

The Blue Doors



The Blue Doors

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We would like to hear from you!

Letters to the editor, story suggestions, corrections, and questions may be directed to bluedoors@nightingale.org. Submit class notes online at nightingale.org/sharenews.

Content & Design

The content and design of this publication are carefully crafted by Nightingale's communications team to bring our community's stories to life.

Photography

All photography courtesy of subject, unless otherwise noted.

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All images, Courtesy of Source

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Vivian Y. '26 (center) with classmates and Upper School athletic board co-chairs Mingma S. '26 (left) and Emma T. '26 (right) at the groundbreaking for Nightingale's new athletics facility at 181 East 108th Street. Read more on page 10.



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Be heard.



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An educated mind and heart:
Nightingale's promise since 1920.
It is an idea both steady and
expansive—clear enough to guide
us and flexible enough to evolve
with each generation.

Its strength comes from the story at its foundation, a story that has been passed down for over a century. It begins with two women: the tender-hearted Miss Nightingale and the Oxford-educated Miss Bamford. One arrived from rural Georgia, the other from Northern Ireland. Both were new to New York. Together, they built something far greater than either could have built alone, reaching across differences to shape a bold vision for girls' education.

This year marks my 14th as Head of Miss Nightingale and Miss Bamford's school, and throughout my tenure I have returned to our founding story whenever I believed it could illuminate the work ahead. This year, it feels especially resonant. The best schools are led not by personalities or trends but by enduring ideas. And for more than a century, educating the minds and hearts of girls has been more than a slogan at Nightingale—it has been an animating force, a promise renewed with each new class of students.

In conversations with our community this year, I've reflected on how the power of our promise lies not only in the individual parts, but in how they are integrated. This, too, mirrors our founders' work. They must have spent just as much time weaving and adjusting as they did imagining and advocating. At Nightingale in 2026, what sets us apart is how we balance and connect the elements of an educated mind and heart—because the components themselves are not unique, but the way we bring them to life is unmistakably ours.

So what are those components?

The first is academic excellence. Our Board President Kathleen McCarthy Baldwin P'31 P'33 describes it as our charge to offer girls a world-class education across all domains. In practice, this means we approach new technologies, including AI, with curiosity and courage. It means we give our athletes—seasoned or budding—the facilities and coaching worthy of their potential. It means our curriculum embraces both the canon and the contemporary. We pursue excellence wherever it lives and inspire our students to do the same.

The second is character. Across generations, Nightingale students have been known for the care they show one another and for the profound connections they form with their teachers. It is within these webs of support that character takes shape. Nightingale girls do not learn for themselves alone; they are asked to contribute to the learning of their peers as well. Nowhere is this more visible than in our peer tutoring programs, where girls step forward not simply as helpers or recipients, but as partners in one another's growth. At Nightingale, the most powerful role model for a Nightingale girl is another Nightingale girl.

The third is community. Our pursuit of academic excellence and character formation happens inside a vibrant community of 717 students from over 100 zip codes, nearly four thousand alumnae, and thousands of parents and past parents. And at Nightingale, community is not something abstract—it is something we build every day by championing today's girls. When an alumna or parent gives to the Nightingale Fund, they are not simply supporting a school; they are declaring their belief in the next generation.

Of course, Nightingale is not the only leading school to pursue academic excellence, character formation, and community; in fact, I would argue that embracing these three ideas is part and parcel of what makes a school "leading" in the first place. What makes us distinct is the unique weight we place on all three—and the way we hold them together. When we speak of the mind and the heart, we mean it quite literally: one is empty without the other. An exceptional thinker who considers only her own interests can be challenging, problematic, or worse. A kind person without skill or capacity lacks efficacy, which can also be challenging and even problematic. And a group of people who gather without an organizing purpose is simply that—a group. At Nightingale, our purpose is found in the minds and hearts of today's girls. Because we hold these elements in equal measure and weave them intentionally, community does not simply appear—community follows.

Miss Nightingale and Miss Bamford founded their school in the 1920s, a period of profound social and technological change. Today, we find ourselves in a similarly dynamic moment. And, as they did, we choose to believe in the extraordinary power of well-educated girls—not only to meet the world as it is, but to lead the world as it should be.



Paul A. Burke,
Head of School

Be heard.





Each fall brings a sense of possibility to Nightingale, and part of that excitement comes from the people who are new to our halls. As we open the doors to incoming students and families, we also open them to the professionals who will guide, teach, coach, and support them throughout the year.

This year, 31 educators and staff members join our professional community. They come to 92nd Street with wide-ranging backgrounds and meaningful experience, united by a commitment to fostering joyful learning and helping students grow into thoughtful thinkers, compassionate community members, and confident agents of their own lives.

We invite you to meet our newest professional community members!

Pictured: Some of the newest members of Nightingale's professional community.

NEW FACES AT NIGHTINGALE

Jennifer Aaron, Lower School Aide
Marie Bellec, PhD, Modern Languages Faculty
Lisa Bernstein, Lower School Counselor
Madison Bollart, Lower School Aide
Lorena Bryant, School Nurse
Yabome Casper, Assistant Head for Faculty and Instruction
Celia Chorzempa, Modern Languages Faculty
Catie Clark, Lower School Aide
Shannon Comer, Science Faculty
Ellie Cullen, Lower School Associate Teacher
Adeline "Addy" DeBella, Lower School Aide
Shazia Durrani, Head of Middle School
Sean Fedeli, History Faculty
Kate Fiscus, Director of Major Gifts
Margaret Garth, English Faculty
Jarena Harmon, Lower School Aide

Emma Humphrey, Computer Science Faculty
Victoria Jenkins, Class I Associate Teacher
Genevieve Madigan, Chief Financial and Operations Officer
Hilary McDonough, Director of Global and Civic Engagement
Abed Muriel, Director of Safety and Security
Amy Nichols, Middle School Counselor Leave Replacement
Bridget Morgan, Lower School Administrative Assistant
Katy Nowiszewski, Senior Associate Director of College Counseling and Director of Student Life
Alyssa Pyle, Computer Science Faculty
Diana Radonicic, Security Officer
Suzanne Saba-Hughes, Performing Arts Faculty
Melissa Soto, Advancement Database Coordinator
Christina Tuccillo, Lower School Librarian
Keziah Varghese, Mathematics Faculty
Ailie Wood, Mathematics Faculty

Meet the New Members of the Board of Trustees



ARUNA CHAVALI P'26 P'28,
PARENTS ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT, EX OFFICIO

Aruna is the mother of Arya '26, Anjani '28, and Adi. A lifelong educator and advocate for girls' education, she is passionate about empowering girls to discover their

voices, think boldly, and lead with confidence and purpose.

As president of the Parents Association, Aruna works to strengthen the partnership between home and school, centering the girls and fostering a genuine sense of belonging that reflects the heart of the Nightingale community.



LAURA REBELL GROSS P'25

With more than 30 years of experience as an organizational leader, school founder, and national expert in education, fundraising, and leadership development, Laura brings a deep understanding of values-driven leadership,

organizational impact, and human-centered strategy to her coaching practice. A certified executive coach through the Hudson Institute of Coaching, Laura integrates frameworks like Positive Intelligence and mental fitness to help clients lead with greater clarity, resilience, and impact. Beyond coaching, Laura serves on multiple nonprofit boards, advises leaders in the education and social-impact sectors, and is a seasoned public speaker who has delivered a TEDx talk on "Educating the Whole Girl." Outside of work, Laura is a mom to three college-aged daughters and lives in Brooklyn with her family. She is a passionate long-distance runner, voracious reader, enthusiastic theatergoer, and avid traveler—pursuits that keep her grounded, curious, and connected.



NAOMI WHITE RANDOLPH '93 P'27,
ALUMNAE BOARD PRESIDENT

Naomi is the mother of Soraya "Rye" '27, and is now in her fifth year on Nightingale's alumnae board. She received her BA in English at Macalester College and her MA in early childhood education from the City College of New York, and has

immersed herself in the world of education for 25 years. Naomi currently serves as AP for student life for the Ethical Culture Fieldston School and embraces, wholeheartedly, progressive educational philosophies and culture, and believes that early social-emotional and cultural awareness are key factors to the development of a child's self-awareness, empathy, and compassion for others. At Nightingale, Naomi was a dedicated athlete, Glee Club member, CAFE co-president, peer advisor, and more—in addition to being the first recipient of the Ruth Rosenfeld Prize. In recent years, Naomi has been a Nightingale Fund class agent and vice president of community and belonging in the Parents Association. She has also been trained and educated as an early childhood teacher, SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) leader, college and varsity swim coach, and as a professional singer.



HELIS ZULIJANI-BOYE P'34 P'34

Helis is the proud mother of twin girls, Elin '34 and Siena '34. She has spent two decades in finance and private equity industries, most recently serving as a managing director at Paine Schwartz Partners, a private equity firm focused on investments across

the food value chain. Prior to that, she spent ten years in a senior investing role at Soros Fund Management, where she focused on opportunistic private equity and growth equity investments across both developed and emerging markets. She began her career at J.P. Morgan as an investment banking analyst. Originally from Croatia, Helis moved to the United States on a boarding school scholarship awarded by the ASSIST organization, where she now serves as vice chair. ASSIST annually provides scholarships for approximately 180 international students from 30 countries to attend U.S. independent schools. Helis graduated from Harvard University with a degree in economics and currently serves on the Harvard College Fund Executive Committee. She enjoys tennis, skiing, traveling and spending time with her family in Croatia and Norway, where her husband is from.



Where the Journey Begins



How an offered hand at the blue doors—and the walk upstairs that follows—reflect the relationships at the heart of a Nightingale education.

Picture it: a beautiful Friday morning in September. The sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, and there's a buzz on 92nd Street. A crowd is beginning to form on the sidewalk outside the blue doors and it quickly becomes clear that this is not just any regular morning in September. Today, the Kindergarten class has arrived for their first day of school.

The Class of 2038 is ready to go. Wearing backpacks as big as they are and clutching the hands of their grown-ups, they line up against the brick wall of the Schoolhouse as they prepare to step into their next great adventure.

At the same time, the senior class lines up inside the lobby, bursting with excitement—because on this day, the Class of 2026 and the Class of 2038 take part in one of Nightingale's most cherished traditions. As each new Kindergartener steps up to the blue doors, she will be met by the head of school and a member of the senior class. Then, the two students, standing on opposite ends of the Nightingale journey, will walk into the Schoolhouse together.

Nola S. '26 felt the morning's significance come into focus as she waited to meet her Kindergartner. "It is such a pivotal moment of our senior year and of their Kindergarten year. Walking up the Kindergarteners serves as such a full circle moment to my own classmates who had been there since Kindergarten and got to complete their own 13-year cycle. To see them so happy and sad and taking in the moment... this tradition is one that all kids know and love and are eager

“I hope that [my Kindergartener] remembers her first day as the start of a wonderful experience, and I hope that she felt the warmth and joy of the Nightingale community. I also hope that she remembers the beginning of the new school year as an exciting time and that 13 years from now she gets to participate in the tradition and walk her own Kindergarten student through the blue doors.”

— Claire. P. '26

to participate in when they reach their last year at Nightingale,” she shared.

As the parents slowly retreat to watch this moment of connection unfold, each senior (or in some cases multiple seniors) crouches down to meet the newest community member on their level, offering a big smile and warm words of welcome.

Alexandra Field '02 P'38, Kindergarten parent and Nightingale alumna, recalled the moment it was time for her daughter, Gigi, to officially become a part of this longstanding and monumental tradition. “Those first steps through the blue doors are the magic of Nightingale—it’s the whole journey in a single gesture. How powerful it is for a girl to cross that threshold knowing there will always be someone to hold her hand, and how humbling to imagine the day she emerges as the young woman who leads the way.”

One by one, each small hand reaches for a bigger hand, and the two set off into the Schoolhouse to make the climb to the fourth floor where the Kindergarten teachers are waiting with open arms, ready to start the new school year.

This tradition highlights one of the cornerstones of a Nightingale education: the building of relationships. Shrujana I. '26 elaborated, “It allows students from completely different stages of life to be friends. I’m so glad I attend a school with K–XII under one roof because I can form connections with students in every grade. Walking up the Kindergartners introduces them to this important aspect of Nightingale as soon as they enter the Schoolhouse.”

The word “tradition” comes from from the Latin word tradere, which can be translated as “to transmit,” “to hand over,” or perhaps most poignantly, “to give for safekeeping.” This etymology feels especially apt



at this moment as parents lovingly launch their children into this phase of their educational lives. It also speaks to the threads that connect the past and present, which allow for the shared celebration of values across time, weaving generations of Nightingale students together. In doing so, they entrust one another with the honor of safeguarding an essential piece of what makes Nightingale the school that it is.

Class XII student Alice P. '26 found the morning to be a combination of bittersweet and nostalgic as she recalled her own experience walking up to the fourth floor with a senior at the start of her Kindergarten year 13 years prior. “I remember looking up to the senior girls as someone I aspired to be—confident, kind, and brave—and sooner than I thought, I became one of them.” She continued, “Having the opportunity to walk the Kindergarten students up on their first day of school is a privilege. And then seeing them in the halls throughout the year makes it even more meaningful. This long-standing tradition speaks to the strong community across all divisions here at Nightingale.”

To further honor these connections across the years, after the seniors dropped the Kindergarten students off at their homerooms, they gathered on the Upper School floor to attend an alumnae panel featuring graduates from 2001, 2012, 2013, and fittingly, 2014—who had walked the Class of 2026 upstairs years ago on their special “first day.” Throughout the panel, alumnae shared their insights

and encouragement about life after Nightingale—everything from their college experience to career paths to networking and navigating the wider world.

Now in its second year, this new tradition assists in launching the seniors into their final year at Nightingale.

The Class of 2026 brought a depth of thought and curiosity to their questions, which struck panelist Aarati Cohly '12. "A recurring theme during the panel was how uniquely Nightingale prepares students with strong 'soft skills,' something that truly stood out throughout our discussion. From navigating challenging work environments to deciding whether to pursue graduate school or entrepreneurship, the students' questions reflected a remarkable level of maturity, introspection, and forward thinking," she said.

"When I was in Upper School, I was a student tour guide. We used to tell prospective families and students that girls of all ages would cross paths every day—by design. The younger girls were meant to see where they were headed and the older girls were meant to remember where they had come from. By senior year, it felt like a privilege to stand at the blue doors and greet our Kindergarteners. We'd made it. We did it."

—Alexandra Field '02 P'38

For many, the first day of Kindergarten may not register as a significant memory in the grand scheme of things. At Nightingale however, it is a beautiful distillation of community, confidence building, and care—a celebration that binds alumnae together and one that continues to resonate long after that particular morning. In the blink of an eye, the Class of 2038 will be welcoming the Class of 2050 through the blue doors, stepping into their own full-circle moment on 92nd Street. •

"Watching [our daughter] Chloe step up to meet her senior and ultimately walk in was both exciting but also comforting. In our view, this Nightingale tradition really encapsulates and reaffirms what we thought of the school's culture. It felt like the whole school was welcoming them into the community."

—Patrick Lo P'38



A VIRAL MOMENT

The magic of the morning of Friday, September 5, was captured on video by Nightingale's communications department and shared on the @nightingalenc Instagram that afternoon. Set to Natasha Bedingfield's "Unwritten," the reel follows Kindergarten and Class XII students stepping into the Schoolhouse as the lyrics — "Live your life with arms wide open / Today is where your book begins / The rest is still unwritten" — underscore genuine moments of connection.

The video resonated instantly, with viewers eager to celebrate this heartwarming tradition. Many shared in the comments that they were moved to tears by the kindness on display. When this issue of *The Blue Doors* went to print, the reel had been viewed more than 1.2 million times, garnering approximately 75,000 likes and close to 900 comments. To watch, scan the QR code.



BREAKING GROUND ON THE FUTURE





**NIGHTINGALE MARKS THE “FIRST DIG” ON
A FACILITY THAT WILL SHAPE GENERATIONS
OF NIGHTINGALE STUDENTS.**

On September 27, members of the Nightingale community gathered for a historic milestone: the groundbreaking of the school's new state-of-the-art athletics facility on East 108th Street. Representatives of Nightingale trustees, students, alumnae, school leaders, and community partners stepped onto the site to witness the symbolic "first dig," marking both the start of construction and a bold step into Nightingale's future.

The ceremony opened with student leaders Emma T. '26 and Mingma S. '26, seniors and co-heads of the Upper School athletics board. "When we first heard about this project, we were excited to imagine a space designed just for us: Nightingale's very own athletic fieldhouse," said Emma. Mingma added that the facility is "much more than just games and competitions. For many of us, athletics has taught us leadership, sportsmanship, community, courage, and teamwork. These lessons have shaped who we are and they will stay with us long after our time at Nightingale."

Board President Kathleen McCarthy Baldwin P'31 P'33 spoke to the crowd about the significance of the project within the broader scope of Nightingale's mission. "When I think about the pillars of a Nightingale education...it's about academic excellence, it's about character, and it's about community. And what we are doing here represents our commitment to all three," she said. She also thanked the donors and



"[Miss Nightingale and Miss Bamford] arrived in New York City together. They saw in New York a unique potential, and they believed in the power of girls' education. And over one hundred years later, for the first time, Nightingale is breaking ground 16 blocks north, with their vision firmly held in our hearts."

—Paul A. Burke,
Head of School



trustees who are making the project possible: “When you know something could be better, and we have an opportunity to deliver excellence, this is a group of leaders in our school that gets after the problem. And this is a great example of it.”

Head of School Paul A. Burke reminded the community of how the vision for the facility was born out of necessity and aspiration. “We had a simple vision. Girls need a chance to play: something that is self-evident to all of us who have the great privilege of seeing girls grow from age five to the age of our seniors,” Mr. Burke said. He highlighted the facility as a promise not only to Nightingale students but also to East Harlem: “Please know that Nightingale is a place of its word. And when we say that being in East Harlem is a source of great pride for us, it is a source of great pride for us. And it is a longstanding promise that we are making to you that our girls need a space to play. And the girls in East Harlem also need a place to play.”

The program included remarks from New York State Assembly Member Eddie Gibbs, who formally welcomed Nightingale to East Harlem. “This community means a lot to me,” he said. “It’s about women. It’s about athletics. It’s about giving women a space to grow, to learn, to be able to educate, and to be able to give back.” He added that he looks forward to “a positive, productive, athletic relationship” with the school and to seeing “our young women succeed.”

Outfitted with Nighthawk-ified hard hats and shovels, students helped mark the official start of construction on the 64,000-square-foot facility by joining Head of School Paul A. Burke, Board President Kathleen McCarthy Baldwin P’31 P’33, and the Nighthawk in the ceremonial first dig. When complete, the facility will feature an indoor turf field, two gymnasiums, a dance studio, strength and conditioning spaces, team rooms, and multipurpose areas designed to support not only athletics but also community programming. The project is being guided by Nightingale’s partners at STUDIOS Architecture, with Zubatkin Owner Representation and Consigli Construction leading project management and construction.



As Mr. Burke concluded in his remarks, he emphasized the profound effect the new facility will have on each Nightingale student. “She is going to have a better chance to grow up healthy. She is going to have a better chance of putting away her phone and growing up in person with her classmates. She is going to have a better chance of serving as a leader. She is going to have a better chance of understanding the breadth and depth of New York City. That’s what we’re doing. That’s what we’re doing together.”

This landmark project is part of *Future Ready: Go Beyond*, Nightingale’s most ambitious capital campaign to date. Through this campaign, the school is investing in facilities, programs, and endowment to ensure that every student has access to transformative opportunities—in academics, in the arts, and in athletics. Over the course of the campaign, every member of the Nightingale community will be invited to join in a shared vision that celebrates progress, possibility, and the enduring impact of athletics and wellness. The community’s collective efforts will leave a lasting legacy for generations of Nightingale students. To get involved, please email futureready@nightingale.org. •

HOME SWEET HOMECOMING





This year's Homecoming weekend delivered all heart, all hustle, and everything that makes this community unmistakably Nightingale.

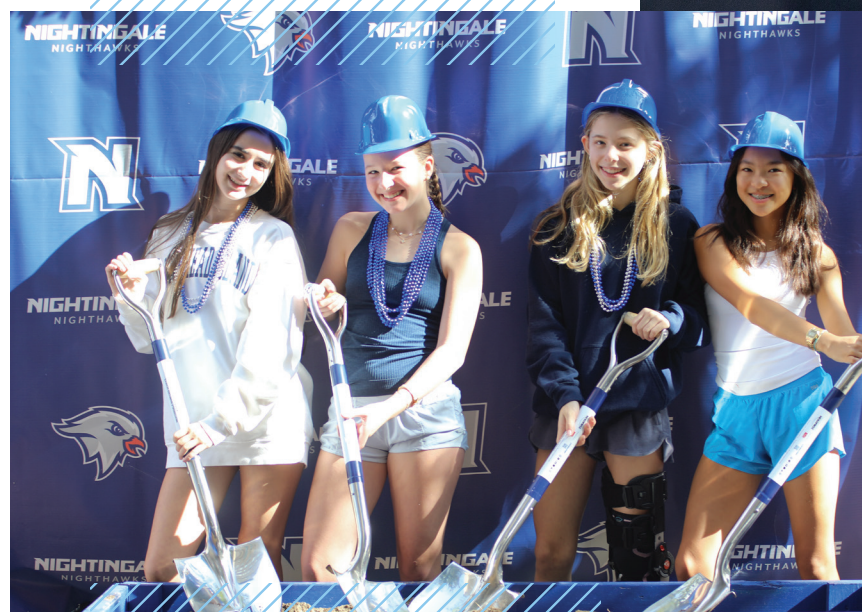
Just moments after Nightingale’s historic groundbreaking on its new athletics facility on East 108th Street, families and community members from all classes, K–XII, gathered on 92nd Street for one of Nightingale’s most beloved events.

Families and children—dressed head to toe in navy and silver—poured onto the block on Saturday, September 27, ready to rally and cheer on Nighthawk athletics as they took on Spence. The atmosphere buzzed with anticipation as classmates, teammates, parents, and alumnae reunited for one of the most spirited days of the year.

Nighthawk pride had already been building the day before, when students from all three divisions gathered in the gym for pep rallies on Friday. Led by the athletics department and athletics boards, each rally brought music, cheers, and friendly competitions that set the tone for the weekend ahead. Later that afternoon, community members headed to Asphalt Green to support varsity soccer, where the team put up a valiant fight against the Sabers, bringing energy, teamwork, and spirit to every moment on the field.

“It was amazing to feel the Nighthawk spirit in full force and see everyone come together to support the soccer game. The energy on the sidelines made the whole event feel even more special,” reflected Waverly M. ’27.

As families arrived at Homecoming the following day, they were welcomed by a festive lineup of spirit tables, games, and food, all generously staffed and organized by the Parents Association. Students created sun catchers, decorated pennant flags, applied temporary tattoos, assembled flower crowns, had their faces painted, and struck a pose at a photobooth and groundbreaking station. Families were also invited to



“Could there be a better day in the fall? The joy and camaraderie of homecoming is always palpable and 2025 was simply amazing. Celebrating the groundbreaking of our new athletics facility and all to come has me even more excited (if that’s even possible) for next year and beyond!”

— Ian Peers P’33 P’35,
Parents Association Vice President &
Vice President of Community and Belonging





“Even from afar, I was so proud to hear how families showed up for one another and created a joyful, welcoming experience for all. It’s more than an event; it’s a reflection of the partnerships, the pride, and the sense of belonging that define Nightingale. I’m grateful to our families for the generosity and spirit they bring to making our school feel like home.”

— Aruna Chavali P’26 P’28,
Parents Association President

participate in the inaugural Taste of Tailgate Showdown, competing for a special prize for their daughter’s class. Families had the chance to enter their dish to the Best Dessert, Best Side, and Best Chili competitions—adding a fun and friendly layer of competition to the day.

“Homecoming is one of those moments that truly reflects who we are as a parent community: engaged, supportive, and deeply connected,” Parents Association President Aruna Chavali P’26 P’28 shared.

As the tailgate was underway, students and families popped over to Spence 412 to cheer on Nightingale’s JV and varsity volleyball games. The energy in the gym built steadily as the varsity match unfolded, with our athletes battling back from a 1-2 set deficit, focused and determined to secure a Homecoming win. With each point, players gathered at center court to celebrate and encourage one another, demonstrating the resilience, teamwork, and sportsmanship that define a Nightingale athlete. In a nail-biting finish, varsity volleyball secured a thrilling victory in the decisive fifth set.



“Homecoming continues to be my favorite event of the year. Nightingale’s strong sense of community is so special, and seeing it in full force in the name of athletics is everything we want and more.”

*— Chloe Grimes,
Associate Director of Athletics*

“[This] game is by far one of my favorite memories. Even though we weren’t on our home court at Nightingale and lost the first two sets, the crowd was unbelievably energetic and we were able to push through for the last three sets and win,” Lily K. ’27 shared. “It was definitely a nail-biter, but I had so much fun and shared spirit with my team.”

After the festivities wrapped up and the Taste of Tailgate votes were counted, Homecoming excitement carried into the following week as the community eagerly awaited the results. Lauren Hobbs P’34 claimed the title of Best Chili with a crowd-favorite recipe for the fall tailgate. Her win earned Class IV a highly anticipated “Pajama Day,” much

“I also loved getting to watch the volleyball games, which gave me the fun chance to be both a spectator and a player throughout the weekend. Overall, it was a wonderful celebration of community and Nightingale pride!”

— Waverly M. ’27





"It truly feels magical to see the Nightingale community come together with such energy to enjoy a day full of fun."
 — Olivia L. '29



to the delight of all Class IV students. Sarah Pal P'37's layered dip took home the award for Best Side Dish securing an "Out of Uniform Day" for Class I. Closing out the competition on a sweet note, Rekha Nair P'33 P'36 won Best Dessert with her beautifully crafted mini apple pies. As a result, students in her daughters' classes, Class II and Class V, later enjoyed a joyful ice cream and pizza party.

"[Homecoming is] more than an event; it's a reflection of the partnerships, the pride, and the sense of belonging that define Nightingale," Aruna reflected. "I'm grateful to our families for the generosity and spirit they bring to making our school feel like home." •





Building a Life

How Anna Sobel '97
wove storytelling,
activism, and artistry
into purpose.

Anna Sobel has always been a storyteller.

Her first theatrical experience at Nightingale—a production of *Robin Hood* in Class III—is so seared into her memory that she can still recall her lines (all four of them) at a moment's notice. That early spark was followed by her star turn as Major General Stanley in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* in Middle School. To this day, she still has every single program from her productions on 92nd Street.

Anna arrived at Nightingale in Class I and recalls her time as a student (all 12 years) with great fondness. In addition to her flair for the dramatic, in Upper School she was an active member of CAFE (Cultural Appreciation for Everyone) and adored her English classes. Her love of creative writing took off at Nightingale, so much so that she was inspired to major in English at Wesleyan. But the future was still uncertain when it came to a potential career.

Inspiration struck the summer after Anna's freshman year when she attended Bread and Puppet Theater's final presentation of the Domestic Resurrection Circus, a two-day outdoor festival of puppetry, in Vermont. It was there that she began to see how puppetry could be used as a powerful means of communication and activism—essentially a creative cousin to journalism.

"I'd really never experienced puppetry like that before. Activism, especially for environmental causes, was and is still very important to me. At the time, I wanted to be a journalist. But when I saw how Bread and Puppet used puppetry to make an appeal to the emotions to the degree that one would leave a performance raring to go out there and take a stand; that's what really hooked me."

And that was that. She returned to Wesleyan, declared herself a puppeteer, and began working in the Wesleyan costume shop, teaching herself how to sew and designing costumes for mainstage productions.

She also began to work with Kids on the Block, a puppetry company that introduces audience members to the differences and similarities between people. Today, the company's puppets include individuals who have Down Syndrome, hearing and visual deficits, cerebral palsy, autism, ADHD, epilepsy, and learning disabilities. Introducing these individuals to children via puppets encourages them to ask questions that they may otherwise be embarrassed to ask a human being. This experience of breaking the fourth wall with an audience would later become an essential component in Anna's original puppet shows.

Upon graduating from Wesleyan in 2001, Anna made her way down to Washington, D.C. after noting an ad on puppeteers.org for a company that claimed "no experience necessary." After an audition that required her to showcase 38 different voices, Anna spent the next two years with Blue Sky Puppet Theatre, traveling to schools throughout the D.C. area teaching kids about important, age-appropriate topics. This included bully prevention, saying no to drugs, or even how to use math in real life outside the classroom—subject matter that one hopes students respond to and internalize—with puppetry being a magical way to do that.

As Anna's puppetry practice grew, so did her artistry and her desire to use her skillset and voice as a storyteller to communicate bigger ideas. After two years in D.C. learning how to perform educational puppet shows, she was ready to expand her knowledge and if possible, travel internationally. She began to consider what it would look like to study puppetry in India via a Fulbright scholarship. "India is so varied, it's like visiting many countries, and Fulbright restricts you to a single country for the nine-month period. Not the most romantic answer, but those were the logistics I was working with to craft my own DIY master's in puppetry, in a sense," she shared.

In a classic case of being in the right place at the right time, a bright yellow pamphlet caught her eye in the National Library one afternoon. Produced in India for people in India, it contained information about teaching oral rehydration via puppetry. It was meant to be. She noted, "Finding that pamphlet meant that I had a mystery to solve: where did the idea of using puppetry to spread the social messages of newly independent India come from, and why was it so successful? It turns out puppetry was a natural fit because it was already such an integral part of the culture, even in the most remote villages."

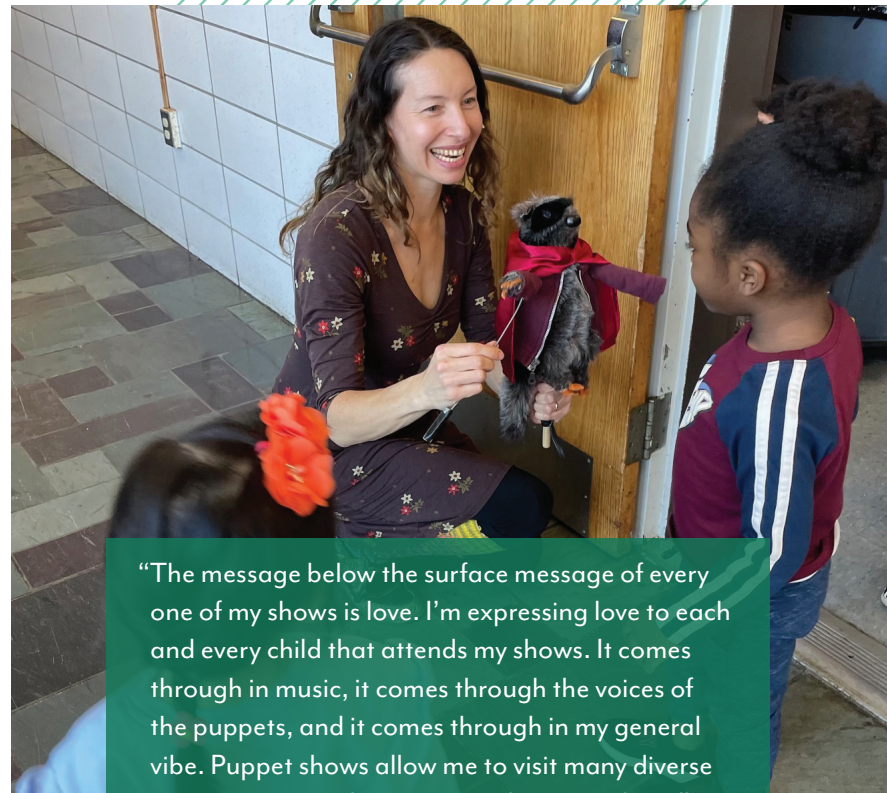
On the plus side, Anna knew that she was stepping into a country with a celebrated history of puppetry, with references to the art form

dating back to the ninth century BCE. Each region is known for a particular style—marionettes, shadow puppets, rod puppets, or glove puppets—and has developed storytelling through those means to emphasize religion, mythology, social expectations, and even the government's agenda.

However, her nine months in India were not without challenge. During her time there, she faced numerous setbacks: one school had just lost all of their puppets in a flood and a teacher she was set to study with had relocated to Delhi with no estimated date of return. Despite these seemingly dead ends, she was able to unearth unforeseen opportunities and learning.

Ever resourceful, she scoured a website that listed every puppeteer in India and ended up making many cold calls to ensure that her time in India was well spent. This included studying shadow puppetry in Kerala, working on a television show in Delhi that spoofed current events via puppetry in a quick three-minute segment after the actual news, and even presenting at a conference on education and puppetry. Her nine months in India were transformative and gave way to an understanding of herself as an artist in a way that she hadn't before.

"Having just a couple of puppet construction techniques in my toolkit before I left meant I had some currency to trade, and could meet other artists on their own turf, rather than as just a researcher or journalist. It really changed me to be able to think of myself that way. When I first arrived in India and my plans of studying puppetry at Darpana Academy fell through, this funny fellow named Ramesh, who spoke very little English, used to take me around Ahmedabad by bike every day and inspire me by showing me art and introducing me to artists and puppeteers. I still remember how he used to shout 'This the new idea!!!' That's how I learned to 'fill the artist's well,' as [writer] Julia Cameron puts it,



"The message below the surface message of every one of my shows is love. I'm expressing love to each and every child that attends my shows. It comes through in music, it comes through the voices of the puppets, and it comes through in my general vibe. Puppet shows allow me to visit many diverse environments and connect to whoever is there."

to keep refreshing my creative well by exposing myself to other artists and their work,” Anna said.

Upon her return to New York, Anna was at another crossroads. She knew she wanted to work with puppets and she knew she wanted to make a difference in the world, but what did that mean at this point in her life? Reality hit like a ton of bricks. “It was the hardest year of my life. I was torn in so many different directions and plagued by insecurity and the uncertainty of having the blank canvas of my life spread out before me. Until then, I had planned and anticipated what came next and how to excel at each phase. To find myself without any clear path ahead was very scary,” she recalled.

She began to take classes in literacy and early childhood education at Bank Street College, thinking maybe she would use puppetry in a career as a reading specialist. But that fit wasn’t quite right, so she enrolled in the educational theatre program at NYU, where she ultimately received her master’s degree. In her heart of hearts, though, she knew she was an artist, a performer, and a storyteller, and it was time to get out of her own way and found her own puppet company.

And thus, Talking Hands Theatre was born in Brooklyn in 2004. She worked steadily for four years, creating her own shows for children’s birthday parties, until the financial crash of 2008.

Unsure of what her future in puppetry in New York City looked like, and after a three-month stint in Thailand working with Burmese puppeteers, she packed up her belongings and moved to New England to begin anew with Talking Hands Theatre. “I had always wanted to live in the country...A camp counselor of mine that I had kept in touch with had built a cabin in Western Massachusetts, and she said I would love the way this area combines rural beauty with city-like cultural offerings—the best of both worlds! Now I drive a lot for each show, but my commute takes me past rivers decorated in ice, steam rising off the local lake, and the morning sun peeking through autumn leaves. That beats the NYC traffic any day!”

Anna now lives there with her husband, a musician and fellow collaborator, and her two sons. Her goal is to build one show each year—all the way from a sketchbook of ideas, to a fully realized script, then the building of the puppets, the creation of the voices, the construction of the stage, the composition of the songs, the rehearsals, and finally the performance. Her goal with each show is to engage the audience in a way that includes them as active participants and gives them something to walk away with.

In doing so, she has made a mark on the world and ultimately created a positive ripple effect. She takes pride in her ability to break the fourth wall and leave audience members with a feeling of connection—to her, to the characters, and to the story—often in 45 minutes or less.



“It was a matter of me finally getting clarity about being an artist and setting about making it happen. At first, until I really honed my method and got practiced at it, creating a brand new show was like walking through molasses, but I had to just pull through and start making things!”



Anna, cane in hand, performing in *The Pirates of Penzance*.

“Each show has a moral, educational concept or underlying message that I’m using the medium of puppetry to convey...I know I’m successful when children laugh, when they focus on the show instead of what happened before or afterwards, and when they want to make a person-to-person connection with me after the show,” Anna noted.

Her most recent show, *Robotic*, tackles social-emotional learning and asks the question: “Do robots have feelings?” as a way to dive into seven human emotions. Other shows in her roster include, *Whale Tales* (meeting undersea creatures), *Fairies of the Seasons* (understanding how the natural world changes with the seasons), and *Big Daddy Z and the Greeks* (an introduction to the well-known characters of Greek mythology). In addition to these more “academically” inclined shows, Anna also creates puppet shows that are connected to her Jewish background that tell the stories of the high holidays and/or cherished traditions.

These days, Anna’s schedule is full, as she performs all over New England at libraries, community centers, birthday parties, churches, synagogues, and schools. Her stick-to-itiveness and commitment to her passion have allowed her to build a thriving career in an industry that does not promise wealth or lasting success. And yet, here she is, nearly three decades since her first summer at Bread and Puppet, living an intentional life full of creativity, storytelling, and performing—exactly what she has always loved. The dedication required to have reached this point is not for the faint of heart though, and upon reflection, it’s evident that her time at Nightingale laid the groundwork for her drive and focus, ultimately achieving success in a somewhat out-of-the-box career.

During her time on 92nd Street, Anna was not a part of the “mainstream” crowd, as she calls it. In fact, she took pride in not conforming and remembers always being filled with an unshakeable confidence to be herself. Her teachers not only encouraged her creativity throughout Lower, Middle, and Upper School, but they also drilled into her the idea that she could do or be whatever she wanted to in life.



“I remember seeing a short performance before the mainstage show [at Bread and Puppet Theater] about a jailed journalist in South America, and I was completely blown away by how the puppeteers took information that could potentially be dry and transformed it into a work of art that not only informed you about the situation, but tugged on the heartstrings in a way that you just couldn’t ignore.”



And, in an all-girls’ classroom, she felt free to take intellectual risks and fully own her abilities, without the pressure to dim her light or pretend that she wasn’t smart. As a result, Anna cultivated a strong enough belief in herself to ultimately ride out the inevitable struggles—financial and emotional—that arose with freelance work. She never gave up on her dreams to pursue puppetry full time.

“Growing up as a Nightingale girl, I felt empowered. The idea of a glass ceiling was simply not conceivable to me. At a difficult time in my life, when I returned from India and had to decide on my next step, it was overwhelming to have such freedom. Now that I’ve seen firsthand the boundaries that race, income, and gender still pose around the world, I never take those freedoms for granted. I feel it as an injunction to live my best life!”

And of course, there are the exceptional time-management skills that she cultivated as a student at Nightingale. She learned how to use time efficiently and how to manage expectations and her workload. That preparation helps her push through the moments of internal resistance that inevitably arise when she feels overwhelmed during the creation and production of a new show, not to mention her juggling responsibilities as the mother of two young boys. But she always knows she will get her work done—because she was taught how to do just that.

In the 1997 edition of *The Bamford*, Nightingale’s yearbook, Anna’s senior page included a quote from American artist Sister Corita Kent that begins with the following:

“We have all this beauty around us and yet we, who are grown-ups, often forget about it and lose ourselves in our offices and imagine that what we are doing is very important work. I hope you will be more sensible and open your eyes and ears to this beauty and life that surrounds you.”

Reading it in 2026 feels almost prophetic.

Anna’s story is one of passion and resilience, artistry and perseverance. Fiercely independent and proud to march to the beat of her own drum, she saw the life she wanted for herself and she built it—puppet by puppet. ●

An Evening *on Pointe*

This November's Book Fair reached new heights as the Nightingale community welcomed Misty Copeland, a groundbreaking voice in the world of ballet, for Authors Night.

Nightingale families, alumnae, and professional community members packed into the H. Dale Hemmerdinger Auditorium for a special event during Book Fair: Authors Night with special guest Misty Copeland. As the first Black woman promoted to principal dancer at American Ballet Theatre in its 75-year history, Misty has redefined what it means to lead—with strength, grace, and courage. She has danced the most important classical roles from *Firebird* to *Juliet* to the *Sugar Plum Fairy*. She is a *New York Times* bestselling author of *Life in Motion*, *Ballerina Body*, *Black Ballerinas*, *The Wind at My Back*, and the picture books *Bunheads* and *Firebird*. In 2022, she launched the Misty Copeland Foundation and its signature program, BE BOLD, which works to expand access, diversity, and inclusion in dance, especially ballet.

After a brief welcome from Performing Arts Faculty Ian Bell, the room welcomed Misty to the stage. She began by sharing insights from her early years—specifically, one of her first loves: journaling.

"I had a really hard time finding my voice and purpose and something I was passionate about... one of the first things that really allowed me to start to process things I was going through and really started to find my voice, was through journaling and writing...it's another form of expression and I feel like it's so related to, and connected to, dance and movement and art. Then, ballet came into my life. And I feel like it's just so important for me—and a responsibility that I feel—to represent ballet in a way that feels accessible to everyone—that ballet belongs to everyone. If you have a body, you can move it. This story in particular, the *Bunheads* series, has been a passion of mine."

The book, she explained, is based on her experience as a young dancer at a small ballet studio in California, and "this kind of eclectic group of little bunheads," she said. "We all came from different communities and different cultures and we all found this commonality through our love of



New York Times Bestselling Author of *Firebird*
MISTY COPELAND
Illustrated by SETOR FIADZIGBEY



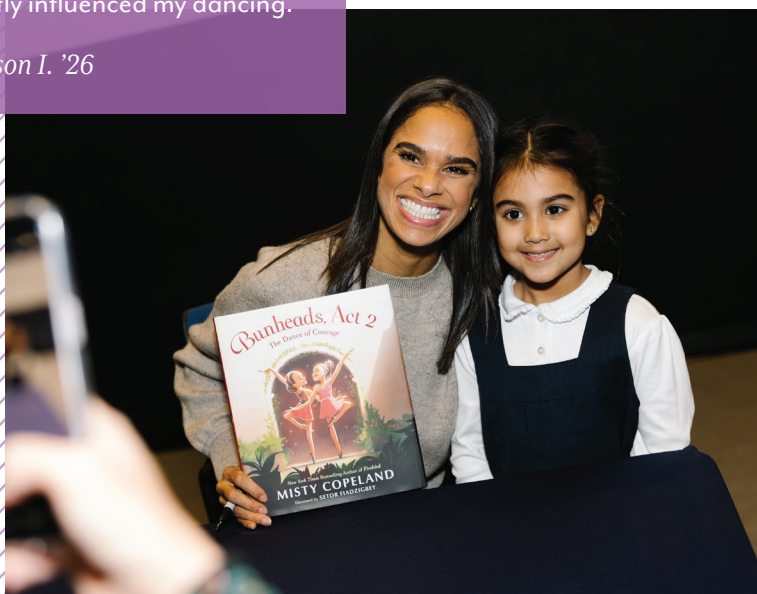
dance. Being in the studio together felt like this safe space for us that we could be supportive of one another and go on this journey together and learn ballet.”

Misty dove right into her latest picture book, *Bunheads, Act 2: The Dance of Courage*—a story celebrating resilience, friendship, and the power of following your dreams. In the book, Misty’s best friend Cat recommends to their ballet class that they learn *Don Quixote*, the ballet and tale about a knight searching for his one true love. Their teacher agrees that *Don Quixote* would be a great next performance. While Misty hopes to get the role of Cupid, Cat wants to be Kitri, who she thinks is the real hero in the *Don Quixote* story. When Cat becomes injured and is unable to perform, she decides to turn her disappointment into resilience and pride.



“As a young, mixed-race dancer who also started later than most, seeing Misty in person meant so much to me. It felt empowering to meet someone who reflects parts of my own journey and has greatly influenced my dancing.”

—Alison I. '26



Following the reading, Misty welcomed speakers from each division to join her on stage. Senior Alison I. '26 asked Misty what helps her stay inspired and motivated on days when training feels tough or discouraging.

“There’s inspiration and motivation in so many places,” Misty began. “I mean, writing, reading, music...I think something that has been an ongoing inspiration for me, and something that keeps me going, is being around young people and being inspired by the next generation.”

Class VII student Äva M. '31 asked if there had been a time in Misty’s career where she had given up on something, and reflected on what she could have done differently.

Misty reflected on her passion for ballet, describing it as more than an extracurricular but something she needed; an outlet. “When I think about things that I maybe wish I would have stuck to...maybe playing an instrument.”

Class IV student Kasey W. '34 asked Misty what advice she would give to younger dancers.

“Look within and remember why you do it,” she said. “I think something we often forget in dance, but particularly in ballet, is to have fun and the joy of it...it’s so important to surround yourself with people who are going to be there for you.”





“She never gives up on things she believes in—and always fights for what she believes in.”

—Äva M. '31



To conclude, Misty took questions from the audience, generously sharing her insight and advice. She encouraged students to admire the talents of others instead of comparing themselves, and spoke about how her life experiences inform her writing and what it was like to take her final bow.

“It’s a decision that I made over five years ago; I felt ready to move into this next chapter,” Misty said. “I’ve always known and felt that the stage, and American Ballet Theater in particular, was a platform for me to do many things—and ballet was a platform for me to do many things...It’s been 25 years now, that I’ve danced for American Ballet Theater, and I feel like the work that I want to do [is to] is to bring ballet to more communities, and make it as accessible as possible... I feel like I’ve been a body on the stage for so long and I feel like I can have even more of an impact at this point being off the stage and sitting on boards, and through my foundation and so it felt like time. So, taking that final bow—I was so ready to do it.”

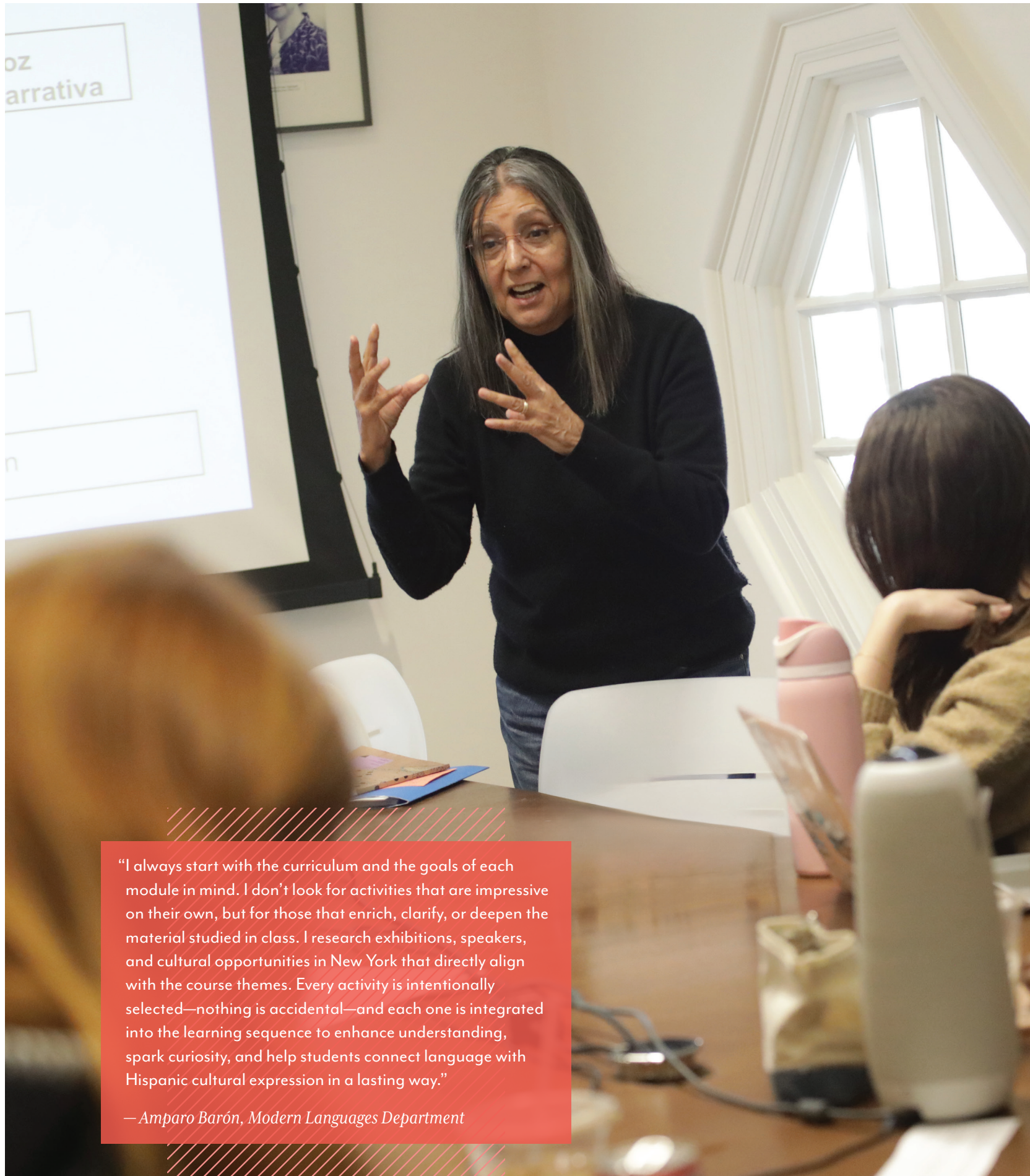
Community members were then invited to the Lauder Black Box Theatre where she took photos and signed copies of her new book *Bunheads, Act 2*, in addition to exchanging smiles and hugs with guests and students.

While nervous to meet Misty, Äva recalled being awed by her role model. “When it comes to her, the expression ‘never meets your heroes’ doesn’t apply, because she is truly amazing.”

“Misty has inspired so many young dancers to pursue their passions, even when facing societal barriers,” Alison reflected. “Her drive, determination, and resilience have allowed her to rise above expectations, and those qualities make her a powerful role model.”

This Authors Night was a powerful reminder that the arts, like sports, demand the same discipline, boldness, and passion that change the world. •





“I always start with the curriculum and the goals of each module in mind. I don’t look for activities that are impressive on their own, but for those that enrich, clarify, or deepen the material studied in class. I research exhibitions, speakers, and cultural opportunities in New York that directly align with the course themes. Every activity is intentionally selected—nothing is accidental—and each one is integrated into the learning sequence to enhance understanding, spark curiosity, and help students connect language with Hispanic cultural expression in a lasting way.”

— Amparo Barón, Modern Languages Department



Using Art as a Lens into Language

Señora Amparo Barón has turned language learning into art exploration.

One afternoon in late October, with the fall semester well underway, seven Upper School students gathered in room 303 on the third floor. This is not a typical classroom, but a space designed for dialogue, centered around a long conference table and chairs, a whiteboard, and a projector. It is an intentionally chosen setting for Señora Amparo Barón's Advanced Spanish: Culture, Literature, and History course, also known as PensArte, where students use art as a lens to explore and analyze the fine arts of 20th-century Spain and Latin America. The course is conducted entirely in Spanish.

As each student arrives to the classroom, they greet Señora Barón in Spanish and find their seats. On this particular afternoon, students welcomed a guest lecturer—one of many that visit throughout the semester. Señora María del Carmen González, a freelance educator at The Whitney, led a lecture and discussion about women muralists, Mexican Muralism, and women surrealist artists. Each image Señora del Carmen González displayed sparked curiosity and conversation amongst the students, sharing their thoughts and interpretations of the art in front of them. Then, students created their own murals while Señora del Carmen González continued her lecture; an immersive, multisensory learning moment.

This is just one example of the rich learning opportunities thoughtfully baked into this advanced, year-long course. By the time of publication, students had already welcomed several guest speakers and led an assembly featuring salsa dancers and musicians. They also participated in immersive experiences around New York City, including seeing *Buena Vista Social Club* on Broadway and taking a Spanish-language tour at The Museum of Modern Art to study the work of surrealist artists Salvador Dali and Joan Miro. Together, these experiences offer a glimpse into the robust and carefully scaffolded curriculum designed by Señora Barón, who traces her passion for teaching back to her own experience as a student.

"My vocation for teaching began in a literacy program during my last year of high school, where I helped older adults learn to read and write," said Señora Barón,

who has been teaching for 35 years. “Since then, I’ve experienced the magical and transformative power of language—a vital tool for creating human and cultural connections. When I faced the challenges of learning a second language myself (English), I understood that teaching Spanish would allow me to share an essential part of my identity, my language-learning experience, and my desire to open windows into Hispanic culture. Over time, my approach has evolved into a more experiential pedagogy in which students learn grammar while engaging with culture in authentic, meaningful ways. PensArte was born from the idea of using the arts—music, painting, literature, film, and architecture—as the central lens of the course so that Spanish becomes a living medium for dialogue, reflection, and connection.”

In Advanced Spanish: Culture, Literature, and History, students explore a wide range of topics drawn from the contemporary culture, society, history, art, and literature of the Spanish-speaking world across Europe and the Americas. The curriculum spans poetry of the Golden Age, regional culinary traditions of the Caribbean, Catalan modernist architecture, Simón de Bolívar and the wars of South American independence, the films of Pedro Almodóvar, bolero and tango, the art of Goya and Velásquez, social realities in Central America and the Caribbean, and Pre-Columbian civilizations. Throughout the course, students continue to refine their speaking and writing skills, strengthening their ability to express complex ideas across a broad range of subjects.

“When designing [this year’s] curriculum, I considered several factors: current museum exhibitions in New York, guest speakers who could address the arts studied in each module, and [Nightingale’s] Hispanic Heritage Month celebration,” Señora Barón explained. “This celebration allowed me to connect the music module—particularly the musical production of the Latino community in New York and the Salsa movement of the 1960s and 1970s—with the course content.”

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, PensArte students hosted an assembly for their Upper School peers. They opened with a presentation

in Spanish on the 20th century salsa movement, and then welcomed Foreign Affair Band to perform and teach a few salsa steps. Students in Classes IX through XII were soon on their feet, dancing and laughing together while deepening their understanding of rhythm, identity, and cultural expression.

Reflecting on the course so far, senior Lydia S. ’26 shared that she is most proud of her presentation to Upper School at this assembly, which gave her the opportunity to practice both her Spanish and public speaking skills. “This class enabled me to build confidence in all aspects of Spanish,” she said.

Soon after, PensArte students attended *Buena Vista Social Club* on Broadway, a musical inspired by the lives of the legendary Cuban musicians behind the Grammy-winning 1997 album of the same name. Told through a blend of historical moments and fictionalized storytelling, the production moves between the 1950s and the 1990s, tracing the musicians’ early years, their experiences during the Cuban Revolution, and their eventual reunion to record the album.

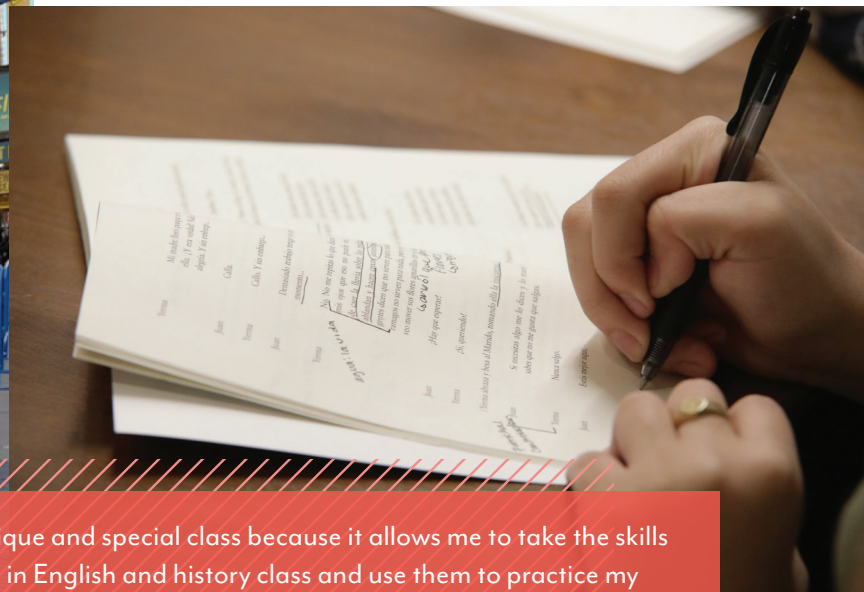
“Before going to see *Buena Vista Social Club*, we listened to Salsa music in class and discussed its rich history, but I had not yet felt the true power of it,” reflected Lydia S. ’26. “When we went to *Buena Vista*, my classmates and I immediately understood the significance of Salsa as a cultural movement. We saw the story of Omara Portuondo and felt the music on another level. This experience was crucial to my [connection] and my classmates’ connection to the Salsa movement.”

A typical day in the PensArte classroom is designed so that students experience art entirely in Spanish, balancing analysis, creativity, and conversation. Depending on the module, a class may begin with a brief review of the day’s objective, followed by a cultural or linguistic warm-up connected to the previous lesson. Students then engage in a presentation or analysis of an artwork or artist through images and



“Our Spanish program, along with our other modern language classes, aim to find a balance between comprehension and expression on the one hand, and a strong foundation in the fundamentals of grammar on the other. Doing so sets them up to be able to get the most out of our advanced course offerings, such as this Advanced Spanish course (called “PensArte” for its approach to thinking [pensar] about art [arte]), where students are expected to use their language skills to delve into literature, art, culture, and history at a university level.”

—Alex Klikunas
Chair of Modern Languages Department



“This is a unique and special class because it allows me to take the skills I’ve learned in English and history class and use them to practice my Spanish skills. Not only am I learning how to use Spanish as if I were a Spanish speaker, but I am learning terminology and techniques of art that I would learn in a regular art history class. It is also so amazing that our class is able to take excursions to apply what we learn in the classroom to the real world. The practicing of Spanish doesn’t end in the classroom: our teachers still converse with us in Spanish on our trips and our tour guides we’ve had in museum tours have also spoken to us in Spanish as well.”

—Stephanie A. '26

short videos, taking notes along the way. This work is followed by guided discussions or small-group activities to interpret the artwork or assigned readings, such as *Eclipse de siete lunas*. Classes often conclude with a review of specialized vocabulary related to each fine art.

As a senior, Stephanie A. '26 is most proud that her years of Spanish classes at Nightingale have concluded with a class that is “so interesting and well-rounded,” she said. “We are not deliberately learning more grammar or technical things, but we are practicing confidence in our Spanish skills.”

Through exposure to art, lectures, and advanced texts, students develop greater fluency, precision, and confidence in both speaking and writing, while naturally expanding their vocabulary and refining their grammar.

For Señora Barón, art serves as both subject matter and catalyst for deeper learning.

“Art encourages reflection on identity, history, social issues, and culture. Creative tasks invite risk-taking, self-expression, and collaboration,” she said. “[Students] develop resilience and understand that mastery of a language is a gradual, beautiful process.”

That philosophy, colleagues note, shapes not only what students learn, but how they experience language itself.

“[Amparo] has a particular way of making students feel that what they are learning together is of the utmost beauty and importance, almost as if they are being let in on a secret because of their Spanish studies,” said Chair of the Modern Languages Department Alex Klikunas. “She also makes them see beyond just the next quiz or test, and really think about what it means to be a speaker of another language—an honorary member of another culture—for the rest of their lives.”

At Nightingale, modern languages are an integral part of a student’s experience, with Spanish beginning as early as Kindergarten. As students enter Middle School, Nighthawks can choose another modern language to pursue, building a strong foundation for Upper School study. With this scaffolding in place, students in advanced courses like PensArte are able to dive deeper into their linguistic and cultural learning.

In those classes, students move beyond the mechanics of language study, “interacting directly with experts and artists, and challenge themselves to engage with native speakers in a nuanced way, learning how to think critically about the history and culture of the people who speak their target language—not just the verb conjugations and grammar. They can begin to make comparisons between their own culture and identities, seeing both what is similar and different from their own experience. They also come to see their own multilingualism as a tool—a lifelong skill that opens doors and broadens their perspective,” Mr. Klikunas said.

For Señora Barón, that long-term impact is central to the course’s purpose.

“Beyond language, I hope this class becomes something they remember for life—looking back on their final year of Spanish with joy, pride, and a deep sense of connection to a cultural and geographic space they most likely only knew superficially,” she reflected. “I want them to leave not only with vocabulary and grammar, but also with the artists and cultural expressions that touched them, broadened their perspective, and stayed with them long after the course ends—language as a window to a different world.” •

Where the Music Lives



Through the Sack Family Community Engagement Endowment Fund, Performing Arts Faculty Samantha Spiridellis immersed herself in Greek folk traditions in Crete to bring living musical heritage into the Nightingale classroom.

At the end of the academic year, it is understandable for a teacher to want to pack up their classroom and take a well-deserved break from an active learning environment. And yet, for Samantha Spiridellis, the summer is an additional opportunity to expand her knowledge through new experiences and immerse herself in different cultures. In fact, seizing these moments is a core part of her identity as a teacher—to always be open to learning and especially from master teachers who come from a variety of different backgrounds.

“I am fascinated by learning new things, trying new things, and going to new places. I think it’s an important practice as an educator to always be enriching oneself in something new to stay inspired and to stay connected to the learning process. I want to always be in a state of growth, and challenging myself in new environments is a great way to do so,” Ms. Spiridellis noted.

The result is the joy of returning to her classes with a renewed sense of purpose and exciting new music and techniques to share with her students. Last summer, this enrichment took place in Crete, where she spent two weeks in music, singing, and folk dancing workshops.



The spark for this experience was deeply personal. Half-Greek herself, she has always felt a strong pull toward the language, music, and dance of her heritage. In the Lower School music program, students already explore global music and traditions—learning folk dances from England, Finland, Sweden, Russia, and Ireland. But she found herself wondering what it would mean to go further. What might be possible if she traveled to Greece, studied these traditions firsthand, and brought Greek music and dance into the Nightingale classroom for the very first time?

To make this dream a reality, she applied for the Sack Family Community Engagement Award at Nightingale last April. As stated in the award description, it is meant “to create opportunities for students and members of the professional community to make a deeper, more ambitious impact in community engagement, locally or globally.” Named in honor of Elizabeth Sack '17 and Charlotte Sack '19, the award celebrates their commitment to community engagement at Nightingale and beyond in their post-graduate life. The goal is to support “a course of study, travel, or other experience that significantly furthers an existing academic interest, or the pursuit of a specialized opportunity in the area of community engagement emphasizing relationships and partnerships.”

In her application, Ms. Spiridellis wrote, “In addition to ticking curricular boxes, this work is powerful in that it allows me to experience and bring back an increased awareness of how music and dance have been and are used for social utility. Greek traditional music and dance enhance community building and community strengthening, and will add to how that is expressed in the music classroom, and Nightingale. Not only will we continue to improve upon the rich curricular work in LS music, but participating and learning from masters and locals will help me understand a deeper sense of the culture that allows one to absorb nonverbal cues and nuances only one can gain by engaging with the source.”

Within her application, she described several organizations she would be interested in working with in Crete which were recommended to her by Dimitri Carabas, founder and director of Meraki Laographic Arts, a local Greek music and dance education organization based in Astoria, Queens.

As she pressed submit on her application, it felt like taking a leap of faith. “I was facing a crossroad and was unsure about what direction to take and said to myself, ‘If I get the award, then this will provide me with the clarity on what to do next,’” Ms. Spiridellis recalled. When she learned she had been awarded the funding, she was ecstatic. Her gratitude towards Nightingale for being able to engage in this type of professional development is boundless.



“Books containing collections of music are a marvelous way to learn new music. But it is breathing the air, speaking with people in person, exchanging cultures, hearing the rhythms, hearing correct pronunciation, and getting accurate translations that make all the difference in enhancing the true sharing of knowledge with the young learners I get to teach here at Nightingale.”



“The mission of this study will allow me to have authentic interactions with organizations and locals who have life-long practices of the traditions. Music and dance are powerful methods of storytelling, community building, and historical memory in motion.”



“I love to learn. For me, being able to have hands-on experiences is such a quick way to take in new information. I am forever grateful for how many different learning-through-travel opportunities I have been able to receive being a teacher at Nightingale.”



The first week of her studies in Crete took place at Meronas—Cretan Music and Dance Workshops, where she studied Cretan violin with Stratis Skarakis, focusing on the style of music from Kissamos to accompany dancers in the Syrtos and Pentozali dances. A violinist since the age of six, Ms. Spiridellis found this week to be eye-opening and exceptionally creatively fulfilling. Classes would typically run from 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. followed by an extended break and then pick up again from 6:00–10:00 p.m. But the night was far from over at that point. Participants would gather for a late dinner, then inevitably pull out their instruments, with music and dancing following well into the night.

“Some of the songs were old poems being sung, some were being traded back and forth amongst singers. The music had its own pulse beyond tempo, where once it started, it was its own living being that continued

on and on and on. These music sessions would last beyond sunrise. We still had class at 10:00 a.m. so I had to eventually go home. Let’s just say I got less and less sleep as the week went on, though I learned how significant these gatherings were for understanding the music we were learning in the workshops,” Ms. Spiridellis recalled.

Her second week was spent at the Labyrinth Musical Workshop studying Greek folk songs from different regions of Greece including islands, the Balkans, those affected by the establishment of borders, and those exiled from homelands in Asia Minor. This workshop was women-only and followed a similar schedule to her first week of workshops. Here, she was able to study with Greek singer and music historian Martha Mavroidi. To have access to her wealth of knowledge surrounding Greek history and the diaspora, observe her passion for music, and to be a part of such an inclusive learning environment was the experience of a lifetime.

Ms. Spiridellis was also fortunate to be able to study with Greek composer and lyra player, Kelly Thoma that week as well. “Getting to play with her students in a multi-instrumental ensemble with various international people was inviting, eye-opening, and life changing. She was extremely encouraging, genuine, and loved to connect with me and her students. She truly welcomed me to her class even though I was registered for the singing workshop. It was a fantastic eight-hour experience,” she said.

When Ms. Spiridellis thinks about the main takeaway from her time in Crete, she’s quick to share that there’s nothing like cultural immersion. In her mind, true understanding comes from being fully present, witnessing traditions firsthand, and in her case, being fortunate to participate in them. As a music teacher, her experience reinforced her philosophy of fostering genuine, inclusive musical engagement in her classroom. By bearing witness to a living cultural tradition, it helped her to think about how to welcome more students in and create a vibrant, collaborative environment where everyone can connect and “jam” together.

She shared, “Sometimes as teachers, we come into the classroom with a lesson, a plan, or a goal—but it’s really about the experience of making music together when it comes down to it. How can we really just play music, have fun, sing, and in the process, everyone gets to find ‘their’ thing. Maybe this student really loves singing, this one really loves dancing, or whatever it may be. I just want to continue to help students find what is their thing within an ensemble. Then, build that space and community within each class, so they can find their own sense of self within that.”

With spring on the horizon, Ms. Spiridellis is hopeful to host Dimitri Carabas to teach Greek folk dancing with the Lower School, incorporate playing Greek instrumental music in her classes, and of course, continuing to lead with curiosity, inclusivity, and a sense of play, all of which were essential components in her workshops from the summer. ●

Groundbreakers in



Athletics have long been a powerful force in the lives of Nightingale students, both on the field and beyond. Groundbreakers in Sports brought together voices from across generations to reflect on the role athletics play in shaping who students become, and why investing in that journey matters now more than ever.

On October 8, the Nightingale community gathered in the H. Dale Hemmerdinger Auditorium for Groundbreakers in Sports, a panel discussion and celebratory reception honoring the transformative role athletics play in the lives of girls and women. Timed to coincide with Homecoming and Nightingale's recent groundbreaking for its new state-of-the-art athletics facility, the evening marked both a celebration and a look toward what's next for Nightingale athletics. Through the voices of alumnae and parent leaders from across a wide range of professional paths, the program explored how athletic experiences shape confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose that endures well beyond competition.

The panel was moderated by Kathleen McCarthy Baldwin P'31 P'33, president of Nightingale's board of trustees and former global co-head of real estate at Blackstone. A past swimmer and a Nightingale parent, Kathleen framed the

Sports

CELEBRATING THE POWER OF ATHLETICS

conversation around athletics as both a personal and institutional priority—one deeply connected to Nightingale’s mission and its investment in a facility designed to support girls as athletes, teammates, and leaders. As she noted in her opening remarks, the new athletics facility represents “a defining opportunity to expand what is possible for our students—on the field, in the classroom, and in how they see themselves as leaders.”

Jane Simmons Bullock '97 P'30 P'33, associate director of marketing programs at ESPN, brought the perspective of a media executive who has spent nearly two decades advancing women’s sports on a national and global stage. Drawing on her professional work with major athletic organizations and her own experience as a Nightingale alumna and parent, Jane spoke to the visibility, credibility, and momentum of women’s athletics—and the importance of investing early in spaces and programs that allow girls to see themselves as competitors and changemakers.

As chief commercial officer of New York Road Runners, Christine Burke P'27 offered insight into the long arc of athletic participation and leadership. A lifelong endurance athlete and a Nightingale parent, Christine reflected on how sports cultivate discipline, teamwork, and motivation—qualities that carry into professional life and community leadership. Her perspective underscored the value of athletics not only as competition, but as preparation for complexity, challenge, and collaboration.

Bari Greenfield P'34 P'36, vice president of enterprise partnerships and World Cup business operations at Major League Soccer, shared a global view of sports as both industry

and connector. With experience spanning professional leagues, major events, and youth athletics—and now as a parent of two Nightingale students—Bari spoke to athletics as a universal language that builds belonging, confidence, and opportunity, especially for girls navigating new environments and experiences.

Dr. Eva Hudgins Kerby '06, an assistant attending dermatologist at Weill Cornell Medicine and founder of the Dermatology Center for Diverse Skin Complexions, reflected on athletics as a formative force in identity and leadership. A former Nightingale team captain and athletic board leader, Eva connected her experiences on the field to her work in medicine—highlighting how teamwork, accountability, and confidence learned through sports continue to shape her professional life and service to others.

Documentary director and producer Sasha Whittle '13 brought a creative lens to the conversation, linking the endurance, focus, and resilience required in competitive running to the demands of filmmaking. A Hall of Fame athlete at Nightingale and former collegiate team captain, Sasha spoke to athletics as a stabilizing force—one that provided structure, confidence, and persistence during moments of challenge and transition.

Following the panel, guests gathered in the Susan Hecht Tofel '48 Gymnasium for a festive reception, where they viewed renderings of Nightingale’s new athletics facility and engaged with the architects bringing the project to life. Together, the evening’s conversation and celebration affirmed a shared belief that athletics at Nightingale are not ancillary, but essential to how students grow, lead, and care for one another. •

Shelf

Awareness

A Lower School visit to the New York Public Library sparked thoughtful conversations about banned books, free expression, and what it means for young readers to find—and use—their voices.

As students cross the threshold into the Schoolhouse, they are greeted by two empowering words: Be Heard—the first foundational lesson baked into every aspect of a Nightingale education. Also positioned just above the blue doors in the vestibule, the same words are visible both when a student enters and when they leave, serving as a powerful reminder to carry their voices beyond 92nd Street.

Being heard is encouraged starting in Lower School, through a myriad of lessons. This fall, through one unit, Class III students had the chance to dive into the idea even further, exploring real-world examples of how voices and stories can be silenced. Each year, Class III reads *Ban This Book* by Alan Gratz—a novel that follows the story of a middle school student whose favorite book gets banned from her school library. This reading is then used as a jumping-off point to a

*If there's a book you
hasn't been written*



You really want to read, but it
isn't yet, then you must write it.

TONI MORRISON



larger discussion about how they can appropriately question the status quo, and make change when they feel it is right.

“Initially, our students are always inclined to accept that the book [in the story] should have been banned and that the adults probably had a good reason, until they find out which book it is! The book uses real examples of commonly challenged children’s books, such as *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E. L. Konigsburg, *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, and the Junie B. Jones series—titles the children are very familiar with and love,” explained Class III teacher Christina Milbourne. “The outrage from the class every year is palpable! From there, we discuss how people can have different opinions on what is appropriate or valuable, and how to respectfully disagree while allowing each other the freedom to make choices that are right for them.”

Serendipitously, this fall, the New York Public Library was hosting a program titled, “Banned: Censorship and the Freedom to Read”—an engaging, age-appropriate tour connecting directly to the novel students had just finished reading. In early October, Class III had the chance to visit the exhibit on a field trip.

“Developmentally, eight- and nine-year-olds are beginning to think outside of themselves and become more world-aware,” Ms. Milbourne

shared. “They can take new perspectives and think critically about their beliefs. In Class III, we spend a lot of time encouraging students to develop their reasoning, by writing persuasive essays in English and by proving their strategies in math class. The exhibit at the NYPL is a perfect example of how people [around] the world can have vastly different opinions on the same topic and how one person or group’s opinion can influence policy for many.”

During the first portion of the trip, students and chaperones gathered in the historic main lobby and learned about the differences between neighborhood/circulating libraries and research libraries. From there, students moved into the permanent exhibition “Treasures,” where they were shocked to see the original stuffed animals that inspired *Winnie the Pooh*, and learned that A.A. Milne’s books were banned for containing talking animals. Class III also got to see examples of ways people resisted book bans, such as a fake cover for the book *Ulysses*.

Class III then took turns voting on whether a book should be banned based on its theme, later learning that these themes had been real reasons those books had been banned in the past. Students ultimately agreed that just because a topic is difficult or contentious, does not necessarily mean the book should be banned.



“While our students are very at home in our Lower School Library on the fourth floor, it was wonderful to see them getting comfortable in a different library environment. To cap off the visit, students received blank booklets to record observations about sketch objects from the exhibit, and they loved this hands-on activity.”

—Rebecca J. Urciuoli, PhD
Head of Lower School

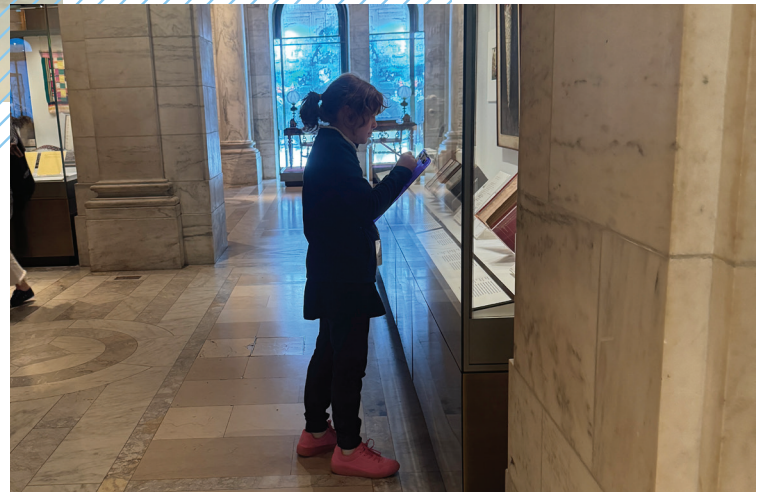


“We hope students remember this experience and realize how important it is to respect each other’s opinions, value our freedom of speech and diversity of thought, and think critically about the information they acquire and opinions they hear as they grow up.”

—Christina Milbourne,
Class III Teacher

“Going to the NYPL and hearing the stories behind real banned or challenged books, they saw clear examples of authors and readers who spoke up for expression, identity, and honesty, even when it wasn’t easy. For third graders, this made the idea of ‘being heard’ feel very real. It showed them that asking questions, sharing their thoughts, and making informed choices are all important parts of being a reader.”

—Christina Tuccillo,
Lower School Librarian



“Going to this exhibit and seeing the physical aspect of censorship really hammered home the idea that books have power... Seeing the real effects of censorship and how people had to work around it in their lives, really helped the students recognize the importance of intellectual freedom and the value of having access to a wide range of voices,” Lower School Librarian Christina Tuccillo shared.

Throughout their visit, Nighthawks recorded observations in booklets they received upon arrival, in addition to sketching items they were curious about during the exhibit.

“Many students found it impactful to learn that throughout time books and shows have been banned for centering on intermarriages or featuring biracial characters,” Director of Museum and Cultural Partnerships Gabriella Kula said. “We agreed we’re lucky to live in a time when all types of people and marriages are not just accepted but celebrated. In all, it became clear that NYPL has a major mission of protecting everyone’s freedom to read and we are thankful to live in NYC, where we have access to such important institutions.”

Ms. Tuccillo shared that, “[Students] learned that their voices matter, even in situations that may feel small, like choosing which book to read.” •



See What's News at Nightingale



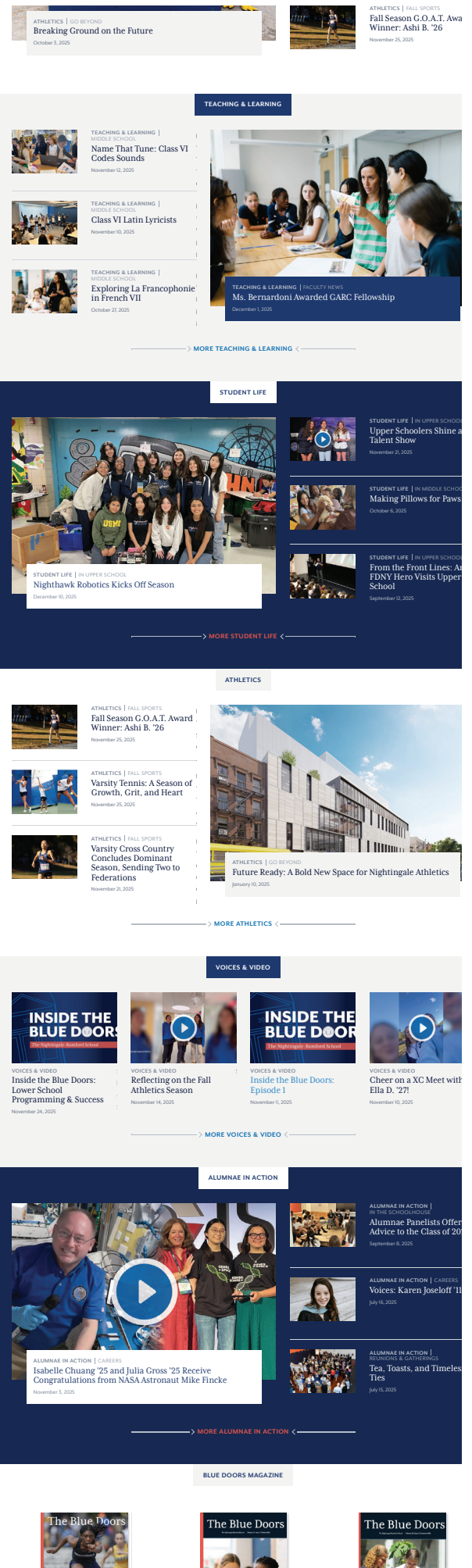
This fall Nightingale debuted a refreshed and reimagined Nightingale News website—a dynamic home for the stories that define our community. From classroom discoveries and faculty innovation to athletic achievements and alumnae milestones, our new platform brings the full Nightingale experience to life in a more vibrant and accessible way.

Designed with our community in mind, the updated News feed makes it easier than ever to explore our stories. A variety of categories create a clearer window into every part of school life. Expanded photo galleries and integrated videos offer a richer, more immersive look at the people and moments that make Nightingale extraordinary each year.

Most importantly, this new platform allows us to share stories more frequently and more fully. Throughout the year, you'll see a steady flow of features, spotlights, celebrations, and snapshots that highlight the curiosity, creativity, leadership, and joy that animate the Schoolhouse every day.

We invite you to explore the new News feed at nightingale.org/news and visit often—there will always be something new to discover. Whether you're a current family, an alumna, or a friend of the school, this is your place to stay connected with the latest chapters of the Nightingale story.

nightingale.org/news



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By making a planned gift, you become part of a special community of donors ensuring the Nightingale mission continues.

Join the Luscinia Society today!

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If you are interested in designating a planned gift to Nightingale, please provide Nightingale's tax ID number: 12-1106710 to your financial advisor.

For more information, contact Director of Major Gifts Kate Fiscus at kfiscus@nightingale.org or 212-933-6774.

Class Notes



Class notes are published twice a year in each issue of *The Blue Doors*. If you have any updates you would like to share with your classmates, please complete our online form at nightingale.org/sharenews.

1950s

Mary Burt (Holmes) Blume '54

"Just sending greetings to all of you, always grateful to remember my Latin and Ancient History teacher, Mrs. Clara Wade Boecklin, as I come into contact with so much referring back to that history, especially a recent trip around Sicily in the Mediterranean."

Patricia Lee Eoyang '57

"Off to Hong Kong in October for the third time this year, while I can still travel! My older son, after retiring from Goldman at 51, took a full time job based in HK last year. My husband and I lived there from 1996–2008, when he taught English Literature and Translation, so it is familiar territory for me. While we were there, several of my former NBS classmates came to visit: **Annabel Stearns**, **Cornelia Wadsworth**, **Gay Booth**, and **Jill Hyde** although I was unable to meet

Jill then (I have since seen her in Providence and Kona, Hawaii). Continue to text and chat with **Dede Bonnett**, and we have exchanged home visits, too. Keeping busy at home playing tennis and piano, but missing my husband since 2021. My sons push me to travel together. We have gone to France in the summer and Asia in the fall. Xmas is always spent in Kona, Hawaii, where my older son has a home we have used for the holidays since 2004. Trying to stay healthy with acupuncture, massage, and a personal trainer! Hope everyone from the class is staying well and continuing to enjoy life. P."

Gay (Booth) Greenleaf '57

Gay shares that, in mid-November, she is moving to Senior Living after two years fixing

up the house that she and Frank moved into 60 some years ago. "Looking forward to finishing family history projects and enjoying the view."

Jane (Goldstone) Hilles '59

"I made two short trips to New York this year: In the spring, I saw **Ordway Clifford** and her very fine cat Thomas. In September, I attended the celebration of life for **Nancy Adams Downey** who, as most of you know, died in July. Nancy's family organized a beautiful gathering with shared memories of Nancy and music. Nancy had an excellent singing voice; she especially enjoyed singing harmony with her children and with fellow artists. Nancy's large family gathered to sing "The Hallelullah Song" with Nancy's daughter, **Anne Downey '81**, playing fiddle and daughter Liz writing the verses. Nancy was generous, loyal, talented, and kind, but most importantly to me, she was my first best friend in first grade at Nightingale. She was a best friend to so many of us."



1960s

Susan Torrey Coppock '63

As a class correspondent, Susan recently gathered her classmates to share some updates—and more specifically, book recommendations—from a recent Zoom. Here is what they had to say:

Diane de Vries Ashley recommends any thriller written by Daniel Silva whose protagonist is an art restorer who doubles as head of Mossad, the Israeli CIA. “They are always entertaining good stories.”

Susan Cole recommends *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson. “It is a letter from an elderly pastor to his young son and is filled with grace and beautifully written,” she says. Susan also recommends *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett which has the intertwining of lives at a particular moment of Latin-American officials, an opera singer, and a band of terrorists.

Lee (Habermann) Wadelton recommends *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1001 Nights* translated by Malcolm C. Lyons. “I love the way every chapter, e.g., Night 140 begins: ‘Morning now dawned and Shahrazad broke off from what she had been allowed to say. Then when it was the hundred and fortieth night, she continued ‘I have heard O fortunate king...’”

Mary Mansfield recommends *James* by Percival Oliver which is a revisiting of the story of Huckleberry Finn told from the point of view of Jim, the enslaved person that escaped. She also recommends *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks.

Dana Ricciardi is making her way through the Oxford English Dictionary “which was started in 1857 and has 500,000 entries! It was created by volunteers and was not published as a whole until 1928.”

Linda Neshamkin recommends *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver and *Moby Dick* by Melville which she is listening to. There is an annual reading of the work at the New Bedford Whaling Museum each January and Linda has participated in that reading by reading her assigned part during the *Moby Dick* Marathon.

Virginia Stuart recommends *Horse* and *James* too but also recommends *Nature's Best Hope* by Douglas Tallamy, a how-to book on turning your yard into conservation land and a habitat for wildlife.

Susan Coppock recommends *Middlemarch* by George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) “that is beautifully written while touching on early 19th century marriage, women’s social status, social and economic change. I could go on, but will restrain myself! Also, *Hamnet* by Maggie O’Farrell which is a fictionalized account of the death of William Shakespeare’s son Hamnet in 1596 at age 11 from the plague. It focuses on the profound grief of the parents and their bond after this loss.”

“We talked about Mrs. Norris and how lucky we were to have had her as a teacher. As you all will recall, we read Virginia Woolf in her class as well as essays by E.B. White. I have no doubt that our love of reading and the wide range of choices above go back in great part to her.”

Lee (Habermann) Wadelton '63

Met with St. Mark’s Church, Ladies Luncheon Group, Westhampton Beach, NY on October 4, 2025. At my table of were: **Mrs. Wolgumuth** (mother of **Bryn Wolgemuth '16** and **Gwynne Wolgemuth '20**), **Mrs. Marwood** (mother of **Abigail Marwood '94** and **Emma Marwood '04**), **Mrs. Palmer (Marcia Tuthill '56)** and myself, **Mrs. Wadelton (Lee Habermann '63)**.

Regan (O’Connell) Roos '65

“A difficult year to be sure. I am six months healed from breast cancer. Two surgeries. Then, while in recovery we learned that my dear grandson has some significant mental health issues that were well masked. The whole family has been in crisis mode for six months. Politics have not been to anyone’s liking, at least where I live. But there is hope yet. No one is giving up on the health of our nation, my grandson’s health, and my own. Life is still very good and very much worth it.”

Diane Falk '65

Diane shares that she has volunteered her expertise to organizations such as the Universal Peace Foundation, United to Serve America, the International Education and Service Unification Project, the Washington

Times Foundation, and the International Academy of Arts. As part of a project of United to Serve America, she served as a professor at the Washington Saturday College, an affiliate and community outreach project of Howard University. In addition, in 1992, Diane volunteered as one of 300 staff members to teach English and philosophy classes in the Ukraine for 3,000 students from the then-recently-dissolved Soviet Union, also known as the Commonwealth of Independent States. Through this program, she was able to connect with students through education because although they lacked material things, they were not lacking in enthusiasm or intelligence. For her contributions and accomplishments to her field, she has been recognized by organizations such as the Universal Peace Federation, The Washington Times, and the District of Columbia Library Association. In May 2013, Columbia School of General Studies published an article about Diane Falk, celebrating her long career in education.

Dove Bradshaw '67

“In October, I exhibited in Iceland at Kambur Gallery at painter Gunnor Orn’s farm with 100 sheep and seven Icelandic horses and in Reykjavik at Corridor Gallery owned by painter Helgi Fridjonsson—nine works: six made there—three boulders of found black lava married with white calcstone brought by my art dealer Sam Jedig from Denmark (similar to the White Cliffs of Dover), a salt sculpture subjected to a slow drip of water from a separatory funnel, an Angle titled *White Enough*, a plaster equilateral triangular mural, a black sand Angle Painting gathered from one of the notorious black



sand beaches where the undertow drowns too many of the unwary each year. (We waded on the expansive and inviting low waves well warned.) Along with three earlier works: the first White on White Angle Painting from 2000 made in Denmark, 2/O, a glass timer and level based on the original 1971 made at MIT now at MoMA, and *SPACETIME*, 2012, a film of it functioning as a timer when vertical and a level when horizontal scored to John Cage's Ryoanji 1983–1985. While there, I was able to see a bit of the amazing countryside from a giant waterfall, a glacier, the highlands where Dune and moonscape films are shot, soak in a hot spring pool, witness a hot spring eruption, and take saunas at the farm led by our host, sleep in my tiny hundred year house and feed the long maned and tailed fat and furry Icelandic horses, and in Reykjavik see their contemporary art museum and the Perlan geological museum packed in nine days guided by Sam Jedig who came from Copenhagen with his car by ferry for four days and four nights, arriving in the north where the reindeer are. Next trip!"

Mary K. Frank '67

Mary is an artist living in Berkeley, California. "I collect good news wherever I can find it. I write postcards to encourage voting, put up signs, and make donations to do a small part in turning things around politically. I am grateful for my life in Berkeley, for humor, nature art making, dogs, good food, friends, and family, of course."



Nancy (Goebel) Rossi '67

"My son John Rossi and I had the honor in September of interring my Dad's ashes at Arlington National Cemetery. He and so many others left their college educations after Pearl Harbor to enroll in Columbia University's Officer Training Program. My dad was a Lieutenant, serving



in the Pacific Theater during the Battle of Midway. The interment service was even more awe inspiring and patriotic than we had imagined, conducted by Chaplains and officers, volunteers, and young sailors on their service rotation there. All have devoted their lives to Arlington's fallen heroes and their families. A proud moment indeed for me and my family. I continue my research at Trinity College on Connecticut's 18th c paper mills and printers, expanding my previous work on selected 18th c paper mills and printers in Barcelona, Madrid, and London. Also, I am learning more about my ancestor, one of the founders of Hartford, Stephen Post, who built the Rev. Thomas Hooker's first church here in 1636. John and his wife Christina, Anna, and Jake are at Taft and Lyla is at Renbrook. I am so lucky to see them often. I started each of them at two years old to paint in my art room on 140lb 18" x 24" paper. We continue to have the best time messing about in my art room with shelves full of different supplies. I feel Nightingale's Mrs. Winkelhorn must be smiling from above each time I share her advice to hold your breath when you paint or draw a straight line. I also am a member of Hartford's Town and County Club where I teach a fun class in Latin (big hearts to Miss von Heereman and Mrs. Boecklin!) and work at the next door soup kitchen. Puppies and dogs continue to be a big part of me, and I cherish my long distance affiliation with NYC's dear St. Bart's. Thank you so much, Nightingale. I never would have graduated with my PhiBetaKappa BA at age 63 and received my MA at 67 without the brilliant Nightingale teachers sharing how important it is always to learn more. And more. Extra love to my Class of 1967. We are so lucky!!"

Gail Karlsson '67

For NYC's City of Forest Day on October 4, Gail Karlsson, organized a tree walk and bird banner display at City Hall Park, calling attention to some of the trees and birds featured in her recent book, *Meeting Trees in City Hall Park*. "The annual city-wide event is meant to raise awareness of the importance of the city's 'urban forest.' Trees from around the world have been planted in the parks, and even though they may have little in common, they still form a community, connected with each other—and with us too, as neighbors."



Claudine Clarke "C.C." Elian '68

C.C. shares that her creative artwork with words and writing systems is receiving increasing recognition across a wide range, from academia such as at Art Center College of Design, to the calligraphy community, where she was interviewed twice this year at calligraphy conferences based in Canada, to its use in video games (Little Rocket Lab). Her view

Save the Date for

Reunion 2026

MAY 15

We look forward to welcoming you and our classmates back to the Schoolhouse for Reunion 2026 to reconnect with your friends, fellow alumnae, faculty members, and the Nightingale community.

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026

Join us for Schoolhouse activities, including morning tours and classroom visits, the Reunion Luncheon where alumnae award winners are honored and the Class of 2026 will be inducted into the Alumnae Association, and closing the day with the Cocktail Party. Celebrating their 50th Reunion, the Class of 1976 is invited to a special breakfast with Head of School Paul Burke.

Get involved as a Reunion Rep and learn more at:
nightingale.org/reunion



is that each writing system has its culture, and that includes Elian script. That culture is expressed in her book *Being the Organic Self*, whose second edition came out in November. She continues to share her life between Washington State and Switzerland. (Presentation on how Elian script became widely used: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FAfBbDBRUE>)

1970s

Karen (Oberlaender) Oertley '70

Brandon "Jill" (Wilson) Evitt and I spent time together in NYC last December and again this past August. Both of us still love to travel...Lots of walking keeps us young!"



Melissa Gordon '71

"After a lifetime in NYC, I am finally packing it in and moving to a condo I've owned for about six years in St. Petersburg, Florida. It's huge! I've had so much life here, but frankly I don't love it any more. At least if I don't love Florida, I'll have sunshine. Wishing you all the best."



Nora (Seligman) Favorov '72

In October, Nora took advantage of a work trip to Boston to get together with her teen-years BFF **Rachel Russell** in Littleton, MA. "There's nothing like the friends of your childhood! We shared fond memories of NBS and our classmates and at times reverted to our juvenile selves."



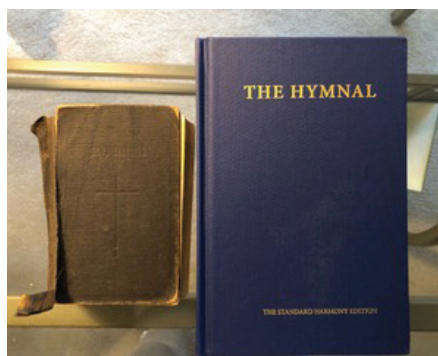
Rachel "Dolly" (Hall) Russell '72

"In April, **Josette Bailey** and I met for dinner in the city. We covered as many topics as possible in a short amount of time. In October, **Nora (Seligman) Favorov** visited me at my home in Massachusetts. We spent the day reminiscing, catching up and laughing. I appreciate my lifelong friends from NBS more and more each year."



Anne Hemenway '73

"Since leaving NBS, after eighth under Aline Vicary's astonishing and protective wing, a beautiful, extraordinary and historically relevant year (1968-1969), I am focussed on poetry, film, theatre and ecological teachings, alternative medicine and the arts. The biggest best umbrella (there are many) is the BIONEERS Annual Conference, now in its 37th year. See you under eucalyptus and redwood trees at University of CA/Berkeley, CA, March 2026: Bioneers.org! Our class



meets regularly thanks to **Rosemary Begley** and others. Much to do in violent and urgent times. I am glad for my smart, hip, compassionate women."

Priya (Butani) Nye '76

"I continue to love living in the beautiful Boulder, Colorado area. I do quite a bit of hiking, photography, and attending local blues music events, as well as volunteering with Colorado Housing for All, working on housing justice initiatives in my spare time. My older son, Ted, lives on the UWS, and we've done a lot of fun things during my frequent visits to the city. We walked past NBS one day, and he couldn't believe how different it looked compared to his suburban schools! My younger son is near me in Broomfield and is an avid musician. No daughter-in-laws yet! I retired from the State of Colorado in 2022 and now work full-time as a case manager at a nonprofit agency that links disabled clients and their families with various state support services. It is very rewarding. I continue to tutor middle and high school students in English and Social Studies, so I get to keep wearing my teacher hat, and these kids keep me on my toes tech-wise! I'm looking forward to this May and our 50th Class Reunion!"

Catharine Guiher '77

"On June 28, **Elizabeth (Libby) Latshaw** visited NYC from her home in France and had dinner with **Maggie Noble**, me, and **Vicky Kriete**. **Lisa Tomaino Zemann** was supposed to join us but had to cancel. The four of us have not been together in the same place for years, so it was great to have the opportunity to catch up. It was a nice mini-reunion of 1977 classmates who rarely have the opportunity to be in the same room together." Catharine also shares that she and her classmate **Vicky Kriete** attended Homecoming and coincidentally ended up sitting next to the niece of their classmate **Lisa Tomaino Zemann** (sister of **Natasha Fekula '89**) at the NBS vs. Spence varsity volleyball match.



Pictured is a photo of Catharine, Vicky, and Class VIII student Ella. Vicky and Catharine also recently went to lunch with classmate **Jill Hamilton**. In addition, Catharine shares: "For those of you who remember our exchange program Senior year with Maumee Valley High School in Toledo, Ohio, you might also remember **Corinne Lewis** who stayed with my family when the Ohio students went to Nightingale, and whose family I lived with when we went to Ohio. Corinne and I have kept up over the years and, although she has mostly lived in Brussels where she raised her three sons, she is currently living with her husband in France, and they often visit New York City where some of their sons have been residing. Attached is a photo of Corinne and me taken in June."

Victoria "Vicky" Kriete '77

Pictured: Victoria at "42nd Street and Second Avenue carrying The United States Flag in Distress (upside down). Protesting during the United Nations General Assembly against President Donald Trump and his authoritarian aspirations."



Gina Bandini '78

"I've been based in Fairfield County for 20 years, working as a college advisor and private tutor. I support students through the full application process—from essays to strategy—with a focus on clarity, ownership, and emotional truth. This past year, my seniors were accepted to all but one of over 60 schools, earning more than \$900,000 in merit-based scholarships. It's deeply rewarding work, and I'm grateful to help students find their voice without losing themselves in the process. You can find me on Instagram at @thewholemotioneducator."



Rebecca "Kim" Jordan-Nass '78

"After years of travel choreographing and directing on six continents, I have decided to stay put in NYC and I opened a boutique pilates studio on the UWS, catering to private individuals who want to elongate both their fitness regime and their bodies. It's a perfect next chapter of health and wellness."

Alison (White) Pena '78

A NYC-based grief coach, Alison has published articles on being a caregiver for her 102-year-old mother-in-law for *Business Insider* and been featured on ABC 7 Chicago, giving tips for grieving people during the holidays. Her late artist husband left her 546 gorgeous artworks—landscapes, cityscapes, still life, and nudes—which she continues to offer for sale. She was co-host for the *Grief Belief* podcast and will be starting as host of the *Find Your Way Beyond Grief, Heartbreak and Loss* podcast in November. Alison is the author of *The Bad Widow Guide to Life After Loss: Moving Through Grief to Live and Love Again*. She is also a contributor to two anthologies,



Writrix Volume One: Coloring With Words and Cassandra Speaks. Alison and her partner, Wayne, live in Harlem and enjoy walking, cooking, reading, open mics, music, art, travel and everything our wonderful city offers.

Ann Seligman '78

Ann attended the Pillows for Paws community event at Nightingale. Students from all three divisions and their parents attended this event to make toys and blankets for animals in city animal shelters.

Julie "Jules" Curtis '79

"We completely forgot to snap some photos, but **Christina Wright** and I met up at my house in CT in May for homemade pizza and schmoozing, and it was as if 40-something years just melted away (take that, Botox). We had a fantastic time reminiscing about NBS days, and we each shared memories of moments spent with each other's parents (Christina remembered my dad—a physician—giving her a booster shot before her trip to Hong Kong, and I remembered going with Christina to her dad's artist's loft in Soho). It was a beautiful reunion and both our respective partners weren't even remotely uninterested in our stories (there were many)."

'81 + 45 = FUN*



Reunion 45 | May 15, 2026

*Years of NBS Math paying off!

1980s

Andrea Demirjian '81

Pish posh on counting the years...Count the memories! We can't wait to see you. Your 45-Fun Reunion Committee, Andréa, Elena, and Jennifer.

Jennifer (Mah) Lawson '81

"Our younger son got married in Sugarbush this summer. **Sarah (Tappen) Windham** and her husband Corey joined the celebration, braving chilly temperatures and precipitation, the latter of which, thankfully, held off during the ceremony! Such a gift to have them there joining new joyful events, with lots of fun, warm memories!"





Honoring Nancy Kingson, Nightingale's former Head of Middle School

Nancy Kingson, beloved former head of Middle School, died on September 26, 2025. Nancy was a colleague and mentor whose presence shaped Nightingale from September 1978 through June 2009. Her dedication to our community, her devotion to students, and her gift for guiding colleagues left an indelible mark on our school.

Nancy was part of a remarkable cadre of women who led Nightingale for a generation. During her 31-year tenure, she taught English and American history and was named Middle School Head in 1990 by Joan McMenamin and remained in that role for almost the entirety of Ms. Hutcheson's twenty year Head of School tenure. When Nancy retired, she passed the mantle with grace to those of us who would attempt to do our part to carry her legacy. She then embraced her retirement with joy—spending time with many of those same friends and, most significantly, with her family, her beloved husband Charley, her daughter, Jennifer, Jennifer's partner Clifford and her two grandchildren, Valerie and Jeffrey Kingson Bloom.

We give thanks for Nancy's life, her laughter, and her love of this school. Her example continues to guide us, and her spirit remains woven into the fabric of Nightingale.

Alison (Sellin) Weiskopf '81

A group of NBS alums were on hand to celebrate the graduation of Alison's son Will from Elon University. Front Row: **Lucy Kindred Galbraith, Alison Sellin Weiskopf, Olivia Sellin '15, and Sarah Lipe '18.** Back Row: **Dina Scheffler Nemeth, Stephanie Ardrey Hazard, Andréa Demirjian, Daphne Sellin '16, Victoria Weiskopf '18, and Annabelle Nemeth '16.**



Kim Green '83

"Hello everyone! The second annual You Have the Write to Heal Women's Retreat was a great success. Covered by the local news, to be covered in AARP newsletter as a curated event for women 45+ and several invitations to bring my therapeutic writing retreat to other cities. Would love to see an NBS-er there next year. The dates are October 15-19, 2026. For more information visit: www.wordslc.com"

Cathy Alfandre '84

"I'm excited to share that I've published a book: *Breaking Free from a Malignant Manager—Strategies to Reclaim Your Confidence and Career*. It shines a light on this pervasive problem and provides concrete strategies to help people survive and move forward. It was more than two years in the making, and I am grateful to have had invaluable support from **Nicole Alger** at key points in the process, as well as wonderful encouragement from **Tara Jones**. I hope you'll check it out and let me know what you think!

Breaking Free from a Malignant Manager

STRATEGIES TO RECLAIM
YOUR CONFIDENCE & CAREER



CATHY ALFANDRE



Alison (Chaitman) Curry '85

"It was wonderful to see everyone at Reunion this spring! I have since seen **Heather de Forest Crosby** on Nantucket, and **Jennifer Mills McSweeney** for a road trip. I have been working as an Interim ED/CEO for the last few years, running a charter school network among other things, but my last interim role won my heart and I am leading House of Speakeasy. Easy full time, and I hope for many years. We run a literary cabaret monthly at Joe's Pub, called "Seriously Entertaining." We bring writers into schools where we run poetry workshops, college readiness programs, author talkbacks and matinees. And we have a Bookmobile that travels throughout NYC and beyond, bringing frees to communities without bookstores & libraries. You are welcome to join me at Joe's Pub—its a wonderful show. Mrs. Wein would love it!"

Jessica Glass '85

"Had a blast at our 40th (!!) Reunion with my mates on a tour of our dear ol' school, unrecognizable to us with its STEM robotics lab, very hip Black Box Theater, greenhouse, etc., etc. It's amazing we did as well as we did



with pencils and a gym with overlapping basketball circles. A testament to the quality, dedicated, rigorous teaching in the olden times. Cooled our heels at **Amanda (Schafer) Brainerd's** afterwards...these smart, talented and accomplished girls can still afterparty together!"

Allison Schuringa '88

"My daughter, **Sarah Schuringa '20**, is living in D.C. and working for the Trump administration as special assistant to the first female Chief of Staff, Susie Wiles."

Allison (Horovitz) Dittmer '89

Mary "MP" Pat Gotschall and I spent some time in La Paz Mexico enjoying the sun, the beach, and the guacamole!"



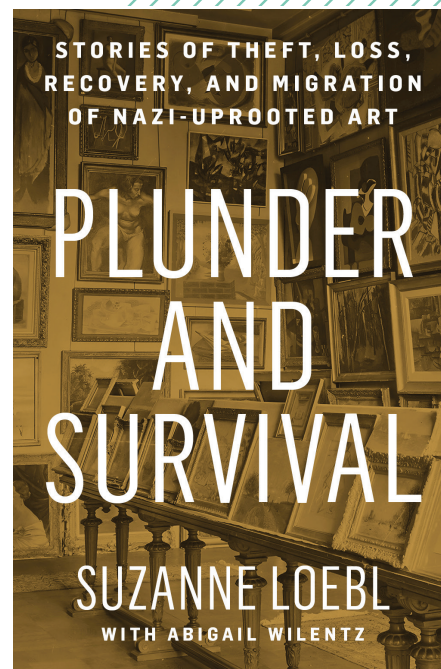
Sam (Ganz) Panzier '89

"I had a fun year traveling since our last reunion. I visited **Lydia Neuman** in Albuquerque and **Mary "MP" Pat Gotschall** in Seattle. Last month, the three of us met up in LA for a long weekend to enjoy the coast and not roller skate with the locals in Venice Beach."



Abigail Wilentz '89

"This October, Bloomsbury released *Plunder and Survival: Stories of Theft, Lost, Recovery, and Migration of Nazi-Uprooted Art*, which I coauthored with Suzanne Loebl, a Holocaust survivor from an art-collecting family in Germany. The book presents notable figures, events, and artworks that contribute to the intricate story of the Nazi attack on art—both the assault on modern art and the unprecedented looting of private, mostly Jewish collections in Europe. This story is personal for Suzanne, and her memories



and family experiences are woven throughout. We are thrilled that Kirkus Reviews calls the book: "A work that stands out from the immense and ever-growing shelf of World War II literature...A rich portrait of the fate of art—and artists—in the shadow of Hitler." (Use code: GLR BD8 for 20% off copies purchased on the Bloomsbury site: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/plunder-and-survival-9781538194225/>)"

1990s

Shoshanna Lonstein Gruss '93

This past summer **Mary Richter, Sage Lehman, Irene Grassi** and I had our very own mini NBS weekend long reunion at my place in Sag Harbor. It was amazing and hilarious and warm and fun...we shelled, we hiked, we swam in the ocean and laughed until it actually hurt...we are planning next summer's reunion already...my girls for life."



Amy Gilkes Loe '95

A few members of the Class of 1995 gathered after Homecoming 2025. Pictured: **Terri Davis-Merchant, Katie Zorn, Amy Gilkes Loe, Monica Polanco, and Gillian Grady.**



Monica Polanco '95

"I launched my online psychotherapy practice this year. As a certified grief educator and social worker for nearly 15 years, I support women who are mourning the death of a loved one. That might include a relative, colleague, or dear friend. I help women integrate their loss so they can move forward with love, meaning, and purpose. Grief can be so isolating, but I'm here to listen and sit with my clients so they can remember the love more than the pain. You can learn more about my practice at www.monicapolancotherapy.com. I'm accepting new clients and would be honored to serve as a resource."



Katherine "Kate" (Nahon) Gordon '96

"Had a wonderful lunch catching up with **Ann McChord** at the COS Club! She is fun and feisty as always. In addition, **Kate Nahon, Debbie Rabbino, and Susannah Canfield** reconvened for an annual visiting weekend at Camp Lanakila in VT, where all of their sons attend sleepaway camp together."



Priscilla Aquino Garza '97

"I am excited that my son is starting at the Magnet High School, and my daughter is starting middle school at an all-girls school in Austin, TX. Excited as they keep growing, and we were lucky to celebrate the graduations with abuelos visiting from NY. It has been fun to remember my biology and geometry lessons as well as having a daughter in a blue uniform skirt and polo shirt :)"



Sarah (Thompson Kane) '97

"Time flies, and Lillian is now in Class VI at Nightingale and absolutely loving it! Our son, Elias, is a second grader at Trinity and loves every moment of school as well. After taking a few years off to focus on the kids, I'm gradually stepping back into work and excited to share that I'll be guest starring in Episode 6 of *IT: Welcome to Derry*, premiering October 26 on HBO. Filming was an absolute blast!"



Alexis (Fields) Mapel '97

Alexis and Lily (Parshall) Wachter came together again this summer in Millbrook with their families. Lily and Alexis played in their Second Ladies Round Robin tennis match, and their kids attended camp together for the third summer in a row. "This has become a highlight for us every summer!"



2000s

Elizabeth Niemiec '00

"I enjoyed a wonderful visit with **Cara Thomas** in August. It was such a pleasure to be together in person for the first time in five years. We went crabbing in an estuary, had dinner with my parents, took an outdoor pilates class, and walked around Newport. It was such a treat! I hope other classmates will visit too."

Jessie (Page) Greenberg '03

Jessie notes a "full circle moment for her and **Brooke Cohen Parker** as they stand with their daughters, **Stella G. '34** and **Sienna P. '38**, in front of the blue doors where they first met in Kindergarten in September of 1990."



Championing Our Alumnae Community

Building on nearly two decades of service to Nightingale, Damaris (Wollenburg) Maclean '97 is excited to serve as Nightingale's director of alumnae relations. In her 19 years, she has served as a Spanish teacher, college counselor, director of global partnerships and community engagement, and now is working in the advancement office, eager to engage with our alumnae community. Please say hello! dmaclean@nightingale.org



Olivia Colson '05

Olivia attended Homecoming 2025 with several members of her family and several friends including, Olivia's daughter Cece and her son Luke; Olivia's sister **Marguerite Colson '06** and her twin boys Will and James;

Marguerite and Olivia's sister-in-law Camila and her twins (in photo); and their friends **Jenny Peissis '06** and **Michelle (Peissis) Koeppel '03**, along with Michelle's daughters **Lola '37** in Class I and **Siena '35** in Class III.

Danielle Ash '06

"I had my second child, a boy named Oliver Bern Ash-Yampolsky, on July 24, 2024—he is over a year old now and he and my daughter Lilah are the best of friends (most of the time). A recent photo of the kiddos is attached. I was also named as a Crains' New York Business 40 under 40! See link here: <https://www.crainsnewyork.com/awards/danielle-ash-40-under-40-2025>"



Tschabalala Self '08

This July, Tschabalala married gallerist Michael Mosby at the historic Thomas Cole House in Catskill, NY. The couple, who met in 2017 at an art opening in Harlem, became engaged in 2021. Tschabalala wore a custom gown by Brandon Blackwood. 250 guests joined the celebration. The day reflected both elegance and intimacy, blending art, community, and joy. **Madeleine Stix '08** and **Adwoa Adusei '05** were among those celebrating the couple."



Emily (Howe) Gianis '09

Emily moved back to Memphis, TN, and in May welcomed her third son, William Davis Gianis.



Emma Neisser '09

"We are thrilled to share that we welcomed Elliott Eve Tannenbaum into our family in June. She has loved meeting her fellow '09 progeny, pictured here during her first play-date! Pictured: **Annie Wick, Devon Washington, Emma Neisser, Andrea Whittle, Samantha Hall, and Loulou David.**"



Caroline (Dickens) Jordan '08

Caroline and her husband Zach welcomed their first child, James Campbell Jordan, back in May. "Everyone is happy, healthy, and loving life as a family of three. James has already met his new best friend, Aurélie, **Armelle (de Vienne) Cimini's** baby girl who arrived just two weeks after James."



2010s

Katie Stillman '10

"On March 22, I got married to **Emma Tyler** in New Orleans! I was thrilled to have so many of my favorite Nighthawks celebrating with us—including alumnae from the Classes of 2010, 2011, and 2019, as well as Ms. Hutcheson."

Sayda Morales '11

Sayda and her husband Sam welcomed their second baby! "Our home has been filled with double the joy and love since the arrival of Owen 'Nacho' on May 3, 2025. Liam is crushing his new role as an older brother to 'Ownie,' and we are soaking up all the summer sunshine at home in San Antonio."

Gretty Garcia '14

"I'm thrilled to share some exciting personal news: I got married on November 29 of this year to my fiancé, Jesse! Our ceremony took place at St. Patrick's Cathedral here in New York City, with a reception at one of our absolute favorite spots in the world, The Polo Bar. The day was extra special, as it also coincides with Jesse's 30th birthday—a milestone we're overjoyed to celebrate surrounded by our closest family and friends. The past few months have been filled with joyful planning, and we're looking forward to an incredible day of love and laughter (and maybe even an additional birthday cake!). We can't wait to begin this next chapter together, and are beyond grateful for all the support and enthusiasm from our loved ones along the way."



Anna "Annie" Jacobson '15

"I recently defended my doctoral thesis entitled 'Structural Uncertainty in Energy Systems Models: Techniques for Mitigation and Impact Quantification,' thereby successfully earning my PhD from Princeton University."

Vivian Cordon '17

Beatrice Arellano, Vivian Cordon, Ava Travella, Tatyana Sealy, Paola Perez Reyes, Olivia Marzovilla, and Lucy Ritzmann recently visited Iceland together!



Jessie Guzman '17

"I am currently in my second year working at Fieldston and I am loving it! This year I am a first grade teacher along with assistant coaching JV volleyball in the fall."



Katia Taylor '17

"After earning two master's degrees from University College London and NYU's Institute of Fine Arts, and spending a couple of years working with NYU Professor Emeritus Colin Eisler, I've moved to Ann Arbor to pursue a PhD in art history at the University of Michigan, with a focus on medieval and Renaissance art. After years of protest, I've also started taking driving lessons."

2020s

Lillian Martin '20

"This past year and half has been full of change for me! I graduated with highest honors from Emory University in Sociology and Spanish, having written an honors thesis exploring the relevance of ethnic and linguistic concordance in clinical settings. I shortly thereafter moved to Logroño, Spain as a Fulbright ETA, teaching 7th-12th graders in English. It was challenging both personally and professionally in ways I had never imagined, but I would certainly do it all over again. I developed a deep respect for all the educators who shaped my learning journey because it is a tough job! I've now moved across the Atlantic again to Madison, WI to work for Epic Systems, which directly links to my studies in healthcare and sociology. I am getting to spend my work days thinking about the social determinants of health and interpreting logistics in hospitals—complex & dense but exciting!"



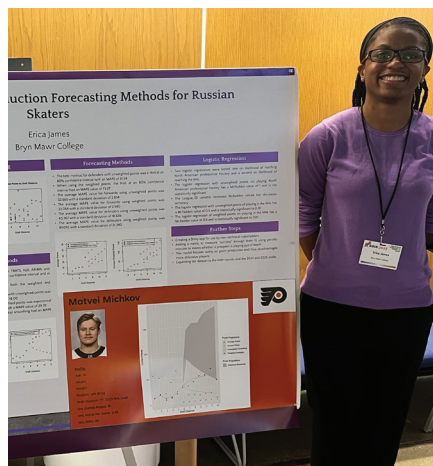
Lily Wolfson '21

"My sister, Isabel '17, is getting married January 1, but more importantly, I will be a maid of honor!"



Erica James '22

"This past September, I was able to present a poster at the New England Symposium on Statistics in Sports, supported by conference grants from Bryn Mawr College and the American Statistical Association Section on Statistics in Sports. My poster covered my independent research on evaluating the usage of time series forecasting to predict the NHL point totals of Russian hockey prospects drafted in the first three rounds. At the end of October, I will present a poster at the Carnegie Mellon Sports Analytics Conference with further independent research using similar methods to evaluate team fit via penalty minutes."



ProCom Notes

Elizabeth Cavanaugh

ADMISSIONS

Liz Cavanaugh and her husband, David Motsonelidze, welcomed their daughter, Siobhan Cavanaugh Motsonelidze, on October 21, 2025.



Submit an Alumnae Award Nomination!

Each year, the Alumnae Association honors two alumnae celebrating milestone years with: **The Distinguished Alumnae Achievement Award** and **The Distinguished Alumnae Service Award**.

Please email Director of Alumnae Relations Damaris W. Maclean '97 (dmaclean@nightingale.org), with your nominations. We look forward to celebrating the 2026 Award Recipients at the Reunion Luncheon on Friday, May 15, 2026!

The Distinguished Alumnae Achievement Award

Granted to a Nightingale alumna who has built upon her Nightingale education and achieved significant accomplishments in her professional life, or for distinguished human service to her community, state, or nation.

The Distinguished Alumnae Service Award

Granted to a Nightingale alumna who has demonstrated outstanding service and devotion to Nightingale throughout her lifetime.

Michael Goede

PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT

Michael Goede and Dan Gilmore were married at City Hall on September 12, 2025. They are loving married life and reside in Brooklyn.



Jarena Harmon

LOWER SCHOOL AIDE

On October 18, Jarena was inducted into the St. Andrew's Athletics Hall of Fame as part of Homecoming and Reunion Weekend. In her three years at St. Andrew's, Jarena was named Washington Post All-Met three times in soccer, being selected All-ISL each of those years, finishing her career with 98 goals and 11 assists. In two years playing basketball, she was All-ISL twice and in two years of track, she was also All-ISL twice setting school records in the long jump, high jump, and triple jump. After graduating, Jarena played Division I soccer, first at the University of Pittsburgh, and later at the University of Maryland.



Tom Hein

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

This past July, Tom and his wife, Bridgid, joyfully welcomed the arrival of their daughter, Mary Josephine. She joins her older brother and two big sisters at home.



Rachael Lewiton

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Rachael welcomed baby Sophia in July. Her big brother, Max, has been wonderful helping with the new baby.



Emily Peters

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

To mark the occasion of turning 40 years old in December of 2024, Emily embarked on a journey to run an official 5k race every month



of 2025. Her races took her to Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and all over Westchester County. She successfully completed her last race—12 of 12—on December 6, 2025.

Samantha Spiridellis

PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT

"This past August I had the privilege and opportunity to travel to Crete, Greece to study Cretan music, dance, and participate in a Greek singing workshop. With the support of Nightingale through the Sack Family Community Engagement Endowment Fund, I was able to enroll in Meronas: Cretan Music and Dance Workshops, and study Cretan violin with Stratis Skarakis. The second workshop was at Labyrinth Musical Workshop studying Greek folk songs from different regions of Greece. See full article on page 32 of this issue!"

In Memoriam

Christina Falise '83

on July 2, 2018

Alex Lucka '93

on May 25, 2025

Joyce Morton '46

on June 15, 2025

Nancy Adams Downey '59

on July 10, 2025

Elizabeth Corker '68

on July 13, 2025

Belle Fox-Martin '70

on August 1, 2025

Caroline R. Donhauser '78

on August 9, 2025

Nancy Kingson

former Head of Middle School (31 years)

on September 26, 2025

Danielle Bielenstein '78

on October 7, 2025

Eleanor Longfellow Strong Graf '43

on October 18, 2025

Their future starts with you.

YOUR GIFT GOES TO WORK—NOW.

The Nightingale Fund is our most essential source of annual support, directly fueling what matters most: an education rooted in purpose, enriched by opportunity, and driven by community.

Every gift, no matter the size, is put to immediate use to create a school where girls are empowered to go beyond barriers—to think critically, lead with purpose, and flourish every day.

The strength of our community—alumnae, families, faculty, and friends—makes all the difference. Last year, more than 1,400 donors helped raise nearly \$4 million for the Nightingale Fund.

That generosity sustains the daily rhythm of life within the Schoolhouse and ensures every student is known, challenged, and supported. Together, we champion a learning environment where students develop intellectual depth and the resilience to lead with both confidence and compassion.

CHAMPION WHAT'S POSSIBLE— TOGETHER.



The Nightingale Fund

BE A CHAMPION



For instructions on making a gift of stock or wire transfer, please contact Rene Mitchell at (212) 933-6594 or rmitchell@nightingale.org.

Be a Champion! Visit nightingale.org/donate

Voices

Linda Frank Sicher '65
Alumnae Board Member

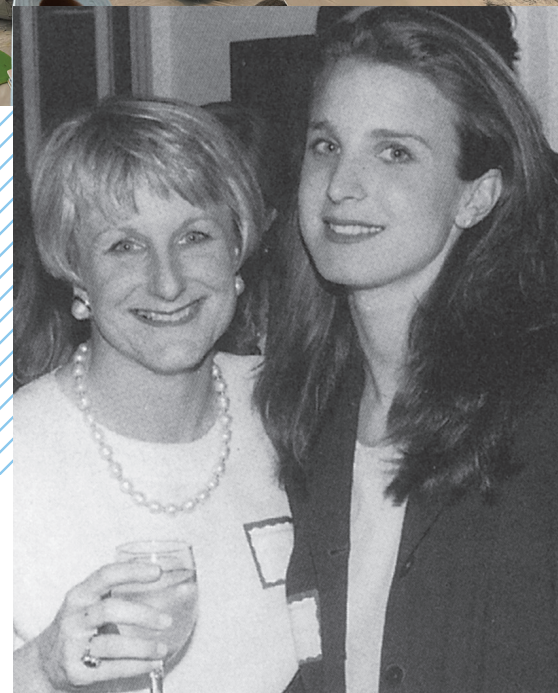
Today, I am a professional abstract artist—something that was never part of my original plan. Yet somewhere in my early sixties, that creative voice emerged and changed the course of my life. Looking back, I can see clearly that my Nightingale education had prepared me to seize an unexpected moment and soar.

Nightingale in the 1950s and 60s was a special place, filled with extraordinarily bright, well-educated women who believed deeply in the importance of educating girls to be strong, active thinkers. In many ways, they were ahead of their time. The physical school was smaller and my graduating class included only 22 young women, but the mission was unmistakably the same as it is today: to nurture young women who could think critically, embrace change, adapt, evaluate, and lead.

The English department—Miss Cundy, Miss Vicary, Miss Wiseman, and Mrs. Norris, among others—was rigorous and demanding. They taught us to write with clarity, focus, and creativity. I still laugh when I remember confusing “concubine” with “carbuncle” in my Chaucer essay. Miss Vicary certainly did; she reportedly laughed so loudly in the teachers’ lounge that everyone heard.

French and Latin were taught with equal seriousness by Madame Bouteneff, Madame Stevenson, and Miss Von Herrmann. I struggled with Latin, but I worked diligently to survive my three required years. Miss Von Herrmann called me her little “centurion,” and whenever I faced academic challenges, I thought of her—and tried harder.

Studying history with Mrs. Davis, who was a force of nature, was fascinating. She was dynamic, opinionated, at times intimidating, and she ignited my lifelong love of American history and ultimately my desire to teach. She had strong views and a clear goal of shaping us into liberal



democrats. She also made us swear that we would not leave college early to get married. I took that advice seriously and was glad I did—I married two weeks after graduation.

Joan McMenamin taught us two lessons that have stayed with me throughout my life: how to read *The New York Times* and how to shake hands with strength and conviction.

And throughout my twelve years at Nightingale, I studied art with Mrs. Winkelhorn. I loved creating art and continued in college, eventually minoring in studio art. I didn’t realize then how important that passion would become—how it would lie dormant for decades

before leading me down an entirely new path after I “retired.”

Because our class sizes were small, each girl wore many hats—head of the Athletic Association, captain of teams, member of drama and glee clubs. In hindsight, we practically invented multitasking. Leadership wasn’t optional; it was expected.

By sixth grade, I knew I wanted to be a history teacher. After college, in a world reshaped by the Vietnam War, I set out to “educate the hearts and minds” of students. Like Nightingale had taught us, we believed we could be anything.

I taught for 36 years, covering nearly every subject and grade level, though much of my career was spent teaching



Pictured: selected works by Linda, whose abstract paintings reflect her creative journey.

girls at Nightingale. I became the school's technology coordinator, helping usher in computers—an unimaginable leap from the chalkboards of my early days. Although I hadn't planned to work with younger students, I found my passion there. I wanted them to become confident, curious, capable young women—girls who didn't begin a sentence with, "This may not be right, but..." a phrase we labeled the "female apology."

After 36 years, I felt it was time for a new chapter. I turned toward two passions: giving back and creating art.

Rooted in Nightingale's emphasis on service, I became an advocate for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. That meant late-night calls to hospitals to stand with survivors, ensuring they knew their rights and received compassionate care. Some mornings, I visited police stations to help officers learn ways to better support survivors—something rarely covered in formal training.

Around this time, I joined The Transition Network—now Women Connecting—a national community for professional women over fifty, dedicated to reimagining

the second half of life. During a discussion about passion, I suddenly remembered my college art minor—something I had truly forgotten. Encouraged, I began taking classes at the 92nd Street Y. Six years later, I moved to the Art Students League, where I still study today. Fifteen years after picking up a paintbrush again, I am now a professional artist, selling my work and exhibiting in shows.

So why join the alumnae board at this stage of my life? The answer is simple: I was

asked—and I said yes. Perhaps my long view of Nightingale's history and intentions will add something meaningful to the celebration of 100 years of extraordinary work.

All told—as a student, teacher, parent, and alumna—I have been part of Nightingale for what feels like 150 years. And when I connect the dots, everything in my life leads back to this school. It was here that I learned to believe in myself, to take responsibility, to adapt, to lead, and to keep growing—no matter where life takes me. •

Head of School

Paul A. Burke

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Aruna Chavali P'26 P'28,

Parents Association President, ex officio

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Laura Rebell Gross P'25

Shoshanna Gruss '93 P'23 P'31

Robert Kinderman III P'28 P'30

Alain Massena P'31 P'33 P'33

Celene Menschel '00

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