Acclaimed jazz and classical musician Wynton Marsalis spends time with the Upper School Jazz Band.

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From the Head — Learning lessons of compassion with Lama Tenzin. PAGE 2 (By Andrea Kelly)
Lower School — The obvious, and not-so-obvious benefits of outdoor play. PAGE 5 (By Debby McLean)
Middle School — Stemming the disconnect in Middle School. PAGE 6 (By Deborah Schoman)
Upper School — The powers of quiet – and compassion. PAGE 12 (By Mark Schoeffel)

February Query – Lower School TASQUE

What does peace mean to you, and how does its presence or absence impact your life?
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

ATHLETIC AND OTHER SCHOOL-ADMINISTERED PROGRAMS

ETHNIC ORIGIN IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ITS EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, ADMISSIONS POLICIES, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, NATIONAL OR ETHNIC ORIGIN

FRIENDS ACADEMY ADMITS STUDENTS OF ANY RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL AND ETHNIC ORIGIN TO ALL RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL. FRIENDS DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, NATIONAL OR ETHNIC ORIGIN IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ITS EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, ADMISSIONS POLICIES, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, ATHLETIC AND OTHER SCHOOL-ADMINISTERED PROGRAMS.

NEXT MONTH’S DEADLINE

To include information in the March 2017 electronic issue of Among Friends please submit information to the Communications Office by Friday, Feb. 17, 2017.

EDITOR:
Andrea Miller – Director of Communications and Marketing
Phone: (516) 393-4295
E-mail: andrea_miller@fa.org

Friends Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities available to students at the school. Friends does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial assistance program, athletic and other school-administered programs.

AMONG FRIENDS
An informational e-newsletter published monthly for Friends Academy parents, grandparents, faculty/staff, trustees, former trustees, and the Alumni Board.

Facebook.com/friendsacademyNY
Instagram.com/friendsacademy

ON THE WEB
JOIN. CONNECT. ENGAGE.
Stay ahead and get the inside look at FA on our Facebook page and Instagram feed.
Join the conversation today.

FRIENDS,

I began my Peace Week experience at Friends Academy preparing a spare bedroom in the Jackson House for the Venerable Tenzin Yignyen’s stay.

Lama Tenzin is an ordained Buddhist monk and college professor at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, who for the past three years has spent a week at Friends constructing a colorful sand Mandala of Infinite Compassion grain by grain, “to ease or pacify our tension, to understand and respect and to embrace the differences by looking from open heart and holistic way.”

From Monday through Thursday, Lama Tenzin diligently works 5 to 6 hours a day with ancient metal tools and colored sands to “paint” specific symbols of wisdom, patience, appreciation and humility onto a 4’ X 4’ surface. While he works, he hosts classes of students and passersby to sit, observe, meditate, ask questions and to receive the gift of his deep and bountiful wisdom.

At Jackson House, I worried about the room itself. Would the color be soothing and settling? Would he be able to meditate in there? Did I have enough hangers in the closet? I was assured that any room would be fine, that he didn’t need a special space and that he turns in for the night very early.

I worried whether he would have enough to eat. I was assured again that all I needed to have in the house for him was plain black tea. I wondered how much I should interact with him. Should I leave him alone to meditate and rest? Should I invite him down to the kitchen to visit? Should I knock on his door? What would we talk about?

I worried for nothing.

The room was fine; Lama Tenzin needs almost nothing to be comfortable, and his “footprint” in the house was virtually non-existent, except for a rattling cough he developed on the second day. He wore long robes, which he draped over a chair in the evening – no closet or hanger required.

He spent each day at school taking his breakfast and lunch on campus so black tea in the morning was adequate. This was challenging for me. I pride myself on knowing my guests well. I like accommodating them, meeting every need, ensuring I have the things they enjoy close at hand so they can feel completely at home in my home.

I know who prefers half & half to milk, who’s gluten-free, and who needs non-feather pillows. But, when a guest requires very little, it renders the host a bit helpless. There would be no serving this guest, no means to offer the first round of kindnesses. I had to stop the fretting, take off the host hat, and simply engage person-to-person with Lama Tenzin.

In the early chill morning on his third day, we met. We took the short walk to the campus together beginning our conversation by commenting on the weather as strangers often are wont to do. We talked about infamous upstate New York winters, lake effect snow, and the mega storms we both know so well.

As we neared Frost Hall he changed the subject and offered three simple acknowledgments. “Being a Head of School is a very hard job. You need to make many tough decisions every day. It will get easier.”

Compassion expressed as empathy for one’s challenges.

As the week progressed, the Mandala of Compassion grew in concentric circles, in colors, and in complexity.

Compassion as a gift expressed through art and beauty.

Lama Tenzin’s cough also progressed.

Wednesday was a long night for him. Finally on Thursday morning, I broke out the Mucinex, Advil and Vitamin C, lining them up on the counter with water and dosage cups. When Lama Tenzin came down, his eyes positively lit up and without a moment’s hesitation he loaded up on the over-the-counter bounty I offered.

Compassion expressed through caregiving.

On Friday morning, his last day, the cough had calmed and Lama Tenzin reported feeling much better. He thanked me profusely for caring for his health and I thanked him for his simple, loving message.

In retrospect, I believe he may have taken the medications for me as much as for himself. I’m sure he wanted me to feel affirmed as all good hosts long to do.

Compassion expressed in a most unlikely way.

Andrea Kelly
Head of School

From the Head of School
2017-18 School Calendar

Tuesday, Aug. 29  
New Families of Color Orientation

Thursday, Aug. 31  
New parents Gr. K-5 and all new 5th Gr. students  
All Gr. 6 students & parents  
New Gr. 7-8 students & parents  
All Gr. 9 students & parents  
New Gr. 10-12 students & parents

Tuesday, Sept 5  
First Day of Classes – 8:05 am

Thursday, Sept. 21  
Rosh Hashanah – No School

Monday, Oct. 9  
Columbus Day – No School

Friday, Nov. 10  
Veterans Day – No School

Tuesday, Nov. 21  
Thanksgiving Break begins after last commitment

Monday, Nov. 27  
Faculty/Staff In-Service Day – No School

Tuesday, Nov. 28  
Classes resume at 8:05 am

Tuesday, Dec. 19  
Christmas/Holiday vacation begins after last commitment

Tuesday, Jan. 2  
Classes resume at 8:05 am

Monday, Jan. 15  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observed – No School

Friday, Feb. 16  
Winter Vacation begins after last commitment

Monday, Feb. 26  
Faculty/Staff In-Service Day – No School

Tuesday, Feb. 27  
Classes resume at 8:05 am

Thursday, March 29  
Spring Vacation begins after last commitment

Monday, April 9  
Faculty/Staff In-Service Day – No School

Tuesday, April 10  
Classes resume at 8:05 am

Monday, May 28  
Memorial Day – No School

Sunday, June 3  
Baccalaureate Meeting for Worship/Senior Brunch

Tuesday, June 5  
Last Day LS Classes ***Full day***

Wednesday, June 6  
Fourth Day Honors  
Last Day MS/US Classes – Dismissal at 1:00 pm

Saturday, June 9  
Commencement – 10:00 am

The 2017-18 Vacation calendar can also be found on the Parent Information Hub and on the main Calendar page.

Support FA!

From the Development Office

Who benefits from the Annual Fund?

The Annual Fund directly benefits our children! These donations help support our educational program, faculty compensation and the overall uniqueness of the Friends Academy experience. Please make your gift today. Your Gift Matters!

See How Your Class Compares

Visit www.fa.org/Participation to view the latest class participation results.

Thank You for Making a Difference in the Lives of Our Children
REMINDER!
Deadline for Donations, Sponsorship and Journal Ads is Wednesday, March 1st!

Your generosity and willingness to contribute your time and resources will make our Auction a continued success.

For more information, contact our Auction Chairs:

Maureen Bergmann
Michele Cagner
Carolyn Mott

Or, visit the website at for more information.

Save the date for the 25th Anniversary of “A Celebration with Friends” on Thursday, March 30 at 6:30 p.m. The Friends Academy Dinner & Auction will be held at the historic Garden City Hotel! Please join us for a fabulous evening of fun, great food and good friends! Your support will greatly enhance your children’s experience at Friends Academy.

Help us to achieve our fundraising goals:

- Attend the Auction – Invitation will be in the mail shortly!
- Volunteer for one of our many Committees
- Donate an Item to the Auction. Some ideas may include: Vacation Experiences, Internships, Sports and Recreation, Children’s Activities, Fashion, Dining, Entertainment, Home and Garden and Health & Fitness
- New this year! Donate a bottle of wine with a value of $25 or more for the wine wall!
- Sponsorship or Underwriting Opportunities

Need Auction Forms? Click here for Auction forms.

Would you like to volunteer?
Contact Diane Biolsi at diane_biolsi@fa.org or 516-629-4859.
The obvious, and not-so-obvious benefits of outdoor play

I had a conversation with a parent recently who frequently sends her kids outside to play BEFORE school. I know, when I think back to my years of getting young children out of the door and into the car that this is amazing to me. I am a clock watcher and if we were running late, I would feel an uncomfortable level of stress. This parent is sometimes late to school but she values what her children gain from outdoor play so much that she is willing to run late. I will point out that her child who is in school at FA is in our Early Childhood program, so perhaps the stakes are different for an older student. Yet, I commend her for deeply understanding the importance of outdoor play for our children.

Why is outdoor play so important you may ask? Our students’ bodies are growing and they need to experience a variety of activities that allow them to leap, run and jump. These all use gross motor skills that are much more difficult to develop indoors, or at least we don’t want them developed on our couch or bed.

Play also allows for fine motor skills to develop as children pick up leaves or pack snow balls. Outdoor play burns tons of calories, which we know is important for setting the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.

Not as obvious, play contributes to cognitive skills. Children are communicating as they invent and modify their games.

Not as obvious, play contributes to cognitive skills. Children are communicating as they invent and modify their games.

From the Lower School

Debby McLean, Lower School Principal | Divisional Assistant: Gail Lucidi, 393-4230

February Highlights

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>Fri. 3</td>
<td>Dress Down Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues. 7</td>
<td>Lower School Parents Meeting – 8:15 a.m. (Jackson House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 13</td>
<td>FA Parent Book club – 8:15 a.m. (Jackson House)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. 16</td>
<td>All-Parent presentation: “Cyberbullying, Internet Safety and Sexting” with Nassau Police Officer Sharon Galvin – 8:30-9:30 a.m. (Theater) RSVP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. Feb. 20 - Mon. Feb. 27</td>
<td>Presidents Day – School and Offices Closed, February Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues. 28</td>
<td>Classes Resume – 8:05 a.m.</td>
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</table>

Our Lower School vision statement prizes academic risk taking. The necessary trust in oneself and confidence begins on the playground by climbing the structure or by swinging higher. With invented games children have ownership of their rules which allows deeper understanding of the purpose for rules. Play allows children to develop turn taking, which helps in their development of social skills.

In the dark days of winter it is important for everyone to experience sunlight in order to stimulate the pineal gland. This allows our biological clock to work effectively. Vitamin D from the sun also contributes to serotonin levels which regulate mood. Without vitamin D our child can get the winter blues.

The same parent who sends her child out in the mornings reminded me of the thought that there is no “bad weather” for play only “bad clothing.”

Children can continue to play outside during the winter months as long as they are dressed appropriately. Of course, as a school, if the temperature becomes unsafe we do choose to stay inside.

As much as we can, we bundle them up and let them play!

Final FA Blood Drive

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1st

WHEN
Wednesday, March 1st
8:15 a.m
to 12:45 p.m.

WHERE
Main Gym

DONOR INFORMATION
Donors must be 16 years old and at least 110 lbs. Please eat and hydrate before giving.
There is no doubt, “screens” are reducing the amount of time we spend in direct communication and conversation with each other. You don’t have to look very far to see evidence of this; on the sidewalk, in the park, on the train, in the restaurant. Adults and children with their heads down, glued to their screens, teens sitting together, all on their cell phones using social media to communicate with each other.

The practice of face-to-face conversation has morphed into communication via text messaging or Snapchatting or any other social media app designed for this purpose.

Author and psychologist Catherine Stein-Adair writes in her recent book, *The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age*, “Absent conversation, kids are developing a seriously disordered understanding of what it means to truly communicate: to hear a voice, process the incoming and outgoing messages, engage directly with someone that way. The result is a new cautiousness, a tentativeness about the art of talking and the psychological capability of being direct or intimate with another person. This disconnect is most concerning when we see it eroding the foundations of communication on which love, deep relationships, and emotional commitments are built.”

I share Adair’s concerns and I see this play out regularly in Middle School. Many students are engaging in many non-verbal conversations outside of school every evening and on the weekends. Their cell phones are not being used as a “telephone,” but are now exclusively used for conversations that are absent of voice. The teachers and I have observed a sharp increase in student anxiety relative to their social happiness caused by unkind digital interactions that occurred the night before on Snapchat or texting groups.

We have come to call these events that spill into the Middle School the next day, “drama.” This drama seriously impacts a child’s readiness to learn as they are worried about broken friendships or upset about a derogatory comment that was aimed at their ethnicity, religion or gender identity. These unkind comments are easy to deliver when not face to face with the classmate.

The personal, spontaneous discussions that used to happen on the telephone in the evening have all but disappeared. Building a kind, caring, empathetic community has been seriously impacted by the inappropriate use of the digital devices.

“Stanford University review of research findings showed that increased dependence on tech has resulted in the diminishing of empathy by reducing the amount of direct human interaction involved.”

We feel strongly that students must develop their ability to communicate and engage in meaningful conversations with their peers. At a recent Meeting for Worship, I spoke to the Middle schoolers about the importance of being fully present in conversation when speaking to somebody; their attention and energy needs to be focused on their friend or teacher and what they are saying. It is for this reason we have a policy that speaks to a ban on cell phone use in the Middle School from 7:45 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. (or even later if students are in afterschool activities.).

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**From the Middle School**

Deborah Schoman, Middle School Principal | Divisional Assistant: Marian Tobia, 393-4239

**February Highlights**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 4</td>
<td>MS Ski Trip to Jiminy Peak – 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. 7</td>
<td>6th Grade STEM Fair – 7:00 p.m. (Commons)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. 9</td>
<td>MS Parents Meeting – 8:15 a.m. (Jackson House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 10</td>
<td>Valentine’s Day Dance at Eastwoods (Grades 6-8) – 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 13</td>
<td>FA Parent Book Club – 8:15 a.m. (Jackson House)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 20</td>
<td>President’s Day/School closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 28</td>
<td>Classes resume – 8:05 a.m.</td>
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</table>

**Ahead in March**

| Thurs. 2 | 7th Grade Parent Coffee – 8:15 a.m. (Jackson House)                  |

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Many Middle School parents and their children attended the recent screening of the movie *Screenagers: Growing up in the Digital Age*. The film was about the impact of the digital age on children and how to help families minimize harmful effects and find balance.

One important takeaway message from this film – “screens” are reducing the time we spend in direct communication with our children, and parents need to develop family policies around screen use.

Here are several suggested family action items shared in this film:

**Strengthen self control**

How can you help your child gain more self control over their screen time? Set clear guidelines. Discuss with your child and come to agreement around how much screen time is acceptable and clarity around when to be off a cell phone, like at dinner or in the car. Discuss with your child situations when self control is not working and why. What can be done to help? There are apps now that can turn off social media or to shut down apps for the night.

**Create a family contract or agreement**

Do this together with your child – discuss the guidelines – amounts of time, times of the day, when to be off screens and when it is okay to be on screens. It is important to be clear around homework and bedtime. Be flexible and revisit the contract to be sure it reflects reasonable expectations that promote healthy screen use.

Please be sure to download this Media Tips handout that was given to parents who attended *Screenagers*.

I look forward to our continued partnership in helping our children to grow up to be responsible digital citizens.

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**Sustainability Committee**

Dan Kriesberg, MS Science teacher

The making of a sustainable Middle School

There is much to celebrate in the opening of the renovated Middle School this year. Not only is it a wonderful place for teaching and learning, it was designed in an environmentally sustainable manner with innovative features that help reduce Friends Academy’s impact on the environment.

The irrigation system has a sensor, which will shut the system down when there had been enough rain. All of the paints and flooring adhesives are no VOC. The new flooring does not require regular stripping and waxing. By eliminating those chemicals from the building, indoor air quality is improved. All the drywall used in the building is Greenguard Certified for low chemical emissions. The carpet backing contains 35% recycled materials. The ceramic tile manufacturer is Cradle 2 Cradle certified, meaning their production process meets strict standards of recycling, water conservation, waste stream re-use, energy conservation, and working conditions. The acoustic ceiling tile is 62% recycled materials. Each floor has a filtered water fountain with bottle filler, that displays a count of the equivalent number of plastic. All restrooms have electric hand dryers to reduce paper towel consumption.

The design and thought that went to renovating helps to make the building healthier for the people and for the environment. In our own lives we can make sustainable choices when it comes to building and renovations in our own homes.

Here is sampling of some of the environmentally sustainable features of the new Middle School building:

- **HVAC:** The new HVAC system is a state of the art Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system. It conserves energy by harvesting excess heat energy from warm areas of the building to heat the cooler areas.

- **REMOTE TECHNOLOGY:** The building has a Building Automation System, which allows for remote scheduled control of building temperatures. This will enable FDA to conserve energy by automatically lowering energy use for HVAC systems outside of normal school hours.

- **LED LIGHTING:** All lighting in the building is LED – FA will get a large rebate from PSE&G for the implementation of LEDs in the building.

- **RE-USE:** It’s fair to say that renovating a building is a large scale version of re-use. Imagine the tons of waste if we had torn it down!
Friends Academy Parent Council is pleased to present the school with a winter gift of $20,000. These funds are a direct result of the continued commitment, hard work and dedication of our many parent volunteers.

The gift is designated as such:

- $7,500 – Faculty Endowment
- $7,500 – Annual fund
- $2,500 – Financial Aid
- $2,500 – Diversity Grant Fund

Parent Council is honored to present the school with this winter gift and as the year moves ahead, we look forward to continuing our commitment in supporting the school through our various volunteer efforts.

Parent Council will soon begin the important process of planning the new slate for Executive Parent Council members, PC Class Representative and Chairs of PC committees. Our Nominating chair this year will be Laura Semlies.

Laura and her committee will be sending out detailed communications in February via e-mail that will outline the process, and list the many committees and posts available to all parents.

If you are interested in a Parent Council position or a committee chair position next year you must fill out the nomination form that will be included in that February e-mail. If the committee doesn’t have your name they won’t know to include you. You are also welcome to nominate someone you think may be interested in a position. We welcome and encourage everyone to participate.

February 27th is Parent Council’s Faculty and Staff Appreciation Luncheon. Thank you to Jen Adoni and Franciska Doshi for co-Chairing this event. Dessert donations and volunteers to help the day of the event are needed. Please contact Jen (jnygirl@aol.com) or Franciska (franciska.doshi@gmail.com) if you would like to be involved.

Although it is only February we are already planning for our largest fund-raising and community service event, Gideon’s Attic, which will take place on April 22nd. It’s the perfect time to do some spring cleaning and help others in our community. Donation dropoff will be Wednesday 4/19, Thursday 4/20 and Friday 4/21.

Thank you Lisa Crowley, for, once again, chairing this incredible event. Lisa is looking for committee members and volunteers to help during the days leading up to and the day of the event. Please contact her at lac4@optonline.net.

– Rita Afzelius, President
Amy Schamroth, Executive VP

Thank You from Andrea Kelly

“I’d like to extend my sincere gratitude to Parent Council for their unwavering support of Friends Academy faculty, staff, students and families. Your generosity across so many areas of our school is truly appreciated.”

Volunteer for 2017-18 Parent Council!

Stay tuned for more details, including the nomination form in an upcoming e-mail.

E-mail Nominating chair Laura Semlies at semliesfam@me.com.

Admissions

Re-enrollment begins in early February

Dear Friends Academy Families,

We continue to look to you as folks who promote our school in the community at large. Admissions season is in full swing and we are looking for Early Childhood and Grade 2 students.

Similarly, we are seeking families and students committed to Quaker Education for Grades 5 – 8. Please direct any prospective families to the Admissions Office – we look forward to sharing the best of Friends!

On the enrollment front, please be on the lookout for an e-mail and letter from Andrea Kelly. The upcoming email will have a link to our online enrollment.

Contracts will be released in early February and re-enrollment should be secured early this Spring.

We look forward to meeting any new families you send our way and are certainly available to help with re-enrollment. Stay tuned.

Go Quakers!

Team Admissions
Nina, Liz, Jo and Doreen
It's time to THINK SUMMER!

Spend the SUMMER with FRIENDS!
Secure your spot for 2017. Spaces fill up FAST.

Visit our website at www.fasummercamp.org or call (516) 393-4207 for more details.

FA SUMMER CAMPS

WE OFFER OVER 30 PROGRAM CHOICES
(AGES 2-15 YRS)

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<tr>
<td>Dance School</td>
<td>Acting/Improv</td>
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New Mini-Camp Programs: (Mon-Thurs, 10-2 p.m., includes lunch)

- Elevate Girls Lacrosse Camp: (K-12th) July 24-27th
- Million Boys Lacrosse Camp: (3-8th) July 31-Aug. 3rd
- Gold Coast Soccer Camp: (K-5th) Aug. 7-10th & Aug. 14-17th
- Hoopology Basketball Camp: (3-8th) Aug. 7-10th, & Aug. 14-17th
- HITT Tennis Camp: (5-10th) Aug. 7-10th & Aug. 14-17th
- Gatti Baseball Camp: (K-5th) July 17-20th

Sign up for your summer today!
Hailed as a “poignant story about meaning and belonging,” the film *Moonlight* recently won the award for Best Motion Picture Drama at the 74th Golden Globe Awards. *Moonlight* tells the story of Chiron, a contemplative young man who struggles to fit into his surrounding community. The narrative unfolds in three segments – “Little,” “Chiron,” and “Black,” each title referring to the way in which Chiron is perceived by others – as first a child, then as an individual, and last as a stereotype. Justin Chang of the *Los Angeles Times* described *Moonlight* as “a film that urges the viewer to look past Chiron’s outward appearance and his superficial signifiers of identity, climbing inside familiar stereotypes in order to quietly dismantle them from within.” In essence, *Moonlight* examines questions of race, masculinity, sexual orientation, and self-identity. This is the story of a young man’s struggle to find himself and find an answer to the existential question, “Who am I?”

Identity can be loosely defined as the condition of being oneself and not another; the condition or character as to who a person is; the qualities, beliefs, etc. that distinguish or identify a person. Identity is a socially and historically constructed concept. We learn about our own identity and the identity of others through interactions with family, peers, institutions, media and other connections we make in our everyday life. Key facets of identity – like gender, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, etc. – can fundamentally shape our life experience, how we’re treated, whom we form relationships with, where we live, what opportunities we’re afforded, and what kind of inequities we may face. Therefore, the answer to the question, “Who am I?” may depend on many factors. Is there one part of your identity that is more salient to you than another and stands out from the rest? Does your identity change depending on who you’re with, what you’re involved in, or where you are in your life? For example, I may, at times, choose to think about my identity only in singular terms (I am female). However, in other contexts, I may choose to reveal multiple and intersecting entities that further identify who I am (I am an introverted middle-class adult Black woman from Brooklyn who is a mother of two teenage children).

When we think about identity, we may focus on external markers (what we can see), on our biology or physiology, or how we were born. However, it is equally important to understand that our identities are comprised of ideas, ideologies, and ways of seeing the world around us. Part of understanding our identity also means understanding how our multidimensional identities fit in a broader social historical context and in relation to other groups.

Perhaps the first step to such an understanding is listening. Activist and YouTube personality Franchesca Ramsey says, “The best way to learn about the experiences of people that are different from you is to listen to them so you can learn what their challenges are and the best way to support them.” Indeed, taking the time to be conscientious could make all the difference in creating a more welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone.

And so, on February 1st, Upper School students and faculty witnessed FA’s second “living room conversation” assembly focused on the theme of identity. Beginning with, “Who am I?” the nine participants on stage (a pre-selected diverse group of students, faculty and parents traveled to this year’s People of Color Conference.)
Save the Date!
Wednesday, April 19th

Coming to FA: Debby Irving

Author of *Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, and a former classroom teacher, Debby Irving offers a fresh perspective on bias, stereotypes, identity and acceptance. Debby now devotes herself to working with white people exploring the impact white skin can have on perception, problem solving and engaging in racial justice work. Her book tells the story of how she went from well-meaning to well-doing.

**Read with us.**
Pick up a copy of *Waking Up White* at the Kumar Wang Learning Commons.

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students and faculty answered additional questions like, "How does the world see me?" and, "How do I want to be seen?"

They engaged in a 40-minute conversation full of active listening, empathy and education about their own identities and backgrounds. “The thing is, you just don’t know what you don't know,” Ramsey also says. “There are always going to be things that you’ve never experienced, so oftentimes you’re not able to see someone else’s perspective until you’ve been exposed to those people or learned about their challenges.”

The divisiveness of this particular election cycle exposed how many people in our country are not seen the way they wish to be seen. My hope is that we will keep listening, seeking, learning and participating in conversations that will deepen our awareness.

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**From Our Kitchen to Yours**

**Flik Turkey**
(To be featured February 3rd)

Makes about 20 servings

**Ingredients:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Ingredient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ c.</td>
<td>Black beans</td>
<td>⅛ tsp.</td>
<td>Ground cumin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ lb.</td>
<td>Bulgur wheat</td>
<td>¼ tsp.</td>
<td>Cayenne pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 c.</td>
<td>Boiling water</td>
<td>¼ c.</td>
<td>Light chili powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ c.</td>
<td>Butternut Squash, diced</td>
<td>1 ½ tsp.</td>
<td>Dried oregano, crushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jalapeno pepper, chopped</td>
<td>¼ c.</td>
<td>Worcestershire sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ½</td>
<td>Red Bell peppers, chopped</td>
<td>1 ½ qts.</td>
<td>Crushed tomatoes, canned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Green Bell peppers, chopped</td>
<td>1 Tbs.</td>
<td>Kosher salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Onions, finely chopped</td>
<td>1 ½ c.</td>
<td>Spinach, chopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Garlic cloves, chopped</td>
<td>½ c.</td>
<td>Cilantro, chopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 lbs.</td>
<td>Ground turkey</td>
<td>⅛ c.</td>
<td>Lime juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructions:**

2. Cook bulgur in boiling water until tender, approximately 35-40 minutes. Drain and set aside.
3. In a hot kettle, brown turkey until cooked through. Add peppers, onions and garlic and sauté 10 minutes, until onions are translucent.
4. Add cayenne pepper, chili powder, oregano, Worcestershire, tomatoes, chili sauce, salt and pepper to turkey mixture. Add butternut squash and cooked beans. Mix and simmer for 20-30 minutes.

**Eat. Learn. Live.**
A mantra for a better life!
The powers of quiet—and compassion

In the wind and rain of this January, filled with change and the ever present promise in a new year, I am grateful for the blessings of being in a school, especially a Quaker one, often reminded of the gift of being with children and helped by a mission that honors and holds sacred our equality as human beings.

During Peace Week one morning, I had the chance to watch Lama Tenzin teach and speak with some young grade three students as my Senior Reflections class also stood and watched him working with these young children. It was a beautiful thing to hear their almost pure voices, filled with very precise diction and exacting questions about his life and work. How long did you have to journey from Tibet? He answered, “Well, I work in upstate New York at a college, so not too far.”

What do the different symbols represent in the Mandala (the sacred Tibetan Buddhist circle he was creating from multi-colored sands)? “Each one is a special symbolic form that represents a core tenet of Buddhist belief, such as kindness and compassion.” The looks on the little faces, all fairly rapt in front of this wise sage in beautiful robes, their gazes were unmistakably ones of wonder. These children did not squirm or fidget, while we were there for forty minutes. “Where does the sand come from?” He paused, and looked the questioner in her eyes: “We make the sand by grinding it from ancient rocks. This sand here is from marble,” as he held it up to her and let her feel it. She reached to it, and touched it, tentatively, with respect.

These are times where such gentle and sacred spaces are essential. That day, the Atrium was busy with life, and some groups were having tea, talking at tables. It was loud. Soon, though, other students noticed the group there, so they moved to other places, letting the large area become quieter, and the children, young and old, could better hear the quiet voice of the monk. As it got less busy, and the space around us became still, I felt the group deepening its attention. In the age of Twitter, and Snapchat, we so need this time and its stillness.

“(Thomas) Merton tells us, ‘The world of men has forgotten the joys of silence, the peace of solitude which is necessary, to some extent, for the fullness of human living.’

When I was younger, I witnessed yearly the powers of quiet in monastic lives. Every spring, my parents would bring us to celebrate Easter with a group of Benedictine monks in upper New York state. We would drive to the monastery at nighttime, and enter down the stairs into the darkness of the Abbey vault below, where they would begin chanting in darkness, then lighting handmade candles, only to lead us up into the upper chambers, still in darkness. As Easter sunlight began...
to filter through the narrow windows, the chanting and its power grew strong. These days, I still read Thomas Merton, an incredible philosophical thinker who became a Trappist monk and also followed the Dalai Lama, practicing non-violence and peace activism late in life. Merton tells us, “The world of men has forgotten the joys of silence, the peace of solitude which is necessary, to some extent, for the fullness of human living.”

Lama Tenzin stayed a week or so with us, and was well cared for by my colleague, Joy Lai, and by Andrea and Tim Kelly, who hosted him at Jackson House. When he spoke at Meeting on Thursday to the students, he shared a story with us that resonated.

He said he used to walk a long way to his teaching job, and went through town, sometimes stopping on a bridge over the water to watch the water flow and to rest. He would walk in all climates, and one snowy day, a woman pulled up in her car and asked if he was the monk who taught up at the college. He said he was. She said she wanted to buy him a car, and indeed, she did, a brand new Toyota.

He was overwhelmed by this stranger’s generosity. He learned to drive the car and also cared for it. But soon, he began to care too much for it for his liking. He got upset at times. He came to see the car came with other costs, bringing with it an attitude of ownership that in his words seemed to alter his spirit.

After a while, he gave the car back. Now he is walking again. He told us that he had come back to an understanding of what was really important to him. He knows that this was his decision, and that it was the right one for him. He told us he is more himself, more at peace with the world now.

He blessed us with words of gratitude and humility, and asked us to treat each other with supreme compassion, as we said goodbye to him.

“Lama Tenzin blessed us with words of gratitude and humility, and asked us to treat each other with supreme compassion, as we said goodbye to him.”

Students from Play Group joined students from all grades as they watched and learned about the principles of the Mandala from visiting ordained Buddhist monk Lama Tenzin.

“Visiting Author Day: On December 8th Chris Grabenstein, famed author of 28 books for children ages 8-12, visited students in grades 3-7. He spoke about his process of writing and how he generates his ideas. With help from student suggestions, he created a story just for them. After giving a hilarious and inspiring hour-long presentation, Chris took questions from all ages and signed books afterward.

Book Fairies Book Drive: The Friends Academy Kumar Wang Learning Commons is proud to support The Book Fairies, a charitable organization on Long Island that gathers books from book drives and distributes them to schools in need. FA contributed almost 1,000 books, ranging from Early Childhood to YA to adult books. The Book Fairies were very happy!”

Left: The Friends Academy Kumar Wang Learning Commons is proud to support The Book Fairies, a charitable organization on Long Island that gathers books from book drives and distributes them to schools in need. FA contributed almost 1,000 books, ranging from Early Childhood to YA to adult books. The Book Fairies were very happy!

Middle School students ask author Chris Grabenstein a “few” questions.
We have just witnessed the inauguration of a new president. Now that Donald Trump has taken office, don’t we still have a responsibility as citizens to let him know what’s on our minds? Like being an informed voter and voting in every election, writing to our government officials is an act of good citizenship that we can practice with no cost to ourselves and great benefit to our nation. These are also life skills that we can teach to our children, using the example of our active citizen life to encourage them to do the same as they grow older.

Why not have your child write a letter to the president, focusing on issues such as these? (These ideas come from a Friends Journal “Student Voices” project that has been recommended to our Middle and Upper School teachers.)

- What is needed in our community that the president could help accomplish?
- What lessons have you learned at school that would help the president do their job?
- What issues should be given priority during the first year and why? Examples might include the economy, education, immigration, refugees, health care, gun control, criminal justice and mass incarceration, foreign relations, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- If you were president, what are three things you would do?
- Recommend a book that you think the president should read and explain why.
- Let the president know how your Quaker education has given you values and tools that allow you to be a good citizen of the world.

Here’s the mailing address (be sure to include a return address):
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

We often state that many people fought hard and made great sacrifices to ensure that our democracy goes forward, yet during the last presidential election 48% of eligible voters (over 92 million people) did not vote. Let’s do our part to make sure that the next generation will be better citizens.
The Arts at Friends
Tracey Foster, Director of Arts | Divisional Assistant: Pia Fleischmann, 393-4289

Welcome to The Arts page, where each month we will be sharing updates and musings from our studios and stage to keep creativity alive at Friends!

Try Your Hand at Printmaking

On Monday 2/13 through Thursday 2/16 from 4:00 to 5:30 pm, a PRINTATHON! will be offered for faculty, kids and parents to try their hand at making prints in the art studios. Each day will offer a different printmaking process, taught by a different member of the visual arts department. No previous experience necessary, all materials will be provided. Please RSVP to allison_doherty@fa.org so that we can be prepared. Come with some ideas, photos or drawings of what you’d like to accomplish, so that we can guide your choices.

Gallery News

An artists reception for PRINTMAKING! will be held on Thursday, February 9th from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Artwork will be for sale, created by students and art faculty.

Student-Artist of the Month: Lauren Bell

If someone asks me who I am or what I do, my first response will always be that I am Lauren Bell and I’m an artist. Art has followed me throughout my years of growth, and with the development of my maturity has come a refinery in my artistic taste and skill. My investment in becoming a painter only began in October of last year. What sparked my interest in taking on the challenge of diving into the strokes and brushes of the paint world was the ingenious musical work of Kendrick Lamar presented in his album, To Pimp A Butterfly.

In each song, Kendrick utilizes an array of voices to broach his experience in the world as a black man not only plagued with success, but also conflicting thoughts that fuel his overwhelming inner turmoil. Listening to this album incessantly drove me to seek further inspiration from other influential black figures such as Nina Simone, Louis Armstrong, Kerry James Marshall, Jean Michel Basquiat, and Ralph Ellison.

The purpose of my work is to display the darkness of the mental struggle that has been attached to black bodies in the past and the present while directly relating it to my sources of inspiration. All of my paintings are named after song titles or quotes from literature and are built off of the concept of the song or novel. The painting above is my first completed painting named after and inspired by Nina Simone’s performance of Strange Fruit, written by Abel Meeropol and originally performed by Billie Holiday. The strong presence of black paint was inspired by Kerry James Marshall and his remarkable usage of different shades of black, illustrating the boldness of black skin. In my work, I use black paint to transform the abstract darkness of the concept to the concrete darkness of the image.

Combining the lyrics of Strange Fruit and the color techniques of Kerry James Marshall, I created a story of a young man in the late 17th century with bloodshot eyes standing alone in a field amidst the complete darkness of night. He is surrounded by trees, one in the front with an empty noose and another in the back, subtly accessorized with a lynched black man. The young man is driven to insomnia and paranoia, shown by his bloodshot eyes, due to his infatigable fear of being the next “strange fruit” to hang from the trees. The looming threat of being lynched reduces his existence to that of a vulnerable, vigilant, hunted animal.

“Strange Fruit” by senior Lauren Bell
The Friends Academy Theater & Dance Department Presents...

Standing in the Current

February 9th, 10th & 11th, 2017

$12 Students | 7:30pm In The Helen A. Dolan Center | $15 Adults

This play contains mature themes

We ask that students 8th grade and below be accompanied by a parent. Please reach out to tracey.foster@fa.org if you would like more detailed information regarding content.