed our Mission Statement (what we call “the why” of SFS) and our curriculum Scope and Sequence (“the what” of SFS) which naturally led to our Educational Philosophy (“the how” of SFS). Then, we engaged the entire faculty and staff in considering the questions, “How do children learn best?” and “How does our Educational Philosophy differ from other schools?”

By December 2016, we had pared the pillars of our Educational Philosophy down to: engaged and active students, reflective learning, curiosity, risk taking, and collaboration.

Leaving the 20th Century ABCs, rote learning and “sage on the stage” approach to teaching behind, we refined our pillars for 21st Century learning. Instead, our teaching sets the stage for student immersion in the Five C’s: Curiosity, Challenge, Collaboration, Courage and Compassion. We were pleased to unveil the refined philosophy below this spring.

“Each (of us) has a special characteristic that makes us wholly ourselves...There is in the soul of a child an impenetrable secret that is gradually revealed as it develops.”

— MARIA MONTESSORI

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

At The San Francisco School, we believe students learn best when the following tenets are an integral part of their experience:

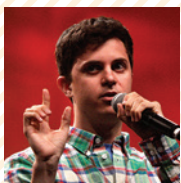
Curiosity: Students are natural explorers. We encourage students to ask meaningful questions and structure experiences for them to arrive at their own moments of discovery.

Challenge: Students take great pleasure in progressing toward mastery. We cultivate learning by designing lessons with varied and increasing complexity.

Collaboration: Students grow through working with others. We model and teach teamwork, cooperation and problem solving across grades and disciplines.

Courage: Students are empowered when they face their fears. We urge students to take risks and embrace their mistakes.

Compassion: Students are capable of astonishing kindness and empathy. We inspire students to think beyond themselves and believe that their actions make a difference.



**GEORGE
WATSKY**

Author of *How to Ruin Everything* and spoken word artist of *The Hamilton Mixtape* fame, George Watsky, visited the 7th Grade Humanities class last fall. Watsky, a San Francisco native and University High School alumnus, stopped by SFS, not only to visit his former English teacher, HOS Steve Morris, but to perform several powerful spoken word pieces for the class. This was followed by a Q&A with Steve as well as the students. 7th Grade Humanities teacher, Araceli Quezada, said, “It was amazing for students to see how the skills of written expression, poetry, and, performance all came together with this young man who was once a student just like them.”



**DR. TUNG
NGUYEN**

Dr. Tung Nguyen visited the 8th Grade and spoke with faculty and staff in May about activism. In addition to being the parent of three SFS students (Minh ‘11, Luc ‘17, Linh ‘18), Dr. Nguyen is the Chair of General Internal Medicine and Professor of Medicine at UCSF as well as Director of the Asian American Research Center on Health. Dr. Nguyen’s career has led him to be a teacher, researcher and activist. With this lens, he shared his perspective on Asian Americans’ political presence and his recent decision to resign as Chair of the President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders under

the new presidential administration. Dr. Nguyen says that his advocacy work re-energizes him. His passion certainly inspired our community. To read his speech, please visit PIVOT, an organization he founded: www.pivotnetwork.org/news/make-history

A LIFETIME OF LUNCHES AND LOVE

BY TALIA GOODKIN '98, 5TH GRADE TEACHER

I gave my students a math challenge a few weeks ago to try to figure out how many days Patty has made lunch during her time at The San Francisco School. It was an arduous problem and on some lone piece of scratch paper floating around the 5th Grade classroom, there is an answer scrawled in red Sharpie and circled twice. Somewhere around 5,000. I tried to calculate how many kids she has fed, but, alas, my mathematical capabilities can only go so far. Eleven years as a student and seven as a teacher, Patty has fed me more than 2,000 lunches. Thank you!

I remember getting to high school and sullenly eating squishy, cold PB&Js, feeling so nostalgic for SFS lunchtime. (In those early days, Middle School also ate Patty's lunches!) Of course, part of what I missed was the comfort of having a hot and home-cooked meal, but it was also the ritual: the smell wafting down the hall in the morning as we tried to guess what was cooking, the anticipation on pizza days, the lunch cart job, the setting of our tables, the milk and water pourer, the conversations with classmates, the sponging of the table and the checkers who inspected for forgotten crumbs.

The beauty of the lunch program that Patty has created is not just about the deliciousness of her food; it's about a reverence and respect for eating as a form of being together, for a shared mealtime to become a shared experience. It's something that American culture as a whole has overwhelmingly lost its ability to honor, but at The San Francisco School, thanks to Patty, meal time is still a sacred ritual.

The year after I graduated from college, I assisted Patty one day a week in the kitchen. I needed a break and a snack after just cutting all the fruit and bread and making the dressing. Patty? She never once sat down. I had to stop all conversation strands so I could count whether I had cut enough oranges for the 2nd Grade. Patty? She was giving fashion advice to one teacher, listening to a second vent about their landlord, dictating the menu to three tiny

preschoolers, all the while cutting 20 onions nonchalantly with remarkably dry eyes, calculating when the soup had to go on, and intuitively smelling to know when to take out the cornbread. She's made 5,000 lunches and I can't remember a single time when the food wasn't coming out warm from the oven just as the sound of the lunch carts' squeaky wheels turned the corner.

When the kids show up, Patty insists with a smile that they greet her and always say "please" and "thank you." She expertly manages to balance the flood of hungry teachers while also getting all the food loaded onto each cart. And after three and a half hours of on-her-feet cooking, with people constantly streaming into her workspace, she still has the energy to socialize with the staff, because Patty is the definition of a people person. She forms genuine relationships with everyone who crosses her path — not only teachers and students, but also folks like Ron, the delivery guy, Jesus, the dishwasher for 20 years, parents, and the many people, like me, who have had the pleasure of being her sous chef. I think it's fair to say that I'm not the only one who thinks of her as so much more than the school cook. She is also part mother, part therapist, part cool aunt, part design consultant, part book critic, part yoga partner, part artist, part fashion adviser. The list is rather endless.

For 50 years, the hot lunch program has been an essential part of our school character, and for almost 40 of them, it's been Patty who has kept it alive and well. Her commitment to tradition is matched by her interest in innovation, taking risks, trying out new dishes or adding new touches to old dishes. In an effort to hook kids on soup, she's deemed Tuesday "Soup Day." Kids learn the importance of division while counting the matzah balls and figuring out how many everyone gets. Math can't get much more relevant than that! Cultural kitchens have given parents the opportunity to collaborate with Patty and share their own family secrets with the whole school community.



Patty Corwin, Kitchen Co-Manager, retires after nearly 40 years at the school, 36 of them in the kitchen

Just like sharing a meal becomes a community builder for the kids, the teachers also get to experience food as a social act. We sit on stools of varying heights, the taller members occasionally bump their heads on the pots hanging above, we pass the salt, we go back for seconds, we share about our day, we connect about a possible collaboration, and we share who we are as people, which deepens our ability to work together as colleagues. Simple acts with profound effects on our sense of belonging to an engaged and vibrant community.

The San Francisco School is like *Grand Hotel*. People come. People go. Life goes on. And yet, I can't quite imagine life at school without Patty. None of us can. Patty, you have generously shared the whole of your marvelous self with dedication, passion, and spirit, and nurtured both our bodies and our souls. Thank you — we are so grateful, and you will always be loved and remembered at 300 Gaven Street.

Talia Goodkin is a San Francisco School alumna and teacher. The above is a speech that she gave at Patty's retirement party.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PEOPLE OF COLOR CONFERENCE

In December, teachers Araceli Quezada, Eugene Stampley and Josefina Bolton, and Head of School, Steve Morris, attended the 29th Annual People of Color Conference (PoCC) in Atlanta, GA. The mission of the annual conference, organized by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), is to provide a safe space for leadership, professional development and networking for people of color and their allies. This year's theme was, 'Advancing Human and Civil Rights, Fulfilling the Dream Together.'

Over the course of four days, more than 5,000 attendees attended professional development sessions and joined affinity groups. Steve presented two sessions on hiring culturally competent faculty and staff.

For our faculty and administration, this was a time to reflect, learn and reenergize. Araceli, 7th Grade Humanities teacher, attended the conference for the first time. "As a veteran teacher and person of color, I appreciated the validation that I received from the workshop attendees and



Araceli Quezada, Eugene Stampley and Josefina Bolton

speakers. It was an important time to reflect. I was able to recognize how my identity is embedded in my curriculum and how I teach it."

Eugene, 7th & 8th Grade Science teacher, attended breakout sessions on the Black Lives Matter movement and how to create safe spaces for students exploring their sexual identity. For Eugene, "The conference re-affirmed that SFS is a place that makes a space for everyone." Araceli, Eugene, Josefina and Steve expressed that they all left inspired, empowered as people of color and grew as educators.



Steve Morris and various colleagues from around the country

MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

Each spring, we honor our faculty and staff who are celebrating milestone anniversaries. We appreciate the wealth of experience, history and wisdom that they bring to The San Francisco School. Congratulations!

30



Laura Burges
3rd Grade
Head Teacher

20



Helen Mae Lee
South Class Preschool
& Kindergarten
Teacher

10



Vahlee Peters
North Class Preschool
& Kindergarten
Head Teacher



Stacy Lee
South Class Preschool
& Kindergarten
Teacher

5



Liz Curley
Learning Specialist



Jackie Ennis
Accounting, Events,
and Database
Manager

HAPPENINGS



SFS Middle School Orff Ensemble at the Benefit Concert for the Nunya Academy in Ghana, November 2016



3rd Grade Winter Play, December 2016



Grandparents & Special Friends Day, November 2016



SFS Staff & Parents at "Around the World," Auction for Tuition Assistance, March 2017



SFS Boys' Junior Varsity Basketball Team, Winners of the San Francisco Athletic League Finals, February 2017



8th Grade Shakespeare Performance, March 2017

ALUMNI NEWS SUMMER 2017



Lots of great news coming into the Advancement Office! We recently connected with **Carlos Kong '07** who, in addition to working as a freelance writer in art, literature and film, was completing a Master's degree in History of Art this spring at The Courtauld Institute of Art at University of London. Carlos will be starting a Ph.D. program in Art History at Princeton this fall. We also had the pleasure of catching up with **Sean Hurd '08** who is working as a Digital Media Associate at ESPN in Bristol, CT. Sean was first introduced to journalism during an SFS Middle School Job Shadow Day. Now, a decade later and after earning a Bachelor's degree from George Washington University, Sean is excited to be covering sports events and writing and editing online stories on the intersection of sports, race and culture.



Top: Carlos Kong '07
Bottom: Sean Hurd '08

It was great to see some familiar faces back on campus. As part of a high school project, **Matthew Kamimoto '14** and **Nathan Logan '14**, Juniors at Lick-Wilmerding, helped put the finishing touches on the new storage shed in the South Play Yard. They conceived, designed and constructed several vertical succulent planters to complement the shed's mural that SFS parent Nico Berry designed and painted with the assistance of the Elementary art students.

Several SFS alumni starred on the soccer field this fall when the Drew School's Boys Varsity Soccer team won the NCS Division Championship for the first time in the school's history. The team included four SFS alumni: **Tyler Nam '13, Sam Loeser '13, Jack Swinkels '13, and Daro Serizawa '15**. Congratulations!

We've heard that the Moog sisters have been busy! **Nina '04** is in her second year of a cinematography program in Munich. **Maia '06** recently returned from a year in Austria on a Fullbright Scholarship. **Lydia '09** is studying Mechanical Engineering at Brown University though her first love is really art. She just finished a shoe-making class. Karen Goodkin must be proud!

In other news, **Nick Burton '06** is working as a lead producer for the 49ers. **Gideon Chase '01** is a writer for *The Regular Show* on Cartoon Network. **Zachary Shedd '99** premiered his new film, *Americana*, at the SF Indie Fest in February.

Read more about Carlos and Sean online at www.sfschool.org/alumni/alumni-news

ALUMNI VISITORS

Mathew Kamimoto '14, current SFS parent Nico Berry and **Nathan Logan '14** — contributors to the new South Yard shed

Do you have news to share?
We are always interested in hearing from our SFS alumni. Let us know what's new these days!

Visit www.sfschool.org/alumni/update





S U M M E R 2 0 1 7



The
San Francisco School

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MISSION STATEMENT

The San Francisco School cultivates and celebrates the intellectual, imaginative and humanitarian promise of each student in a community that practices mutual respect, embraces diversity and inspires a passion for learning.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL

Founded in 1966, The San Francisco School is a Pre-K through Eighth Grade independent, coeducational day school. The school is an established, vibrant educational community with a multicultural enrollment of 270 students, an experienced and dedicated faculty, and supportive and involved parents. The preschool program centers on the ideas of Maria Montessori. The elementary and middle school program reflects the ideals of a progressive, student-centered approach. The school also includes an extended care program, parent education opportunities, and summer recreational activities. Suitably characterized by a parent as "an urban school with a village atmosphere," the school embraces San Francisco's ethnic, cultural and economic diversity. Our progressive approach to education encourages children to develop self-reliance, solid academic skills, integrity and a sense of social values. The school is respected for our strong academics, our vibrant community, our personal attention to students and our dynamic arts program. Our students graduate academically prepared, inquisitive, compassionate and eager for the challenges ahead.

