



eyes wide open

THE SPRINGMONT NEWSLETTER - ALUMNI EDITION
Winter 2021-22

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Letter from the Interim Head of School

Dear Alumni,

My name is Megan Hakerem. It is my pleasure to serve as the Interim Head of School at Springmont. I have been actively involved at Springmont as a parent, volunteer, and Trustee for the past 10 years. It was my children, specifically my oldest daughter, Samantha, who led me to learn about the Montessori method. I was a new parent seeking direction for what to do with a young infant. At the advice of a good friend, I picked up a book called *Montessori From the Start* and never looked back. Shortly thereafter, it was a then, First Montessori School of Atlanta, parent, George Soba, who guided my husband and me to this very special place. My appreciation for Montessori began with that book and has continued to grow as I witness how each of my three children is thriving in this program. Samantha is now a 6th year in Upper Elementary, Joshua is a 3rd year in Lower Elementary, and Katherine is in Primary.



As you can imagine, having been raised in a traditional education environment, there are times of uncertainty about how a Springmont education will impact my children's future success. In those moments, I don't have to look any further than what you have accomplished as alumni of our school to know the great potential that exists for them. Your accomplishments are varied, but reflect the manifestation of learning in a thoughtfully prepared environment with guides who supported you along your path of development to achieve independence and understand your unique place in this world.

It has been a challenging time for Springmont, as we strive to continue to offer an authentic Montessori education despite health and safety limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. While we were able to maintain our academic program, COVID-19 made a significant impact on our ability to gather as a community this past year and a half. As we emerge from COVID-19, I am looking forward to opportunities to reinvigorate this vital aspect of the Springmont experience.

Springmont has re-opened to visitors. I hope you will come visit campus and reconnect with us. I look forward to the opportunity to get to know you and hear about your experience, as well as to share more information about what is currently happening at your school.

All the best,
Megan



Congratulations Springmont Graduating Class of 2021!

On May 27th eight new graduates joined the Springmont Alumni Association. These impressive students exemplify our vision for our graduates, individuals who are informed, determined, socially conscious, collaborative and resourceful. Here's a look at where they are now:

Evan Chan-Woo Clough attends the Riverwood International Charter School Magnet Program.

Dana Mae Edler is a student at Dunwoody High School.

Siddhartha Guntur attends high school at the Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology.

Christopher Huff is a freshman at Capstone Academy.

Cole James Kite-Powell is a student at Lakeside High School.

Alessandro Michael Mendes attends Dekalb School of the Arts.

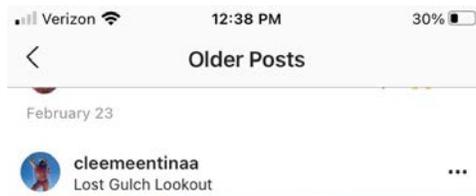
Mason Turner Smith is a freshman at the Center for Advanced Studies in Science, Math & Technology at Wheeler High School.

Timothy Williams attends high school at the Fulton Science Academy.



As Seen on Instagram

Thanks to social media, we can keep up with our alumni! Here are some recent highlights!



Spotlight on Springmont Class of 2017!

In May 2017, we graduated ten 8th years. Thanks to a global pandemic, their junior and senior years were far from the usual high school experience. Regardless, those alumni graduated and are headed off on new adventures!

Max Erdmann graduated from Walton High School and started at Kennesaw State University this fall. He plans to concurrently take automotive repair classes at a local tech college.

Catherine Friedline attended Blessed Trinity Catholic High School and is currently attending Coastal Carolina University to study Marine Biology.

Robert Gordon attended Ben Franklin Academy for three years and transferred to Grady High School for his senior year. Robert studies at Vanderbilt University where he plays on the baseball team.

Parker Hollosi graduated from Mount Vernon High School and is spending the next four years overseas to play soccer for i2i International Soccer Academy in partnership with Northumbria University in Newcastle, England.

Sunny Leveson-Jones attended North Springs Charter High School until 10th grade when he decided to enroll himself in Gwinnett Tech where he cleared his general education requirements for a bachelors degree. He started at Kennesaw State University in the fall.

Mary Pleiss graduated from The Galloway School and attends Wake Forest University to study psychology.

Madeleine Rojas completed high school at Holy Innocents Episcopal School and is now a student at University of Miami.

Zach Vogel earned his Eagle in Boy Scouts and graduated from Fulton Science Academy. He attends Appalachian State University where he plans to study environmental science.

Nicole Walker graduated from Mount Vernon High School and attends University of Georgia to study political science on the pre-law track.

Adem Wijewickrema graduated from Atlanta International School and is now living in Brooklyn to study graphic design at the Pratt Institute.

Congratulations to all our alumni!!



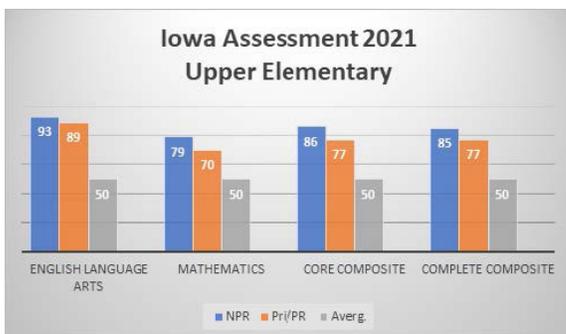
What's new at Springmont



Springmont is proud to have had many students as winners and finalists in the 2021 River of Words Poetry and Art Contest! Lower Elementary student Flynn MacQueen's poem, *Tiny Turtles*, and Lower Elementary student Brielle Cliett's poem, *Nature's Love*, were both National Poetry Finalists! Upper Elementary student Sophie Little's poem, *Hope*, and Middle School student Penn Keromytis' untitled poem were Georgia Poetry – State Winners. Upper Elementary student Celeste Beaty's artwork, *Spring Fox* (pictured here), was a Georgia Art- State Winner!



Congratulations to Team Nebula (Marina Santos, Ellia Meisinger, Mustafa Iqbal and Mason Smith) for placing 3rd in the Georgia Regional Future City competition! The 2020-21 Future City theme was *Living on the Moon* and required teams to design safe and healthy, futuristic lunar cities. Competition deliverables included a project plan, a 1500-word essay, a scale model built from recycled materials, a presentation video, and a virtual Q&A session with judges.



While Springmont does not believe that standardized testing alone can accurately assess student achievement or measure a student's full potential, tests like the Iowa Assessments taken by Elementary students last January do provide a context for measuring Springmont against the national average as well as other independent and parochial schools. The grey columns represent the national average score or what is considered "grade level" while the blue and orange columns show Springmont's scores in relation. Using English Language Arts as an example, Springmont students scored better than 93% of all students who took the test (NPR) and better than 89% of all students in independent and parochial schools (Pri/PR).

As you can see, in both cases and across the board, our students are well above grade level. What is even more impressive is that our students' complete composite declined only 2% over previous year whereas other independent and parochial schools that administered the Iowa Assessment saw scores fall by nearly 6%.



While planning, cleaning, and organizing are always a part of Faculty/Staff Workdays, so too is setting aside time for professional growth and development. Over the course of the 2020-21 school year and into this year, workdays included workshops on how racial identity impacts teaching and learning. By investigating our own personal, social, and universal identities, Springmont faculty and staff took a closer look at how we recognize and challenge unconscious bias and systematic racism in service of all Springmont learners. This important work supports our delivery of the school's mission and core values and provides a framework for instilling a global perspective and respect for diversity of all kinds in our students.

Spotlight on Springmont Class of 2013!

Eight years ago, ten students became Springmont alumni. Since then they have graduated high school and many graduated college this spring!

Derrick Bass attended high school at The Galloway School and graduated from Western Carolina University with a BFA in Musical Theatre. He has moved to Syracuse, New York for his next chapter.

Samantha Dyer also graduated from The Galloway School and went on to Clemson University where she earned a major in Architecture and a minor in Studio Art. She is currently working as a UX/UI designer for a tech company in Atlanta

Kate Everly attended North Atlanta High School and went on to graduate with highest honors from Georgia Tech with a BS in biology. She has moved to Baltimore, Maryland where she works for Becton, Dickinson and Company, a medical technology company.

Summer King attended The Galloway School after Springmont and went on to graduate Summa Cum Laude from the accelerated Nursing program at Georgia State University. She is currently working as an RN on a medical/surgical unit at Emory.

Rachel Newman graduated from Walton High School and is currently wrapping up her dual degree program at Georgia College while also working for State Farm. She plans to graduate this spring.

Jake Pitts attended Walton High school and went on to Kennesaw State University. Due to COVID-19, he decided to take some time off from school and is working full time at The Home Depot. He plans to return to school to pursue a degree in IT.

Katie Pleiss graduated from Oxford College of Emory University in 2019 and Emory University this past May. She will attend Harvard Law School and is interested in pursuing rights for incarcerated individuals through work with an organization like the Southern Poverty Law Center or ACLU.

Chandler Ross graduated from Marietta High school in 2017 and went on to earn a B.A. in International Business from Loyola University New Orleans. She is now studying to become a licensed Customs Broker and will continue to pursue a career in International Import and Export.

Amy Soba attended The Galloway school and continued on to graduate Summa Cum Laude with a degree in psychology and a minor in physics from Dickinson College. This fall she began her job in the College Center for Advising, Internships & Lifelong Career Development as a Post-Baccalaureate Associate at Dickinson. She hopes to attend graduate school in the future to obtain her masters in Industrial Organizational Psychology.

Sara Soba graduated from The Galloway School and matriculated to Dickinson College to graduate Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Environmental Science. She spent the summer sailing and backpacking is now working as a Technical Analyst for Enterprise Knowledge in Arlington.

We're so proud of all of you!



Alumni Panel Recap

For many Springmont parents, the educational experience they have chosen for their children looks very different from their own schooling. As a result, they sometimes have questions about how a Montessori education fits into the bigger picture for their children. In January 2021, we hosted our first **Virtual Alumni Panel** via Zoom. Five outstanding alumni shared first-hand accounts about how their experiences as Springmont students shaped their lives.

- Libby Brandt Ranniger — North Springs High School Class of 2005; Vanderbilt University Class of 2009 with majors in Chemistry and Math; University of Virginia School of Medicine Class of 2013; Northwestern University Pediatric Resident 2013-2016. Libby is currently a Pediatrician at Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Denison, Iowa.
- Erin Lemmon— Blessed Trinity Catholic High School Class of 2019; University of Kentucky Class of 2023 with majors in Healthcare Communications and Psychology and a Clinical Healthcare Management certificate.
- Ryan Restifo— The Galloway School Class of 2019; Wake Forest University Class of 2023 with majors in Mechanical Engineering and Physics.
- Gavin Rolls— Kent Denver School Class of 2019; Georgia Institute of Technology Class of 2023 Stamps President's Scholar with a major in Computer Science.
- Shawdon Zadeh— Walton High School Class of 2014; Washington University Class of 2018 with a major in Finance. Shawdon is currently a Senior Analyst at Avascent in Washington, DC.

If you are interested in participating in a future Alumni Panel, please send an email to development@springmont.com.



Alumna In The News

One June 22nd, 2021, Springmont's own Catherine Friedline was featured in the AJC for the incredible work she is doing with the Girl Scouts and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Catherine founded Troop Hope, a Girl Scout Troop geared towards girls facing long-term hospital stays. Over three years Catherine created the program which allows girls to earn badges within a health care setting. So far, the program has expanded to ten hospitals in six states. As a result of her incredible work, Catherine earned the Gold Award, the highest achievement among the Girl Scouts, as well as the honor of "Woman of Distinction." Go Catherine!



#SpringmontTBT

