“Teaching is more than imparting knowledge, it is inspiring change. Learning is more than absorbing facts, it is acquiring understanding.”

- William Arthur Ward
Alumni Spotlight

Frances Perkins, Class of 1995

Frances (Fofy) lives in Nashville and recently visited PS1 during a trip with her husband for their new project in L.A. designing a co-working space with childcare and wellness components. She has been active in art gallery work in Paris and New York and also has a business called Totem Press. We decided to find out more about our entrepreneurial alumna and asked her some questions...

Tell us a little about what you've been up to in recent years as well as the project you are currently pursuing.

I graduated from Brown in 2005 (BA in History of Art and Architecture, magna cum laude), and spent five years in Paris as the director of both design and contemporary art galleries. In 2010, I moved to New York City and spent seven years working as a curator, independent publisher, art advisor, and gallery owner. I co-founded the gallery Eli Ping Frances Perkins in 2013 and launched an art advisory service and an independent publishing imprint, TOTEM Press, the same year. Editions of TOTEM are included in the collections of MoMA New York, the New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress. I'm a founding board member of Wide Rainbow, an arts advocacy non-profit that provides after-school arts programs for teenage girls in New York City. My husband and I moved to Nashville last year, and I split my time between Nashville and L.A., where I am involved in opening a space where work, family, and wellness coexist under one roof. Our vision is to provide amenity-rich co-working spaces alongside drop-in childcare and holistic wellness programs in a beautiful, uplifting space.

How did your PS1 experience/education help set the foundation for your academic and personal pursuits?

PS1 welcomed me (and my brother Sid) with open arms when we moved from Sao Paulo to L.A., and I can’t possibly imagine a more nurturing, responsive, and cool environment to fall into. One of the things that I loved about PS1 was that it felt like everyone belonged, everyone had a place here; it was a truly pluralistic environment, not just in theory, but in practice. PS1 taught me that learning was fun, instilling in me a deeply-rooted love for learning. I have such fond memories of PS1, ranging from sleepover read-a-thons to camping trips in Sycamore Canyon to learning about astronomy, hatching chickens, making ceramic masks and putting on plays....

What are some of the ways PS1 helped inspire you to pursue your interests and passions?

The PS1 ethos embodies values that are important to me. For instance, that difference is to be celebrated; that a diversity of perspectives and experiences enriches your understanding of an issue; that we have a lot to learn by sitting down and simply talking to one another. I’ve tried to live my life courageously and courteously according to these values, often swimming against the prevailing tides and searching for some deeper meaning or higher truth in what I do. I’ve deliberately sought out new voices and non-conformist world views, I’ve tried to walk the razor’s edge of the avant-garde, moving society forward, but with care.
There is an age old argument about intrinsic vs extrinsic motivation. The above New Yorker cartoon says it all for me. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, this may be my longest Head’s PeriScope column ever!

I think about the irrefutable learning that takes place in all human beings between birth and five years old before they begin elementary school. These young people learn to talk, walk, snuggle, perceive difference and patterns, discern which foods they like and which they dislike, who they choose as friends, determine the colors and smells they prefer, how to get the things they want and need, what to do with shovels in the sand or toy boats in water, how to repeat pleasurable experiences—all without someone rewarding them for specific behaviors, preferences, or actions.

The promotion of the value of extrinsic motivation seems to me to be introduced right around the elementary school level. Doing your personal best helps define intrinsic motivation; doing better than someone else defines extrinsic motivation. Schools traditionally have existed to be hierarchical, to rate students around very limited and specific parameters. If you are not as good as someone else, you are offered carrots to help you come out on top, so you can become better than the next guy in that same category. No matter how the numbers get manipulated and interpreted, it still seems to me that there can still only be 50% of the people in the top half of a group, no matter how the pie is sliced.

Shouldn’t the goal rather be to uncover the genius in each child—not necessarily in relation to anyone else, but rather to be recognized and acknowledged for their own special and specific gift, style, effort, personal achievement, or attribute? Don’t we all do well when we know we are valued and admired by others? This has been the foundation of PS1 Pluralistic School for 47 years now... and counting.

There is a great deal of research that shows that competition destroys intrinsic motivation. Daniel Pink, in his 2013 book, “To Sell is Human: The Surprising Truth About Persuading, Convincing, and Influencing Others,” argues that four decades of scientific research on human motivation reveal the disconnect between human yearning and what’s used to get us thinking and acting in a certain way. Instead, he says we turn inwards for motivation, in seeking autonomy, achieving mastery, and determining purpose.

An American Psychological Association Report dated July 21, 2004 states:

Research by psychologists Richard Ryan, PhD, and Edward Deci, PhD, on Self-Determination Theory indicates that intrinsic motivation (doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable), and thus higher quality learning, flourishes in contexts that satisfy human needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Students experience competence when challenged and given prompt feedback. Students experience autonomy when they feel supported to explore, take initiative and develop and implement solutions for their problems. Students experience relatedness when they perceive others listening and responding to them. When these three needs are met, students are more intrinsically motivated and actively engaged in their learning.

Numerous studies have found that students who are more involved in setting educational goals are more likely to reach their goals. When students perceive that the primary focus of learning is to obtain external rewards, such as a grade on an exam, they often perform more poorly, think of themselves as less competent, and report greater anxiety than when they believe that exams are simply a way for them to monitor their own learning.

In an article in Motivation and Emotion Journal, Volume 27, No. 4, in December 2003, Maarten Vansteenkiste and Edward L. Deci ask: “Competitively Contingent Rewards and Intrinsic Motivation: Can Losers Remain Motivated?” What’s most interesting for me here is that extrinsic motivation is often praised in citing the preponderant urge for adults to single out the parents and teachers who they believe have successfully pushed the very select few to great heights of success. My mind always goes to thinking about those who don’t come out on top. Where are the articles about the Losers and Motivation? As Will Rogers said, “Everyone is ignorant, only in different subjects.” Help uncover the passions and interests of each person; surely there is room at the top for everyone!

In this issue of PeriScope, you will see examples of that throughout the PS1 curriculum and program.

I am ending this column, as I started it, with a New Yorker cartoon, this one from memory. A young boy walks into his house holding a trophy overhead that he just received in an awards ceremony at his school. With a big smile on his face, he announces to his family “I just got this trophy for being the least competitive kid in the class.” Talk about being conflicted!

–Joel Pelcyger, Head of School
Three particular values that PS1 has always stood for are safety, civic engagement, and empowerment. The three came together around the Call to Action Movement on March 14th initiated by high school students in Parkland, Florida.

The week before the observance, every child and staff member wrote on a piece of rice paper their private wish for a safer world. The children of parents who signed permission slips were part of a supervised walkout for 17 minutes that morning, after which the entire school community gathered together as we unfurled an art piece with every wish connected and hanging from a piece of driftwood. The art piece, titled Our Wishes for a Safer World, will hang permanently on our campus in support of safety, empowerment, and civic engagement.

Two national newspapers, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times, heard about our planned developmentally appropriate observance and both published articles that included us. At PS1 we believe that it is never too early in a student’s life to help each one develop and put into practice a responsible and empowered voice.

What a far out and groovy community, PS1! Thank you to everyone who joined the fun, volunteered and donated to Summer of Love Fundraising Gala on May 5th! This was PS1’s most successful fundraising Gala to date, as we raised more money than ever on Raise Your Paddle to Fund a Need for Financial Aid. The production of our Summer of Love Gala was the result of the collaborative efforts of many volunteers, working together in a community with a shared vision and purpose (including PS1 students who created the backdrop for the event!). We are so proud. See you next year!
PS1’s annual Open House provides an opportunity for students and teachers to share their best work with the community. On the day of Open House, students visit each other’s classes to hear about favorite activities and projects in all the clusters. This gives the students the chance to learn from one another, present their work to their friends and fellow students, and to find things that they will want to share with their families in the evening. It’s so fun to watch students as they transform from learner to teacher and back again. Year after year this is a day filled with camaraderie, pride, and a sense of great accomplishment... and this year, we even added rain!

For a fitting finale to 2017-18’s PS SERVES, our volunteers served up a hearty and healthy meal of Mexican lasagna and fresh salad to our neighbors and good friends at Turning Point Transitional Home. A surprise sweet dessert of homemade ice cream sandwiches contributed by the Blue Class was received with oohs and aahs by the residents. PS1 students deserve the credit for meal preparation and table setting including handmade place mats and cards with messages of inspiration and friendship. Interacting with the volunteers at Turning Point, our students chopped, tossed, decorated, participated in a Q & A, and were treated to a tour. Our work force was representative of students, parents, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the past year of PS SERVES activity. Our association with The People Concern (formerly OPCC) has grown to be one of pure partnership built on mutual respect and gratitude. Together, we can look forward to continuing the tradition of PS SERVES in 2018-19 under the ongoing leadership and awesome coordination of PS1 parents Taura and Jade, along with the cadre of committed service providers in our community.
The curriculum at PS1 is designed to inspire students’ thinking. When teachers plan and develop curricula, they are developing ways to engage and challenge students, capturing their interests and motivating them to develop a rigorous and sophisticated understanding of a given topic. Driven by curiosity, our students seek to discover what they don’t know. In this section, you will learn from teachers and specialists about their foremost examples of inspiring academics from this school year, from bugs to wetlands to writing for change!

Nancy Harding, PhD., PS1’s Assistant Head for Teaching & Learning

Writing for change is a window into so many passionate topics for our students. The challenge of this unit is for students to look at the world all around them, identify problems, think about ways they can inspire change, and write about them. We began by finding small problems in our class and school, then expanded to beyond our classroom walls. Many students were inspired by our Beach Clean-ups and began writing about keeping plastic out of our oceans. Other students tackled issues like classroom management or homelessness. Students made signs to hang in their neighborhoods, wrote letters to Mayor Garcetti, and even to the President. This unit was full of energy, as students learned that their words have an impact to create lasting change.
The students in Yellow have been thinking about how a community begins within each one of us, working to understand who we are and how we relate to and differ from one another. By reflecting on how our lives and experiences are connected, we were able to recognize how one thoughtful and giving act could be the first step in making a positive impact on those around us. For students to become experts at identifying change-making behaviors, every time an “act of community” was witnessed, a pom pom went into our “Community Jar.” As the jar filled with more and more pom poms, students could feel the positive impact it had on our classroom community, which inspired them to continue the cycle of making positive choices. Students thought about how change is not limited to the four walls of our classroom. They considered issues that were close to their hearts and learned how they could use the power of words to make a change. They wrote letters, signs, and petitions to champion for causes that they cared about. As teachers, we are inspired by the way our students have taken ownership of this concept, how it has become part of the everyday language in our class, and how it has impacted the choices we make throughout the day.

Students in Orange combined their interests in math and stories to create their own mathematical story problems. All stories have actions, and in story problems the actions are mathematical. At first, students created their own math stories. After listening to others’ stories, the children practiced retelling the problems in their own words. Sometimes they added dramatics to the lesson by acting the stories out to model what happened and determine what they were being asked to find out. This process encouraged students to develop intuitive approaches to problem-solving that deepen their conceptual understanding of mathematical operations. Building on what they already understand, they develop a sense of ownership of their knowledge. As teachers, we were inspired by the many different approaches to problem-solving that the students applied. As students listen to one another’s ideas, they learn that there is more than one way at arriving at an answer. This expands the work that we do as a classroom community and is an essential element of the pluralistic classroom; while gaining exposure to diverse strategies, students learn to see things from multiple perspectives, promoting flexible thinking and deepening their own understanding.
Blue students have been magnifying the importance of Writers Workshop through paragraph writing. After a class reading of *Who Is Malala Yousafzai?*, students identified and demonstrated the different types of writing, including persuasive, descriptive, and informative. Malala’s story filled the Blue classroom with inspiration and motivation to bring forth change in education. Malala is a Pakistani activist for education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She is known for human rights advocacy, especially the education of women and children. As a follow-up activity to our many discoveries of Malala Yousafzai, students used persuasive essays to unify content of their stories and direct the order of sentences. The essays quickly transformed into educational speeches, encouraging students to use strong topic sentences and reinforce them with clear supporting and detailed sentences. Constructing a paragraph was the building block for writing longer stories, letters, and a variety of other writing models. This culminated in students sharing their impassioned speeches with their schoolmates. They were so proud of their efforts in being advocates for education and children’s rights.

The Green class is deep within a year-long study of local plants and animals. We began our year taking a look at wetlands, moved into tide pools, and then ocean life. Students found inspiration to explore and research during field studies to the Ballona Wetlands, Malibu Creek, and the tide pools at Point Ferman. Studying flora and fauna from one’s own backyard fosters deeper investment and personal connection. Green was eager to understand the aspects of preservation and how human pollution impacts both plants and animals. The class visited a Santa Monica runoff water recycling facility and took a closer look at a collection vat to see what, exactly, would flow into the sea if not caught. This experience inspired further stewardship and plans for action as to how we can better protect our local ocean life. Green students demonstrated their understanding as they built an interactive bulletin board along one wall of the classroom. One can find wetlands and wetland animals, tide pools and open ocean. This curated space includes student built models and information and represents the Green class’ curricular journey.
Once upon a time, the students in the Violet class began a writing journey through studying the storyline and qualities of original fairy tales. Violet students explored a variety of Cinderella stories and recognized how one significant change in the story could alter the entire course of that story. For this writing unit, a core learning goal was sequential storytelling that led to a natural sense of closure. This included the sub-goals of using a strong storyteller's voice, writing with a story arc, and bringing characters to life. We assessed student writing through the use of graphic organizers, self- and peer-editing checklists, and a rubric.

As a class, students decided on which fairy tales to adapt, selecting from Cinderella, The Three Pigs, and Three Billy Goats Gruff. Students brainstormed how their versions were distinct. Some chose unique characters, others chose a different setting, while others opted for altering the main character's motivations. The students drafted a story as a collection of scenes with colorful dialogue and action, stitched together through narration. Their creativity exploded in this unit that exemplified inspired academics, giving the Violet classroom a feeling of “happily ever after.”

Their imaginative tales included CinderNutella and her desire to get eaten at the picnic; HermyEdna, the hermit crab who lived “in the realm of the Tidepools” and lost her shell at the ball; and The Three Kittens who had to cross the scratch lounge. The Three Marshmallows Fluff had to cross a bridge covering a melted popsicle stream guarded by an Evil Broccoli. The Three Little Birds and the Big Bad Cat, The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig, and The Three Little Hedgehogs all faced nemeses trying to destroy their dwellings.

Indigo's biome study has been a year-long theme. Students started by researching biomes in class and in the field during various excursions, and then brought their learning to the forefront during an Indigo Circle Time. Their performance included songs, interpretive dances, information, and skits that highlighted all that students learned about the temperate forest, arctic tundra, and prairie grasslands.

Circle Time was the highlight of our public sharing, but the learning behind the scenes was still underway. Students spent time building a miniature physical landscape of these biomes in class using recycled materials, clay, and other materials to populate the biomes with indigenous flora and fauna. After several weeks creating the natural landscape, it was time to add a human element to the biomes. Students made people out of clay and then worked in committees to determine how the natural resources in each biome could be utilized to meet basic needs. A clothing committee considered climate and resources (and style!) while designing fashions; a housing committee considered the functions of a home (such as protection and comfort), examined housing styles around the world, and considered resources in their own environments before coming up with housing codes in each biome; an economic committee thought about highly valued resources in each biome when planning their monetary and trading systems; and a tool committee examined the functions and designs of tools as they planned and then created devices that their classmates could use.

After all of this planning, the Indigo students eagerly embraced the opportunity to put their plans into action! Homes and businesses were built, commerce was underway, and soon students started encountering and problem-solving real-life situations as complex as how trade is handled between communities with different currencies, how to deal with buildings that exceed the regulated size, and how to achieve a balance between individual liberties, the best interests of the community, and preserving the natural landscape.
The students in HA have been studying the rise and fall of Ancient Egypt. Their goal was to unravel and analyze the key components that contributed to the success of this civilization including geography, social class, occupations, science & engineering, and diet. At the beginning of the unit, the students explored Egypt through learning centers. At each center, they were given the opportunity to focus on specific parts of Egypt, deepening their understanding and nurturing their inquiry. This also provided each student with exciting and engaging experience to practice, enrich, reteach, and enhance their learning. Coupled with learning centers, the unit had relevant learning expeditions to the L.A. Zoo and The King Tut Museum, a PowerPoint research project, and a persuasive essay assignment. This unit inspired students to think deeply, make real-world connections, and unpack the impact Egypt still has on us today. By the end of the unit, the students were able to evaluate and explain in great depth how Egypt became a civilization.

The Olders classrooms have also been converted into a laboratory for students to behave and think like physiologists and biochemists. The goal for the Olders human body unit was to acquire an understanding of how different body systems work together, the sequential steps of each body system, and the structure for respiration, digestion, waste disposal, and transport of materials in living organisms. Moreover, students learned the location of major organs and can now explain the functions necessary to maintain life.

This enthusiasm and passion for the human body stem from having weekly hands-on experiments and the opportunity to partake in four different dissections: a pig heart, cow eye, squid, and frog. Alongside having hands-on exposure, the scientists in the Olders Cluster have also been given the freedom to wonder, make discoveries, and more importantly, explore the “why” behind whatever it is they are investigating. This resulted in the students being able to articulate and showcase their knowledge of the physical structure and chemical composition of the body systems in living organisms at our Open House.
While studying the human body in life sciences, the initial activities in John and Carol’s class included such things as creating oversized models of cells, inventing and developing “Brain Games” and electronic operation games, and building prosthetic arms from everyday objects. As a final project, students were divided up into six groups, each representing a different body system of which they would become experts. Their end product was a life-size representation of their assigned system that would be laminated and placed on apparatus to create an entire human model. The learning goals were to work effectively in a group, utilize a variety of reliable sources (both print and electronic), master the terminology of your system, create a visual rendering of your body system, and to be able to impart scientifically accurate information about your body system. This was one of the highlights of John and Carol’s class at Open House. Visitors could be seen using this compelling hands-on project to gain knowledge and to ask questions. Perhaps what was most impressive was that the project by its very nature was a visual reminder of the power of working together on a project with common goals.
At PS1, we encourage students to learn about other cultures and to examine how we are all similar and different from one another. On a trip to the American Southwest, I was struck by this majestic and magical region filled with Native American history. I wanted to share my experience with the Middles students and deepen their understanding of the Hopi Indians, specifically through their art.

We focused on Hopi Kachina dolls and the stories behind them. According to Hopi legend, Kachinas are mythical spirits who dwell atop the San Francisco Peaks, Sunset Crater, and other high mountain places in the Flagstaff area. Each Kachina has a separate and distinct form and function. These dolls are fashioned from the dried root of dead cottonwood trees and are shaped by knife, chisel, wood rasp and a piece of sandstone.

Middles students became interested in the story of the Kachinas, and we decided to create our own. Because cottonwood root is sparse in Santa Monica and knives are very sharp, we had to use different materials. We used aluminum foil as a base and then sculpted over the foil with plaster gauze. The results were beautiful, and we all agreed that it would be amazing to carve the dolls out of wood one day.

Through the project, students learned how the Hopi Native Americans have adapted to a more modern lifestyle today while fighting to keep their culture, language, and art alive. The students pointed out that the authentic Kachina dolls don’t look like cute westernized dolls. Instead, they appear more like futuristic robots or fantastic creatures, and that made this project very special. This in-depth study was truly eye-opening for us and built connection, identity, and community awareness outside our school.

Math is music! Music is math! This is a fact that does not always occur to music learners. We have been working on creating, identifying, writing, and sharing rhythmic phrases throughout the clusters this year. As an Orff Schulwerk certified music instructor, I guide my musicians through a method of music learning that starts with speech, which is then combined with body percussion. The body percussion is designed to practice technique on an instrument. Once the students are comfortable playing a piece on the instrument, they analyze the music by writing the rhythms on paper. Understanding how music fits into a formula is enormously beneficial to music learners because it allows them to interact with the music in a physical and cognitive way. The application of rhythms inside of structured time can be observed and experienced before acquiring the skills and understanding to demonstrate music notation, but the math of music is the academic aspect that enhances a musician’s connection to the emotional experience of creating music. Time signature, rhythmic division, tempo, and form represent the rhythmic components of a composition. The Olders students have demonstrated different ways of using these elements to create their own rhythmic compositions and improvisations. It is evident that their relationship with rhythms is strengthening because their compositions are continuously more interesting, clear, and successful.
Insects pollinate many kinds of plants. What if the right insects aren’t around to do the work? The students in Youngers began their unit on hand pollinators by studying insects, designing insects and then, in the Studio, creating and testing their own hand pollinators. Hand pollination, also known as mechanical pollination, is a technique that can be used to pollinate plants when natural or open pollination is either undesirable or insufficient. This method of pollination is done by manually transferring pollen from the stamen of one plant to the pistil of another. The storybook Mariana served as an inspiration, showing how one girl solves a pollination problem. In the Studio, Youngers students became agricultural engineers. They applied their knowledge of insects, insect life cycles, pollination, and natural systems as they explored a variety of studio materials, then engineered their own technologies for pollinating plants by hand. Students showed their learning by sharing their blueprints and testing their designs. As the Studio Director, I was inspired by the collaboration, support, and focus the students demonstrated as their challenge unfolded, all of which feeds directly into PS1’s school mission.
Alumni Corner

We try to include as many Alumni updates as space allows. If you were not included in this column, and you sent us an update, please look for your feature in an upcoming issue. We love hearing your news!

Alumni Corner

Hallie Hobson, Class of 1984
Hallie attended Northfield Mt. Herman, Yale University, and UCLA where she received her MFA in playwriting, focusing on theatre and African-American Studies. She now lives in New York City and serves as the Deputy Director, Institutional Advancement at the Studio Museum Harlem.

Coryn Madley, 1986-89
Coryn lives in Venice and works as a senior stylist at Free People.

Josh Berger, 1985-1990
Josh writes, “I am going to be the founding K-12 Director of our Center for Innovative Leadership here at Brentwood School. I’m excited by the opportunity. I have also been doing some work in the Bay Area helping set up cross-age peer mentoring programs with transitional-aged youth in Hope SF public housing communities.”

Sid Perkins, Class of 1993
Sid is the founder and managing partner of Ion Energy Brokers in New York City.

Paul Henry, Class of 1994
Paul attended Brentwood School and the University of Pennsylvania, earning his Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Economic and Financial Systems) with a Minor in Mathematics. Paul resides in New York where he is involved in real estate development and volunteers with MORE New York, an organization advocating for more housing in New York City.

Daniel Rosenfeld, Class of 1997
Daniel’s mom, Maggie (PS1’s Director of Finance and Operations), sent us a picture of Daniel and his daughter, Sheridan (age 2), flipping through the pages of the Winter 2018 Periscope. Sheridan may indeed be the youngest Periscope reader so far!

Rem Koning, Class of 1998
Rem is an Assistant Professor at Harvard Business School and the father of baby Noa, born in October 2017.

Jak Koning, Class of 2002
Jak is a Technical Artist at Sledgehammer Games in San Francisco.

Alexandra Kraemer, Class of 2005
Alexandra attended Wildwood School and Pitzer College, where she focused on Spanish and Portuguese, Gender/Sexuality Studies, and Latin American Studies.

Wade Clement, Class of 2006
Wade recently wrote in to update us on his adventures and subsequently stopped by PS1 to say hello. He is working at Team Prime Time in L.A. and is running a program called the Prime Time Games, an inclusion-model sports program for middle and high schools.

Alumni in grades 7–9 celebrated together at our PS1 Alumni Bowling Party this spring. It was so fun to reunite with everyone and see the PS1 connections still going strong!

Alumni from the Class of 2012 returned to PS1 this spring to celebrate with one another before graduating from high school and heading off to their next adventures!
Ivey Burns, Class of 2011
Ivey’s mother, Bonnie, writes, “Ivey has found her passion: she wants to go pro in the horse world. She is excelling in her classes. It is thrilling for me to watch her progress as a rider. Thank you, PS1, for helping lay the ground work for Ivey thinking outside the box.”

Trevor Nevell, Class of 2011
Trevor and three of his PS1 pals (Clyde Mulroney, Justin Ciccone, and Becket Hamel) recently spent some time together in Joshua Tree!

Dylan Vecchione, Class of 2011
Dylan graduated from Wildwood and now attends the University of Washington, where he is focused on Oceanography and Physics. Dylan is still very involved with ReefQuest.org (the non-profit he founded as a student at PS1), pursuing research in coral and marine science, now in 48 countries (www.ReefQuest.org). About his PS1 experience, Dylan says, “I learned how to be a critical thinker, and to approach education as research. This has affected me deeply and led to my career path.” Dylan gave a TED talk on his work in climate and marine science. You can watch it at http://www.tedxteen.com/talks/passionate-questioning-dylan-vecchione

Gemma Brand-Wolf, Class of 2012
Gemma graduates from the Archer School this spring and will be attending Brown University. At Archer, she stage-managed and directed Archer’s musicals and plays and co-ordinated their annual Literature Conference. She studies ceramics and takes a nude sculpture class every Saturday outside of school (she recently received a Gold National Medal in the 2018 Scholastic Arts & Writing Awards for one of the sculptures she made in this class). In 2016, she traveled to India through the Archer Abroad program for a service learning trip. She continues to work with Vatsalya, the school and orphanage in India, and recently held a fundraiser its sister organization, raising close to $3,000.

Gemma says that PS1’s philosophy set the foundation for her education and life experience, saying, “I truly believe that the values I learned at PS1, of empathy, understanding, connection, acceptance, and so many more, have guided me through my life and helped me become the person I am today. Most of all, I think the flexibility, creativity, exploration, and adventure I found at PS1 have taught me to love risk-taking and to face challenges head-on and with excitement. At PS1, I learned to love learning for the sake of learning, a value that is fundamental both to my academic and personal paths.”

Matthew Tovar, Class of 2012
Matthew is rapidly gaining recognition and achieving awards for his design project that he initiated at Palisades Charter High School, where he is a senior. Their team competitions are showcased on modapchs.wixsite.com/ moda.

Maddie Boudov, Class of 2015
Maddie attends Harvard-Westlake, where she co-leads a club called SAFE, standing for Students Against Firearms in Education. She was inspired to reach out to us after reading about PS1’s observance of the March 14th Call to Action. She helped organize a student walkout at her school involving student speeches and announcements about the ways students can help in their community, including a time of silence for the lives that have been lost to gun violence.

Olivia Rosen, Class of 2015
Olivia attends the Archer School where she says, “I continue to have small class sizes, and my teachers are very engaging. I love being able to play team sports, which has connected me to lots of new girls that I wouldn’t have met otherwise.”

Izzy & Alex Hyman, Class of 2016 & 2017
Izzy and Alex, along with their mom, Susan Hoffman (Hyman), returned to PS1 to participate in PS Serves’ grand finale meal preparation, delivery and service at Turning Point Residential Home this spring.

Erika Tinsley, Class of 2016
Erika attends Brentwood School and still loves singing and playing instruments. She looks back on her PS1 experience fondly, describing PS1 as a nurturing environment that helped her to be herself while fostering her intellectual curiosity!
Sustainable Quality Award

PS1 Pluralistic School won the 2018 Sustainable Quality Awards’ GRAND PRIZE! Getting the top prize in the whole city for ALL businesses in Santa Monica is a huge achievement!! Thank you to our entire PS1 community—students, parents, and staff—who continue to support our efforts in these areas! Go Green!

Save The Date!

| June | 5  | Student Council “Creation Day” (look for photos and video of this incredible Makers’ Day on our Social Media sites) |
|      | 6  | PS Run’s 5K |
|      | 7  | School Tour |
|      | 8  | Olders Shakespeare Circle Time |
|      | 11 | Olders Shakespeare Circle Time |
|      | 13 | Grad Leaf Ceremony |
|      | 14 | Last Day of School and Graduation |
|      | 15 | Moving Up Day |

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