An extraordinary 65 years
Mission Statement
The Howard School educates students with language-based learning disabilities and learning differences through instruction designed to complement and address each student’s individual needs, and to help each student understand and advocate for his or her own learning process. The curriculum focuses on depth of understanding to make learning meaningful and therefore, maximize educational success.

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Celebrating 65 years... Ready for the Future

The Howard School revisits its rich history and shares its remarkable accomplishments

how impressive!
Howard student art hangs at Atlanta's High Museum

how athletic!
Howard Hawks teams take multiple back-to-back championships

how inspiring
Class of 2015’s Connor King is reaching new heights

contents

02 Head of School and Board Chair Introduction
10 how innovative! Genius Hour & All About Astronomy
11 how are we impacting students globally?
13 Spark Program & Create Your Dreams
14 how encouraging! Eye to Eye Program comes to Howard
19 Class of 2015
20 Environmental Education at Howard
21 Howard News
22 Division Highlights
28 Class Notes
30 how generous! Annual Giving
It’s not often that a Head of School gets to celebrate her school’s 65th anniversary. New schools begin with great enthusiasm for worthy missions, but the support for sustaining the school through challenging times, economic or otherwise, is not always there, causing the school to falter, and then close.

The Howard School was founded in 1950 by a woman who was accustomed to challenges because of her own physical disability, and had learned to persevere despite barriers. The Howard School began because Marian Howard believed that several young children, who were struggling learners, were much smarter than their school work indicated. She realized that these children were “different” learners, and so they needed a “different approach” to their learning. “The rest,” as they say, “is history.”

Today The Howard School serves approximately 260 students who struggle to learn because their brains learn differently. With the help of bright and dedicated teachers, children for whom academic success seems unattainable, find the path and learn the strategies that will make it possible for them to be successful learners. The process to reach that “Eureka” moment when the key to learning is found takes time and requires patience, but finding the key that unlocks learning for the student is rewarding and incredibly thrilling.

It’s not often that a Head of School gets to celebrate her school’s 65th anniversary. I am lucky to be that Head that gets to say, “Thank you, Marian Howard. You have changed lives for generations to come.” Happy Anniversary to The Howard School! May you have many more happy years as you help Atlanta’s children.
Welcome to an exciting new school year! Having wrapped up my first year as Chair of The Howard School Board of Trustees I am pleased to report that the school is financially healthy, extraordinarily well-run, and excited about kicking off a capital campaign that will allow us to provide an even better environment and learning experience for our kids.

Our 2015 school year was successful in every way. Our Annual Fund yet again exceeded its goal, raising $305,586 with 81% family participation. School enrollment was up to 257, an all-time high for our Foster Street campus, and we had 11 students graduate from the High School.

We start the 2015-2016 school year with great energy and optimism. We have approximately 260 students currently enrolled for our opening day.

Our already terrific faculty and staff have managed to get even better with the addition of 18 faculty and staff members. And our Howard Institute, through which our faculty teaches educators all over the Atlanta area, just completed its third summer offering and will continue its mission of reaching children way beyond our walls by offering programs to teachers and parents throughout the year.

I have been a Howard School trustee for more than 10 years, and I have never seen the school in better shape. I am proud to be affiliated with this great place, and I look forward to meeting many of you this year.

Beth Tanis
Chair, Board of Trustees
2014–2015
Back in 1950 – the year Stevie Wonder was born, “Cinderella” premiered in movie theaters and Joe DiMaggio got his 2,000th hit – Marian Howard had a bold idea. She started a class for three children with learning disabilities in a Decatur church.
Soon after, she poured her life savings into purchasing a home for her burgeoning school on North Decatur Road — soon to be known as the Marian Howard School. Many years and six locations later, The Howard School is a vibrant and growing institution focused on utilizing the latest educational research and best practices for children with learning differences.

“Marian was a genius,” said teacher Charlotte Webb, who retired from Howard in 1997 after 36 years, “a very dynamic but down-to-earth person. She loved everybody, especially kids.” Webb began her 55th year at Howard in August — serving as a substitute teacher for the Lower School since retirement.

Betty Lockett, former teacher and assistant head of school, started Howard’s High School in 1974. She has been a part of The Howard School family for 42 years and still serves as a substitute. “Our goal for each child was not just to present the material, but to teach in a way each child could learn — and teach them how they learned,” she said. “That was very important.”

Today, 65 years after its founding, The Howard School continues to build on a legacy of bold ideas, ingenuity and dedication to helping students achieve their potential. The spirit of Marian Howard is ever present in the creative and innovative ideas that arise from the Howard faculty, staff and students. Marian Howard was ready for the future in 1950 and The Howard School remains ready for the future today. Read on to see what we’ve been doing in this year to fulfill our mission of addressing students’ individual needs and helping them understand and advocate for their own learning.
Velcro Vocabulary Makes Words Stick

Fact: There are about 88,500 word families in the English language. The vast majority of them are too technical, literary or antiquated to be used much. Of the 15,000 left, about 8,000 recur so frequently that they don’t need to be taught. But that still leaves 7,000+ words that define us as educated people — and that’s a lot to learn!

For this reason, Howard’s Director of Language and Literacy Kim Papastavridis launched a schoolwide vocabulary program, called “Velcro Vocabulary.” As its name implies, it’s designed to make words “stick.”

“Children who start third grade with fewer than the typical 6,000 words seldom catch up to their peers,” Papastavridis said. “And for children who have language-learning problems from a young age, not knowing enough words can be a lifelong hindrance because vocabulary is tightly linked to reading comprehension.”

Papastavridis’ methodology involves choosing words that are relevant and that children will encounter and use regularly, either in curriculum or in everyday life. Each class has a “word wall” featuring five new words every week, chosen by the teacher in collaboration with a speech-language pathologist.

Teachers have a nine-point routine to teach each word. Techniques include giving the students multiple opportunities to say each word, including the word in phrases, adding a gesture to reinforce the word, and using other recurrent methodologies to encourage the words to stick.

Some teachers and students have written songs and enacted plays, while others have staged mock debates in order to promote vocabulary word usage. Middle School students who master words wear a “Word Wizard” hat to encourage others to ask them a word’s meaning.

“A good vocabulary is a hallmark of an educated person,” said Papastavridis. “Our students could easily miss acquiring words because they don’t catch them in the same ways that people without language-based learning disabilities do. Plus, our students’ reading levels are often not at the level of their intellect, so they might not encounter these words in their reading. Yet they deserve to hear and use sophisticated words.”

“This is a very concerted effort toward getting children interested in higher level words and getting them into their vocabulary,” she added.

Papastavridis concluded with this thought. “Remember, vocabulary is under construction at all times. Word knowledge progresses from mere recognition, to common usage, to erudite applications and explanations. We all need to capitalize on vocabulary throughout the day: in school, at home, everywhere!”

For information on sources for this article, go to www.howardschool.org/programs/language
STEAM Gains Steam with $450,000 Grant from The Goizueta Foundation

Have you heard of STEAM? It’s an acronym for science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. It’s also the subject of the new initiative at The Howard School, led by Bryan Schomaker, formerly a math and science teacher in the High School, and now the new STEAM Coordinator.

Funded by a three-year grant of $250,000 from The Goizueta Foundation, Howard’s comprehensive STEAM Initiative will promote a STEAM focus in the classroom, integrate STEAM subjects more closely into the overall curriculum, and include STEAM focused professional development for teachers.

“The STEAM curriculum frames learning as connections between content areas, which is particularly beneficial for Howard students because they don’t automatically create those connections for themselves due to their learning differences,” observed Schomaker. “The idea is to break down the artificial barriers between these subjects.”

“The STEAM grant will bring our students to a place where they’re approaching curriculum content in a way that brings all of the parts of the brain together,” Schomaker continued. “STEAM allows for more creative expression of knowledge through art and engineering, which plays to Howard students’ strengths. We want to make it a cultural movement throughout the school.”

In addition to the $250,000 grant, $200,000 was awarded to establish The Goizueta Foundation Endowed Fund for STEAM Initiatives. “STEAM is often reserved for a gifted student population, and LD students don’t get a lot of exposure to this type of curriculum,” Schomaker noted. “This grant recognizes Howard’s leadership in the LD community. It underscores the fact that we know what we’re doing and we know how to handle this challenge in an LD population. It’s a real feather in our cap.”

Jack Whitaker, one of the students featured in the article on page 8.
Encouraging the Love of Reading

Perhaps Dr. Seuss said it best: “The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

Avid readers appreciate where books can take them, but for children with dyslexia or decoding challenges, reading can take them down a road of frustration and self-doubt. At The Howard School, Director of Assistive Technology Jennifer Topple works to make reading easier for students by offering the latest in assistive technology, designed to help students read and encourage reading for pleasure.

In 2005, Howard’s Assistive Technology Department emerged through the research and determination of Topple, then a Speech-Language Pathologist. After 10 years and financial support from The Fraser-Parker Foundation, the Sara Giles Moore Foundation, and The Ware Foundation, Howard’s Assistive Technology Department is now viewed as a pioneer in the field and provides state-of-the-art software and equipment for student use.

“Many of our students are diagnosed with dyslexia, but understand auditory information at age level or higher,” explained Topple. “In other words, they can understand what’s presented, but just can’t read it off the page.”

To help with this problem, many Howard students use software called Read&Write Gold, which has a floating toolbar that reads text aloud and highlights each word as it is read, creating a connection between the printed word and its pronunciation. Students can use similar technology on an iPad through the Read2Go and Voice Dream apps. Topple works with identified assistive technology students to find the right combination of software and technology tools to use in class and at home for homework support.

“The text-to-speech software is able to provide our students with increased exposures to the written word, which helps them connect the sounds, symbols and meaning,” Topple maintained. “While it doesn’t help them with decoding — breaking words into parts — it does seem to help them recognize the patterns of words, which improves reading fluency over time for some students.”

Software users have shown great improvement in their reading fluency and enjoyment of the written word. Hope Tubesing, 10, struggled to read and tried many different strategies over the years. Thanks to the assistive technology offered at Howard, she just finished the fourth Harry Potter book. “I love reading now,” she said. “I read all the time.”

Jack Whitaker, 11, has also had great success with assistive technology. “The computer programs have been helping me so much,” Whitaker said. “Last year I didn’t read at all, and this year I’ve made a big jump.” He has particularly enjoyed Henry Winkler’s Hank Zipzer series about a boy with dyslexia. “He reminds me of me,” Whitaker noted.

Whitaker and his family saw Winkler speak at a benefit for the Georgia Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. “During the Q&A session, Jack popped right up and asked him a question,” remembered Whitaker’s mother, Page Anderson. “A lot of that confidence has to do with Howard.”

Stories like these underscore Topple’s feeling that she has the most rewarding job in the school. “The magical part of my job is getting to explain to kids that their ability to read has nothing to do with their intelligence,” she said. “Some brains are just wired differently. Fortunately, there are new technologies coming out every day to level the playing field for children with dyslexia. And once children discover that they enjoy reading, they’ll be readers for life.”
Howard Gets National Attention at National Association of Independent Schools & The Dyslexia Foundation

The Howard School has taken its place on the national stage by participating in two educational conferences. Head of School Marifred Cilella represented Howard at the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Science of Learning and 21st Century Schools Summit, held at Vanderbilt University in May. Soon after, High School Principal Dr. Scott Hamilton, Director of Assistive Technology Jennifer Topple, STEAM Coordinator Bryan Schomaker and Literacy Lab Coordinator Erika Afeman attended The Dyslexia Foundation (TDF) Think Tank outside Washington, DC.

NAIS Takes a Deep Dive
Among other topics, the NAIS symposium focused on the application of neuroscience to learning and teaching, and the changes that are expected in the 21st century. Cilella was in good company, with other participants from well-regarded institutions joining others from LD schools from NYU to the Brookings Institution. “I was so thrilled when I got the invitation,” said Cilella. “Not only does it help our school be part of a national conversation on a topic that’s integral to our approach, it also raises the visibility and respect of schools like ours.”

Participants heard from professors, consultants, school-based practitioners and think tank members about best practices. “To their credit, NAIS sees that we are having success with challenged learners,” Cilella noted. “They realize that the science we’re using isn’t just applicable to our population, but to everyone. It’s simply good science that would help all students.”

Cilella hopes that The Howard School can continue to foster this type of conversation at NAIS. “It was an incredibly stimulating time,” she said. “Going forward, it would be a good idea for participants to see how these ideas play out in a school. I’d love to have Howard be a part of that.”

The Dyslexia Foundation Hacks Education
The Howard School team had a similarly enlightening experience at TDF’s “Hacking Education” think tank in June, joining others from LD schools from around the country. “Our focus was on innovative pedagogy, including design thinking, technology, and classroom setup — what are the best conditions for kids to learn and what it takes to create optimal environments,” said Hamilton.

The conference was highly interactive and hands-on, with participants visiting the WeWork office on Dupont Circle to see space designed for cooperative learning and collaboration. The group also studied the “holacracy” approach to leadership, worked in teams to solve school-specific challenges using design thinking, and studied the utilization of student assessment data to plan curricula and benchmark progress.

“Everyone walked away with great ideas to take back to our respective schools,” Hamilton said. “These are the types of innovations that can really make a difference for students.”

Hamilton believes that this type of meeting of minds fosters idea sharing and also places Howard in the company of the top LD-focused brains in the country. “It was a great experience to spend time considering these issues in the company of such visionary thinkers,” he said. “We were all very energized by it.”

Topple further explained the partnership between the two organizations. “The Howard School has been a sponsor school of TDF since 2014, which included our participation in the ‘Extraordinary Brain Symposium’ last summer as one of four LD schools in a dialogue with several of the world’s top dyslexia researchers.” She continues, “This was a significant opportunity for The Howard School to present and discuss ideas and brainstorm solutions related to dyslexia. The topics discussed will be encapsulated into the fourth volume in The Extraordinary Brain series.”

Also, because of The Howard School’s sponsor school status, in October 2014 it hosted an exclusive on-campus live stream event for the educational community of TDF Conference, “Dyslexia and Dyscalculia: Current Research and Teaching Practices,” held at Harvard University Medical School.

The Howard School is proud to be a part of NAIS and TDF and looks forward to continued participation in the national conversations sponsored by these two innovative organizations.
For a student struggling with academics or learning, discovering and pursuing a passion is a gateway to a positive self-image and leads to a successful career, as demonstrated by many Howard School alums. One teacher brought the concept of “passion” into his classroom and got big results.

From music production and the art of improv comedy, to writing short stories and painting, Howard School High School students in Bryan Schomaker’s class explored their interests during their “Genius Hour.” Formerly a math and science teacher at Howard, Bryan was recently named the new STEAM Coordinator (page 7). He developed “Genius Hour” for his students, allowing them one hour per week to dedicate to learning and cultivating what interests them most outside the classroom.

Practicing independent learning is at the core of “Genius Hour,” which is based on the concept of a self-organized learning environment as described by 2013 TED Prize winner Sugata Mitra. “Google employees are allowed, even encouraged, to spend 20% of their time working on projects that are unrelated to their day-to-day duties,” Schomaker explained. “Some great innovations, such as Gmail, Google News and ADSense, started out as ‘20% time’ projects.”

Students spend the first few Genius Hours brainstorming project ideas and then pitch their project through a formal written and oral presentation. Parents are also included, as they are asked to approve their child’s final project selection. In addition to the work itself, students share their projects with the class, but there is no grade attached.

“I wanted students to have freedom to begin the practice of finding their passions in life,” Schomaker said. “But I was adamant about not grading any of the work they did because I wanted to make sure their motivations remained intrinsic.” Schomaker says that some students easily select a topic, and others struggle to make a selection between several interests. Eventually, each student settles on the topic that feels right for them.

Schomaker has each student answer four questions during the Genius Hour process:
1.) What did you do with your Genius Hour time?
2.) Why did you choose this project/topic?
3.) Will you continue working on this project?
4.) What did you learn about yourself throughout the process?

Schomaker says the sentiment toward Genius Hour has been largely positive. “We all tend to agree that we’d like future generations to be full of content, independent-thinking individuals with strong communication and problem-solving skills,” Schomaker said. “Genius Hour is a way for kids to practice these skills and authentically decide what they want to learn and how to learn it.”

Students created a Howard Hawks sports broadcasting channel and website.
A student planned and organized a recycling program with young kids in her own Hispanic community.
Students produced and recorded original music.
Students learned to play a musical instrument.
A student researched how the human immune system works at the molecular level.
Acting and improv skits
Students created a slideshow about “Life at Howard through the Eyes of Students”
Painting/Art
Creative writing

“Genius Hour” Inspires Independent Thinking

All About Astronomy

One of Bryan Schomaker’s passions is astronomy. In fact, he has completed the coursework for his PhD on the subject. Bryan enthusiastically decided to share his passion with his students through a Senior Astronomy Class – Howard’s first!

The yearlong senior science course was a mix of challenging class work and monthly night observation. The seniors also collaborated with the youngest Howard students, teaching them about the night sky and important astronomical events.

Additionally, the astronomy class hosted multiple evening sky-viewing events, where students and parents used telescopes and long-eye relief binoculars to view astronomical sightings like Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and even a few deep-sky objects like the Orion Nebula and the Andromeda Galaxy.

Georgia Tech astronomer Jim Sowell generously donated a 4” Newtonian reflector telescope along with copies of his book, “The Naked Eye Sky.” Lois Hertz and Jim Davis, parents of rising sophomore Ari Davis, donated a 10” Dobsonian telescope. These generous gifts, coupled with Bryan’s infectious passion for the night sky will ensure that this class is here to stay for Howard students.
Howard Shares LD Best Practices in Trinidad and Tokyo

The Howard School has always believed in collaboration and partnership. Recently, we welcomed opportunities to share our best practices with schools in other parts of the world. Last year, we mentored two schools with similar missions — The Eshe’s Learning Centre in Trinidad and The Aoba-Japan International School in Tokyo, Japan.

Eshe’s Learning Centre
Located in Port of Spain in Trinidad, Eshe’s Learning Centre was founded by Dr. Esla Lynch and has been educating children with learning disabilities for 30 years. The Howard School first connected with Eshe’s a few years ago when Howard teacher and native Trinidadian, Kitts Cadette, organized a workshop there. Since then, the two schools have collaborated on more conferences, including one in 2014 called “Hidden Disabilities: A look through the Microscope — Prevalence and Intervention,” where Howard’s Assistant Head of School Allen Broyles presented. Howard teachers also facilitated a children’s camp at Eshe’s, and later Dr. Lynch and three teachers spent one week training at Howard.

After Dr. Lynch retired, Cadette accepted the job as interim head of school for two years, while on a sabbatical from Howard. “I’m humbled to have been given the opportunity to return to Trinidad at this time in my career,” said Cadette. “The Howard School contributes to Eshe’s enhanced vision. I look forward to further strengthening the ties between the two schools.”

Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS)
When Angus and Jackie Haig, former Howard School parents with Angus serving as a Howard Trustee, learned of an upcoming move to Tokyo, they began to search for the right school for their four children, including two who had been enrolled at The Howard School. “Jackie and I wanted to take a piece of Howard with us to Japan, as it had been the answer to our prayers and such a perfect fit for both Ella and Bailey for the seven years we were part of the Howard community,” Angus recalled. “Our initial impression of the Japanese school system was that in general it unfortunately does not recognize, nor adequately cater to kids with LD.” After evaluating many schools, the Haigs chose the Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS), which is a mainstream school that also caters to LD kids, as 5% of their population has a diagnosed learning disability.

“We knew A-JIS could significantly benefit from exchanging ideas with Howard. We thought the best way to do that would be to set up a teacher exchange program to encourage mutual best practice sharing between the schools,” said Angus. The Haigs agreed it could be a great opportunity for educational and cross-cultural teacher development at both schools.

The Haigs took their ideas to A-JIS Head of School Ken Sell, who was intrigued with their experience at The Howard School and agreed to explore the the teacher exchange program opportunity. After further conversation with Head of School Marifred Cilella and a generous contribution from the Haigs, the Aoba Teacher Exchange was born, Director of Assistive Technology Jennifer Topple visited A-JIS in the fall of 2014 to explore its use of assistive technology. The Aoba Teacher Exchange later funded two A-JIS teachers’ visit to Atlanta in early 2015. “Jennifer Topple’s initial visit confirmed our belief that we were on the right track and that many children in Japan with LD could potentially benefit from shared practices,” Angus confirmed.

The goal of the A-JIS teachers’ visit was to learn more about The Howard School’s use of assistive technology, direct instructional approach and teaching techniques. Ken Sell also visited Howard’s campus and met with Marifred Cilella, several Howard Trustees and other members of the Howard Leadership Team to learn more about Howard’s methodology and teaching, and to explore a mutually beneficial partnership. Sell hopes to utilize the Aoba Teacher Exchange to ultimately create a school where children become empowered and enabled global leaders.

“As our school grows, there is a need for professional development support,” said Sell. “We know we can benefit from collaboration with The Howard School.” Angus and Jackie Haig are thrilled that the program will benefit all students at A-JIS and potentially other children in Japan who are not being given the educational tools needed to develop and thrive academically. As the program advances, the Haigs see future potential for a student exchange program between the schools.

Howard School teachers and staff look forward to a sustained partnership with A-JIS, as we continue to develop programs for children who could benefit from our resources and knowledge, both locally and around the world.
As an Academic Affiliate Partner of the High, The Howard School often collaborates with the museum to integrate visual arts into the curriculum. The art show followed that model, with Howard’s students not only providing their extraordinary artwork, but also being very involved in the exhibit itself.

“Often teachers just drop off the artwork and we hang the show,” said Kate McLeod, head of student and teacher services at the High. “But the Howard students were very involved in the whole process. They wrote the labels for their pieces and worked closely for several hours with the ‘preparator’ who handles and hangs the artwork. It was a strong exhibition and they did a really good job.”

“The show really validated their work. They not only created the art, but also learned how to present it and explain it.”
– Eric Eaton, Howard High School Art Teacher

More than 30 works by 10 Howard students were displayed, including large format photography, an 8-foot Styrofoam robot and 3D computer model renderings. “The show really validated their work,” explained Howard High School Art Teacher Eric Eaton. “They not only created the art, but also learned how to present and explain it. For example, they learned that the art must hang at a certain height, and the labels include specific information about each piece. The entire experience reinforced the idea that it’s not easy to make good art.”

The show culminated in “Howard Day” at the High on May 31. “That was the highlight of the exhibit for us,” Jennifer Turko, Howard’s Lower School Art Teacher and the school’s liaison with the High remarked. “It was a terrific opportunity for family and friends to go to the High — free of charge — and not only see our students’ work and ask the artists questions, but also view collections at the museum. It was a great day for The Howard School.”

For information about the High Museum Academic Affiliate Program and student/family discounts, go to www.howardschool.org.
Spark Program Prepares Students for Learning

Ask any Howard parent and they will likely agree: There’s a positive connection between movement and the brain. What these parents know intuitively is actually backed by hard science; as Harvard Medical School Professor John Ratey explains it, “Vigorous movement before learning helps create a heightened sense of attention.”

In 2009, Ratey’s book, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain,* inspired Howard PE teacher Mike Hamilton to implement an exercise program that helps prepare students for learning. Since then, Howard has been using the Spark Program, in addition to its regular PE program. Regular exercise and movement throughout the day helps students learn better by raising their attention levels to improve the quality of their educational time.

“At first, we thought we’d give it a try to see if it had any meaningful impact,” said Hamilton. “It did!”

Incorporated schoolwide, the program has been found to be particularly successful in the Lower School, with students in each class beginning their day with “Spark Time” that includes 20 minutes of movement and exercise. “We start first thing in the morning and rotate what we do,” Hamilton explained. “Some days we run laps or do timed runs. Other days we work on strength and play games like tag. The idea is to get the students’ heart rates up.”

Hamilton believes the program meets children’s natural need for movement before learning. “Kids are wired with so much energy,” he said. “Playing and moving helps them focus and improves their communication, problem solving, creativity and expression. There’s both a physiological and psychological piece to why Spark works.”

“When students arrive in the classroom after Spark, they are excited, energetic and ready to start their day,” Lower School Lead Teacher Laura Emerick explained. “Not only is Spark a great form of exercise for the class, it brings them back to the room calm, engaged and enthusiastic.”

Spark has been shown to improve math and reading and helps relieve anxiety, stress and symptoms of ADD. At a time when many schools are cutting recess and PE from schedules, The Howard School is committed to preserving this important time. Spark Time is so fully integrated into the school day; most students don’t realize its impact. But parents and teachers do. “Everyone benefits from Spark,” Hamilton said. “The students enjoy it, their brains need it, and the teachers have classrooms full of kids who are ready to learn.”

Creating Your Dreams Through Volunteerism

Whether participating in a neighborhood clean-up day, The Pet Club, food drive, or volunteering at a shelter, The Howard School is a community-driven school. This year, Howard High School students established a partnership with Create Your Dreams and began volunteering regularly, spending their after-school time with children in need.

Create Your Dreams is a long-term youth enrichment program dedicated to nurturing the talents and dreams of students living in underserved areas of Atlanta. Create Your Dreams is based in Atlanta’s Westside, right around the corner from The Howard School, and giving back to the local community has been an important part of the student experience. Kim Dennis, the organization’s Executive Director and a Howard parent, understands the importance of students getting involved locally.

Recent Howard School graduates: Greyson Whiteside, Griffin Barton and Grant Williams volunteer regularly at Create Your Dreams.

“We’re all in the same community,” explains Dennis. “Having Howard students spend time at Create Your Dreams allows them to give back to our specific neighborhood and meet people they’d otherwise never meet.”

Several groups of Howard students have volunteered and found the experience to be enriching. Recent Howard graduate Shelby Benefield spent time at Create Your Dreams helping with homework and playing games with students. Greyson Whiteside, also a recent graduate, joined a few friends on a Create Your Dreams outing to the Fernbank Science Center. “We all learned a lot being with these kids,” Whiteside explained. “Their circumstances are very different from ours, so it’s nice to really be engaged and relate to them on a deeper level.”

Howard parent Libby Viergever coordinates the program and further affirmed that this experience is equally important to both Howard students and Create Your Dreams. “Howard students often struggle with feeling competent academically,” she said, “and this is an opportunity for them to help children who might be feeling the same way they did when they were younger.”

For more information about Create Your Dreams, visit www.createyourdreams.org, and to learn more about volunteer opportunities, contact Libby Viergever at libbyviergever@gmail.com.
Imagine a world where all children value their unique way of learning and feel empowered for future success. Imagine the power of younger students spending time with college students who have overcome learning differences and are successfully navigating college life and preparing for their future.

These are the inspirational ideas behind Eye to Eye, the only national LD/ADHD organization dedicated to mentoring, which is beginning its fourth year at The Howard School. Howard’s Eye to Eye mentors are Georgia Tech students who have math or language-based learning disabilities or ADHD. They visit once a week to mentor and create art projects with Lower and Middle School students, showing them first-hand that students with learning differences can succeed academically. Valued more than the resulting art is the time that the mentors and mentees spend in conversation — where the student feels valued and understood by a mentor with the same learning difference, who just happens to be a successful college student at Georgia Tech.

Eye to Eye founder, David Flink, an Atlanta native, is a former student of Howard’s Lower School Principal Jennifer Betts. Diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD at a young age, Flink founded Eye to Eye as an undergraduate at Brown University. His idea was to empower young people with learning differences by giving them a mentor who shares that experience.

Alexandria Menchion, an 11-year-old Howard student, was moved by a presentation Flink gave at The Howard School in March — so much so that afterward, she gave him $5 as a donation to the program and signed up as an Eye to Eye mentee.

“I was very surprised because I didn’t really know any other kids outside of Howard with ADHD or learning differences,” said Alex. “It was fun to do projects with them and also encouraging because I didn’t know if I would make it to college, and these kids have made it to college!”

Alex’s mother, Padrica, agrees. “Children with learning differences are sometimes a little discouraged and think they can’t be successful in school. Spending time with these Georgia Tech students — seeing the ultimate in success — has been a very positive experience.”

Alex plans to sign up again next year and is thankful for Eye to Eye. “I love the program,” exclaimed Alex, “and I appreciate that he made it.”

“The power of Eye to Eye is that our students are able to see the possibilities of their own futures in their mentors,” Assistant Head of School Allen Broyles explains. “The mentors are Georgia Tech students studying difficult subjects who have had the same struggles with learning as our students, and who are taking advantage of the LD services available in college to support them in pursuit of the competitive fields they have chosen. They set a unique real-life example for their Howard School student mentees.”

Eye to Eye has had remarkable success, and has seen an increase in mentees’ self esteem and their ability to self-advocate. Student mentees think more positively about their future and feel empowered academically through discovering their talents. For more information, visit www.eyetoeyenational.org.
Participation in school-sponsored athletic events is an important aspect of the educational experience at The Howard School. Varsity and junior varsity sports teams compete in the Atlanta Athletic Conference (AAC), a league consisting of five schools similar in mission and athletic philosophy. The Howard School is proud to offer team sports at the Middle School level, as well. Middle School teams compete in the Metro Atlanta Athletic Conference (MAAC), which is comprised of 20 schools. The Howard School’s teams compete in the small school division.

FALL
Athletics are an integral part of student life at The Howard School. In the fall, our Varsity Girls’ Volleyball team, coached by Head Coach Keeta Bell and Assistant Coach Necole Robinson, won its third AAC Title in a row, going 8-0 in conference play. This is the first back-to-back three-time volleyball championship in AAC history. Jade Starosta set a new Howard School record with 16 points in a row – all off serves. Congratulations to Kalley Huddleston for being named Best All Around and Player of the Year for the AAC.

Our Middle School Volleyball team, coached by Will Long and Assistant Coaches Abi Mangel and Olivia Rado, advanced to the conference tournament and finished third in the MAAC Division. Lead players were Emily Taylor, Avery Lawrence, Sydney Balan, Sydney Cobbin and Sarah Huger.

The Howard School is proud of our High School and Middle School Cross Country teams. The Varsity team (High School) was coached by Scott Goode and Assistant Coach Audrey Steele. In its second year of competition, the Middle School team was coached by Kelly Lyn and Assistant Coach Elise Albrecht. Varsity team member Camille Phillips was named All-Conference. Isaiah Frances was the top runner for the Middle School team.

Our High School Soccer team, coached by Head Coach Michael Garrett and Assistant Coach Jordan Horne, advanced to the AAC tournament. Ronin Molina-Salas was the leading scorer. Greyson Whiteside was named an All-Conference Athlete.

The Middle School Boys’ Soccer team was coached by Eric Eaton and Assistant Coach Erin Grady. Cameron Campbell was the lead scorer. Michael Hagerty had an outstanding season and was one of the best goalies in the MAAC.

The Middle School Girls’ Soccer team, coached by Eric Eaton and Assistant Coach Michelle Krengel, won three games. The team was made up of five Bridge Class students and six Middle School students. In its 3rd year, this team had its highest number of wins to date. Lindsey Bomar led the team in goals scored.

Continued next page
HOWARD SCHOOL
ALL-CONFERENCE HONORS

18 All-Conference athletes

Volleyball
Jade Starosta
Crystal Grady
Kalley Huddleston

Soccer
Greyson Whiteside

Basketball (Boys)
Conor Alves-Ammar
Josh Dannenfelser
Charlie Lo
Shem Nduwimana

Basketball (Girls)
Greer Corbett
Crystal Grady
Jade Starosta
Ariel Walker

Baseball
Christian Banks

Cross Country (Girls)
Camille Phillips

Swimming
Joey Hesskamp

Varsity Girls Track/Field
Greer Corbett
Camille Phillips

Varsity Boys Track/Field
Greyson Whiteside

AAC Best All Athletes
Kalley Huddleston (Volleyball)

WINTER

Our Varsity Girls’ Basketball team, coached by Head Coach Keith Spillett and Assistant Coach Billy Swords, won the AAC championship for the second time in school history (2008, 2015) by beating Atlanta Area School for the Deaf in the championship game 42-27. The team finished in 2nd place in regular season play with a 4-2 record and its overall record was 8-9. Greer Corbett finished 3rd in the league in scoring with 11.9 points per game and was named the AAC Basketball Tournament’s Most Valuable Player. Jade Starosta finished 5th in the league, scoring 9.6 points per game. Ariel Walker, Jordan May, Greer Corbett and Jade Starosta were named AAC Basketball All-Stars and played in the All-Star game. Head Varsity Girls’ Coach Keith Spillett was named the head coach for the AAC All-Star game.

Our Varsity Boys’ Basketball team won its first basketball championship in school history, beating Mill Springs Academy 57-45. Coached by Will Long and Assistant Coach Sainabou Njie, the team finished as regular season champions with a 4-2 record. Conor Alves-Ammar led the team in rebounding with an average of 11 points per game. Josh Dannenfelser had the highest three-point shooting percentage. Shem Nduwimana led the league in scoring with 22.5 points per game. Charlie Lo was 2nd in the league in scoring with 17.4 points per game and was named the AAC Basketball Tournament’s Most Valuable Player. Josh Dannenfelser, Charlie Lo, Shem Nduwimana and Joey Skinner were named to the All-Star team. The Howard School’s Will Long was named head coach for the All-Star game.

Our JV Boys’ Basketball team, coached by Ramoris Parham and Assistant Coach Necole Robinson, beat The Cottage School 37-36 to win its second AAC Championship in a row. This is The Howard School JV Boys’ Basketball third AAC Championship title (2007, 2014, 2015). This is the only team in school history to win three consecutive titles. Dylan Polay was the leading scorer and was named the AAC Basketball Tournament’s Most Valuable Player. Grant Sexton was the leading rebounder.

“The Hawks swim team had a fantastic first season this year. Although our team was small in number, we certainly didn’t lack for spirit or enthusiasm. Each member of the team put hard work and dedication into improving their skills and becoming faster in the pool. The team consistently placed well at each meet, both individually and as a whole. Most of our swimmers even placed times below the State cuts, which is an impressive feat. I couldn’t be prouder to have coached such a stellar group of athletes.”

– Chet Vaughn, Howard Swim Coach

Our Middle School “A” Boys’ Basketball team, coached by Eric Eaton and Assistant Coach Erin Grady, was led in scoring by Mac Harlow, Lance Bottoms and Logan Beasley. The team advanced to the finals of the MAAC Basketball Tournament, but lost to Brandon Hall.

Our Middle School “B” Boys’ Basketball team, coached by Kaci Palmore and Assistant Coach Tess Sobomehin, was led in scoring by John Mengel, Davis Domesick and Matthew Angove. The team finished 4th in the MAAC Basketball Tournament.

Sophomore Joey Hesskamp spearheaded the start of The Howard School’s first swim team in 2014-2015. Coached by Chet Vaughn and Assistant Coaches Dawn Splinter and Frances Walsh, team members were Emily Taylor, Sarah Huger, Lucas Macauley, Carlin Lathi, Michael Hagerty, Theo Luxembourg, and Joey Hesskamp, who was named to the All-Conference team.
SPRING
Along with warmer weather, spring brings exciting sports activity to The Howard School. The Varsity Track and Field team, coached by Scott Goode, had a great season. During the season, Kalley Huddleston tied the school record for the girls’ 100m with a time of 15.19. Jacob Williams set a new school record in the boys’ 3200m with a time of 12:29.53. Greer Corbett set a new school shot put record of 25’ 1”. The Varsity Track and Field Team represented Howard well at the AAC League Championship, with the Girls’ Team finishing 3rd and the Boys’ Team finishing 4th. Camille Phillips finished 1st in the long jump at 11’ 7” and 3rd in the 3200m with a time of 17:25.96. Greer Corbett finished 2nd in the shot put at 23’ and 3rd in the discus with 64’ 9”. Kalley Huddleston finished 2nd in the 400m at 1:19.79. In the relays, our girls’ team took 2nd place in the 400m relay with a time of 1:07.56 and the boys’ team took 4th place in the 400m relay at 56.63. Greyson Whiteside finished 3rd in the 800m with a time of 2:29.42.

Congratulations to these outstanding athletes!

The Middle School Track and Field Team, coached by Head Coach Kaci Palmore and Assistant Coaches Abi Mangel and Sainabou Njie, completed one of its more successful seasons. Logan Beasley finished in 2nd place in the 100m with a time of 13.65. Colin Benecki finished 4th in the 110m hurdles with a time of 21.29. Jordan McGuffey finished 7th in the 200m with a time of 44.52. Cameron Campbell finished 5th in the 200m finals with a time of 22.97. Lance Bottoms finished 2nd in the 200m with a time of 27.49. Cameron Campbell finished 5th in the 3200m finals with a time of 13:00.11. Daisy Thomas finished 12th in the 400m finals with a time of 1:34. Gigi Frangos finished 10th in the girls’ discus with a throw of 33’ 6”. Michael Haggerty finished 11th in the boys’ discus with a throw of 61’ 8”. Logan Beasley earned 4th place in the boys’ long jump with a jump of 16’. Lance Bottoms finished 5th in the boys’ shot put finals with a throw of 30’ 4”.

In the second year of baseball for The Howard School, the team finished 3rd in the AAC. After losing eight seniors from last year’s team, Head Coach Will Long and Assistant Coach Ramoris Parham worked hard with our young team. Christian Banks had the highest batting average at .350 and was named to the All-Conference team. Jake Klausner led the team in strikeouts.

Boosterthon Fun Run
Boosterthon, a team of Fun Run experts, helped our community put on an innovative, interactive and educational Fun Run focusing on character building, fitness and leadership.

The Howard School kicked off our 10-day Boosterthon Fun Run with an All-School Pep Rally. The goal of the Fun Run was to raise funds for our Athletic / PE Programs and Annual Fund, while teaching our students the importance of fitness, leadership and character.

The Howard School would like to thank all of the families that sponsored students, volunteered and/or came out to cheer for our students during the Fun Run. The students loved running around the track with their friends.

Our High School Color Run was a colorful party for our students. Many were doused head to toe in bright hues and kept dancing through the pockets of exploded color in the air.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and support of Howard School families and the community, The Howard School was able to raise over $18,000 to benefit our PE/Athletic Programs and the Annual Fund. A special thanks to our t-shirt sponsors: Cosmo Boyd; Carl Black GMC Kennesaw; Resurgens Orthopaedics – Douglas W. Lundy, M.D., FACS; Small Business Services, Lovable Foods; The Howard School Parents Association and Braxton Automotive Group, Inc. THANK YOU!
Connor King is reaching new heights

You never know what Howard students are up to — and in the case of 2015 graduate Connor King, the operative word is “up.” King, a climber from an early age, earned a top spot in the recent Adaptive Climbing National Championship, held in Atlanta in July.

King, who has a mild form of cerebral palsy that has affected the muscles on the right side of his body, placed third in the “males with neurological/physical disability” category. This was his second year competing in the national championships. Last year, he was the youngest to go to the world championships, held in Gijón, Spain.

Climbing and Academic Success

Throughout high school, King climbed two or three times a week and was a member of the Urban Core climbing team — the only member with a physical challenge.

According to his father, Michael King, Connor is a natural climber. “His mom and I are climbers, and Connor’s been climbing since he was about five years old. It’s almost like physical therapy on the wall. He’s always loved it,” he noted.

King likes the individual nature of the climbing challenge, combined with the camaraderie of the climbing community. “You set your own goals and rely on your own strength and talent,” he said. “But the climbing community is very tight — everyone knows each other and is very supportive.”

Of course, King’s love of climbing was balanced with an impressive academic performance. A student at Howard for 12 years, King was salutatorian of the Class of 2015. At the 2015 Honors Program, King received the President’s Award for Educational Excellence — based on his academic performance; the Melissa D. Wilson Award — given to the student who displays persistence, strong passion and a dream; and finally, Connor was awarded The Howard School Award — the highest award presented by the faculty to a student who epitomizes everything The Howard School represents: involvement in the school community, acceptance of responsibility, outstanding citizenship, consistency and excellence in academic studies, initiative, and perseverance in striving to reach individual goals.

King was active in Howard’s Student Government and Honor Council, and served as a School Ambassador. He also started Howard’s sports broadcasting club — another of his passions — and called and broadcast Howard’s baseball games through the Hawk Talk program.

“Howard has been a great learning experience as well as a great social experience for me,” said King. “At Howard, everyone has a learning disability, so it’s an easy place to bond with classmates. We all know each other well. Everyone is allowed to be heard.”

King is headed to Georgia College & State University in the fall, where he plans to double major in mass communications and computer science. His dream is to be a sports broadcaster, and he’s set his sights on calling minor league baseball.

King says he will continue to climb, both on a rock wall at college and at home in Atlanta. We have no doubt he will continue to reach great heights. Good luck to you, Connor!

“Howard has been a great learning experience as well as a great social experience for me.”

Connor King (center) pictured with his parents Elizabeth Tai and Michael King.
Members of The Howard School Class of 2015 have been accepted to the following colleges and post-secondary institutions. We congratulate them on this wonderful achievement earned through academic persistence and leadership in our High School organizations such as Honor Council, Associated Student Body, clubs and athletics. The asterisk indicates scholarships offered, not including the Georgia HOPE Scholarship.

Auburn University
Brenau University
Brevard College
Campbell University*
Clemson University (Bridge Program)
Columbus State University (Honors Program)
Furman University
Georgia College and State University
Georgia Southern University
Georgia State University
Gwinnett Technical College
High Point University
Kennesaw State University
Lynn University
Reinhardt University*
Savannah College of Art and Design*
Shorter University
Southern Polytechnic State University
Stetson University
The Ohio State University
University of Georgia
University of West Georgia
Valdosta State University*
Wofford College
Young Harris College*

*Institutions in which graduates expect to enroll in the fall are in bold.
how

do you teach children about food, farming and agriculture?

At The Howard School, environmental education takes many forms.

Last year, the school hosted 24 pieces of artwork from the Lexicon of Sustainability series to educate the Howard community about the basic terms and principles that define sustainability. Thanks to Lois Swords, former Howard parent, the exhibition was on display for several weeks. The artwork — large-format poster collages produced by Douglas Gayeton and Laura Howard-Gayeton — illustrates and explains vocabulary associated with sustainable food production. In addition to providing the perfect educational backdrop for the school’s environmental focus and Earth Day activities, the artwork also complimented Howard’s integrated “hands-on” learning approach while students cultivated the vegetable garden, which recently received a three-year gardening grant from the Captain Planet Foundation to underwrite a food cart, Vitamix, gardening supplies, birdcams and professional development.

The Swords Family has been sharing their passion for conservation and sustainability since The Howard School’s days in our Ponce de Leon Avenue location. Lois Swords purchased a Georgia Organics membership for the School, and along with fellow parents Joan Ashley and Michelle LaLonde, became a founding mother of Howard’s gardening movement. Lois is still involved today through her son, Billy’s, efforts.

Billy Swords, a Howard alumnus and now a High School teacher, has followed his mother down the gardening path, becoming a driving force behind Howard’s thriving vegetable garden. Billy spearheaded the Captain Planet Foundation grant application process and has been a champion of Howard’s garden for many years. “I’ve been passionate about gardening all of my life,” Billy says. “I’m happy to see our students get excited about being in the garden and I’m glad I could help support our program.”

Thank you, Lois and Billy, for helping the Howard community stay green!
Instagram Ambassadors

Have you ever wanted to know what goes on in your Howard School student’s life after you say goodbye each morning? Our Instagram Ambassadors give our community a look into the classrooms and hallways of the High School and beyond.

Instagram Ambassadors provide key insights into life at The Howard School and tell true Howard School student stories — appreciated by the entire community.

Ambassadors are connected, involved current students who are leaders in our community, convey a wealth of accurate knowledge about The Howard School, span a wide variety of academic focuses and co-curricular interests, and are passionate about social media.

In 2015, we welcomed four unique and wonderful faculty-elected High School students, Lauren Cobbin, Greyson Whiteside, Kalley Huddleston and Christian Banks. Instagram Ambassadors serve until graduation and new students are elected each year.

Hawk Talk

Hawk Talk is The Howard School’s official student-run news channel that broadcasts original content from our community including weekly news reports, student talent showcases and media from around the School. New episodes are uploaded to our page Monday through Friday at noon during the school year. Subscribe to receive an email when new episodes are posted!

www.youtube.com/user/HowardHawkTalk

Kalley Huddleston (2015) owns her own bakery called Kalley’s Konfections. During her senior year, she teamed up with Lower School students, who appeared on her show as guest chefs. This two-person team made easy, fun, delicious snacks and treats. In her final video with guest chef, “Chef Shaun,” they created cheesy quesadillas.

In 2015, we welcomed four unique and wonderful faculty-elected High School students, Lauren Cobbin, Greyson Whiteside, Kalley Huddleston and Christian Banks. Instagram Ambassadors serve until graduation and new students are elected each year.


Howard website becomes responsive

A Responsive Web Design is an approach aimed at crafting sites to provide an optimal viewing and interaction experience — easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning, and scrolling — across a wide range of devices (from desktop computer monitors to mobile phones).

On July 15th, howardschool.org converted to a responsive site, making it easier to keep up with all things Howard from your smartphone, iPad or other mobile devices. Since most people use technology “on the go,” we hope that our new responsive site will make things a little easier for the Howard community.

In addition to the responsive site feature, howardschool.org has a fully integrated school calendar, Parents Association page, brand new athletics page, social hub, staff directory, RenWeb Parent Portal, photo galleries, online giving and admissions information. Check it out today!
High School

Allez Cuisine! High School students face off for an iron chef style culinary show down.

Howard Seniors are camera ready at WSB Television!

Prom 2015

Enjoying down time during a field experience to Asheville, NC.

High School students write on a wall mural while on a field experience to Asheville, NC.
Howard High School’s legacy is showcased throughout the year through the Literary Magazine and annual events such as the Giving Ceremony.

Minimester yoga class

What a week! The Junior and Senior classes traveled to the Florida Keys to explore aquatic wildlife up close.
The Faculty Band brought the house down during Battle of the Bands.

Concentrating during a field experience.

Middle School students perform at Grandparents’ & Special Friends’ Day.
Howard’s Middle School students found many ways to express themselves this year, whether through poetry during the annual Poetry Slam, testing their Art Carts, taking a kayak ride during their trip to Sapelo Island, getting in costume for the Halloween Dance, or celebrating their accomplishments during the Night of Celebration.
How amazing!

LOWER SCHOOL

Field Day provides a full day of active play and group competitions!

Waiting to perform during the Lower School Music Invitational.

Making new furry friends is a great way to celebrate the year.

Lower School and Middle School Reading Buddies are an important part of The Howard School experience.

Learning about “conductivity” during a lesson with Georgia Power.
Dressed to impress during Spirit Week!

Trick or Treating for Unicef makes Halloween one of our favorite holidays.

Grandparents’ & Special Friends’ Day 2014.

Looking the part for the Lower School performance during the Spring Talent Show.
1979/1980
Susan Taylor  After leaving Howard and getting her Bachelor’s degree, Susan furthered her education with a Masters Degree and lived in Japan for seven years. She is currently a mom to two great kids - one attends Middle School at The Howard School. Susan remembers being at The Howard School for 2nd and 3rd grade in the Decatur Church Annex. She always appreciated field trips as a powerful learning tool. Her class walked to the library, went swimming every Friday and in the summer they had school/camp at Rabun Gap and experienced lots of hiking, camping and gem mining.

1985
Jeffrey Hooper (Leo)  Jeff currently works as a Wastewater Operator in Bellevue Washington. He still keeps in touch with alums Ken Wiggens and Peter Kite.

1991
Benjamin Schiff  Ben received his Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s degree from Georgia Tech. He currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

2001
Ann Jameson  Ann works in Atlanta, Georgia and recently celebrated a job promotion.

Mary Beth Sullivan  Mary Beth is happily married with one child. She recently started working with a start-up company producing an organic all-natural skin care line. She and her family currently live in McDonough, Georgia.

Jennifer Sloan  Jennifer is currently the Chef de Cuisine at 103 West in Buckhead as well as the founder and owner of the local food truck, The Toasted Cheese Truck. Her truck has come to campus on two occasions this year to feed The Howard School’s families and fellow alums during Alumni Homecoming and the Lower School Music Invitational.

2002
Morgan Hendricks  Morgan is currently employed in Oxford, Georgia.

2005
Lisa Troncalli  Lisa is a self-employed entrepreneur with her successful mobile pet grooming business, Buds and Suds. She recently bought a house and is living in Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Will Long  Will is finishing up his role at The Howard School as Assistant Athletic Director. He recently accepted a job at his alma mater Reinhardt University, as Assistant Men’s Basketball Coach, and will be getting his Masters Degree in Sports Management from Shorter University’s online program. He also works part-time at the sports radio station, 680 The Fan. His favorite memory from Howard is from this year when The Howard Hawks Boys’ Varsity Team took home the ACC Championship title. It is his proudest moment as a coach.

2006
Georgia Pavlostathis  Georgia has accepted a job with Real Madrid C.F., one of Spain’s professional soccer clubs. She will help the team, Youth Academy, to develop the sport professionally in the Dominican Republic.

In her spare time, Georgia and a friend published a travel book on iTunes called Pack Your Bags. This guidebook outlines four alternative spring break itineraries for students and was quickly a top seller.

Have we heard from you lately? Submit your class note today at howardschool.org/alumni and like us on facebook.com/TheHowardSchoolAlumni.

2009

2010
Rebecca Horowitz  Rebecca graduated from Jacksonville University with a degree in biology. She enjoyed volunteering with Girls on the Run through her sorority, Gamma Phi Beta and even came back to Howard with fellow former student Jordan Brittain to continue serving with their team. Rebecca is currently making plans for graduate school to earn a degree in osteopathic medicine or public health.

Leah Kelly  Since graduating from The Howard School, Leah attended Chattahoochee Technical College. She recently took a semester off to focus her studies and identify her area of interest. She is returning to become a neonatal nurse. Leah also works as a nanny part-time. She misses her High School mini-semester courses and is grateful for the opportunity to meet people she never would have known without attending high school at The Howard School.

Benjamin Chandlee enjoying some stand-up paddle boarding. He currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

Scott McCleskey (Class of 1996) – Alumni Spotlight

Discovering and following your passion is often an overlooked but vital aspect of a student’s educational experience. No student better exemplifies this than Scott McCleskey ('96). Though a raging river is a frightful force of nature for some, Scott found solace from his chaotic mind, there.

Scott came to The Howard School in the fall of 1989 to attend 5th grade. Diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD, Scott spent years struggling to pronounce words, demystify the alphabet and understand the English language. He graduated from Howard in 1996 and came away from his experiences, both in and out of the classroom, with a deeper sense of self.

"[The Howard School] taught me to advocate for myself, how to create a group around me to balance out my weaknesses...how to focus on my special abilities that I excel in. Essentially, use the skills I am strong in and ask for assistance on my weaknesses. My father was a whitewater enthusiast, and he brought me to the river. The river was a great outlet for my ADHD. It allowed a place that my focus could narrow and gave peace to all the wandering thoughts. The river gave me a center.”

Scott continually acknowledged and worked on his weaknesses, but through the guidance and support from those at school and at home, he continued to follow his passion for the river and build on his strengths. By age 15, Scott began competing in freestyle kayaking and progressed to competing all over the world in multiple World Championships and World Cups in Whitewater Slalom.

“My life with dyslexia and ADHD is a constant work in progress. Competition gave me something that I enjoyed and was good at. It gave me self-confidence and an outlet for all my energy. Also, I competed mostly in a two-man boat, so it helped me know that I [could] bring my best strengths to my partner, which means a lot to me. My weaknesses were compensated for [through] the partnership.”

By 1996, Scott was a graduate of The Howard School and an Olympic hopeful. He started working at The Home Depot through the company’s Olympic Job Opportunities Program to support his competition dreams, and there he discovered his aptitude for carpentry.

“Building was a ‘light bulb’ moment for me. Equations, shapes, numbers, and how things fit together come easy to me. I finally found something that I understood and was good at. It gave me a great feeling when people would come to me for advice on how to do something with my skills instead of the other way around.”

Scott took an apprenticeship in carpentry but he was soon tapped to be a part of National Geographic Channel’s televised competition show, Ultimate Survival Alaska. He happily accepted and set off back to the river on an Alaskan adventure for the next three months.

The show wrapped up with Scott’s Team, Lower 48, coming away in second place. Scott shared a valuable lesson that helped him through the long Alaskan competition. “My time at Howard taught me that there are many different people in the world and [they] all should be respected and accepted. Just because someone has faults, it doesn’t mean that they [are worthless] and do not have strengths of their own. In Alaska, I was part of a team, in which we came from different backgrounds and had different strengths and weaknesses. There was much conflict for the first of the show. [The] Howard School helped me to know that even if someone was calling me [names], I know that I have worth and am a strong person. My advice is to focus on your strengths, work on your weaknesses, and create a life that supports who you are and what you have to offer the world.”

Scott and his wife, Aleta, currently reside in North Carolina where he continues his passion for carpentry and stays close to the river.
The Howard School is truly grateful for the generous support of our donors during the 2014 – 2015 school year. The Howard School Annual Fund supports the educational tools and resources needed to ensure our students’ success.

For 65 years, we have carried out the mission of Marian Howard, who sought to provide a safe, educational environment created especially for students with unique learning needs.

Thank you to our Board of Trustees, parents, former parents, grandparents, alumni, faculty/staff and caring members of the greater Atlanta community and beyond. Your contribution to the education of our students makes all the difference. Listed here are all who made gifts for the fiscal year August 1, 2014 to July 31, 2015.

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The Howard School
Dr. Tara Terry joins Howard staff

In July, an old friend returned to The Howard School in a new role. Tara A. Terry, Ph.D., has joined The Howard School as the new Middle School Principal. Current Middle School Principal and Assistant Head of School Allen Broyles, has transitioned to a singular role as the Assistant Head of School.

Longtime Howard School families will remember Dr. Terry as Howard’s School Psychologist from 2001 – 2008. In that role, her responsibilities included staff development, parent education, school-wide assessment coordination, and working collaboratively with teachers, parents and students to support students’ academic and social-emotional development.

Dr. Terry comes to The Howard School from Pace Academy, where she has worked as the Middle School Counselor and Upper School Academic Coach since 2010. At Pace, she pioneered division-wide programs including character development programming, bullying prevention and response, eating disorders awareness, diversity and advisory group activities. Dr. Terry also spent six years working as an online instructor for two different online universities.

Dr. Terry is married to Tom Pittard, former Howard School Teacher and now a teacher at The Children’s School, and they have a seven-year-old son.
how generous!

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