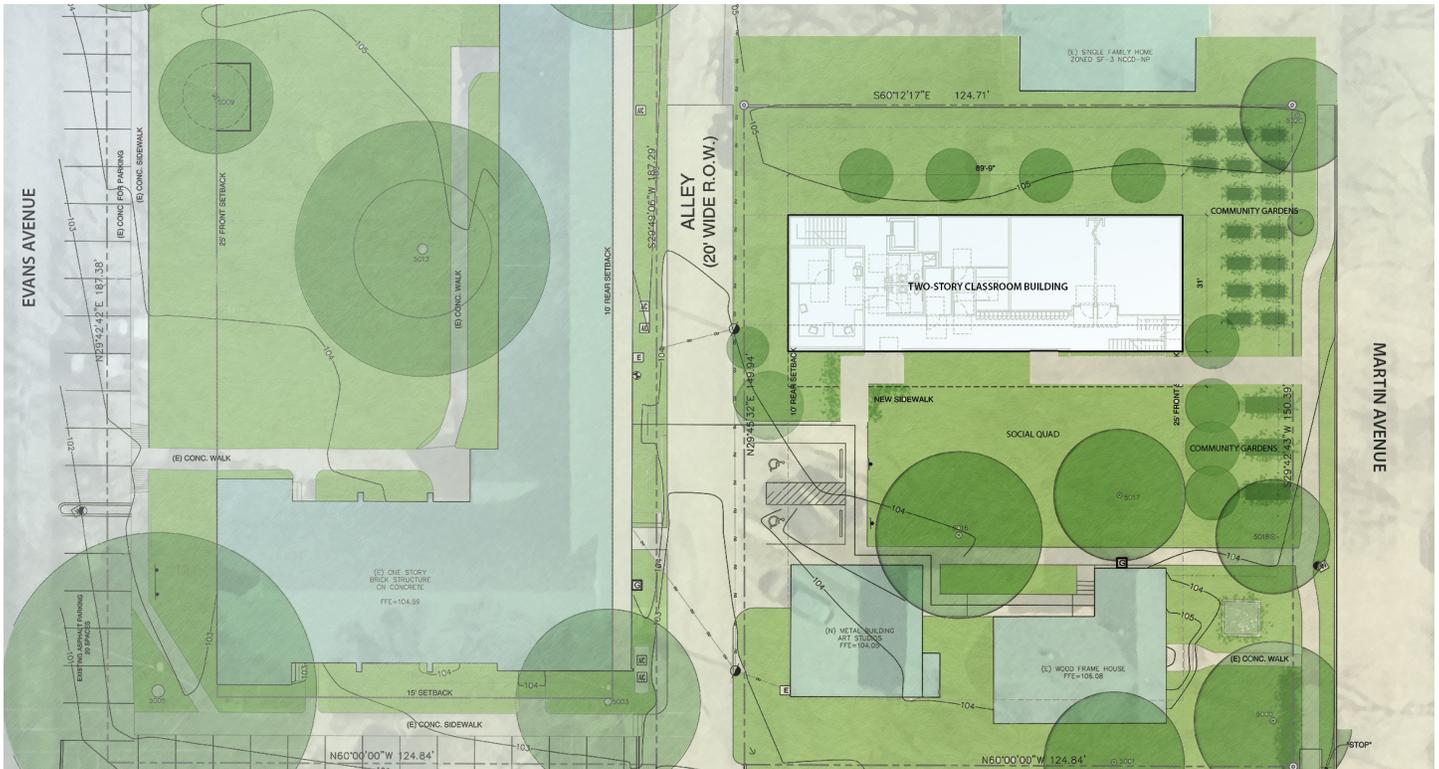




# GRIFFIN SCHOOL PERSPECTIVES

INTEGRATING ACADEMIC RIGOR & CREATIVITY

## A NEW BUILDING ON GRIFFIN CAMPUS—COMING SOON!



Growth and transition – that’s what the high school years are all about. We work with these themes every day at Griffin School. And as the school has grown into our permanent campus in the north part of Hyde Park, it has been a time full of growth and transition for our school. We have developed our programs in core academics, the arts, and athletics, and we have done much to make a positive impact on the community around us.

We always saw our move into the Evans Avenue campus as having two phases. We accomplished the first phase three years ago in acquiring the property and doing the major renovations and updating needed in the old Trinity Methodist Church buildings to enable them to function as a school. The second phase is an addition on the property to allow us to grow fully into the space and expand our enrollment to the size that will sustain our school community. Here is the news: phase two is upon us!

This year, the school leadership has been working with award-winning architect Murray Legge to build a design

for our addition that is beautiful and functional. Initially, we pursued the idea of a new classroom wing onto the Main Building – one that would enclose our legacy oak tree in an outdoor courtyard. This was the concept we had been promoting for the last few years. Unfortunately we discovered that adding onto the Main Building is not possible given the zoning and code requirements in our neighborhood plan. To stay within these guidelines, and to maintain the existing buildings, we are now planning a new free-standing building on the east side of our campus where we have plenty of open space with which to work. (See the site plan above.)

Once we made the decision to shift our building plans, we found a lot of positive things about the new location – we could orient the building so that its small side is on the street frontage to minimize the visual change for our neighbors, there is plenty of room to arrange the community gardens around the building, and we can take advantage of the natural sunlight coming into the south-facing side of the building.

*(continued on page 6)*

## From the Director's Desk

Last week we had the Freshman Meet And Greet – something we do each summer to help new students and parents connect in advance of the first day of school. We do a few ice-breakers, serve some pizza, and just let people interact with each other. It was lovely, and I was so inspired by the enthusiasm that many of our new families expressed about starting at Griffin. Parents talked about their own high school experiences, and many said they wished they had a school like Griffin when they were in high school. It's great to have this kind of positive energy as we head toward the start of a new school year!

I trust and expect this this will be a great year, but I also know that there will be challenges and frustrations along the way. High school is full of change and transition and growth (for both parents and students), and not all of it is easy. Just as there will be great joy and things to celebrate, there will also be moments of awkwardness, frustration, and self-doubt – these moments are part of life even in the best circumstances.

It's to prepare for those moments that we have the Griffin School Essential Values. These are five statements that reflect what we think is most important for all of us so that the school functions as a positive and supportive community. The Essential Values include things like respect for others, communication, and personal responsibility.

The Value that I have been thinking about most is:

***“We treat one another with kindness and respect.”***

In our School Handbook, we expand on what living this value might look like in practice. We have found it helpful to think about the specific ways we can make kindness and respect show up in our lives...

We understand that kindness and respect for one another is reflected in:

- Active engagement in selfless behavior
- Encouragement and support of all Griffin School community members
- The assumption that we approach our interactions with good intentions
- The thoughtful use of language demonstrating an understanding of appropriate context, time and place
- An attempt to be aware of and sensitive to other people's feelings
- An effort to be patient with one another

There are moments when this is tough to live up to, and at times all of us fall short of our aspiration for kindness and respect. But when that happens, we go back to our commitment to strive to embody the Values – this is the way we can reset our interactions with other people in the school community throughout the year.

If we can communicate with each other with kindness and respect – even when we disagree, even when we don't feel kindness and respect from the other – we can diffuse a lot of frustrating moments and sustain a healthy and positive way of relating to each other. I hope we can all embrace that effort, not just in the Griffin School community, but in the world community.



Adam Wilson  
Co-Founder  
School Director



*Life at school. Top: Jules Cordova ('15), Bottom: Jake Black ('17) Pictures by Clif Wright*

## FIVE QUESTIONS FOR JOHNNY WALKER

For the past two years, Johnny Walker has been coming into the office each semester with fire in his eyes to pitch new art classes. He'd say something like: "Okay, so I was dreaming yesterday about teaching a class that will be an open collaboration between students to produce art work that will live in the public spaces of the school. There will be this great dynamic created by the public reaction to their works. We'll call it 'Creative Collectives.'" We have learned to let Johnny run with ideas like this—his classes are consistently engaging, challenging, effective and enriching for his students. This fall, Johnny takes over the reigns of the art department as our new Art Director.



Johnny Walker, the new Art Director at Griffin

### **What were you like in high school?**

When I was in high school the things in my life that mattered most were skating, art, music, and traveling with family and friends. I've always loved to learn but my high school was big and the classes weren't that exciting. Football and baseball were hugely popular, and I played; I never loved them, though. Coming out of high school I received a combination football and Art scholarship. Football helped get me into college but after a year I'd had enough, so I quit and focused on Art and my studies. The things that you love are the things that last. To this day I still skate, make Art, and travel with my family every chance I get.



"Wind and Waves" An exhibit in Zilker Park by Johnny Walker for the 2013 Fusebox Festival

### **What led you to become an art teacher?**

I became a teacher because I love to learn. Art is about asking questions, exploring for answers, and finding ways to share the things you've found with others. It's the same with teaching. The classroom is a laboratory for learning. Everyone in my classroom is there to question and research, including me. I guide the class simply because I've had *(continued on page 6)*

## **Mark Your Calendars!**

Aug 21

**First Day for New Students**

Aug 22

**Whole School Orientation**

Sept 2, 5:30-7pm

**Annual Parent Meeting**

Sept 5, 8:30-9:30am

**Parent First Friday Coffee**

Sept 12

**Half Day, Family Meetings**

Sept 18, 5:30-7pm

**Talk First Parent Workshop  
Are you an Askable Parent?**

Sept 25, 5:30-7pm

**Open House for  
Prospective Families**

Oct 2, 7-8:30pm

**Parent Workshop  
Mean Girls No More**

Oct 15

**PSAT Testing**

October 22-25

**Freshman and Sophomore  
Class Trips**

Nov 21, 2-4pm

**Community Thanksgiving  
Potluck Feast**

Nov 24-28

**Thanksgiving Holiday**

Dec 5, 6-8pm

**Fall Art & Music Showcase**

Dec 20-Jan 5

**Winter Holiday**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS SUMMER



Senior **Sara McNeil** attended the Fir Acres Workshop in Writing and Thinking at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. Fir Acres is a community of writers from across the US and overseas who share a commitment to the work and play of writing together. This awesome collaboration of writers is part of the National Writing & Thinking Network.

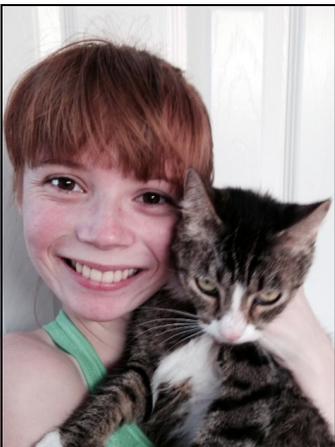


Junior **Maximilla de Berardine** (pictured, bottom row, second from left) spent her summer in Japan, living with a host family in Hokkaido through the Experiment in International Living program. Max was interviewed for the local newspaper and was even chosen to give a farewell speech (in Japanese) thanking the town on behalf of her group at the goodbye ceremony. She then moved to Tokyo to complete an internship with an animation studio.

Senior **Gunnip Mueller** experienced college life at the Jackling Engineering camp at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, Missouri. It was a great introduction to engineering and to dorm life. Gunnip also attended the UT College of Natural Sciences Summer Research Academy for three weeks later in the summer.



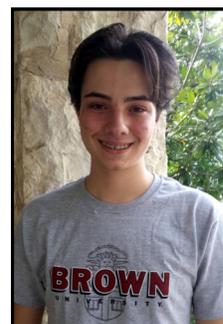
Sophomore **Whitney Barquet** volunteered as a camp counselor for a second summer with the Joy of Learning Child Development Center in Austin. She loved the experience of growing close to her group of campers and caring for them. She is pictured here, surrounded by her campers on a field trip to a candy store!



Junior **Sophie Barrett** volunteered at the Austin Humane Society as a "cat socializer." She loved visiting with the cats and playing with them. Her job was to keep the kitties active and happy while they await adoption.



Junior **Marti Summers** spent three weeks in Ecuador's Andean Highlands doing service work through the Putney Student Travel program with thirteen other high school students from around the country. She spent a fourth week exploring the extraordinary wildlife on the Galápagos Islands.



Senior **Jamie Dunaway** attended a week long program about the creative process at Brown University. He learned that creativity is profoundly different to each of us. He said, "We must not think comparatively; we must search based solely on the parameters of our own unique consciousness." We expect even bigger ideas from Jamie this year!

## SUMMER ACTIVITIES



Four Griffin students honed their writing skills at the BadgerDog Creative Writing Camp, hosted at Griffin. Freshmen **Jaidan Langston** and **Sam Winget** and sophomores **Anne Morgan** (center) and **Sophia Magri** bonded over #MoshiMoshiWalrusKun (don't ask, we don't know either).



Sophomore **Holland Dorgan** (back row second from right) attended the Amala Foundation's Global Youth Peace Summit, which unites American, refugee, immigrant and international youth for a week-long summit devoted to healing, personal growth, cultural exchange, community building and leadership development.

Freshman **Katherine Held** made this awesome Batman dress at Tina Sparkles' Stitch n' Style Fashion Camp at Griffin! After finishing off this amazing addition to her wardrobe, Katherine left for the mountains of Colorado for two weeks of volunteering with Mission: Wolf, a wolf conservation program through The Road Less Traveled.



## WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

Teenagers need good food to function well. We know this, but too often kids grab the fastest item on their way out the door and just snack their way through the day. Like consistently getting good sleep, eating a decent lunch sets students up for a successful day.

With the leadership of super-volunteer Valerie Bissett, Griffin has developed a lunch program that provides yummy food from some of our favorite local eateries. Bissett reached out to the places where our students want to eat anyway...

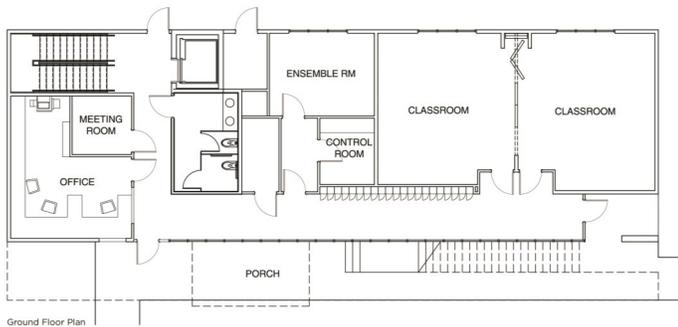
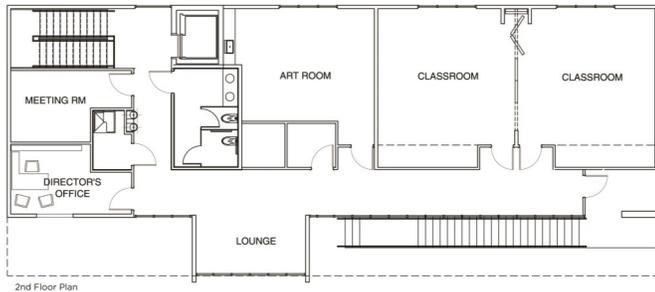


So how does this sound: Edamame and sushi from Zen? How about Wheatsville's Tempeh Chili Frito Pie? A falafel wrap and baklava from Tino's? The huge slices from East Side Pies are a student favorite, and they come with a monster Caesar salad too. For the new year, the students pushed for the all-natural, free-of-all-junk beef burgers from P.Terry's, and they can look forward to that on the menu. If you know Austin, you know this is good stuff!

Bissett is proud of how the lunch program is a partnership of iconic local businesses. The program works well she says because the vendors and the school "have the same communal spirit. Like Austin, Griffin is unique, inclusive, and well-informed. Both have an authentic vibrancy all their own with a fierce passion for those around them." This is the synergy that makes lunch happen at Griffin School!

## NEW BUILDING—continued from p 1

This summer, we are seeking the site plan permit needed to do this work, talking with neighbors and the neighborhood association to gain their feedback and ideas, and continuing the planning needed to see a project like this through. The building design is still taking shape, and there are many details – big and small – that we need to put in place. But Legge has created an initial concept for the building that is unique, creative, simple and functional – it is a remarkably elegant and beautiful school building. It uses a generous open front porch space to encourage students and staff to socialize along the warm south side of the building. Classrooms will be large and flexible to allow for multiple uses. Legge is particularly intrigued by the idea of a sunlight screening feature that would add color and texture to the face of the building and provide a filter for the sunlight coming in from the south. Overall, we hope to make a new building that is just as thoughtful and creative as the school is.



*The new building floor plan, showing new classrooms, offices, and some great new space for music and art production.*

There is a lot to still develop as the planning for this building continues, but we are seeking feedback and ideas about this project from our school community as well as from the surrounding community. Please be in touch and let us know what you think. More details coming soon!

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[www.griffinschool.org/donatenow](http://www.griffinschool.org/donatenow)

## JOHNNY WALKER – continued from p 3

more experience, but we are all there to learn and share.

### ***What do you hope that students get out of your class?***

I have three ideal goals for each student. I want them to develop a sense of who they are and what they can do. I want them to understand the context in which they live. And I want them to possess the confidence, curiosity, and compassion to engage with the world in a way that is intriguing to them personally and mutually beneficial.



*"Unicorn Island" For more of Johnny's art, see [JohnnyWalkerArt.com](http://JohnnyWalkerArt.com)*

### ***In your own artwork, what is it that you get most excited about?***

What most excites me in my art practice is discovering something extraordinary and wonderful in the world around me that I had initially overlooked or taken for granted. Finding ways to share these discoveries is the most difficult part of making art but also the most rewarding.

### ***Do you have a favorite motto, quote or saying?***

My mother once told me something that I keep in mind while working. She was an ICU nurse for 30 years, helping very ill people become well again or, when that wasn't going to happen, helping guide patients and their families through the process of dying. When I thought about my job as an artist and what I did every-day in relation to what my mother did, I sometimes felt uncertain, almost guilty, about what contribution my work made in comparison to her work. I told her about my doubts and she told me that my thinking was all wrong. She said that it was her job to help people to heal when they were not well and that my job is to help those who are well understand and appreciate the lives that they are living.

# ALUMNI UPDATES



**Hiep Dinh Huynh, Griffin '10, BS in Public Relations, minor in Government, UT Austin, May 2014**

Hiep returned to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to accept a job as an Investor Relations Associate at Indochina Capital in their Infrastructure Management Division. He works closely with the investment team in the process of closing Mekong Renewable Resources Fund, a \$150 million private equity fund with a diverse mandate on renewable energy, sustainable forestry, plantations and environmental services. Hiep also serves as our Griffin School International Admissions Coordinator for Vietnam.



**Lindsey Hale, Griffin '00, Master of Science in Human Services, Lubbock Christian University, May 2014 Focus in Family Life Education**

Lindsey is now qualified to be a prevention instructor to teach families how to communicate more effectively and resolve conflict in a productive manner. This specialization emphasizes curriculum development, needs assessment and educating individuals and families. She is currently working at the American Cancer Society as a Patient Resource Specialist and loving it!



**Katie Parker, Griffin '10 BFA in Animation, Savannah College of Art & Design May 2014, Magna Cum Laude**

Katie is back in Austin, working as a freelance 2D animator and continuing to write and record music. If you've missed her amazing voice, you can find her latest songs on [katieparker.bandcamp.com](http://katieparker.bandcamp.com)!



**Seungyeon "Lina" Lee, Griffin '10 BS, Chemical Engineering University of Texas at Austin, May 2014**

Lina returned to Seoul, Korea to accept a new job at Samsung! She spent the summer in orientation and after completing three more weeks of training with Samsung heavy industries, will find out her final placement!

Do you have news to share? Send us an update to [caroline@griffinschool.org](mailto:caroline@griffinschool.org)



# GRIFFIN SCHOOL

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Yoga class in the Big Room

Photo by Clif Wright