

The Blue Doors

The Nightingale-Bamford School Volume 18 | Issue 2 | Summer 2024



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We would like to hear from you!
Letters to the editor, story suggestions,
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Nightingale's alumnae gatherings seek to meet many purposes. For participants they provide an opportunity to connect with old friends and an earlier time in life. Our rituals aim to help.

For instance, this year the Class of 2014 took their turn with a favored Nightingale tradition. At the end of Reunion, they traveled to the Joan Stitt McMenam Library to open a letter written to a future self, ten years prior on the eve of their Commencement. Seeing the Class of 2014 opening their letters together, laughing with each other brought me back to the group of ninth graders I traveled to London with in the fall of 2009. They were so grown and also so much the same. When I got up to leave, they broke into song, singing their favorite cheer from a Nightingale Field Day. They knew all the words and they were just as effusive, and just as off-key as they were over a decade ago. It was pitch perfect.

Reunion is not the only time I had seen 2014 since they graduated. They returned in January 2019 to remember their classmate Maddy Parrasch, a transcendent spirit who left us way too early. And much more recently, many of them came back to Nightingale to be among the 900 people who gathered for the celebration of their beloved Ms. du Nouy's life.

Sophia Kiam '14, a former advisee of Ms. du Nouy spoke at the celebration. She represented her class and also our alumnae body when she said "Ms. du Nouy's legacy is tangible and it is profound. It is here in this room now, an entire generation of women who knew and were known by her. In the years when we were wondering who we might become, here was Ms. du Nouy to remind us who we already were."

Sophia did the seemingly impossible. She captured Ms. du Nouy's essence and she reminded all of us what a connection to Nightingale's people can provide. We can help each other. We can support each other within hardship, and we can provide much needed grounding even as—and perhaps especially as—life swirls.

On an institutional level, there is a sort of proof concept in alumnae gatherings. The lives that our alums lead testify to the worthiness of our existence.

Enter the Class of 1974. Also at reunion, I participated in a roundtable conversation with several members of our 50th reunion class. Julie Sogg Seymour '74, this year's most deserving alumnae service award recipient and a primary connector of her classmates, asked former Associate Head of School Mrs. Kitty Gordon to join us. Kitty was our long-serving associate head of school, but before that she was a history teacher who made a profound impact on the Class of '74. Towards the end of our hour, I asked the class what should never change about Nightingale. They were unequivocal: "The quality of the education." "The belief that teachers have in students. The high standards that they had helped me achieve more than I could have imagined."

Thank you, 2014. Thank you, 1974. Thank you, 2024, our most recent and also our 100th graduating class. Thank you, alumnae for your truth, your friendship, and your loyalty.

In short order our Kindergarten, the Class of 2037, will arrive. We have big plans for them and each one of the 13 grades who will populate our Schoolhouse on East 92nd Street. The world we share is filled with both uncertainty and opportunity, hardness and possibility. Amidst it all, I hope that all of our students can grasp what it means to be a part of our school. A school that will ask a lot of you and also be right there with you during hard times and good; a community that will see things in you that you may not even see in yourself.

Our alums will be glad to help you. In fact, they already have. Each one of those one hundred graduating classes has given us a gift, a school that is ours to help us grow; a school that is ours, for a period of time, to help grow.

Paul A. Burke,
Head of School





One for the History Books

CELEBRATING THE ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER OF LINDA FIELD

To know Nightingale is to know Linda Field. For over four decades (42 years, to be exact) Ms. Field has been an integral member of the professional community, holding numerous roles within the Schoolhouse, garnering the utmost respect and admiration of students and adults alike. It is then with deep gratitude that Nightingale celebrated her outstanding tenure and well-earned retirement at the end of this school year.

Surprisingly, Ms. Field did not initially have her sights set on education as a career path. “Growing up as a teenager in the 1970s there was a sense that women should be pursuing non-traditional career paths, and so the idea of teaching or nursing—typically thought of as fields for women—were not in my mind. I thought maybe I’d go to law school,” Ms. Field recalled. And yet how did she spend every suburban New Jersey summer in high school and college? Teaching swimming lessons at her local pool and babysitting—surrounded by children.

During her undergraduate studies at Princeton University she majored in religion, primarily interested in history and theory, all the while still toying with taking the LSAT. Upon graduation, she moved to Philadelphia and took a job as an administrative assistant at Wharton while her husband at the time finished his MBA there. Working in academia felt like the right fit and, when she asked herself what she wanted to do with her life, law school became a distant memory. She enrolled in an educational psychology

course at University of Pennsylvania, which would ultimately change the course of her life.

The young couple relocated to New York City next, and Ms. Field enrolled in Teacher’s College at Columbia in the curriculum and teaching graduate program—a masters tailored for those who had not taught before. Upon graduation, Ms. Field was certified to teach in grades K–VI and thus her job search began. Of course, this was the early 1980s, which meant typing out job inquiry letters on a typewriter and cold mailing them to independent schools throughout the city.

As luck would have it, she landed an interview at Nightingale. “I don’t actually know what happened, but the fifth grade homeroom and history teacher must have given her notice quite late, because by the time they were interviewing me, the school was in final exams. I remember touring the building and all of these children were scribbling away,” she said. Unable to give a sample lesson because of the timing, she recalled meeting Ms. Kitty Gordan, chair of the

history department, June Smith, the coordinator for Classes V and VI, and Joan McMenam, head of school, all in one day. Based on the strength of her interviews and her recommendations from student teaching, Ms. Field landed the job—a surprise to no one who has worked with her throughout the years.

Ms. Gordan recalled, “When Ms. Field began teaching at Nightingale in 1982, neither Mrs. McMenam, Mrs. Smith, nor I knew that she would become an important member of the school community for the next forty-two years. An energetic young woman with excellent credentials whose affection for the Middle School age student was palpable, she hoped to teach fourth, fifth, or sixth grade. We were looking for a fifth-grade teacher to teach alongside the legendary Margaret Thaine, and we thought that she would be perfect for the job. We were right! They were a superb team guiding the girls’ transition into the middle school world.”

Indeed they were. With no experience in independent schools or all-girls education, Ms. Field began her career at Nightingale and Ms. Thaine immediately took her under her wing. “She was by far the best mentor I could have ever had. She taught me how to be a complete teacher—and not just in the classroom—but as a shepherd of your little flock of students,” Ms. Field remembered.

Ms. Field herself would extend this same kindness to all who had the good fortune to work with her over the years, as noted by Jena Epstein, Class V dean and history faculty member.

“Her incredible kindness and her heart of gold are inspiring. This year I needed help in the morning with homeroom check-in for Class V. Ms. Field volunteered to help me check in the students every single morning. When she told me that she volunteered to do this I was extremely touched. Despite her very busy schedule, Ms. Field was willing to help out a colleague, especially at 7:45 a.m. That is what Paul [Burke] means when he says a member of the community goes ‘above and beyond.’ I will miss her intellectual curiosity, her [young adult] book recommendations, her championing every single student in the Schoolhouse, her smiles and laughter, and seeing one of my mentors and role models every day who is now a close friend,” Ms. Epstein said.

Through the years, Ms. Field taught history at every level from Class V to Class XII (with the exception of Class X). This entailed a wide variety of topics in Middle School, including but not limited to geography, ancient civilizations, American history and government, and medieval world history. Eager to broaden her experience, she also taught women’s history, world religions, and African American history electives in the Upper School but realized that, while she was more than capable to teach in that division, Middle School was really her first love.

Her impact as a history teacher is impossible to measure, her influence affecting generations of Nightingale students. One of those students, Associate Head of Lower School



“Nightingale is a stronger community because of Ms. Field because she thinks so deeply about what we need as a school. She’s always asking, ‘How can we serve the students best?’ Her endless dedication will continue to be felt long after she has left the blue doors.”
—Claire Anderson '95, Associate Head of Lower School

Claire Anderson '95, credits Ms. Field for her lifelong love of learning and commitment to being a better educator every single day.

“Ms. Field taught me American history in seventh grade and I have a distinct memory of her teaching me how a bill becomes a law. And who could forget the much loved class trip to Philadelphia that she was responsible for organizing? Being a student in her class was the first time that I remember being truly taken with a subject—so much so that I went on to study American history in college. I can confidently say that a large part of that decision was due to her teaching and my interest that was piqued in seventh grade,” Ms. Anderson recollected.

She continued, “It’s not lost on me how incredibly lucky I have been to call Ms. Field a colleague for so many years. I am deeply grateful to have been able to learn from her in so many ways—especially how to be a better educator and community member—because of the values and standards that she models so beautifully each and every day. She is selfless, thoughtful, brave, and humble. A true and inspirational educator.”

In addition to her time in the history classroom, Ms. Field also taught Class V math and Class III math, the latter of which she particularly enjoyed because of the enthusiasm of the children and the fact that many classes in the Lower School are planned together as a teaching team. This was a common theme for Ms. Field when she thought about what she was going to miss most upon retirement.

“There are a lot of things I’ve loved about being at Nightingale, but more than anything, I think the collaborative nature of the work here has been the thing that gives me the most joy. I almost always taught a class that someone else was teaching, so I was almost always planning with someone else. The years that I taught with Jane Guggenheimer and Jena Epstein were the greatest joys to meet with them regularly to plan lessons and activities for a bunch of sixth graders.”

Not surprisingly, she has also fulfilled multiple roles within the advising program, and was the assistant head of Middle School and the assistant head of Upper School.

It was as the assistant head of Middle School that she began to take on scheduling tasks. Her talent in this arena soon became obvious and she took on more and more scheduling requests, ultimately crafting the Middle and Upper School schedules and then finally all Classes K–XII.

When she first began as the director of scheduling in 1993, she was still teaching 50 percent of the time, and there were years when her children were young that she only worked as the scheduler in the Schoolhouse part-time—a flexibility she was grateful to have. Her children, who she welcomed with her current husband, Curtis, not only joined her at Nightingale as students eventually, but also as colleagues in recent years. Mickey Field '14 and Susannah Field '16 both currently work as associate teachers in the Lower School, which has been incredibly moving for Ms. Field to witness. “I have loved having my children here as adults. I think it’s so rare for a parent to be able to see their adult children in a working environment and to see them being appreciated and in their element. That’s been a special joy,” Ms. Field said.

She would fulfill both roles—teaching and scheduling—eventually stepping out of the classroom full-time in 2019. Her extraordinary and masterful command of the entire Schoolhouse and all of the individuals inside of it will be impossible to ever fully replace.

Ms. Gordan has high praise for Ms. Field’s organizational prowess, having witnessed it from the start. “For many years, she dedicated her summers to crafting the academic schedule for the forthcoming school year. It is an arduous and unsung task with a profound impact on the daily life of the school, and I witnessed her remarkable problem-solving skills in action. She explained that she enjoyed working on the schedule because it felt like solving puzzles which she liked doing. However, as the years passed and Nightingale added more to the program, the puzzle bordered on the insolvable. Her determination to succeed did not waiver! As time went by, computer programs started to assist her. However, they couldn’t fully grasp the complexities of the school like Ms. Field did, and she stayed true to her creating the schedule with pencil and paper,” Ms. Gordan said.

It is important to note that within this role, she was also known as the unofficial “Queen of Coverage”—ensuring that every activity outside of the classroom had the appropriate amount of adult presence to run efficiently and without incident. Lunch periods, study halls, recess on the roof, the list goes on...Ms. Field oversaw it all, many times stepping in herself, and always with a smile on her face.

Finally, in addition to her myriad of roles, she has also been deeply committed to realizing Nightingale’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion both in the classroom and among the professional community. Her work in this area began in 1990 when she attended the NAIS Diversity Conference at the urging of Joan McMenam and she never looked back. “It’s been hugely rewarding, sometimes upsetting, sometimes frustrating, but the school has really changed a lot in ways that I applaud in terms of our diversity,” she noted. As a member of the history department, she’s played a crucial role in evolving the curriculum to be more inclusive, less Eurocentric, and conscious of including social justice. She also served as a member of the Accountability Team and Coordinator of the White Anti-Racist Learning Spaces that grew out of the racial reckoning of 2020.

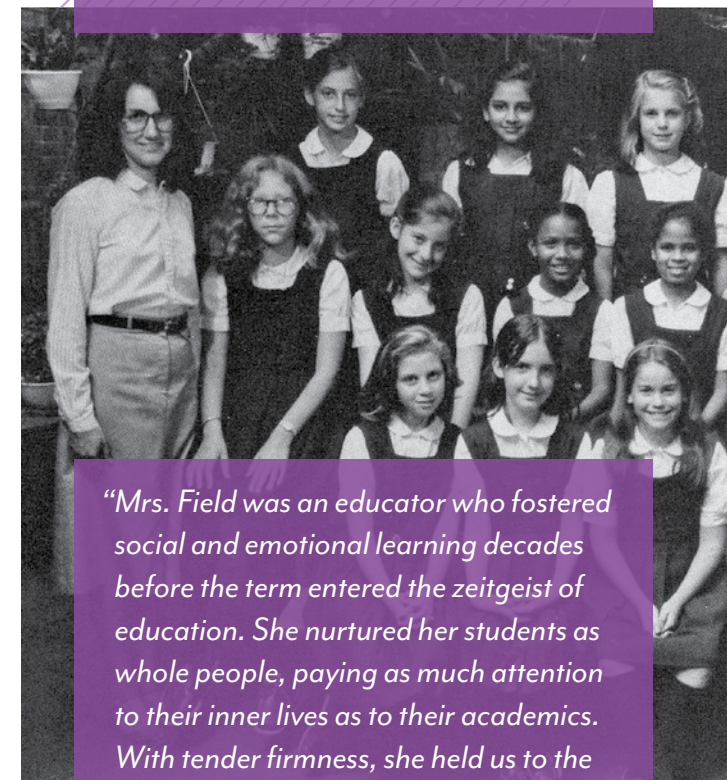
So what does retirement hold in store for Ms. Field? Right now, the future is wide open. She received valuable advice from a colleague who shared that, when her own mother retired, she told herself that she was not going to commit to anything new for an entire year. This approach feels right for Ms. Field. With this in mind, she’s looking forward to seeing where the wind takes her, discovering new hobbies, reading for hours, and relishing not having to get up quite as early as she’s had to for so many years.

“I’m practicing saying, ‘I’m just going to take some time for myself.’”

And after 42 years of giving so much of herself to so many students, colleagues, parents, alumnae, and friends, that’s exactly how it should be. •



“Ms. Field is the Mariano Rivera of our community. Time and time again, over the course of her career, she has been asked (or volunteered) to take on some new role and/or responsibility, always with her trademark sense of grace and humility. She has ‘saved’ the game countless times.”
—Allan Bikk, History Faculty



“Mrs. Field was an educator who fostered social and emotional learning decades before the term entered the zeitgeist of education. She nurtured her students as whole people, paying as much attention to their inner lives as to their academics. With tender firmness, she held us to the highest standards of social conduct. I am truly grateful to have been her student.”
—Renee Kaufman '93

LESSONS IN

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Class III's South American Summit



On the morning of April 9, Class III students excitedly led their parents into the H. Dale Hemmerdinger Auditorium for a special presentation of their capstone projects—also known as The Nightingale-Bamford School South American Institute for Language and Culture. In preparation for the summit, students in Ms. Milbourne and Ms. Peck's homeroom worked together in groups of four to five for just over a month to create a poster board containing well-researched information about their assigned South American country.

Born out of a previous project from years' past, which centered the study of United Nations member countries, Class III's new capstone project highlights specifically South American countries and allows students to develop a deeper understanding of geography, increase cultural awareness and understanding, and build cultural connections.

Reinvigorated for the Class of 2033, this year's project—now a capstone initiative—was a also way to synthesize the skills that students have been learning all year: reading, non-fiction writing, English, Spanish, research, practicing group work strategies, and to “dive into the concept of life far away; that life may be different, but it also can be very much similar around the world,” Class III Homeroom Teacher Ms. Christina Milbourne explained.

“Traditionally, social studies is often thought of as a progression from the ‘here and now’ to the ‘long ago and far away’...Now, we’re learning about the ‘right now’ but far away; really understanding the differences in culture, economy; all of the parts of what life is and how to make an impact,” Ms. Milbourne said.

Once students were placed into their work groups, they were assigned a South American country to research. Together, students were tasked with vetting online resources, digesting their research, and reporting their findings to form an overview for their poster board. Each group created single paragraph outlines about their country's culture, economy, history, government, and environment. Third graders also needed to find accompanying imagery to support their research.

"[This summit provided] a sense that their work matters to other people and [it's] a chance to celebrate as well; to see not only what they as an individual were doing, but what their whole class was doing—to see each others projects."

—Ms. Christina Milbourne, Class III Homeroom Teacher

The project was divided into three phases. In phase one, students worked together in teams of delegates to prepare for their research. They determined the needs of the project and strategized their approach. In phase two, students used trusted resources to learn what they needed to know about their country and create a presentation. In phase three, students (or "delegates") presented their work at the summit and received feedback from peers, teachers, and their families.

Delegates were also asked to report to 92nd Street in business professional attire—a key component of the summit, to help them assume their role as official delegates. Students dressed in their parents' oversized jackets, did their hair, and made sure to look their best.

"We wanted them to take this seriously and see themselves as scholars and researchers," Class III Homeroom Teacher Ms. Katie Peck shared. "Whether they're wearing a parents' oversized blazer or one of their own, they [were] going to put the effort into picking out their outfit and feeling very serious. It was very adorable."

Prior to the summit, students reviewed photos of United Nations delegates and engaged in discussions about what they were wearing and why they might wear that type of attire to conduct business. In these conversations, students learned how this formality creates an air of seriousness and commitment to one's work.

"There is a lot of theory that progressive education should be experienced and, for children, part of that experience really is the immersive quality of becoming the person who does this type of work," Ms. Milbourne explained. "In addition to professional dress, we also presented this as The Nightingale-Bamford Institute of South American Culture."

With these layers of formality established and posters created, the project culminated in April when families were invited to the summit. There, students' projects were displayed on tables throughout the auditorium. Standing next to their projects, students presented facts and findings about their country to their families and other guests. While this project allowed students to practice their public speaking



"It was fun because we got to be out of uniform, but we felt more serious and more professional because we were in professional clothes so we got to present like we were delegates of the UN."

—Zoe E. '33



Class III students peering into an assembly hall during their field trip to the United Nations in May.

and oral communications skills, this moment also provided an opportunity to deepen their Spanish speaking skills. As Spanish is the predominant language spoken in South America, delegates communicated their research in Spanish to their Class IV peers, who visited the summit with questions they asked in Spanish.

"I wanted to create an opportunity for dialogue to happen in Spanish between the presenters and the visitors. For this reason, I intentionally designed an exchange in the form of a question and answer format, to give the Class III students a way to share beyond the simple memorization of facts and beyond just a one way experience," Lower School Spanish Program Coordinator Ms. Annalise Porras said. "I wanted students who were presenting to really listen carefully to what was being asked and then respond appropriately, much more like a real life scenario. I also wanted to equip the visitors with a way to engage in Spanish and practice utilizing questions based on the country research."

When Ms. Porras began to develop the Lower School Spanish Program, it was incredibly important to her that the program be integrated, to align with what students were already learning in other subjects.

"Familiar context provides such a rich opportunity for students to understand content being presented in a new language," Ms. Porras said. "Additionally, each grade level year in LS Spanish is designed around a specific country or region of focus; in third grade, we explore various countries in South America. So, in alignment with the third grade study of the United Nations, I suggested the idea to focus our research solely on the Spanish speaking member states of the UN and thus, the capstone theme was born!"

Class III student Zoe E. shared that one of her favorite parts about the whole process was the summit, specifically because all attendees had the chance to enjoy a variety of Spanish foods, such as empanadas and plátanos.

Reflecting upon the capstone's inaugural year, Ms. Milbourne hopes that students will take away a sense of pride from this experience and that they will have developed an identity as learners, researchers, and experts; "a sense of themselves as scholars who can do serious work." Ms. Milbourne added that she was most proud of seeing the students display a new level of independence.

"They stepped into their identities as delegates," she reflected.

Following the summit, students had the opportunity to visit the United Nations headquarters, located in Midtown Manhattan. Students split into groups to visit The General Assembly Hall—where a live meeting was taking place—as well as the Kids Corridor that exhibits an actual refugee tent, UN uniforms, flags, photographs, and more. Through conversations, games, and role play, students deepened their understanding of how the UN works and continued learning about the UN's goals.

Reflecting on the capstone and summit, Class III student Elle P. '33 shared, "We showed all of the other grades that we can do challenging things—like they can." •



GAME ON!

From championships won to longstanding records broken, this academic year was witness to some outstanding performances on the court, track, and field. Here are a few spotlights on some of the most memorable highlights and achievements from our Nighthawks.

JV Basketball Completes Undefeated Season with AAIS Championship

It was a season to remember for this year's JV basketball team. After plowing through the regular season undefeated in league play, the team fought their way to the AAIS title match, where they completed the first Nightingale basketball regular season and tournament championship since 2005. "Our team's work ethic and attitude set them apart from other teams in the league. We were able to play at an intense level and be aggressive, helping us lead the league in steals and blocks, and ultimately win," Coach Saguirer, Coach Labows, and Coach Juliano said.



Varsity Indoor Track and Field Takes Home AAIS Title

For the first time in school history, Nightingale's Varsity Indoor Track and Field won the AAIS championship title. The team scored a total of 147 points, with a dozen individual athletes achieving personal records. Nighthawks placed first in the 55m hurdles, 1500m, 1000m, triple jump, high jump, 4x800, 4x400, 4x200, and set new indoor track school records in the 4x200 and 4x800. Varsity runners also placed third in the 55m hurdles, 600m, 3000m, and long jump.



Varsity Indoor Track and Field Finishes Second at New York State Association of Independent Schools Championship Meet

Following the AAIS Championship, Nightingale's top varsity indoor track athletes competed at the NYSAIS Championship Meet, earning a second place finish overall. Junior Jada C.'s 5'2" jump height won the high jump event, and sophomore Ashi B.'s times of 4:48.17 and 3:04.68 won the 1500m and 1000m races respectively. The relay team of Amehlia A. '25, Ashi B. '26, McLane B. '28, and Vivian Y. '26 earned a first place finish in the 4x400m relay with a time of 4:13.47.



Coaches Explore "Winning with Words"

This year, a number of Nightingale coaches participated in a professional development opportunity focused on the concept that elevating team communication skills can offer unique competitive advantages. Taught by "The Coaches' Coach" Betsy Butterick, the course outlined a blueprint to better connect with student-athletes while increasing accountability, minimizing complaints, and improving the quality of their experience.



Track & Field Records Broken

It has been an exceptional spring season for Nightingale Track and Field. Sophomore Kardene A. recently set two new Nightingale records: 12.69 seconds in the 100m and 26.0 seconds in the 200m. In addition, Kardene, Amehlia A. '25, Jada C. '25, and Ellie K. '25 also broke the school record for the 4x100 relay with a time of 51.43 seconds.

Jada C. '25 Jumps to a Second Place Finish at the Nike Indoor Nationals

Congratulations to Jada C. on a personal record 5'3" high jump at this year's Nike Indoor Nationals. The jump earned her second place in the annual competition. Held at The Armory Track & Field Center, the Nike Indoor Nationals is the second of a trifecta of National Championships that provide a unique opportunity for students to compete against the nation's best athletes in three of the most historic venues in the world.



Varsity Squash Competes in U.S. Nationals

For the first time in Nightingale's storied history, the varsity squash team traveled to the University of Pennsylvania to compete in this year's U.S. High School Squash Nationals. Led by team captains Jiya K. and Olivia Y., eight of the 13 Nighthawk teammates battled against some of the nation's best squash athletes.



Inaugural Spring Weekend Basketball Clinic a Success

Nightingale's basketball coaches hosted an inaugural spring weekend basketball clinic geared towards Lower School students. With 40 students participating over a six week period, students were taught the basics of ball handling, shooting, defense, and teamwork. The clinic focused on instilling a genuine love for the game of basketball and a sense of community among our youngest athletes.



OUT OF THE CLASSROOM AND INTO THE FIELD



A key component of the Nightingale experience is expanding student learning beyond the walls of the Schoolhouse on 92nd Street. Field trips begin right from the start in Kindergarten and run steadily through every grade, all the way through Class XII. Throughout the year, students may travel to nearby sites such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art or the American Museum of Natural History, but also to international destinations such as Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, or London. With every step that students take beyond the blue doors, they immerse themselves in the wider world and experience hands-on learning in a way that enriches their work in the classroom and educates them as purposeful citizens.

For the science department, incorporating field trips—or field studies—into the curriculum is especially relevant as there are certain areas of study that require a deeper level of understanding than a traditional lab or classroom setting can provide.

Chair of the Science Department Mary Beth Spina, PhD, further explains: “Incorporating field studies into any science program enhances its effectiveness. Providing students with opportunities to learn beyond the confines of the classroom enriches their educational journey. Moreover, experiencing real-world applications of theoretical concepts they’ve studied brings those lessons to life. Field studies also serve to highlight the significance of our planet’s precious resources and the disparities in access to them. Through firsthand exploration, students gain a deeper understanding of these crucial issues.”

This emphasis on learning in the field ultimately served as the foundation of the Middle School Costa Rica Field Studies program.

In the 2009–2010 school year, the Independent Science Research Program (ISRP) in the Upper School had just expanded to include

Biotechnology Summer Training, which requires students to participate in primary science research for six to eight weeks during the summer between Class XI and XII. With that addition to the curriculum, the science department began to consider what was possible for younger grades.

Nikki Vivion, science faculty and director of strategic initiatives, took the lead on launching and leading this new program for Middle School students. She recalled, “We realized that the Middle School was a logical next step to build and solidify authentic interest in the sciences and to keep more students ‘in the science pipeline.’ Developmentally, field work made much more sense than lab work for Middle Schoolers, so we started there.”

And thus the Costa Rica Field Studies program was born.

“My hope is that every student who participates in this program leaves with a deeper appreciation for the natural world, an understanding of the cultural significance of landscapes, and a commitment to environmental stewardship. By blending scientific inquiry with cultural education, students are encouraged to become thoughtful, informed, and responsible global citizens.”

—Nicole Seibert, Science Faculty



“Costa Rica was an ideal place to launch the program. Logistically, Costa Rica is relatively easy to travel to and around, is generally safe, has fresh and delicious food readily available, and has high-quality medical care. Substantively, it is rich with biodiversity and volcanic formations. Simply waking up and walking around the lodge grounds provided opportunities for citizen science, as a troop of howler monkeys acted as our pre-dawn wake-up call each morning, and we followed our amazing breakfast of gallo pinto and the freshest fruit juices with birding in the surrounding rainforest led by an expert naturalist guide,” Ms. Vivion shared.



“Everyday we learned about a new lesson topic. One day we were learning about mycology, the study of mushrooms, and our activity that day was to make our own paper out of mushrooms and cardboard. Because Eleuthera is a small island, the resources they need have to be shipped from other parts of the world. These shipments come in cardboard boxes, and because the Island School’s mission is to live sustainably, instead of cutting down trees to make paper, they can use the cardboard and mushrooms to make paper. This is not only used to make regular paper but also on a larger level, panels for houses!”

—Layah M. '28

Participating in the Costa Rica Field Studies program was much more than just the time spent in Costa Rica though—it was essentially taking an additional class. From the start, interested students in Classes VII and VIII had to apply to the program and if accepted, take on that extra responsibility. A successful Costa Rica Field Studies candidate would have a strong interest in science, the maturity to manage extended overnight travel, a sense of adventure, and a consistent academic performance.

Approximately 15–20 students would be selected to participate and they would attend meetings with their field studies teachers after school or during the Clubs and Enrichment periods and conduct independent library research. The goal was to prepare them to conduct scientific research “in the field” from start to finish—constructing thoroughly

researched field guides ahead of time and then sharing their knowledge with classmates upon arrival at their destination.

“One of the most rewarding parts was observing students first identify their researched species on the trip and excitedly run over to a giant tree and begin telling us about its natural history,” Ms. Vivion said.

In 2013, Nicole Seibert, science faculty member, co-lead the trip, eventually taking over the leadership of the program in 2015–2016. It was at this point that she saw even more possibilities for growth. Whereas the Costa Rica Field Studies program mainly focused on biology and ecology, there was so much more of the scientific world to explore. She was ready to include geology, volcanism, astronomy, and even a bit of archaeology so that “students with interests in other disciplines of science the same opportunity to conduct field observations and research,” Ms. Seibert noted.

She continued, “Overall, leading these trips is a deeply fulfilling experience that strengthens my commitment

to education, environmental sustainability, and cultural understanding. It provides invaluable insights that shape my approach to teaching and reinforces the importance of fostering a holistic, inclusive, and experiential learning environment for my students.”

This expansion gave way to the first trip to the American Southwest as the Environmental Science Field Studies program was officially introduced. This inaugural adventure included excursions to study desert ecology (flora and fauna) and depositional and erosional processes that shape landscapes. Students ventured to Red Rock Canyon, Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, Horseshoe Canyon, Antelope Canyon, and of course the Grand Canyon. This excursion was such a success that the science department decided to begin alternating years with an Environmental Science Field Studies program and a Costa Rica Field Studies program.

The following years brought students back to Costa Rica in 2018 and then to Iceland in 2019.

The Iceland trip was unique in many respects because it combined the study of science and society. Here, they studied the country’s diverse terrain—hiking across the Sólheimajökull

Glacier and learning about the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which is the boundary of the North American and the Eurasian tectonic plate margins. But they also studied the relationship between the government, the economy, and society.

Ms. Seibert recalled, “The trip to Iceland was not only a geological marvel, but also provided students with the chance to delve into the Icelandic language, its vibrant culture, and unique species like the Icelandic horse. Inspired by this experience, we have continued to incorporate the exploration of diverse peoples, languages, and cultures in all future trips.”

“I was interested in applying to the ESFS program because the topics that we would be learning about in the Bahamas were fascinating to me. Since I was a little girl, I have always wanted to go into a profession related to helping the environment and learning more about how to do so. I thought this trip would show me what I would be doing in the future and give me a head start on the topic.”

—Aima W. '28



Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic would bring all travel to a halt in 2020, but the program was revived in the spring of 2023 with Flagstaff, Arizona as the destination. In this instance, the trip aligned very closely with the current Class VII and Class VIII science curriculum. In these Middle School years, students take a two-part course taught over two years titled “Sustainable World” which focuses on exploring the world through the three lenses of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental responsibility.

With this curriculum as the backbone, the Arizona ESFS program investigated the impacts of climate change, irrigation and water scarcity, and indigenous land rights. Hands-on highlights in this trip included a visit to the Snowbowl recreational area in Flagstaff on Mt. Humphry’s. Here, they learned about a case brought by the indigenous Hopi peoples that declares that all land is sacred and therefore the use of reclaimed or “impure” water to make snow for skiing goes against their beliefs. Although the Hopi lost this case in 2018 in the Arizona courts, the debate continues to this day. They also visited Montezuma Castle National Monument to learn about indigenous cultures using archaeological evidence. Their trip concluded with a night visit to Lowell Observatory where students were able to stargaze using various large telescopes.

Eden J. ’27 traveled to Arizona during her Class VIII year and recalled, “I had the best time on the trip to Arizona. We went to so many amazing locations, my favorite being the Grand Canyon. I loved being with my friends and making new friends with the grade below me. I also learned how important taking care of our environment is, because I got to see the impact we have on it firsthand. It was a once in a lifetime experience and I am so glad I went!”

“Being in the Bahamas was a memorable experience, which was made even more special by the bonds formed with other students who shared my passion for experiential learning. I will never forget laying on the beach with my science teachers and talking about what new information we would bring back to the city and share with our friends while also being entrenched in discussions about what we had just researched.”

—Emme S. ’28

In January of 2024, the destination would change again as the ESFS program journeyed to The Island School located on the beautiful island of Eleuthera in The Bahamas. In this location, the main points of study were coral reef ecology, shark research and conservation, mycology, aquaponics, island sustainability, and the impact of climate change and pollution on the world’s oceans. Students spent time in the classroom every day—whether that be a physical building or the ocean—and also had time to snorkel, cliff jump, and bike around the campus.

The Island School had been on Nightingale’s radar as Upper School students had participated in a program there in previous years. Seeking a different experience at a different time of year (Arizona had taken place in June of 2023), Danielle Coggin, science faculty member and ESFS co-leader, selected The Island School because she was eager for students to have an immersive experience living and learning in a sustainable community.

“I like that it is so vastly different from our everyday life here in New York, and poses new challenges for them. I think most importantly they understand their impact as a consumer, decision maker, and leader,” Ms. Coggin offered.

Swimming with and researching the sharks left a lasting impact on Aima W. ’28, as she shared that these moments were true highlights of the experience and have continued to stick with her moving forward.

“We got to see three sharks: one bull shark, and two nurse sharks. For most of the year, nurse sharks live in the marina. When temperatures rise in the spring and summer bull sharks start to come in to seek food. We got to throw fish into the water and see if the more aggressive bull sharks would cause the nurse sharks to get more aggressive now that they were competing for food. We wrote down our observations and later discussed more about them.”

Aima continued, “This was my favorite experience because it sparked my passion for bringing awareness to sharks and why we should protect them. One of the researchers told us about a product commonly used in skin care called squalene, which is taken from a shark’s liver. Now anytime my friends or I purchase new skincare products I always tell them ‘Make sure it does not have squalene.’ Shark conservation is now very important to me and I am always teaching people about why we should protect them.”

Aima wasn’t the only one who found herself altering her behavior post-trip, as Emme S. ’28 also had a life-changing experience.

She shared, “Learning and implementing sustainability and conservation in our daily life while living on the island was a challenge at first. For example, the tap and shower water came from the rainfall and were heated by the solar panels. Therefore, we had to be conscious about the time of day we used the water, as well as how often. We had to be thoughtful about how to be conscious of conservation at all times. We also used mostly recyclable products and items that we had to bring home to dispose of. This had a profound impact on my behaviors and I now no longer use or buy single-use plastics.”

Another aspect of the ESFS experience, in addition to the scientific knowledge acquired, is the commitment to nudging students out of their comfort zone. Whether



it be getting brand new boots covered in mud, experiencing days that start earlier and end later than they do in New York City, trying new foods, or the ups and downs of communal living, students are encouraged to lean into these new experiences, even if they don’t quite enjoy them at first. Ultimately though, these trips serve to build incredibly strong bonds between the participants, as Layah M. ’28 can attest to:

“I always hope to remember the friendships, lessons, and memories I made in the Bahamas...Just like last year, it was my favorite part of the year, and I felt that I learned and bonded with my roommates even more than I did in Arizona. I am so excited that the ESFS program is continuing to travel to the Bahamas and I hope the upcoming VIIs and VIIs have the same amazing experience I did,” she said.

As the years pass and our world continues to face new and different challenges, there is no denying that humanity has a shared responsibility to protect our resources and must come together to ensure a sustainable future for all. The Middle School students who participate in the ESFS programs understand this intimately and there are no signs of slowing down.

“Middle School students inherently possess a curiosity about the world, making this initiative a valuable tool for nurturing their interest in science. We remain committed to leveraging this opportunity to inspire curiosity among our students, fostering their dedication to improving the world, and instilling in them a lifelong passion for learning,” Dr. Spina remarked.

A better tomorrow is possible and Nightingale Middle School scientists are ready to lead the way. ●





Remembering Claire du Nouy *Luminary of Learning & Laughter*

Ms. Claire du Nouy, an extraordinary leader, educator, and colleague who dedicated over two decades of her career to the Nightingale community, died on January 21, 2024. Ms. du Nouy was serving as both Nightingale's associate head of school and the head of Middle School. Her death followed a courageous and private four year battle with cancer. She was 50.

"Claire devoted a boundless energy to Nightingale. There was always work to do, faculty to love, and students to embrace. She moved from one task to the next with unwavering dedication. In every instance, with the child at the center. In *every* instance," said Head of School Paul A. Burke.

"Given her irreverence and irrepressible wit, stories of Claire's mischief should be shared far and wide. And yet, still for me, her humor was merely the outgrowth of her brilliance. The most intuitive educator I have ever known. She could spend twenty minutes catching up with you about your family pet because in the next five she would cut through the complexity of the Nightingale issue on the table and then move towards a solution and an action plan. With her there was always action. And it was always brilliant. For over twenty years she chose to shine her brilliant light on us every day, even—as we all know now—under the most challenging circumstances."

Claire Lecomte du Nouy was born in Manhattan on March 2, 1973. She attended The United Nations International School and the Fleming School prior to enrolling in The Spence School for fourth grade, where she would remain through her high school graduation in 1991. A proud graduate of Swarthmore College, Ms. du Nouy furthered her academic pursuits with a Master of Arts in developmental psychology from Columbia University, Teachers College.

After an initial teaching stint at York Prep, Ms. du Nouy's journey at Nightingale began in 1997. She joined the school as a member of the modern languages faculty, spearheading the development of the French program for Class V and Class VI. Dorothy Hutcheson, Nightingale's former head of school who first hired Ms. du Nouy, expressed the privilege it was to have witnessed her—from near and afar—grow from a high-spirited middle school French teacher into an extremely talented and beloved school leader.

"In the first few months of watching Claire teach French to exuberant and exasperating fifth and sixth graders, I knew she had 'it.' It is that rare ability to enter their world with humor and joy to inspire them to love school and to embrace the language and culture that was part of her DNA. Along the way, she never lost her 'it,' and I am grateful for what she gave to innumerable Nightingale girls, my daughter Holly '11, and to me."

Ms. du Nouy continued to teach French in both Middle School and Upper School until 2002, when she briefly departed Nightingale to run the Oxbridge summer program in Paris and to oversee Middle and Upper School admissions at Marymount.

"She taught French with enthusiasm and flair," reflected Kitty Gordan, retired assistant head who served Nightingale in multiple capacities for more than four decades. "I admired her unwavering dedication to the girls and her high standards, which were firmly rooted in her sharp intellect and insightful comprehension of human nature. She consistently bridged the divide between younger and more seasoned faculty members, and everyone appreciated her sense of humor and boundless enthusiasm."



"Ms. du Nouy's legacy is tangible and it is profound. It is here in this room now: an entire generation of women who knew her and were known by her. In the years we were wondering who we might become, there was Ms. du Nouy to show us who we already were. It is rare and lasting to have been given a door into her magical, mischievous, and brilliant inner world. Her sense of wonder as bright as it was contagious, and she has shown us even now in her memory that there is still so much joy bursting in the places we have forgotten to look."

—Sophia Kiam '14



Ms. du Nouy will be remembered as...

"...a hilarious delight. And more than being entertaining, she gave us all the permission to take ourselves a little less seriously, to find more joy in the everyday, and to be a little more free. She was also a tremendously wise and compassionate educator and administrator, who served as a role model and inspiration for me."

AMY NICHOLS, FORMER STAFF

“Ms. du Nouy was not just an exceptional head of middle school, associate head of school, and French teacher. She was also an unwavering source of joy, inspiration, and zealous energy. These experiences that I had with Ms. du Nouy were unique to me, but the spirit that she approached them with were universal in how she treated all students. She was truly the heart of Nightingale and she made Nightingale feel like home. I’m everlastingly grateful that I had the opportunity to laugh with her, talk with her, and—above all—learn and grow from her. She was truly one of a kind.”

—Sasha H. '24



Ms. du Nouy will be remembered as...

“...incredibly cool. But she was never intimidating, never aloof, and never held herself above anyone. I learned everything I needed to know from interacting with her warmth, her intelligence, her sense of humor, her delightful weirdness, and her ability to relate to people in a way that made them feel seen. She was such an amazing example to me of the person I could become, and I genuinely believe I made it through all of the discomfort of being a teenage girl trying to figure herself out because of Ms. du Nouy.”

RIDLEY ROCHELLE '15

During the summer of 2020, Ms. du Nouy’s associate head of school responsibilities became her exclusive focus as she navigated Nightingale through the COVID-19 pandemic and began charting the academic roadmap for the school’s second century. Her vision for Nightingale, her collaboration with faculty, and her support for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives demonstrated an unwavering commitment to educational excellence.

For Johara Sealy, assistant head for diversity and equity, Ms. du Nouy will be remembered for her invitational nature that cultivated space for a more loving community. “Claire believed wholeheartedly that, in her words, ‘all of our students deserve a curriculum that evolves as they do, one that is sensitive to the world around them.’ Her leadership and commitment to equity and justice were rooted in an ethic of joy: joy in building relationships and maintaining critical connections; joy in committing to the process of learning and unlearning; and joy through collaborative action.”

Ms. du Nouy was also firmly committed to “inspire girls to go beyond barriers”—a signature phrase from Nightingale’s mission statement that she helped school leadership define in 2017. The greatest gift

Fortunately for Nightingale, Ms. du Nouy’s time away from 92nd Street was brief. She returned to the Schoolhouse in 2006, assuming the role of Upper School dean of students, a position she held until becoming the head of Middle School in 2014. During her tenure in this role, Nightingale’s Middle School truly became a destination of its own, where her leadership celebrated intellectual curiosity, the joy of discovery, and the excitement of taking risks.

“Claire infused boundless energy, an innovative spirit, and humor into every facet of Middle School life,” reflected Head of Lower School Rebecca J. Urciuoli, PhD, who also co-led the Middle School alongside Ms. du Nouy during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Dr. Urciuoli described Ms. du Nouy as a force of creativity who could turn visionary ideas into reality. “She inspired teachers to create engaging and innovative minimester programs. She loved elaborate surprises. She wanted Middle School to be a time of exploration for both students and teachers. More than anything, she was committed to making sure school stayed fun. Her infectious passion for Nightingale translated into a symphony of joy that echoed through every hallway.”

In 2017, Ms. du Nouy extended her leadership responsibilities again, this time adding associate head of school to her title. In that capacity, her attention turned towards stewarding the overall academic curriculum, providing faculty leadership and mentoring, and managing the processes by which instruction was administered to students in every division.

we can give our students,’ Ms. du Nouy often said, ‘is an education that remains as relevant throughout their lives as it is right now.’

Panayotes Dakouras, head of Nightingale’s Classics department, described Ms. du Nouy as a visionary and innovative educator who undeniably shaped Nightingale. “Claire could look at the big picture as well as reflect on the most minute details. Bold, wickedly funny, and irreverent, but always with caring and compassion, sage advice, and a pragmatic approach to problem solving for the benefit of every constituent of the Nightingale community.”

This past fall, Ms. du Nouy transitioned back to her dual roles. At the time, she expressed pure delight in returning to lead the Middle School, emphasizing the unique and transformative nature of these formative years.

“Middle Schoolers navigate what I think of as some of the funnest, quirkiest, smartest, and most appealing years of a child’s life,” she reflected in a letter to families last spring. “We know that during these years, a student’s joy of learning grows in harmony with inspired confidence and an emerging independence.” Her commitment to meeting the diverse needs of students in Class V through Class VIII was at the heart of a new Middle School leadership structure she introduced this fall, which emphasizes an authentic and supportive environment for every student.

Ms. du Nouy’s extraordinary impact extended well beyond the blue doors, having profoundly influenced the lives of countless students and colleagues, both past and present. For many alumnae, including Sophia Kiam '14, Ms. du Nouy continued to be a guiding presence and a source of inspiration and wisdom that endured beyond the classroom.



“We talked about everything. She was brave and she was honest, and I could be too around her. She held me to high standards. She extended empathy without pity,” said Sophia, reflecting on the deep connection they shared.

“Ms. du Nouy gave great advice, but more than any specific wisdom was a complete depth of understanding. She cut through formality and artifice immediately with her sharp humor, and got to the heart of what really mattered. When language failed,



Ms. du Nouy will be remembered as...

“...a beautiful soul and an extraordinarily committed educator.”

MICHELE BALFOUR NATHOO P'19

“...that unique type of person that enlightens your day just by exchanging a hello with you.”

KIKI AND LUIS VARGAS P'31 P'33

“...an irreplaceable, one-of-a-kind spirit—there for our girls in ways like no other.”

PAM MICHAELCHECK P'98 P'03 P'11

humor filled the gaps. She recognized and delighted in the absurdity and strangeness of life. We laughed together for hours. Joy was everywhere. Our lives were sacred. Other people were ridiculous. So were we. She showed me that irreverence and respect are not opposites, but twin forces in the expression of care, in the expression of love."

Beyond her professional endeavors, Ms. du Nouy found joy in family. She beamed with pride when sharing stories of her mother, Patricia, her husband, Eric, and their children, Lucy and Sebastian. She volunteered as a crisis counselor for Crisis Text Line, a nonprofit organization that provides mental health support and crisis intervention. She proudly ran two marathons, loved Broadway musicals, and had an uncanny ability to weave joy into every encounter, effortlessly putting a smile on the faces of those around her.

"Claire was rarer than rare, and larger than life. It's impossible to imagine this world without her," said Andrea Kassar, head of school at Westridge School and former head of Nightingale's Upper School. "She was unique in her strength, brilliance, and inspiration. She was a friend so profoundly connected to my core. It's an honor—a true privilege—to have shared a deep bond of friendship with her. Claire's love for us all was a gift."

Indeed, Ms. du Nouy left an indelible mark on Nightingale and all who knew her. At a school that strives for every student to be known, we will all be forever grateful for knowing Ms. du Nouy: grateful for her joy, grateful for her wisdom, and grateful for the warmth she brought to our lives every day.

"Claire's legacy is ours to live. Her legacy belongs and lives in each of us—there is work she would want us to do; which there is, after all, always work to do and lives to lead on behalf of others," added Mr. Burke.

"My great Nightingale hope in this impossibly sad moment is that we can all somehow see in Claire the true meaning of what it means to inspire others to go beyond barriers. We often talk about our mission. She lived it every day, on full display, for all to see." •



"Claire always found a way to connect and to empathize with others. She found ways to share a story—personal or otherwise—that made the person with whom she was speaking feel seen and heard. Claire knew that stories created community and were the only way to truly see each other. Great leaders have the ability to nurture human connection. Through her stories, whether she knew it or not, she gave sustenance and strength to all, and she never let me forget that I was not alone."
—Johara Sealy, Assistant Head of School for Diversity and Equity



Ms. du Nouy will be remembered as...

"...my beloved French teacher from fourth grade ('97-'98) through eighth grade ('01-'02), and one of my best and all-time favorite teachers throughout all my years of schooling. I will forever remember her as an incredibly engaging, entertaining, warm, fun, and patient teacher, who cared deeply about her students and went above and beyond for us."

ALEXANDRA JIGA '06

The Claire du Nouy Fund for Joy in Middle School Leadership

The Claire du Nouy Fund for Joy in Middle School Leadership is an endowed fund established to preserve the philosophical approach to learning that Ms. du Nouy espoused her entire career—that joy is inextricable from the most effective teaching—and help Nightingale acquire, nurture, and retain outstanding Middle School leadership who are able to continue her legacy.

An extraordinary leader, educator, and colleague, Ms. du Nouy served in a variety of roles at Nightingale: a member of the modern languages faculty, Upper School dean of students, head of Middle School, and associate head of school. Ms. du Nouy had a deep love of the Middle School—years during which she said "a student's joy of learning grows in harmony with inspired confidence and an emerging independence." Under her transformative leadership, Nightingale's Middle School became a destination of its own, celebrating intellectual curiosity, the joy of discovery, and the excitement of taking risks.

If you would like to discuss ways in which you can support this fund, scan the QR code below or contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at giving@nightingale.org or (212) 933-6505.



A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

CLAIRE *du Nouy*



On April 14, the extended Nightingale community gathered at The 92nd Street Y alongside friends from the Spence, Allen-Stevenson, and Grace Church communities to celebrate the life of Ms. du Nouy. In front of a theater filled to capacity, Nightingale students, alumnae, and professional community members shared memories and gratitude for a most extraordinary teacher, colleague, and friend.

To view a recording of the celebration, visit nightingale.org/cdn or scan the QR code above.



Charting a Path in LEADERSHIP

Class V–VIII students go the extra mile to develop skills and gain experience in the Nighthawk Leaders Club.

Three years ago, former Head of Middle School Ms. Amanda Goodwin charged all Middle School professional community members to embark on a “dream project.” This initiative encouraged staff members to reimagine aspects of their roles at Nightingale and pursue projects aligned with the school’s missions, values, and goals.

Born out of her own elementary school experience, PE/Athletics Faculty Coach Michelle Cocchiaro envisioned a space for Middle School students to gain leadership experience in an athletic environment through the creation of the Nighthawk Leaders Club.

“It was important to me to tailor this club specifically for younger Middle School students because this is a pivotal time in their development,” Coach Cocchiaro explained. “By engaging them in leadership roles within an athletic setting, we tap into their natural energy, enthusiasm, and love for physical activity. It’s not just about fostering leadership skills; it’s about creating an environment where they feel empowered to make a difference while having fun.”

Two times per cycle, Class V–VIII Nighthawk Leaders will journey up to the seventh floor gym to assist in Lower School PE classes. Taking advantage of any availability during community time, enrichment, advisory, or study, students will spend time with younger Nighthawks by leading activities, providing peer support, promoting physical activity, and modeling healthy behaviors.

“One of the best things about being a K–12 school is that we have opportunities across ages and grades and divisions for students to get to know each other in a myriad of ways,” Head of Lower Middle School Ms. Rebecca Oshins said. “The Nighthawk Leaders Club allows our Middle School students to embrace being leaders for younger students. They practice time management, communication skills, and empathy for younger students.

For the Middle School kids, it’s a chance to be the oldest kids in the room and demonstrate what being a Nighthawk looks like. For the younger kids, it’s an opportunity to see what their future holds. It’s a really special and meaningful program.”

Outside of their assistance in Lower School PE classes, Nighthawk Leaders meet once a cycle to coordinate upcoming schedules with the PE department and teachers, discuss classroom feedback, work on conflict resolution, outline a Middle School assembly, and create inspiring bulletin boards for the sixth and seventh floors.

Each year, all Middle School students are welcome to apply for the Nighthawk Leaders Club. Since the club’s creation in January 2022, its membership has nearly doubled. Interested students must fill out an application form where they explain, in detail, why they want to be part of the club, outline their best leadership qualities, share what sports they play, and explain how they can make a difference, and why they are a strong applicant. The application also includes a video submission portion where students must explain what being a leader means to them.

Exceptional Leaders—those who have been part of the club the longest—earn the distinction as group mentors. This past school year, Lyla K. ’29, Grace K. ’29, and Olivia T. ’29 served in this capacity.

“It is important to cultivate leadership skills in Middle School because these are traits we will have moving forward for the rest of our lives,” Exceptional Leader Olivia T. reflected. “We can only grow once our leadership journey begins, so it’s good to start this growth early. You also learn from your mistakes, so if you begin learning in Middle School, it will help us deal with more complicated situations in the future. We will know how to communicate and cooperate with others, a key thing involved with being a leader.”

Fellow club member Adelaide C. ’30 shared that since joining the club two years ago, she has become more responsible, developed quicker decision-making skills, and gained greater confidence in public speaking. “Being a leader takes courage and responsibility,” Adelaide said.

This year, Nighthawk Leaders Club students hosted an assembly for their peers in honor of International Women’s Day titled, “Fearless Leaders: Charting Our Path in Leadership,” where they highlighted several female trailblazers and their impact, such as Linda Caicedo, Amanda Gorman, Helen Keller, Taylor Swift, Kelly Yang, and Malala Yousafzai. They also shared powerful quotes from female leaders, discussed why philanthropy is a key leadership characteristic, and highlighted qualities that exemplify leadership, including resilience, confidence, communication, flexibility, and bravery.

“The goal is to build a culture of respect and empowerment,” Coach Cocchiaro said. “Their dedication to celebrating diversity and speaking up for fairness sets a strong example for everyone and shows the power and capabilities of young leaders.”

Stella C. ’31, who joined the Nighthawk Leaders Club last fall, shared that one of her fondest memories as a Nighthawk Leader was this particular assembly—in addition to the ice cream party that followed in celebration of their hard work.

“I’ve become better at projecting my voice,” Stella said, reflecting on her first year.

Looking ahead, Coach Cocchiaro hopes that the club will continue to grow and inspire more young leaders to make a positive impact.

“I want it to be a vital part of our school’s culture, where leadership is natural. I hope it reaches students of all backgrounds and interests and evolves with their needs,” Coach Cocchiaro shared. “Ultimately, I want it to be a source of inspiration, empowering students to lead and serve, and creating a community where everyone can thrive.” •

“I have learned how to keep my cool when presented with difficult situations. I’ve learned how to take control of my actions, and to always put my best foot forward. I’ve also learned that being a leader means listening to everyone’s ideas, and having empathy for others.”

—Olivia T. ’29



“I’ve learned what being a leader really is: setting a good example, working together, and being the one who gets things done, not just sitting around waiting for it to get done by someone else.”

—Stella C. ’31



Passion for Plastics

Plastic surgeon and
Nightingale alumna
Dr. Whitney Lane '06
discusses her career
and what inspired her
to pursue a career in
reconstructive surgery.

From the blue doors to the operating room, Dr. Whitney Lane '06 has exemplified what it means to be a Nightingale alumna. Fueled by her passion for reconstructive surgery, Dr. Lane has developed an affinity for advocacy, conducted intensive research in the breast cancer sector, and found her niche as a reconstructive plastic surgeon.

Dr. Lane '06 arrived on 92nd Street in the fall of 1993, and graduated in the spring of 2006; a Nightingale "lifer"—as they say. During her 13-year tenure at Nightingale, Dr. Lane met the demands of her day-to-day courses, in addition to also being a three-season athlete in Upper School, engaging in varsity volleyball, swimming, and tennis. She also sang in Nightingale's choir and acapella group. As a student, Dr. Lane enjoyed her science and math classes, with particular fond memories of AP Physics with Mr. Flomberg, and AP European History and Art History with Mr. Bikk.

After completing an undergraduate degree in cognitive psychology at Duke University, Dr. Lane decided to take a



year off before continuing on to medical school; a decision that meant a great deal to her. After the break, Dr. Lane returned to her studies and began medical school at Duke University.

Following medical school, Dr. Lane started residency training as a general surgeon at Duke Hospital. After her fourth year of general surgery residency, Dr. Lane realized she was drawn to reconstructive surgery, so she decided to listen to her gut and switch into a new specialty: plastic surgery; a decision she is most proud of today.

"One of the biggest misconceptions about plastic surgery is that the entire field is exclusively focused on cosmetic surgery," she explained. "Plastic surgeons perform complex adult and pediatric reconstructive surgery, craniofacial surgery including cleft lip/palate care and trauma care, and hand surgery. It's a much more diverse field than how plastic surgery is generally portrayed in the media."

In recent years, Dr. Lane has focused her work on "breast reconstruction, and more broadly reconstructive plastic surgery,

for a number of reasons. Predominantly, as reconstructive surgeons, we have the ability to impact and improve the quality of patient's lives after cancer treatment or trauma making this an incredibly rewarding field."

Dr. Lane continued: "For me, medicine is the science of people and their stories. You have to like science, but an interest in science and problem-solving is only the first step. I always enjoyed history and english because the humanities teach you to understand the human condition. Medicine is a field that allows you to combine both interests."

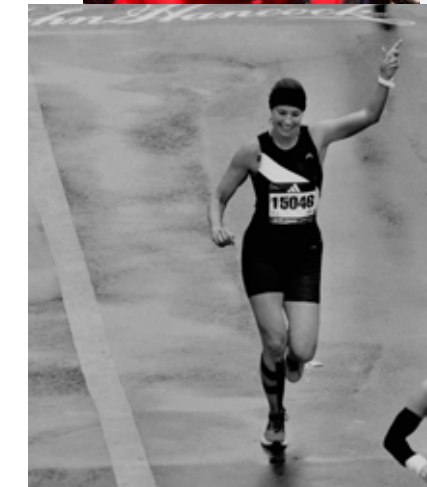
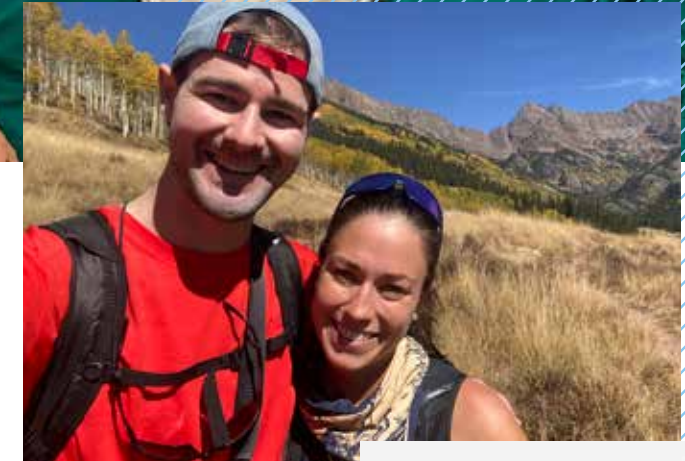
"[Dr. Lane] was a larger-than-life presence in the classroom, equipped with an infectious energy and passion for learning," her former teacher and current History Faculty Mr. Allan Bikk recalled. "She had something to say about every historical issue imaginable. And there were also many other moments when she quietly listened to the insights of her classmates, surely measuring them in order to best assess her own. Dr. Lane was never content to accept a historical narrative or paradigm at face value. She challenged everything. She came to the truth on her own terms."

While in residency, Dr. Lane spent a significant amount of time focused on financial toxicity and the burden of breast reconstruction. However, in recent years, her focus has since shifted to more specifically on quality improvement efforts in plastic surgery, at both the division and hospital level. "This means that I am more interested in ways to improve and streamline the care for the patients that we take care of at Duke," she explained.

Outside of her career, Dr. Lane got married in 2022 to another doctor at Duke. Together, the two have a "goofy rescue dog named Charlotte." When not with patients, in surgery, or conducting research, Dr. Lane loves cooking, swimming, spending time outdoors, and vacationing out west where she can hike in the mountains. A distance runner, Dr. Lane has completed several marathons in the last five years. "The NYC Marathon was my first—and still my favorite," she said.

Dr. Lane recently completed her final weeks of fellowship training in Reconstructive Microsurgery at Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York. In August, she will return to North Carolina and Duke—this time, as faculty—in the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. •

"For me, medicine is the science of people and their stories."



World Celebrations

A Night of Cultures and Traditions

On March 1, hundreds of Nightingale community members came together for one of Nightingale's most beloved annual events: Cultural Night. Upon arrival, students were given a "passport" to carry with them throughout the Schoolhouse, and received a stamp or sticker from each destination. This year, 30 cultures were represented at Cultural Night: Argentinian, Armenian, Australian, Brazilian, Canadian, Chinese, Colombian, Costa Rican, Croatian, Ecuadorian, English, Egyptian, Filipino,

Guyanese, Hip-Hop, Honduran, Indian, Israeli, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Mexican, Pakistani, Peruvian, Spanish, Tibetan, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese.

Families also enjoyed a potluck dinner, thank you to our generous community members, and enjoyed collages in the second floor hallway created by Lower and Middle School students that showcased their own family's cultural celebrations and traditions.





“Love, laughter, and the excitement of children’s voices filled the rooms as parents greeted each other and shared their beloved cultural traditions—this is what Cultural Night at Nightingale is all about! It’s my favorite event and a beautiful display of our community’s diversity, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of our parent and student body. With 30 different cultures represented in 2024, we continue to build on this tradition, bringing our community together through culture, fostering meaningful interactions, and celebrating each other!”

*—Maleha Haroon P’22 P’24 P’28,
2023-2024 Parents Association President*



In the July 2013 issue of *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, researchers from the Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden published their findings on the effects of choral singing on the well-being of the singers. The study confirmed that guided breathing—breathing in and out together to complete a choral phrase—has a calming effect on the heart similar to that found in the practice of yoga or meditation.

But the study also revealed a new finding. Not only did the heart rates of the singers slow down, they also synchronized almost immediately, guided by the tempo of the song. Whereas the average person's heart beat can vary widely based on a number of factors, this collaborative effort brings singers together both consciously and unconsciously—creating a unified sound and a unified emotional connection.

Do these results ring true outside of Gothenburg, Sweden? Just ask any member of the Upper School Chamber Chorus at Nightingale.

“Whether Chamber is performing before a large audience or rehearsing on a Saturday, there is a tangible feeling when our music ‘clicks.’ In these moments, I know that we are not only secure in the music we are making together, but we are also united in our focus and intention,” Orli A. '25 reflected.

“Chamber,” the affectionately colloquial term for Upper School Chamber Chorus, is composed of students in Classes X–XII who are deeply committed to choral singing. This audition-based group rehearses three times in the eight-day cycle (and many Saturdays) and is marked as an academic minor class. The highly selective group, made up of 14–20 members each year, performs a variety of repertoire that includes Renaissance, Baroque, contemporary classical, and vocal jazz pieces. Director of Performing Arts and Choral Programs Michael Goede helms the group that performs throughout the year in concerts at Nightingale, in New York City, and around the world.

Sing Out, My Soul: *Elevating the Voices of Chamber Chorus*





“Each of our performances in Brazil was unique and special. Our first performance in Paraty felt vulnerable and intimate. Our second exchange concert was an incredible moment of cultural celebration, energy, and fun. Our audience was lively and supportive, and during the gathering after the concert, we were able to connect with the members of the audience in a way that bridged language and cultural divides. Our third concert in Petropolis was a formal and final opportunity for us to honor our time in Brazil before we returned to New York.”

—Orli A. '25

“From my experience, students who choose to audition for and be part of Chamber Chorus want to be challenged, desire to sing a variety of repertoire that helps them understand and appreciate the music of other cultures and traditions, and wish to be ambassadors for Nightingale,” Mr. Goede noted.

Whether it be in the classroom, in the lab, on the field, or on the stage, enriching and rigorous experiences exist at every grade level at Nightingale. Providing these opportunities allows students to find the environment(s) where they feel most themselves, learning how to push past the boundaries of their comfort zones, and hold themselves to high expectations at the same time. Being a member of Chamber Chorus encapsulates this experience, as Abby S. '24 recalls what it felt like when she began her journey:

“As a new soprano one, I walked into the choir room terrified of being miles behind the other singers. I was, yet I happily realized that in Chamber, every singer struggles; no one is afraid to admit it. In one of my first rehearsals, I remember one of the altos, a much more experienced singer than me, raised their hand and asked for pitch help. I sang a little louder after that.

Two and a half years later, I still have loads to learn, and I still have a warm community to support me. My choir mates cheered me on when I squeaked the highest note I have ever sung before. We cheerfully laughed when a singer’s hiccups interrupted our longer-held ‘ahs.’ When an alto forgot we were only on the first verse, everyone grinned and merrily rolled along.”

Picking repertoire for each year is a process that Mr. Goede undertakes with great care, as he invests a significant amount of time every summer considering the endless possibilities. The common thread connecting all of the pieces he ultimately selects? Opportunities for growth and expansion—both musically and personally. His goal is for the pieces to bring forth new concepts, techniques, and musical traditions, ultimately building a diverse tapestry of songs to make up the textbook that is the students’ Chamber

binder. This year alone has featured German hymns, African American spirituals, contemporary musical theater, and American folk songs.

“It is important to me that our singers leave Nightingale having been exposed to music that reflects the fullness of music traditions from around the world, that they experience and engage with texts that are intellectually rich and spark conversation, and that they hear sounds in the music that might not be familiar to their ear. I have been guided by the belief that students know good music when they hear it. Upon a first listen to a piece, they might not immediately find it compelling,

but so often they learn to appreciate and even love a piece by growing with it through rehearsal,” Mr. Goede said.

In 2022 and 2023, Chamber Chorus participated in a state-wide choral festival run by the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA), garnering well deserved praise and recognition. Participating in this festival stemmed from Mr. Goede’s belief in the value of receiving feedback from an audience outside of the Nightingale community—especially from a respected music education community. In this way, the idea of competition is de-emphasized and the experience can truly become a learning opportunity.

In preparation for the festival each year, Chamber Chorus spent four months learning the program, which pushed the group to really explore their choral technique and passion. They prepared three memorized pieces, two of which were selected from a prescribed list established by the NYSSMA repertoire committee.

Their months of hard work were rewarded with a Gold with Distinction, the highest and most rare rating. To earn a Gold Rating, ensembles must “demonstrate an outstanding level of technical and artistic skill in every category for every song performed.” A Gold Rating with Distinction recognizes those ensembles that “qualify for a Gold Rating

while having achieved a standard of performance deemed exceptional in every song performed.” This accomplishment two years in a row was an outstanding and defining moment for Chamber Chorus and a beautiful recognition of their hard work and dedication to excellence.

And yet, it’s important to note that for Mr. Goede and Chamber Chorus, the goal of the performance was always to share their program with confidence, conviction, and pride. “Making music is not about being ‘the best.’ Rather, it is about being compelling, stirring emotions, and communicating messages,” he said.

This year, in addition to singing at the annual winter and spring concerts, Chamber Chorus also had the distinct pleasure of traveling to Brazil for a week-long choral tour and cultural exchange during spring break. Chamber Chorus had previously traveled to South Africa in 2019, so when it came time to consider a location for this year’s tour,





Mr. Goede knew that he wanted to select a destination where students could experience a new culture (in fact, no one on the trip had been to Brazil before) and one where the music and history of the country would enrich the entire Nightingale community upon their return.

With these goals in mind, Nightingale worked closely with a tour company that curates choral trips that are centered on learning, while also weaving in elements of traditional tourism. In this way, Chamber Chorus was able to have immersive cultural experiences, in addition to sharing their musical repertoire with Brazilian audiences. Ultimately, the tour brought Chamber Chorus to the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Paraty, and Petropolis. Their Brazil concert program, titled “Sing Out, My Soul” included songs in English and Portuguese and intentionally honored Brazilian music. In addition to Mr. Goede, Ms. Lauren Aloia, accompanist, and Ms. Bria Tyner, dance faculty, also joined the students on the trip.

What transpired was a rewarding trip for all—one that each singer and traveler will carry with them for a lifetime.

When they touched down in Rio de Janeiro, they immediately took a five hour bus ride to the coastal town of Paraty. Here, students visited the local quilombo community of Campinho da Independência. These community settlements were established by enslaved Africans who had escaped from plantations in Brazil going back seven generations and still exist today.

On this tour, students had the opportunity to learn about Brazil’s history, make connections with United States history, and gain a greater understanding of the struggles and resistance of enslaved people.

The visit to Campinho da Independência left a lasting impact on Geo S. ’24.

“My favorite moments from the trip were times where we got to learn from local people sharing their culture. I made human connections with people I had never met and I think the reason they felt so genuine was because the other people could tell I was genuinely interested in learning from them. I remember during one workshop where we learned how to dance Jongo at Campinho da Independência, I felt like I stuck out when I decided to wear the traditional skirt worn by girls during the dance even though I tend to dress more masculine and have short hair. I could tell the local people were a little confused, but when I was paired up with a little girl to dance, maybe five or six years old, with the little Portuguese I learned on Duolingo before the

trip, I said, ‘Hi, I’m Geo. It’s nice to meet you.’ She didn’t say anything but smiled and extended a hand shake. Once the music started, everyone was so wrapped up in the dance that I wasn’t even thinking about how people perceived me, but how I had been welcomed into the circle to learn about their culture.”

The first concert of the trip in Paraty was an especially memorable one, as a huge thunderstorm knocked out the power at the cultural center where they were performing just before the start of the concert.

Avi Z. ’25 recalled this moment as a favorite from the trip.

“The show must go on, even without lights, air conditioning, or an electric keyboard! We stayed in our regular clothes and set up some flashlights to illuminate the stage, we welcomed in our audience (who had walked through the rain to hear us), Ms. Aloia and Ms. Tyner made up accompaniment on some drums we found backstage, and Mr. Goede sang the piano part. We gave our performance with energy and joy, dancing to the music, looking at each other, clapping with the audience, and connecting as a group. As we were singing our last song, called “Shine Like Stars,” the lights came back on! Everyone cheered...By the end of the concert, we were all incredibly sweaty and simultaneously energized and tired out from such an exciting performance.”

In Rio de Janeiro, students visited the major sites of the city, including the Christ the Redeemer statue, the botanical garden, and rode a cable car to the top of Sugarloaf mountain to take in the views of the entire city. They also had the opportunity to meet up on the world-famous Copacabana beach and play beach volleyball with local high schoolers and, of course, enjoy a meal at a traditional Brazilian steakhouse.

Their concert in Rio was set up as a shared concert with Escola de Música da Rocinha, a non-profit music school, which was founded to bring music education to students who wouldn’t otherwise have access to such training. This concert felt like a true exchange between choral groups and one that reaffirmed that music and joy are truly universal languages.

This rang especially true for Orli A. ’25.

“It was an honor to hear musicians from Rio share music that was authentic to them. I was surprised by how I could easily emotionally connect to the music and performers despite language barriers. I could understand the intention of their songs without knowing the words sung. It seemed that our audience understood us, as well, even though most of our songs were in English. We performed three songs in Portuguese, and their positive response was exciting and encouraging. The lack of language barriers translated to the moments after the concert, where we understood the gratitude and inspiration that we each had for each other.”

Their final concert took place in Petropolis—otherwise known as The Imperial City—where Brazilian aristocrats lived during the country’s founding as an independent nation. Here, Chamber rehearsed and performed with the Petropolis Girls Choir, a respected youth choir known throughout Brazil. Nightingale had already “swapped songs” with the group—sending music to learn ahead of time—so that all of the singers could share Brazilian and “American” music with the audience. It was during this particular concert that Mr. Goede was struck by the deep appreciation for

music in Brazil and how everyone they met on their travels was exceptionally proud to share their culture and music with those around them.


“During every exchange concert we had on the tour, our hosts were so eager to share their music with us. This was particularly prevalent in Petropolis when the performance space was overflowing despite torrential rain. We prepared several Brazilian songs, and I will never forget hearing audible gasps when we started one particular song. It was clearly meaningful to them that we took time to learn some of ‘their’ music. When we finished that piece, their singers and the entire audience gave us a standing ovation. It was a magical moment,” Mr. Goede reminisced.

For the members of Chamber Chorus, being a part of the group is so much more than learning music and performing it for others. It is a place to grow, to celebrate, to appreciate the value of hard work, and to revel in the work of creating something bigger than yourself.

“Chamber has been the community where I have learned through music how to be a good human in the world, how to be there for myself and those around me, and how to take on challenges I face with thoughtfulness and determination,” Avi Z. ’24 noted. “I love the feeling that we’re all working together to cheer each other on and create an environment based on our support of each other.” •

“In Chamber, we sing through mistakes, and we improve. We break a mental sweat, we give high fives, we share throat lozenges. Although Chamber is a high-calibur choir, it is also a group that makes loads of errors. It feels really refreshing to know I am not alone in my imperfections. We battle through the music together, and we emerge from the eighth notes and triplets triumphant.”

—Abby S. ’24



February 7 is known as National Girls and Women in Sports Day, a day that celebrates the accomplishments of female athletes and advocates for equality for women in sports. This yearly observance also recognizes the influence athletics has on girls. A 2020 report by Ernst & Young titled “Why a Female Athlete Should Be Your Next Leader” underscores the correlation of athletic discipline and future success, noting that an impressive 94% of women in executive leadership roles have competed in sports. At Nightingale, we not only acknowledge this correlation but also understand the critical role of physical fitness in maintaining both overall health and mental well-being.

On this year’s National Girls and Women in Sports Day, Nightingale announced its first-ever athletics strategic plan, *Go Beyond*. The plan outlines the school’s hope to develop a transformative vision for Nightingale athletics, prioritizing each student’s relationship to physical activity and empowering them to excel in the world of sports and beyond.

While *Go Beyond* outlines a course of action exclusively focused on our athletics programming, we adopted the same four pillars used during our 2017 schoolwide strategic plan because we believe that committing to athletics demonstrates a further commitment to the educational program, the student experience, the sustainability of our mission, and the elevation of the centrality of relationships in the building of our community. *Go Beyond* seeks to maximize the transformative impact athletics can have on our students’ lives.

GO BEYOND

A PLAYBOOK FOR ATHLETICS EXCELLENCE

Nightingale last embarked on a strategic plan—titled *First Things First*—in 2017. The plan was organized around four strategic goals: the educational program, the student experience, the sustainability of our mission, and the elevation of the centrality of relationships in the building of our community. The effort simultaneously shored up areas deserving of attention while also advancing pre-existing strengths. *First Things First* resulted in significantly enhanced academic programming across all divisions and departments, underscoring our continued commitment to excellence and advancement.

Go Beyond, our first-ever athletics strategic plan, adopts those same headers. By returning to a familiar design we are making clear that Nightingale’s prioritization of athletics—just like our 2017 commitment to academics—is both comprehensive and true to our mission. And just like our work in 2017, we seek to both build on pre-existing strengths and also go beyond in significant ways.

GO BEYOND STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

We have identified six action areas to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan and to bring our vision to life. We invite you to read our overview and explore the six strategic action areas we have identified. For additional details, visit nightingale.org/gobeyond. While some of this important work commenced as early as last spring, there is still much more to be done.



STRATEGIC AREA #1

SOAR TO VICTORY | PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

We commit to developing a world-class athletic program that researches, articulates, and implements the learning objectives for each grade level. Our program will be designed to instill a culture of lifelong, health-enhancing physical activity in every student, from Kindergarten through Class XII. Our program will also offer students who demonstrate significant drive and talent the best chance to achieve athletic success. We will understand and more intensely pursue competition, seeing it as an avenue for growth, resilience, and the cultivation of confidence.

STRATEGIC AREA #2

NEST OF KNOWLEDGE | COACHING EXPERTISE

At Nightingale, we recognize the pivotal role of the coach-player relationship. It forms the bedrock of our athletic community. With this in mind, we are committed to nurturing our coaches, empowering them to exceed expectations and embody our ethos of “going beyond.” We will actively seek out, cultivate, and retain top-tier coaches who not only excel in their field but also resonate deeply with our mission. These individuals will embody a passion for continuous learning, understanding the symbiotic relationship between their own growth and that of their players. Above all, they will prioritize the development and well-being of each athlete under their guidance, fostering an environment where both personal and collective growth flourish.



STRATEGIC AREA #5

NIGHTHAWK NATION | EXPANDING IMPACT

Fully realizing our aspiration to “go beyond” requires a collective commitment to integrating physical, social, emotional, and academic dimensions. To this end, we will establish new Nightingale-specific traditions for games and tournaments, deliberately designed to foster inclusivity across all segments of our community. Furthermore, by strategically investing in athletics, we aim to elevate Nightingale’s standing within an increasingly competitive New York City landscape. This proactive approach not only strengthens our school’s appeal to a broader spectrum of students but also cultivates connections with new applicant pools, thereby enriching the diversity and vibrancy of our student body.



STRATEGIC AREA #3

FEAR THE FLOCK | ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

We will increase the number of students participating in athletics, finding new ways to engage students of varying experiences and skill levels. For all students, we will seek ways to leverage athletics to promote success in life well beyond the playing field. This includes fueling a unique convergence of academics, arts, technology, journalism, and humanities to promote learning within athletics and across our curriculum.



STRATEGIC AREA #4

NIGHTHAWKS UNITED | RELATIONSHIPS

Both the success and strength of Nightingale’s educational experience are rooted in the collective voices of our diverse community. We will nurture a winning culture where families, alumnae, and fans are integral contributors. We are committed to enhancing communication channels between athletes, parents, and the broader community.



STRATEGIC AREA #6

SPREAD OUR WINGS | ROOM TO COMPETE

We are growing our athletic program at a time when access to fields and other resources in Manhattan continue to decline. We will explore all the ways we can provide better access to spaces for our student athletes. Our programmatic transformation can only be fully realized by ensuring that our teams have the proper space to train, practice, and compete. We will also use this opportunity to find new ways to partner with and invest in New York City and in the communities where we play, compete, learn, and grow.



"With the vast amount of information available on the internet today, it's hard to know what is trustworthy. When coming across online information, the first thing we should ask ourselves is who's behind the information."

—Juliet C. '29



Class VII students learn how to review online information with a critical eye in Nightingale's brand new course,

Information Literacy

During this past school year, Class VII students met once per cycle in the library for one of the newest courses on 92nd Street—Information Literacy—which focuses specifically on media and news literacy. Created by Middle School Librarian and Advisor Ms. Tina Chesterman, this new course was piloted in the seventh grade, and all students in Class VII were required to complete the course this school year.

While the library team actively promotes information literacy through classroom lessons, research project support, and one-on-one consultations, throughout the last couple of years Ms. Chesterman recognized the need to centralize this work and create a structured media literacy class in Middle School.

"Students' digital literacy needs grow rapidly in Middle School," Ms. Chesterman explained. "By introducing this class, we aim to provide students with a strong foundation in information literacy skills to support them on their academic journeys here at Nightingale and beyond the classroom."

Class VII student Juliet C. understood the value of a course like this when her mother shared that she had recently been misled by online information related to a potential new train line. Together, they investigated this news further, only to find out it wasn't guaranteed. "When I heard this, it made me realize all of the false information on the internet. I wanted to know how to determine if and when the information is trustworthy...A class like this [helps me] evaluate the trustworthiness of sources while I am researching topics," Juliet said.

Throughout the semester-long course, students learn how to review information with a critical eye and ask questions such as: Who is the source of this article? Why is this article being written? Is the source credible? Is this website credible?

One important way students have learned to review content online is through lateral reading.

"Lateral Reading is a strategy to learn about a website and to determine if a source is reliable or not. It involves leaving a website to see what other sources say about it. There are three questions that guide lateral reading," Juliet explained. "The first step is to ask yourself who's behind the information. This means looking up more about the creator of the website and their background. The second step is to see what other sources have to say about that topic. Finally there is click restraint. Click restraint is a strategy to help know what a website is about without clicking on it. You look at the URLs and titles to see if they sound familiar and well-known. Afterwards you look at the snippet below the URL to find out what the website is about."

Class VII also learned how to cite their sources properly, how to critically evaluate images and videos in the news and on the internet, how to identify mis- and disinformation, how to distinguish credible sources from unreliable ones, and how to evaluate unfamiliar websites, Ms. Chesterman shared.

"The curriculum aims to empower students with the skills to discover and analyze information on their own; to navigate the congested information landscape with confidence and a critical eye," Ms. Chesterman said. "I hope that students will take away a sense of empowerment from learning these skills, so that they can thrive in today's information age." •



"Alums are connected through the years by Nightingale's traditions, ProCom, and the excellent education we received. We get to relive that [at Reunion] while learning how Nightingale continues to nurture young people...It felt wonderful to see people reconnecting while learning more about what Nightingale is like now. I think both reminiscing as well as learning about how NBS has grown and changed can help strengthen these bonds. Seeing alums from across generations both reconnecting with each other and in some ways meeting people from different classes [makes Reunion special]. I also got to meet Demise Rolle '74—one of the first Black Nightingale alums."

—Terri Davis-Merchant '95, Alumnae Board President



"We talk about being a school rooted in relationships, and that begins with our Kindergartners and extends throughout lifetimes as evidenced by the fierce love that alumnae have for one another. Alumnae exhibit what it means to be a community rooted in relationships everyday, but ESPECIALLY at Reunion."

—Elizabeth "Oz" Oswald, Director of Institutional Advancement



On May 17 and 18, alumnae—spanning over 50 class years—revisited 92nd Street for Reunion 2024. Alumnae stepped back into the classroom, sang in the Alumnae Chorus, explored the Schoolhouse on student-led tours, heard from school leaders at Second Century talks, and reconnected with one another at the All Alumnae Cocktail Reception.

Once a Nighthawk, Always a Nighthawk

REUNION 2024



Molding Future Artists *with Mr. Meikle*

Lower School Visual Arts Faculty
Scott Meikle has taught students how to paint, woodwork, and explore countless creative pursuits for over two decades at Nightingale. Retiring after his 24th year, Mr. Meikle reflects on his time teaching, Lower School creations, and what he hopes for his legacy on 92nd Street.



“When we nurture creative thought, we help a child to perceive underlying facts and ideas, to see old problems in new ways. When we nurture creativity in students, we help them to develop the very traits they will need in order to become the productive adults of tomorrow.”

—Scott Meikle, Visual Arts Faculty

“In Mr. Meikle’s woodworking classes, students discover the joy of bringing their ideas to life in tangible form, building confidence and a sense of accomplishment with every project completed. He is a teacher who ignites creativity in young minds, while also teaching invaluable lessons in patience, perseverance, and problem-solving. Mr. Meikle’s art studio is a space of creativity and exploration where imagination flourishes.”

—Rebecca J. Urciuoli, PhD,
Head of Lower School

What originally drew you to Nightingale?

I was a sabbatical replacement instructor at Trinity and found the position so fulfilling that I decided to return to teaching full-time. After successive sabbatical and maternity leave positions at Brearley and Poly Prep, my current Nightingale position became available.

How many art projects do your students create each school year?

The number of art projects I teach varies widely; it depends on a student’s grade level and the materials and processes they’ll be exploring. Woodworking has been the exception; there’s usually one major project constructed during a single trimester each year.

How do you get inspiration for the variety of art projects that are part of your curriculum?

My inspiration for lessons comes from student observation and personal experience. Some of my most successful lessons employ layers

of material and process exploration; I find that this approach gives students with varied interests and experiences the opportunity to fully explore art making both individually and as a member of their class. My primary goal is for my students to gain confidence and a sense of accomplishment based on their own personal efforts. A child who gains confidence based on competence can successfully build upon their acquired skills and knowledge both inside and outside of the Schoolhouse.

While at Nightingale, what art projects have been most meaningful to you and why?

I’ve taken great pleasure in developing and teaching many different lessons, but exploring sculptural form with my students has been particularly satisfying. They’ve achieved wonderful results with lessons that I wrote for woodworking, stone carving, and other sculptural media.

It’s developmentally beneficial for young people to create art using three dimensional form but they don’t always have a chance to do so in meaningful and in-depth ways. I’m pleased that they’ve been able to experience this way of working in my studio.

Why is it important for Lower School students to learn skills like woodworking and printmaking? What made you want to build those classes into the curriculum?

Art-making is a child’s first language and an intrinsic part of all human culture; consequently to nurture and develop a student’s abilities through art education is developmentally beneficial.

What do you hope alumnae have/students will take away from your art classes?

Identify what you wish to accomplish, then connect with the material, processes and people you’ll need to accomplish your goals. Try to proceed effectively. As in art, in life.

Reflecting on your tenure at Nightingale, what are you most proud of?

Those beautiful, quiet moments when I see that a self-doubting student has gained real confidence based on their actions.

This year marks your 24th year at Nightingale. What is it about the Nightingale community that inspired you to teach for so many years at the same institution?

The time I’ve spent as a Lower School art and woodworking teacher has enabled me to watch my students learn and grow over the course of years; this is something I’ve really appreciated as it’s not often the case for most teachers.

When I started here, I found it notable that my colleagues and co-workers at Nightingale often recognized and celebrated each other’s achievements; this isn’t always what happens in educational institutions.

In more recent years I’ve taught so many siblings and seen so many students become accomplished adults that I feel like something of an institution myself...though honestly, the time has really flown by.

What are you most looking forward to in retirement?

I’m still working at the time of this interview, so I’d say setting my own schedule and not commuting on the subway will be absolutely wonderful.

What kind of art do you create personally? Will you be focusing more time on your art/woodworking in retirement?

I’ve always kept myself busy creating when not teaching; I have thoughts and plans but at this point I’m going to let my retirement evolve organically.

What lasting impact do you aspire to leave behind?

I hope that my students become life-long learners who follow their interests and aspirations with passion and humor; confidence that they are able to learn what they will need to know and patience/good humor with the people and processes they’ll encounter will help them to achieve their goals. •



At Nightingale, students navigate balancing their classes, coursework, club time, and athletic schedules—in addition to engaging in numerous extracurriculars. It's not uncommon for students to discover a new passion and even start a club at school, often ones that are specifically dedicated to helping others. These student-led initiatives have inspired Nighthawks across divisions to get involved and connect with one another, all the while giving back to both local and broader communities.

BEYOND MEASURE

Meaningful student initiatives and their impact within the community.



Packing Products:

DAYS FOR GIRLS

While investigating period poverty for a history paper, senior Abby S. '24 was shocked to learn that, globally, one in five women misses school or work because of inadequate menstrual products. Armed with this knowledge, Abby and fellow senior Gabbi S. were inspired to co-found Nightingale's Days for Girls student club.

"Globally, the DfG non-profit has partnered with developing communities and distributed three million inconspicuous, washable menstruation kits in 145 countries. I am honored they were willing to work with me and Nightingale."

In December, a few dozen Upper School students gathered in the commons to pack DfG kits, complete with hygienic products such as a reusable shield, reusable liners, disposable pads, a washcloth, a bar of soap, a DfG period education/care and use sheet, wipes, a carrying pouch and washing bag, and a drawstring bag. Earlier this spring, the group had already surpassed their goal for the year of assembling over 2500 menstrual products.

Nightingale welcomed Days for Girls Founder Celeste Mergens to their Health & Wellness Day in January to learn about her background and what inspired her to found the organization. Later that day, Upper Schoolers gathered in the library for a special Days for Girls workshop, led by Abby S.

"I was inspired to incorporate Days for Girls into Health and Wellness Day programming because menstruation is a remarkably important aspect of Nightingale student health. Unfortunately, it is not considered as important in other parts of the world. To combat period poverty and shatter stigmas in broader society, we have to start close to home. I am so happy so many students were willing to attend my workshops and learn more about Days for Girls. The more Nightingale knows, the more the world knows," she said.

Creating Comfort for Furry Friends:

PILLOWS FOR PAWS

In 2016, then-Class IV student Isabella C. '25 began volunteering at Pillows for Paws, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing comfort to animals in need. Founded by Jen Halpern, aunt of Olivia H. '34 and Grace H. '36, Pillows for Paws "[provides] comfort and love to NYC shelter cats, dogs, rabbits, and guinea pigs. The group does this by donating beds, blankets, toys, treats, medical supplies, food, Kuranda beds, plus many more enrichment items to our city shelters on a monthly basis," as stated on their website. This seemed like the perfect fit at the time as Isabella had been searching for hands-on volunteering opportunities.

"I wanted to actually be doing something. I love animals, and I really wanted to be able to help them," Isabella reflected.

During COVID-19, the organization lost their meeting space. However, after the blue doors reopened, Isabella was inspired to bring Pillows for Paws events to Nightingale. Since then, students in Pillows for Paws have hosted Crafting Cafes to create blankets and beds for animals in need, in addition to organizing drives to collect linens, pet food, and toys for donation to the Animal Care Centers of NYC. Students make the most out of their creations by using materials that are reused or recycled.

"Pillows for Paws let me actually make a change when I wanted to," Isabella said. "I wasn't restricted by an age limit like many volunteering opportunities are. If I'm being honest, I would have tried to bring them into any high school I ended up



"Menstruation is something to be respected, honored, and celebrated. I believe Nightingale does this terrifically. At Days for Girls, we're promoting it in other communities, too."

—Abby S. '24



"Any bit of help towards a cause is important and can make a difference. We truly mean it when we say that you can stop by for just a few minutes and allow yourself to be a little crafty."

—Isabella C. '25

going to, but I think Nightingale is a perfect place. I love how eager Lower and Middle School students are to help."

Since March of 2023, Pillows for Paws club members have donated approximately 450 no-sew blankets, 300 pull toys, and 2000 cat kickers—made by members of our community—in addition to many other animal care items donated at events, History Faculty and Pillows for Paws Advisor L.E. Hartmann, PhD, shared.

"You might think I am most proud of the contributions we have been able to make to support shelter animals, and I am—that is extremely important. Comfort and enrichment items help greatly to calm animals awaiting a home and increase the likelihood they will be adopted," Dr. Hartmann said. "What I am most proud of, however, is the way our students enjoy the act of crafting and spending informal time together with students from other divisions and from the PFP community. Our youngest participants are in Kindergarten and our oldest volunteer is in her 90s. People of all ages working together is such a healthy and natural way to build community while doing something good makes me extremely proud of Nightingale."

Making Meals:

THE FOOD WASTE RECOVERY TASK FORCE

Founded in December by community engagement board co-representatives Sophia S. '25 and Eleanor K. '25, the Nightingale food waste recovery task force is a student-led organization that aims to combat food insecurity in the community. Just before winter break, the task force hosted its first event where students packaged foods to be delivered to a Grassroots Grocery community fridge, one of eight community fridges across the boroughs of Manhattan.

"The task force's goal is twofold; our first goal is to help redistribute food waste from the Nightingale cafeteria to the community fridge on 92nd and 1st Avenue," Sophia said. "New York City wastes 3.9 million tons of food each year, and 20% of this waste comes from restaurants and school cafeterias. Our second goal is to address food insecurity in our immediate neighborhood. People are struggling daily with food insecurity in our community, and we can help."

Ellie added: "[Our goal] part of a larger movement to eliminate the 170 million metric tons of gas emissions released by food waste in the country each year. We aim to direct the food that is eligible to eat into people's homes rather than to landfills."

Last year, the duo partnered with a volunteer program at Brick Church to cook dinners once a week for the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter (NCS), which provides housing and educational programs for the homeless on the Upper East Side.

"The food waste recovery task force was a natural extension of this program to reach more people in our community," Sophia explained.

This spring, students had delivered upwards of 75 meals to the community fridge every week, with the goal to deliver 1000 meals by the end of the school year.

This endeavor provided the community engagement board with an opportunity to partner with the environmental board to address food waste and sustainable packaging.

"The food recovery task force stood out to me as a way I could get involved with fighting food insecurity and climate change in both our school community and the larger Upper East Side neighborhood," said Julia G. '25, environmental board co-head. "On top of that, it is a fully student-led organization. I find that the food recovery task force is an empowering group of students who have set their sights on actively addressing the problems they found within their community and it inspires me every time we meet."

In April, Ellie, Sophia, Orli, and Julia hosted a drive to collect gently-used and clean plastic takeout containers from Nightingale families in order to sustainably package the meals they deliver weekly, without absorbing the extra cost and waste of ordering packaging.

"Without Sophia and Ellie's diligence and advocacy, I never would have known how much food we as a community threw away at the end of each week. To become a more sustainable community, it is important to think creatively about our school and personal consumption and to develop actionable steps to change old habits for greener ones...These initiatives are important because they encompass our school values of sustainability, community engagement, and student leadership," Orli A. '25 reflected. "We are making a difference in the schoolhouse by reducing waste, to the people who utilize the community fridge by providing meals, as well as inspiring our peers to make change where necessary." •

"As members of the food waste recovery task force, we are neighbors helping neighbors. By addressing the issue of food insecurity locally, we become part of a movement driven by neighbors helping neighbors nationally. Beyond the issue of food insecurity, establishing small-scale habits such as recovering food waste is how we begin to combat climate change on the global-scale."

—Eleanor K. '25





Memories of Ms. Kira Harris

ARTIST AND EDUCATOR

This spring we learned of the passing of former faculty member Kira Harris. Ms. Harris was a deeply respected member of our art department from 1999 until 2022. Her love for art and for her students was apparent every day and throughout the length of her tenure. In addition to serving as an art teacher, Ms. Harris was a sought-after mentor for students of color and a faculty liaison to Parents of Daughters of Color (PODOC) for a period of time. She was a central member of our professional community, a collaborator, and an innovator.

“She had such a large skill set that crossed all divisions: from drawing, life drawing, sculpture, video, and art history in the Middle and Upper Schools to Lower School art in Classes III and IV. She was a devoted advisor to many and a passionate advocate for the rights of African American women and all women, in general. Her enthusiasm for her students and her work with them was infectious and she was always looking for ways to make art and art history fun and relatable. She was a great conversationalist, a generous colleague and brought a joyful demeanor to the classroom and department meetings. She is greatly missed.”

—*Caroline Hastie, Art Department Chair*

“The last time I shared space with Ms. Harris, I told her how important her presence was across so many generations. The message I was trying to convey, which I hope she understood, was that she helped us to see all the inspiration and beauty in this city we call home. For me, in a place so unfamiliar, she was home. I will be forever grateful to Ms. Harris for sharing her vision and for helping us to see the mundane as divine.”

—*Diana Ballesteros '05*

“When I first met Ms. Harris in high school, it was clear she was so much more than just a teacher. She was an inspirational, creative thinker and a free spirit. But even more, for a young Black woman like me, she was an icon. Back in my time at Nightingale, there weren't many faces like mine among the faculty. So when Ms. Harris joined us, she made a lasting impression. She had a quiet power about her that I wanted to emulate and she was so compassionate, so generous with her time. Without knowing it before, I was hungry for someone like her in the Schoolhouse and she accepted my fascination with grace. I thought breathing as much of the air around her would make me as invincible as she seemed to be. In some ways, I think I was on to something because through my interactions with Ms. Harris, I became more confident in the person I was, embracing my quirks and all. Since graduating, I saw Ms. Harris a handful of times during visits to the Schoolhouse, each time feeling overcome with the same adoration I had in high school. I just wish I had taken advantage of spending more time with the friend I had gained. I hope she knew that though life got in the way of the dinners we'd promised one another, my love for her and her impact on my life never waned.”

—*Jessica Taylor Allen-Arney '05*

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Voices

Priscilla Aquino-Garza '97

I could not have imagined the surge of feeling that would run through my body as I stepped onto the stage and heard "Dr. Priscilla Aquino-Garza." It had been five years of long nights filled with reading, coding, and data mining through a pandemic—juggling remote learning with two small children, a husband working as a nurse manager before there was a vaccine and facing many tough realities in hospitals, and even enduring an unexpected snow-pocalypse in Austin, Texas.

In my burnt orange regalia, I cried with my immigrant parents, my husband and two children, sandwiched in the three generations that have woven very different stories in this country. I always wanted to be *doctora* and, as I participated in all of the graduation ceremonies, I carried with me pieces of all of my biggest believers that have supported my pursuit for this final degree. I have been acutely aware throughout my journey that, first, you get nowhere without your *gente*; your people who not only believe in you unconditionally, but also help with meals, pick up children after school so you can go to class, and pick you up off the floor when you think you cannot take another step. I also learned early on that you better be ready to fight for your dreams no matter the uncertainty, constant feelings of being an imposter, or the way you wait for the next "but" that delays your end game.

As I reflect on this truth, I know that it has always been about the journey of hundreds of small steps that got me here, going back to when my mother and father stepped on planes from Costa Rica and Mexico respectively, with a dream of a better life in the United States. Those steps created a new map of what life could be like for my brother and me, and ultimately our children and future generations.

I took my own first steps starting school in Washington Heights as a first-generation



Latina, before moving on to Prep for Prep to prepare for my private school education. I took my next step (and some very deep breaths) when walking through Nightingale's newly minted blue doors in 1991. When I think about the places that molded me to believe that, not only *could* I, but I *should* complete my dream of a doctorate, I am grateful for the many lessons from my time at Nightingale.

In reality it did not always feel that I belonged, but my time at Nightingale taught me that I needed to be the one that determined where I belonged, no matter the discomfort. One of my early lessons came in ninth grade when I was talking to Ms. Porricolo (one of our PE teachers) and I told her that I could not swim. She responded with, "Well then you should join

the swim team." I chuckled and thought to myself that she was joking—but she was not. That fall, I earned my first varsity letter as part of the swim team. Every practice, I had my own lane or small section of the pool, and I repeated small step after small step to learn how to swim. My Nightingale teammates welcomed me onto the team with no reservations; just positive reinforcement. As I learned how to swim, my fear of drowning dissolved, and I learned all four strokes—eventually competing in my first race by the end of the season.

I swam for all four years of Upper School. While I did not win my races, that step of



Above: A 1997 yearbook photo of Priscilla (middle row, third from left) with the varsity swim team.

Left: Priscilla poses for a photo with her parents during the commencement ceremony for her doctoral degree.

joining the team—and deciding I was going to do something that absolutely frightened me—confirmed once again that taking a first step could carve a new path, otherwise unventured.

The willingness to take those unventured paths have defined my life. I left my predominantly Latine neighborhood to attend Prep for Prep on the promise of building foundations so that I could chart a new path for my future through an exclusive private education that, at the time, I had no idea existed. Not only were we a family learning about U.S. schooling, but we were a family who could not afford any school with tuition. Prep for Prep and Nightingale gave us a way into this magical world.

The steps were not easy, and I did have many feelings about leaving my familiar neighborhood. But the new world I came to know opened up new paths. It was at Nightingale that I found my voice in leadership—growing Cultural Awareness for Everyone (C.A.F.E) with my good friend **Afua Addo '97** to include more students and with signature programs that are still part of the heartbeat of Nightingale. The experiences with C.A.F.E. helped me navigate and commit myself to working on the racial and hegemonic systems that continue to dominate all aspects of our

society. As one of the few Latinas in the school, I learned that, while it mattered to me that I stepped into this world, it mattered just as much to my peers and the Nightingale staff that I was there to raise different issues in this ecosystem. Just like learning to swim, I often found myself treading water to figure out so many things, from how to properly write a research paper or learn Latin to read the *Aeneid*—these were not familiar areas to ask for help from my parents, so I had to get comfortable with asking for help from others. I learned deeply that faculty and staff were in my corner—from Ms. Chase who purchased my first yearbook for me when she realized that I was the only student in my seventh grade class that had not bought one due to the cost, to Mr. Feig who ignited my love of politics and history (I credit him to both my teaching and policy career), to Ms. Bauer, whose ever so challenging AP Calculus came back to me as I ran multilevel models for my dissertation 27 years later. It was also from Ms. Smith who counseled students with warmth and a push from her front desk, or Ms. Guzman who let us fall apart in her office, but only to then help us get up and continue stepping toward our degree.

At Harvard, I would come to truly value the time that had been poured into me at

Nightingale because you never quite get that again in larger schools. Through college, my master's degree, my move to Austin, Texas, and the growth of my family, and my doctorate, Nightingale friends, teachers, and staff have always checked in and continued to cheer me on. The gift of support and belief is one I wish for everyone because I still wonder what my path would have looked like without it.

I know I have always worked hard, but little Priscilla did not believe she could be *doctora* when she first stepped through those big blue doors. But, by the time I left, I knew I could swim with the best of them, even if my stroke was different and at my own pace. My favorite moment from my doctoral graduation was looking up into the stands and hearing my children, parents, husband, brother, and *hermanas*—they were walking with me and, together, we made this step become real. •

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