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Director of Enrollment Management & Placement  
314.880.5013 or  
sdooley@CityAcademySTL.org  
www.CityAcademySTL.org



Our new Head of School, Jarrett Young, officially started July 1 and has hit the ground running! Families were excited to take pictures of their scholars with Mr. Young on the first day of school on August 15, 2022. On the cover: Sixth graders Daylin Douglas and Malakhi DeBoise

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### Dear City Academy friends,

Since 1999, City Academy has meant community. Even when faced with the most daunting social challenges, our outstanding team steps up for our students. Our work is difficult, and our work is transformative. Over the past two years, I have often reflected on the wisdom of the late Kathryn Nelson, Founding Trustee, who during a particularly difficult situation in our early years, said to me, “Now you know why our work is so important!”

The 2021-22 school year was a challenge for schools across the country, as we dealt with the effects of Covid fatigue. At City Academy, St. Louis City restrictions meant another year of quarantines, masking and cohorting. But there were also so many positives. Day after day, I was fortunate to see what makes City Academy so important and transformative: our amazing collective team of dedicated faculty, staff, families, students, alumni, volunteers and supporters.

Our faculty’s commitment to beginning each day with a “morning meeting” as part of our “Responsive Classroom” program, ensured that each child had a voice and forum to share feelings and thoughts (page 8). Our parents’ eagerness to reconnect with the school community was evident in our incredibly well-attended Donuts with Dads and Muffins with Moms social events (page 3). Our alumni continue to see City Academy as their school, with graduates like Jerrica, class of 2012, who made a surprise visit with her father in her Maryville University graduation cap and stoles, excited to share her success with her past City Academy family, as she prepares for her next step as a doctor (page 10)!

We recognize that you have many choices when it comes to investing both your time and treasure, and we sincerely appreciate that you have chosen to support City Academy.

Our success is possible because of our incredible community of supporters who invest in our important mission to provide exceptional and affordable education. We are grateful to our entire City Academy family, and we invite you to not only read about our success stories in this report, but to come back to campus to see first-hand the impact of your investment.

By the time you are done reading this report, I am sure you will agree with Akberet Boykin-Farr, Emeron’s Vice President of Diversity & Social Responsibility, who says on page 20, “I think this model is a guarantee for impact. City Academy definitely delivers on improving reading levels and test scores and secondary school placements. That’s a guaranteed investment.”

Sincerely,

Don Danforth III  
President and Co-Founder



## Pen Pals Program

**Pen pals may seem like a program that would go by the wayside with the prevalence of texting, e-mailing, and Facetimeing, but perhaps that's all the more reason why it is still alive and well at City Academy.**

Each year, our scholars in third through sixth grade are matched with a member of our community - donors, volunteers, board members, alumni, and other friends of City Academy. The pen pal relationship starts with a two-paragraph letter from the student, introducing themselves and then asking questions of their new friend.

Fifth Grade Humanities Teacher Shalawn Fennoy said that pen pal letters give students an avenue to practice writing to an authentic audience, focusing on writing conventions and structure to convey purpose and meaning. Students also learn how to properly address envelopes.

“Though we have many ways of communicating, there is nothing like something tangible as a letter from your pal,” Fennoy said. “It gives students opportunities to reread letters and reflect on conversations. Pen pal writing gives students

“

**It has been exciting to see my students come alive as they anticipate their letter from their pen pal.”**

– Shalawn Fennoy, Fifth Grade Teacher

a chance to break down the walls and expose students to others who serve within our school community in some capacity.”

Whenever possible, pen pals are matched with the same student from year-to-year so they can continue their relationship. The pals are sometimes even able to meet each other on campus at Buddy Morning, the Annual Luncheon, or Graduation. One such pen pal is Ginger Smith, who serves on City Academy's Board of Trustees. Ginger has been a pen pal for the past two years and enjoyed interacting with a third-grader named Izzy.

“I think it's fun to have a lens into what it's like being a third-grader in today's world,” Smith said. “I learned about books she was reading. I learned about video games and she told me all about Minecraft. We talked about our dogs and all the good things they do and bad things they do.”

Smith said that despite all the advances in technology, it was still important for students to learn how to handwrite a letter or thank you note as those skills are universal.

“I remember when Izzy was learning cursive and so for a six-month period all the correspondence was in cursive and she was getting better over time,” Smith said. “I save all the old ones on my bulletin board in the office.”

Fennoy indicated that as beneficial as the practice of writing the letters is for her students, it's the receiving of letters that truly makes the program special.

“It has been exciting to see my students come alive as they anticipate their letter from their pen pal,” said Fennoy. “Kids feel important when they receive mail. It is thrilling to see the room filled with students' faces sinking into their letters.” ✨

## Students Enjoy Donuts with Dad and Muffins with Mom

**As the saying goes, “You can't buy happiness but you can buy donuts. And that's kind of the same thing.” On the morning of October 20, 2021, there was an abundance of happiness — and donuts — as we held our Donuts with Dads event on campus.**

Although the event had been held in previous years, last October's Donuts with Dads event was particularly special. During the year of virtual classes in 2020-2021, larger community events were either canceled or moved online. For the 2021-2022 school year, City Academy brainstormed ways to host events that parents could safely attend. That's when City Academy's Chief Financial and Operating Officer, Brian Gross, suggested bringing back the Donuts with Dads event and hosting it outside.

“There was a great vibe to it because we had some parents whose kids started a year before who had never really been on campus outside of drop off and pick up,” Gross said. “It allowed the dads to be around other dads and to be out there interacting with their kids, and for us to interact with them.”

Although conversations had already been had internally about a Muffins with Mom event in May, Gross said he immediately started getting calls from City Academy moms asking when they would be able to have a similar event on campus. Muffins with Moms was held outside on May 11, 2022, which turned out to be another beautiful day.



“When you work at City Academy, as part of the culture you're used to not just seeing the students in the building, but watching the families interact with each other as well,” Gross said. “That's some of what I would say is the secret to the sauce of City Academy.” ✨



## Second Graders Explore the Great Outdoors at Forest Park

**Thanks to wonderful partnerships with the Missouri Department of Conservation and Forest Park Forever, our second grade scholars were able to visit Forest Park four times during the 2021-2022 school year.**

In October, the class visited the Anne O’C. Albrecht Nature Playscape, which opened in Forest Park in June 2021. The 17-acre free park is located near the World’s Fair Pavilion and the Jewel Box and features nine distinct activity areas, including sand play, willow tunnels, stump steppers, boulders and rocks, hand water pumps and more.



**They’re learning from experience.”**

– Monette DeSimone, Second Grade Teacher

Employees from Forest Park Forever had toured City Academy and were eager to work with our students. Second grade teacher Monette DeSimone met with their outdoor educators to discuss what the students were learning in class in order to make the trip more educational and meaningful. The class had been studying insects so the outdoor educators set up informal stations in the Nature Playscape with microscopes and magnifying glasses, along with containers to collect insects to examine.

The second graders had also been studying Native Americans so there were stations on natural weaving as well as buckets to transport water back and forth to the sand to give the students an idea of how water would have been moved before modern plumbing.

“It was interesting to see how at first when we got there, it was chaos,” DeSimone said. “And then slowly they started to calm down and acclimate to their surroundings. And that’s when they went off into their little groups and we saw them start to have imaginative play and make up stories, which we don’t often see on the playground at school.”

In addition to the second grade trip, our Summer at City scholars also got the chance to visit the Nature Playscape and work with the outdoor educators. More than 100 students ages 3 to rising 6th graders explored the area, climbing trees, digging in the sand, blowing bubbles, and even taking a dip in the swimming hole to cool off on a hot summer day.

In February, the second graders visited the Successional Forest across the street from the Playscape in order to listen for the winter birds they had been studying in class and try to identify them by their calls. They also searched for owl pellets which they had previously dissected in class.



The next two trips to Forest Park in April and May focused on fishing. DeSimone attended a workshop put on by the Missouri Department of Conservation, which provides curriculum, transportation, and all the necessary equipment for the fishing trips. Students learned about the parts of the fishing pole and practiced casting at school. They also studied the external and internal anatomy of fish, as well as the food chain of a pond involving insects, plants, and the different types of fish.

Inside Forest Park, students visited the hatchery before fishing in the small ponds. During the April trip, students caught 76 fish. Each time they reeled one in, they would record their name and then identify the type of fish they caught. Back in the classroom the students then graphed how many of each type of fish were caught - mostly bluegill, hybrid sunfish, and largemouth bass. The second time around in May, there was even more interest from parents to attend the trip. The second graders put their newly-acquired skills to use and caught 240 fish.

“I’ve never had a field trip like that where so many parents wanted to come,” said DeSimone, who is in her 12th year at City Academy. “Just to be able to visit with them and for them to be able to visit with each other, and how much fun the kids had. It was really special.”

At the end of the school year, each student received a drawstring backpack that contained color pencils and a collection box with a magnifying glass from Dennis Cooke, the Missouri Department of Conservation Educator for St. Louis City.

DeSimone enjoys taking the class to Forest Park because it’s both nearby and free, so it’s something that is easily accessible for City Academy families and hopefully they can explore it together on their own in the future. Field trips are obviously meant to be a fun experience outside the classroom for students, but DeSimone says they offer so many other benefits as well.

“They’re learning from experience,” she said. “That’s going to increase their vocabulary and I think improve their quality of life because it opens up your mind to these other interests that you might not even realize that you have.” ✘



# Class of 2022

Each year, our sixth graders collaborate to write a class quote that represents their time at City Academy, which is then displayed on their class banner that will hang in our gym for years to come. The Class of 2022 wrote: **"We continue on a path ahead not because we are certain of what lies ahead, but because we are ready to tackle the unknown."**

The Class of 2022 certainly faced uncertainties the last few years, and we are so proud of the determination and resiliency they showed in overcoming everything the world threw at them. We can't wait to see what the future holds for them! ✨

## 2022 Matriculation to Secondary Schools

Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School	4
John Burroughs School	3
Crossroads College Preparatory School	3
Whitfield School	2
Chaminade College Preparatory School	1
St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Parish	1
Saint Louis Priory School	1
Carr Lane Visual & Performing Arts Middle School	1
Villa Duchesne and Oak Hill School	1
KIPP Inspire Academy	1
Westminster Christian Academy	1



**Jamaron Bass**  
KIPP Inspire Academy



**Deijah Jackson**  
Crossroads College Preparatory School



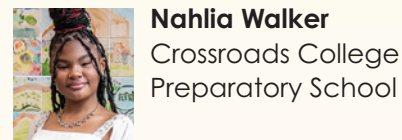
**Zain Thomas**  
John Burroughs School



**RaShae Blanchard**  
Whitfield School



**Niles Jones**  
Chaminade College Preparatory School



**Nahlia Walker**  
Crossroads College Preparatory School



**Mason Chambers**  
Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School



**G'Mori LaValle**  
St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Parish



**Maria Wansong**  
Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School



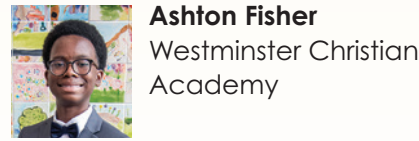
**Kelton Ellis**  
Carr Lane Visual & Performing Arts Middle School



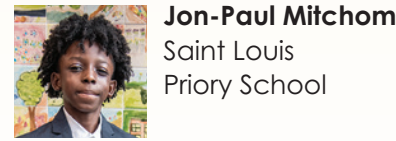
**Gabriel Miles**  
John Burroughs School



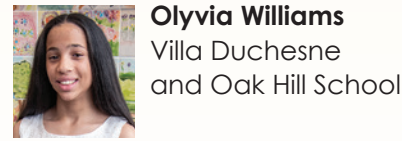
**Myles Williams**  
John Burroughs School



**Ashton Fisher**  
Westminster Christian Academy



**Jon-Paul Mitchom**  
Saint Louis Priory School



**Olyvia Williams**  
Villa Duchesne and Oak Hill School



**Cat Hall**  
Crossroads College Preparatory School



**Savannah Rainey**  
Whitfield School



**Syeda Harvey**  
Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School



**Madison Smith**  
Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School

## Martin L. Mathews Award Winners

The Martin L. Mathews Award is given annually at graduation in honor of Martin Mathews, co-founder of Mathews-Dickey Boys' and Girls' Club, City Academy's first home. It is awarded to students who exemplify his exceptional leadership and citizenship while demonstrating academic integrity. The 2022 recipients, chosen by City Academy faculty, were **Maria Wansong** and **Kelton Ellis**.

**"She speaks in whispers but one must not quickly judge her by her soft-spoken expressions. Though quiet by nature, there is a tenacious spirit and subtle confidence that sparks the moment she enters a classroom setting. Invested in thriving as a learner, Maria instantly becomes focused with a heart and mind ready to take a deep dive into the process of learning. The hallmark of this young lady is her gift of maintaining poise as she adds intricate details and precision to her work. Gentle and kind towards her teachers and peers, she is a strong collaborator and team member, but also relishes as an independent learner."**

- Maria Wansong's Nomination

**"With integrity defined as being honest and having strong moral principles, there is no doubt why Kelton is receiving the Martin Mathews award. When asked collectively, teachers chose Kelton because he has remained consistent in doing his best in his classes. While on campus he is involved in the life of the school and embodies a calming, welcoming presence along with a great sense of humor. He converses with both adults and his peers and was a great ambassador with school visitors, including in-person tours and during the virtual annual luncheon. Having a consistent positive outlook, he strives to see the best in situations and has expressed gratitude for his learning opportunities and for having his family. With his school work, he strives to do his best and self-advocates accordingly. Simply stated he is a wonderful human being."**

- Kelton Ellis' Nomination



Don Danforth III, President & Co-Founder, and Maria Wansong



Don Danforth III, President & Co-Founder, and Kelton Ellis

## Responsive Classroom

**If you have spent any time with children, you probably know that getting them to be quiet and listen, or to follow certain rules, is not always as easy as just asking them to do as you say - especially if it's your first time meeting them. It is important to establish trust and respect, as well as create an environment that is conducive to those wanted behaviors.**

Enter responsive classroom, a student-centered, social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. Responsive classroom is comprised of a set of research, and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities for both students and teachers. Teachers at City Academy receive extensive training in the practice — from four-day workshops with independent school teachers from around the country to a four-part webinar series.

Third Grade Humanities Teacher Erin McDonough is a responsive classroom “guru” and enjoys implementing the strategies with her students as she sees extensive benefits from the approach.

“

**The main purpose** is for students to **really have the ability** to **feel seen and heard in the classroom.**”

— Erin McDonough, Third Grade Teacher

“The main purpose is for students to really have the ability to feel seen and heard in the classroom, and feel as though they are a part of a community that is filled with trust and gives them the ability to tackle new challenges and take risks in the classroom,” McDonough said. “Establishing that community of support and love is really the main purpose. And then it guides the students through the year as we experience those new challenges. They’re willing to take on new risks with a positive mindset and know they’re in a safe space.”

Two components of responsive classroom that are widely implemented at City Academy are the morning meeting and closing meeting. Morning meeting occurs shortly after the all-school pledge and can last up to 25 minutes, depending on the grade level. McDonough said the morning meeting is a great way to check back in with students to review what they learned the day before, as well as to gain insight about the child’s life outside the classroom.

“Learning about those traditions and what those evenings look like for our students also helps you support them during the day,” McDonough said. “I have been able to support families through conversations we have had through morning meetings, things that I wouldn’t have necessarily found out about a child or a family, I am able to hone in on specific things that come out, because they’re willing to share during morning meeting or closing meeting.”

The meetings begin with a chime as a gentle reminder that it is time to stop what you are doing and listen to your teacher. During the warmer months, McDonough likes to have the morning meeting outside in conjunction with the other 3rd grade students that are part of Lisa McKenna’s advisory. The meetings typically



include a greeting, a share, and an activity. The greeting can be educational (i.e. greet each other with an adjective) or just silly (i.e. greet each other in an animal noise, or with a new dance move). The share offers teachers and students an easy way to get to know each other, as each student answers questions like “What’s your favorite color?” or “What did you have for dinner last night?” McDonough then quizzes the students based on what was shared to make sure students are listening to one another. The activity usually involves some kind of movement such as a game of sharks and minnows or silent speed ball.

“As we all know, kids need movement breaks and having these options built into the day makes it easier for when we need them to sit still and focus,” McDonough said. She also likes to incorporate an academic piece to the activity when possible, such as having the students line up in alphabetical order or by age without talking.

The closing meeting is typically a shorter wrap up at the end of the day, often just five minutes in length. It allows students to reflect on their day and end it with closure, that way they are able to come back fresh the next day.

McDonough enjoys the morning and closing meetings because while it’s easy to focus on what students are good at or not good at in an academic setting, responsive classroom allows students to shine in different lights.

“You might find that a child is very good at taking on responsibilities and then you can tap into those strengths or weaknesses in the academic settings and see how they bring that to life as well,” McDonough said. “When we have the ability to have those connections, the students trust me and they trust each other so much, so this classroom really is a safe space. It’s not just something we say, but it’s a safe place where they know I can make a mistake and I can know I’m supported through that mistake. I have a community here that will uplift me and not laugh at me when I make a mistake. And therefore I’m willing to push myself in that direction, even when I don’t fully trust that I can’t tackle a challenge.” ✨



Erin McDonough and Lisa McKenna's third graders play a game of silent speed ball during their morning meeting.

# Alumni News

## Class of 2012

Many of City Academy’s Class of 2012 alumni are wrapping up their undergraduate degrees, pursuing further education, or beginning their first jobs in their career paths. This class showed amazing promise when they left our classrooms in 2012 and are outstanding examples of the bright futures ahead for all our scholars!

## Class Updates

**Jerrica Flakes** continues to stay in touch with City Academy and take advantage of the opportunities with the Alumni Program. She was excited to come back and have pictures taken with Don Danfoth and others that mentored her when she was at City Academy. She recently graduated from Maryville University where she received the Jim Thomas Endowment Scholarship.

She is currently studying for the MCAT and visiting medical schools where she wants to study to become a medical examiner.

**Zuri Thomas** graduated from TCU with a Bachelor of Science in Strategic Communications and a minor in Arts Leadership & Entrepreneurship. She was a project manager for the TCU Ad and PR agency while there. She is currently an intern with FleishmanHillard here in St. Louis.

**Madelyn Wansong** graduated summa cum laude from University of the Arts - Philadelphia Consortia with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance. After graduation she traveled to Berlin, Germany to dance at the b12 dance festival and collaborated with artists from all over the world. She currently lives in New York City where she spent the month of August in residency with the Merce Cunningham Trust in New York and performed the restaged work “Doubletoss.” ✨

## Class of 2016

Our 14 scholars from our Class of 2016 graduated from secondary school in May 2022 and moved on to college this fall at 10 different schools in six different states. Many of them are pursuing undergraduate degrees at competitive colleges and universities, receiving significant financial support. Members of this class are now attending:

- DePaul University
- Fayetteville State University
- Fisk University
- Missouri S&T
- St. Charles Community College
- St. Louis Community College
- Saint Louis University
- Truman State University
- University of Miami
- Wittenberg University

## Class Updates

**A'dia Dickerson** graduated from Whitfield where she spent much of her time engaged in furthering equity at the school and in the broader community. She enrolled at the University of Miami – her dream school – and will be studying psychology.

**June Brown** and **Cecily Taylor** graduated from MICDS and both received the prestigious Head of School Award at graduation. June enrolled at Missouri S&T to study engineering and is still exploring the different emphasis areas. Stepping onto the Missouri S&T campus reminded June of being there with Erik Taylor and fellow sixth grade classmates, and it felt like home. Cecily, daughter of City Academy’s Science Teacher Erik Taylor, is enrolled at Truman State University.

**MaKyla Spann** graduated from Crossroads College Prep and is now attending DePaul University. MaKyla was a scholar athlete while in high school and was recognized frequently by the community for her skills on the basketball court. MaKyla will be studying sports management. ✨



Jerrica Flakes with Don Danforth



Zuri Thomas with her brothers Zion and Zain, both City Academy alumni



Madelyn Wansong



A'dia Dickerson



June Brown



Cecily Taylor



MaKyla Spann

## Alumni Updates

# Lifelong Learning Beyond the Classroom

**Jordan Bow**, City Academy 2011  
John Burroughs School 2017  
Washington University 2021,  
BA in German and African Diasporic Studies

Jordan Bow spent just three years at City Academy, but his time here left a lasting impact on him. He fondly remembers his science classes and he enjoyed learning more about robotics during the extended day program.

One of his most inspiring teachers was his literature teacher, Kip Warr, who returned to City Academy for the 2022-23 school year. He appreciated that his City Academy teachers were deeply engaged and went the extra mile in order to get students excited about their education.

“A lot of the things I learned back then ended up giving me a little bit of a boost when it came to middle school,” Bow said. “I was already versed on books that others were being introduced to for the first time.”

During his time at John Burroughs School, Jordan attended STRIVE for College sessions, a City Academy alumni program run in conjunction with Washington University.

“You need people with firsthand experience of what it’s like to go through standardized testing and what it’s like to apply for schools, and what you should be looking for in schools,” Bow said. “Having that level of close expertise at my fingertips was invaluable to my journey.”

Bow ended up enrolling at Washington University where he received Bachelors of Arts degrees in both German and African Diasporic Studies. He also completed a six-month program to receive a certificate in cyber security coding his senior year.

Bow mentored City Academy students in the STRIVE program throughout his time at Washington University and took on the role of STRIVE student president in 2020-2021. Unfortunately, COVID prevented City Academy students from attending programming on campus, but Bow took it upon himself to conduct tutoring sessions with students who reached out for help.

Recently, Bow accepted a job as a project manager with Epic in Madison, Wisconsin, a company that creates health care software. He looks forward to identifying his strengths and weaknesses in the field as he figures out what path he wants to follow long-term. ✘

**Whitney Gross**, City Academy 2021  
Villa Duchesne 2027

A recent graduate of City Academy, Whitney Gross wasted no time in getting heavily involved at Villa Duchesne and Oak Hill School. Already a member of show choir, and the volleyball and basketball teams, Whitney applied and was selected to go on the Sacred Heart trip to Chicago this summer where students volunteered at food pantries and soup kitchens, while learning more about food insecurity. She came away impressed with the quality of food being prepared and the importance of providing healthy, good-tasting meals.

Whitney also spent much of her summer volunteering at City Academy with the Summer at City program and helping teachers get their classrooms and bulletin boards ready for the first day of school.

“I like seeing how students I used to tutor or go to class with have developed their mind and intelligence,” Whitney said. “They’ve grown so much too!”

Whitney especially enjoyed her experience participating in STAGES (see more on page 22), which she credits for making her feel so connected to her classmates. Her favorite teacher was Stephanie Oteng (fifth and sixth grade math), who always made sure students had the chance to meet with her for extra help if they did not understand a concept. She also appreciates all the book choices from Shalawn Fennoy’s class, such as *Out of My Mind* and *Of Mice and Men*.

“She had really good picks,” Whitney said. “When it came to readings and real-life situations, and comparing that to our lives - it was just really inspiring.”

Whitney thinks that what makes City Academy special is the sense of community. She remembers working on projects in the Makers Space together with her classmates where they were able to work in unison to bring a plan from a book to life.

“It really brings people together because you have to partner up,” Whitney said. “[City Academy] is definitely a place where diverse thoughts can actually co-exist and not be brought down. I just really love that.” ✘



Jordan Bow



Whitney Gross



**Michael Strawbridge**, City Academy 2009  
John Burroughs School 2015  
Beloit College 2019  
Rutgers University 2024

Michael Strawbridge still remembers singing “Celebrate” while watching the bulldozers break ground on City Academy’s new campus in 2003, his first year at the school, at the time based out of Mathews-Dickey Boys’ and Girls’ Club.

“I remember the hype of getting that new building and how cool that was,” Strawbridge said. “Now I come back and see this campus and I remember when it was just dirt and us celebrating having this property and getting ready to build.”

Much like City Academy’s campus, a lot has changed in the last 19 years of Strawbridge’s life. After graduating from City Academy, Strawbridge went on to attend John Burroughs School where he was a three-sport athlete (football, track and field, and wrestling), sang in the choir, and served as the Chief Justice of the student court his senior year. The academic standards at John Burroughs School could be daunting, but Strawbridge says he learned from a young age at City Academy to find his confidence.

“City Academy trained me to know my worth and to know what I could bring to the table and never lose sight of that. And those are the kind of things that you need being at a challenging school like Burroughs. It helped me find my way on those hard days and I feel like I was always able to rise to the occasion,” Strawbridge said.

Upon graduating from John Burroughs, Strawbridge attended Beloit College in Wisconsin where he was on both the football and track and field teams, while double majoring in political science and media studies. He was initially hesitant to attend

school too far from home, but he had attended Camp Timberlane in Wisconsin with City Academy, so he felt more comfortable going away.

Strawbridge is now in his fourth year of his PhD program at Rutgers University in New Jersey. He is studying political science and is scheduled to finish the program in May 2024 and then hopes to become a professor at a research university where he can continue to explore political psychology and political communication. He credits his teacher Shalawn Fennoy with giving him his first chance to teach a subject in front of a class. With so many years studying political science, it’s only natural that Strawbridge also has ambitions of running for office one day.

“That’s been a long term aspiration of mine,” he said. “People who’ve known me my entire life know that’s something I’ve been talking about — senator, representative, president — I’ve been throwing that out there and manifesting that to myself since kindergarten.”

Strawbridge also expressed how proud he is of his mother, Michelle Strawbridge, for serving as the Board of Trustees chairperson at City Academy. “That’s an example of how involved parents are and how committed parents are to City Academy. Her kids haven’t been there since 2011 and she’s still bought in.” ✨



Michael Strawbridge

## Quinten Ford Creates Stained-Glass Piece for City Academy

As a sophomore at Saint Louis Priory School, Quinten Ford (City Academy Class of 2018) was faced with the challenge of deciding what piece of art he wanted to undertake next. All students at Priory learn the history and beauty of the Medieval Arts in class, but they also have the option to join a Medieval Arts Guild, known officially as “The Guild of Saint Columkille.”

Students in the Guild may choose to work on projects in the mediums of stained glass, calligraphy, or mosaics. Many students choose to work on a piece of personal interest that can hang in their homes or dorm rooms for years to come.

“I thought it would be a great idea to create a piece for City Academy - just with how much the school helped me and a bunch of other alumni throughout the years,” Quinten said.

Ultimately, Quinten decided to pursue the creation of a large stained-glass piece of City Academy’s logo. Quinten worked diligently on the project over the course of the next six months. The process started with a drawing which is then transposed onto glass and broken into several smaller pieces that are cut out and painted, before being put into a kiln. Next, he ground the edges of the glass and soldered them together in a frame to be hung.

Quinten presented the finished piece to City Academy at an event in the library in May 2022. He was joined at the event by Priory Medieval Arts Teacher Mary Claire MacDonald, Guild President Thomas Daniel, and members of his family. In addition to the larger piece, Quinten created three smaller stained-glass pieces to gift to Don Danforth, and two of his former City Academy teachers, Shalawn Fennoy and Erik Taylor. The large piece now hangs

“

I thought it would be a great idea to create a piece for City Academy - just with how much the school helped me and a bunch of other alumni throughout the years.”

– Quinten Ford

in the window at the landing of a staircase in the old main foyer near the gym, where the sun can shine through. Students will walk by it every day for years to come.

“I’m really happy that a piece of me will stay a part of City Academy,” Quinten said. “And maybe in 20 years some kids will see it and want to try it out for themselves.” ✨

▼ Quinten Ford with City Academy Art Teacher Julie Bugnitz and Priory Medieval Arts Teacher Mary Claire MacDonald (at right).



## Alumni Giving: Alexis Barber

**When Alexis Barber thinks back on her time at City Academy, she distinctly remembers her Language Arts teacher Shalawn Fennoy holding her accountable when she had missed turning in several assignments in a row. “You’re better than this,” she remembers Fennoy saying.**

“City Academy required you to expect greatness from yourself, rather than failure, which is what the alternative is for a lot of kids,” Barber said.

Upon graduating from City Academy in 2010, Barber attended Thomas Jefferson School. She then went on to Northwestern University where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. While in college, she interned with Google in New York City as a BOLD Associate Product Marketing Manager. After finishing her undergraduate degree, she accepted a full-time position with Google as an Associate Product Marketing Manager.

In 2021, Barber switched over to YouTube (owned by Google) and currently works as a Global Shorts Content Strategist. She recently moved from New York City to Los Angeles. In her free time, Barber hosts a podcast called “Too Smart for This” which has more than 70 episodes. The show’s description reads: “For smart and superficial girls everywhere, this podcast helps multifaceted women untangle society’s expectations of them through candid conversations and tangible tips for crafting your own journey.”

▶ Alexis Barber

In addition, Barber has built a large following on social media where she develops her own content and partners with other companies to endorse products. She now has more than 100,000 followers on TikTok and 11,000 subscribers on her YouTube channel. After a bout with COVID-19 in December forcing her to spend Christmas alone, Barber came up with the idea to launch a line of luxury robes. The product will be released soon!

During her time with Google, Barber has taken advantage of the company’s matching gift policy that allowed her to double her donation to City Academy.

“I choose to support because I know the impact City Academy had on my life and how important that was,” Barber said. “So I’d like to give my money to somewhere that I know can make a huge difference in kids’ lives!”

Did you know that like Google, hundreds of employers offer matching gift programs to recognize their employee’s generosity? And yet every year, millions of dollars in matching gifts go unclaimed! ✖



## Oliver Langenberg Award: Ted Simmons

**At our first graduation in 2005, City Academy established the Oliver Langenberg Award to annually honor a St. Louisan whose contributions have made the school and our broader community better. Oliver Langenberg was City Academy’s first donor in 1998, a year before we opened. He invested in a school with no students or teachers. Mr. Langenberg believed in our vision for a school of excellence for all families. He had faith that we would get it done and we will always be grateful.**

Our 2022 Oliver Langenberg Award recipient is Ted Simmons, a supporter of City Academy since year one. “I’m proud of what City Academy has accomplished and impressed by the school’s ongoing efforts to improve the lives of children in St. Louis,” Simmons said.

“Ted is someone who recognizes the importance of philanthropy and makes an active effort to promote the welfare of others,” said City Academy President and Co-Founder Don Danforth. “We are all here today because of the generosity and support of those in our community who believe in our school and our students.”

Simmons’ cousin, Sally Johnston, a 2010 recipient of the Langenberg Award, said “I was very pleased that Ted was recognized. He doesn’t take much credit for his involvement in various things and I thought it was a wonderful tribute.” ✖

### Previous Award Winners:

Mr.\* and Mrs.\* Oliver M. Langenberg  
Mr.\* and Mrs.\* Melvin C. Bahle  
The McDonnell Family  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Virgil  
Mr.\* and Mrs. Robert Tschudy  
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Linda and Pete Werner  
Harris Frank\*  
Tracey Marshall  
Pat and Nick Reding  
Holly James and Alicia McDonnell  
Charles Knight Family  
David Steward Family

\* Deceased



▲ Ted Simmons and Don Danforth

## Remembering Pat Istwan's Lasting Legacy

**On June 14, 2020, City Academy lost a dear friend of the school, Pat Istwan.**

A loyal supporter of City Academy since 2000, Istwan made a tremendous impact on the school in a variety of ways that will leave a lasting impact on both our campus and the hearts of our students, staff, and alumni.

One day while on a tour of City Academy, Istwan noticed that there were no outdoor drinking fountains near our playground. Soon after, she donated the funds to have two new drinking fountains installed. She also enjoyed surprising classrooms with pizza deliveries.

Istwan celebrated her 75th birthday at City Academy on August 23, 2019. The card that was presented to her by City Academy scholars now hangs on the wall in the kitchen of her sister, Jenny Pirrie.

“She would talk about the school and the children,” Pirrie said. “She just thought very well of the school and she liked being a part of it and how funny all the kids were. She didn’t have any kids of her own, but she got a kick out of all the kids there.”

In addition to all the ways Istwan supported City Academy while she was alive, she also left a substantial gift to the school in her will that will help sustain the school for years to come. Pirrie believes that Istwan’s willingness to support City Academy came out of a desire to spread around the abundance of blessings she had received in her own life.

“I think Pat saw that she could make a difference for these children to get them off to a really good start that they might not have otherwise,” Pirrie said. “We’re so grateful that she followed through because you can think about these kids as you drive down to Busch Stadium and through the neighborhoods, but if you don’t do anything yourself, a lot of times nothing gets done. Somebody has to take that step, and she did.”

Istwan and her family grew up in Glendale and she attended Mary Institute (which later merged with Country Day to become MICDS), before moving to Des Moines, Iowa to receive her Bachelor’s Degree in Journalism from Drake University.



◀ Pat Istwan with David and Nikki Lemkemeier

Istwan faced a lot of major health concerns near the end of her life, but she always kept fighting. Pirrie says the best way for City Academy to honor Istwan’s memory is to “continue your efforts and your work long range into the future and don’t lose inspiration. Even though sometimes it’s hard and sometimes it’s challenging, keep trying. Keep sharing. Learning with these children. That’s what Pat would want.”

If you are interested in learning how to include City Academy in your estate plans, please contact Janice Bailey, Chief Development Officer, at 314.880.5010 or [JBailey@CityAcademySTL.org](mailto:JBailey@CityAcademySTL.org). ✖

“

**I think Pat saw that she could make a difference for these children to get them off to a really good start that they might not have otherwise.”**

– Jenny Pirrie

Most of her career she spent at Missouri Baptist Medical Center as the head administrator of the unit clerks in the maternity ward, keeping the records of who was coming and going, and all the births on the floor. In her retirement, she became a master gardener after taking a course through Missouri S&T in Rolla which she lived nearby on a beautiful 640-acre ranch in Newburg. She also looked after her German Shepherds and as many as 29 cats on the ranch, each of which she would choose an appropriate full name for based on their personality.

Istwan lived in the City of St. Louis for a time, and Pirrie said their parents truly appreciated the city and did what they could to support charitable causes such as Children’s Hospital, along with their aunts and uncles. Istwan also supported The Haven of Grace, which her relative Sally Lemkemeier helped found. Another Lemkemeier, Nikki, created the beautiful tiled murals featured on City Academy’s walls.

◀ Pat Istwan celebrated her 75th birthday at City Academy on August 23, 2019.

## Corporate Giving: Emerson

Emerson has a long history in St. Louis, dating back to its founding as the Emerson Electric Manufacturing Company in 1890. Early on, the company focused on building a reliable electric motor which led to selling the first electric fan in North America in 1892. While the company's product line and services have certainly expanded over the last 130 years, the company's roots in the St. Louis region remains strong. Now headquartered in Ferguson, Emerson has grown to more than 86,700 employees around the globe.

Emerson's support of City Academy dates back to the school's founding in 1999. Akberet Boykin-Farr, who serves as Emerson's Vice President of Diversity & Social Responsibility, believes Emerson simply recognized the change that could occur in the neighborhood surrounding City Academy with the addition of a high quality school. "I think they just believed in

what the vision was," she said. Boykin-Farr currently serves as the Vice Chair of City Academy's Board of Trustees.

Boykin-Farr indicated that one of Emerson's philanthropic priorities has always been educational equity and providing quality educational opportunities regardless of economic status. Emerson also likes the model of independent schools and with their headquarters being located just a few miles west of City Academy, they want to make an impact in their own backyard.

As a member of the Board of Trustees, Boykin-Farr has been able to personally witness the impact City Academy is having on its scholars.

"It's just surprising, the maturity the students exhibit," she said. "And I think I may have undervalued the impact that it has on the future of the families."

As a corporation, Emerson has previously supported a wide variety of organizations including arts and culture, civic, health and human services. But recently, they have narrowed in on education being the primary focus of how they want to have an impact with their philanthropy because they view it as the foundation of our society. In the past, Emerson invested primarily in City Academy's STEAM program since Emerson has a strong STEM focus. However, as Emerson has looked at studies showing third grade reading levels as a leading indicator of college readiness and future potential, the company's thinking has evolved to include all aspects of education.

One of the reasons that Boykin-Farr would encourage other corporations and organizations to consider investing in City Academy is because the school truly delivers on its vision.

"I think this model is a guarantee for impact," Boykin-Farr said, specifically mentioning the alumni program as evidence of the school's commitment to the long-term success of its students. "City Academy shows the results that the school is having. City Academy definitely delivers on improving reading levels and test scores and secondary school placements. That's a guaranteed investment." ✨

◀ Akberet Boykin-Farr and former Emerson Executive Dave Rabe at a past Buddy Morning



## Gift Talk

Free up more space in your garage and stop paying for insurance, registration, and maintenance on that car that just sits in your garage! City Academy recently forged a partnership with CARS (Charitable Adult Rides & Services) to make vehicle donation simple and impactful. CARS makes the process hassle free and helps you avoid any costs associated with selling a car, such as advertising and delivery.

Despite the name, CARS does accept motorized vehicles other than cars, including trucks, trailers, boats, RVs, motorcycles, campers, off-road vehicles, planes, heavy equipment, farm machinery, and most other motorized vehicles. CARS even accepts vehicles that do not currently run. However, the car should be in one piece and towable, have an engine, and be tow truck accessible. You should also have a free and clear title for the car.

Most donated vehicles are sold through local wholesale auctions, and CARS works to get the highest return per vehicle for the designated nonprofit (i.e. City Academy). According to the IRS Guidelines, donors may claim fair market value for their vehicle donation up to the actual sale value. If a vehicle is sold for more than \$500, the maximum amount of your deduction will be the sales price of the vehicle.

**Donate your vehicle by following these easy steps:**

1. Visit the CARS website, [www.careasy.org](http://www.careasy.org).
2. Select City Academy as the non-profit recipient.
3. Submit a donation form with information about your vehicle.
4. Schedule a free pickup for your vehicle.

If you have any further questions, you can call 855-500-RIDE (7433) and the CARS Vehicle Donor Support Team will walk you through the donation form over the phone and then help you arrange for your free pick-up. ✨

“

**City Academy shows the results** that the school is having. **That's a guaranteed investment.**

– Akberet Boykin-Farr

## Partner Spotlight: STAGES St. Louis

**One of the many things that sets City Academy apart is our early and extended day programs, that allows students to arrive at school as early as 7:00 a.m. and stay as late as 6:00 p.m. for free.**

However, what truly makes this program unique is the wide variety of school clubs and activities that our scholars can participate in before and after school — from the Green Thumb gardening club to Hispanic cooking to LEGO Creations. There is no shortage of opportunities for students to explore their interests.

Thanks to a great partnership with STAGES St. Louis, our scholars can even participate in theater productions on campus at City Academy. Previous productions have included the shows *The Wiz Jr.*, *Shrek*, *Aladdin*, and *Seussical: The Musical*.

▼ STAGES ST. Louis Outreach Manager Katie Hayes with members of City Academy's cast from *Aladdin*

Ricco Martin Jr. (Class of 2021) first performed on stage at a summer camp in 2nd grade — crediting his “roar” that gained him the part of the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*. The next year he “accidentally” signed up for STAGES at City Academy and was cast as Iago in *Aladdin*. His love for theater then took off when he was cast as the Tin Man in *The Wiz Jr.*

“I knew then that this art was something I wanted to continue to explore,” Ricco said. “From the rehearsal and audition process to the shows — it all excited me. It made me eager and excited for the next year because I couldn’t wait to see what musical was next. Overall, getting to perform in front of the whole school during assembly was always my favorite.”



▲ Ricco Martin Jr., third from right, with several City Academy alumni, faculty, and staff after a performance of *In the Heights*

Although he wasn’t quite old enough yet to join Triple Threats, the year-round, pre-professional program with STAGES, Katy Hayes convinced the director at that time that he could do it.

Over the summer, Ricco made his professional debut with STAGES as part of the cast of *In the Heights*. A group of City Academy alumni, faculty, and staff attended one of the shows to support Ricco. Before the show, he took part in a Q&A with a producer of the show in front of a live audience of more than 100 people.

“Having the opportunity for them to see me do what I love to do on stage was incredible and I will never forget it,” Ricco said. “It made me proud that they were proud and that they took time out of their lives to support me.”

Now at John Burroughs School, Ricco is having success off the stage as well - even being elected class president in seventh grade! Ricco hopes to make it to Broadway or into film one day, and dreams of meeting Tyler Perry, who he says has played a big role in his motivation. But mostly, he wants to have a “long successful career with loving and supportive people by my side.” That’s certainly a goal worthy of a standing ovation. ✘

## Community Partners

City Academy partners with organizations both local and national to enhance the educational experiences of our scholars. These partnerships provide us with additional resources and services that transform children, families, and communities.

- American Youth Foundation and Camp Miniwanca
- Camp for All Kids
- Camp Nebagamon
- Forest Park Forever
- Healthy Kids Express - St. Louis Children’s Hospital
- Kids Vision for Life St. Louis
- Litzinger Road Ecology Center
- MADE St. Louis
- Mestiza Heirloom Project
- Missouri Dental Hygienist Association
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- Missouri College & Career Attainment Network
- National Society of Black Engineers
- Places for People - Incredible Years
- Shaw Nature Reserve
- St. Louis Blues
- St. Louis Cardinals
- St. Louis Science Center
- STAGES St. Louis
- Tickets for Kids
- Varsity Tutors
- Washington University - Strive and Social Work Practicum
- WE Schools



## 2022 Honor Society Donors

City Academy is grateful to the generous community that invests in our mission and our scholars. The Honor Society recognizes gifts of \$1,000 + during the 2021-22 year (July 1, 2021– June 30, 2022). Thank you so much to all who contribute to our scholars, families, alumni, faculty and staff.

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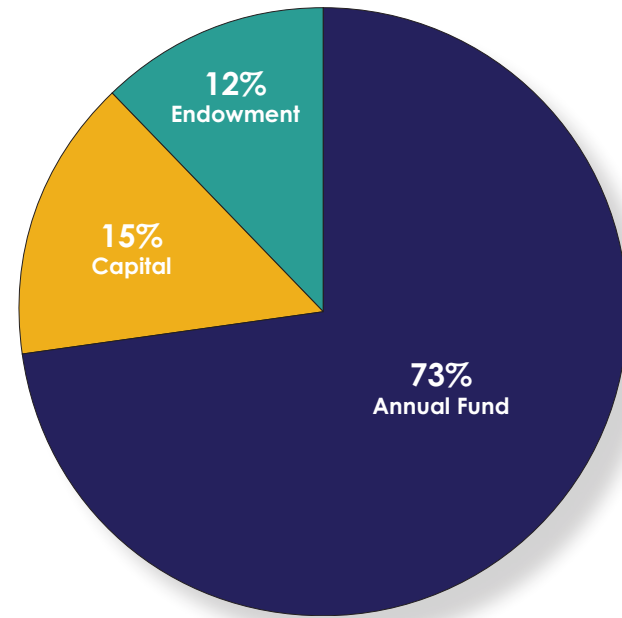
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*Any omission or error is simply a slip of the pen, not a slip of the heart. Please alert us if our records require attention.*



# Thank you to all donors who contributed to City Academy!

Your gifts matter to our scholars. Donations to City Academy support all aspects of our school, but a large amount helps offset the cost for families to attend the school. While 100% of our scholars receive tuition assistance, all families contribute a financial amount toward tuition based on their household income, family size, and number of children attending City Academy. Each family is also expected to participate in 20 hours of family engagement through volunteer work, educational opportunities, or community events.



Aid Awarded to Current Students **\$4.65 Million**

Budgeted Cost per Student **\$25,672**

Median Household Income **\$43,685**

Median Tuition Paid **\$3,200**

Total contributed in 2021-22 **\$3,103,668**

Number of Donors **628**



# Community Giving

**A big shout out to Grimco employees for donating 126 books to our library.** Grimco, headquartered in Sunset Hills, has been a wonderful supporter of City Academy for more than five years. Reading is the cornerstone of City Academy's curriculum, and we are grateful for the tremendous community support we receive to enhance our scholars' literary choices.

**City Academy is grateful for the long-standing support from the Optimist Club of St. Louis.** The Club has been supporting local youth in the name of Optimism for more than 100 years. Their \$12,500 gift helped support City Academy's scholarship program.

**Our students and staff are big fans of the St. Louis Cardinals** who not only provided a grant to support our amazing library through their funding arm - Cardinals Care - but also invited City Academy families out for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. A visit to the field and the dugout as well as meeting Manager Oliver Marmol and pitcher Milas Mikolas were just a few of the highlights!

**City Academy is grateful to Blues for Kids** - the charitable trust of the St. Louis Blues - for their continued support of our scholars. The trust contributed \$5,000 to our scholarship program in 2021. ✨



Grimco



Optimist Club of St. Louis



St. Louis Cardinals



Blues for Kids

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 Michael Small,  
*Finance Committee*  
 Jim Steiner,  
*Investment Committee*

**Friends Committee  
2021-22**

Courtney Mach, *Chair*  
 Allie Beath  
 Ben Beath  
 Kat Beath  
 Thomas Bunn  
 Brian Caskey  
 Colleen Daum  
 Heather Day  
 Aaron Goeckner  
 Lacey Gulyas  
 Darrion Harris  
 Lisa Hart  
 Lindsey Heisler  
 Gracie Jackson  
 Eric Jones  
 Clare Lucas  
 Will Lucas  
 Caitlin Oppland  
 Julie Peters  
 Turner Peters  
 Diane Swank  
 Todd Turner  
 Patrick VanCleave

**City Academy Parents  
Organization (CAPs)**

The City Academy Parents Organization (CAPs) promotes active engagement within the school community and provides resources to support student growth. City Academy parents are automatically members.

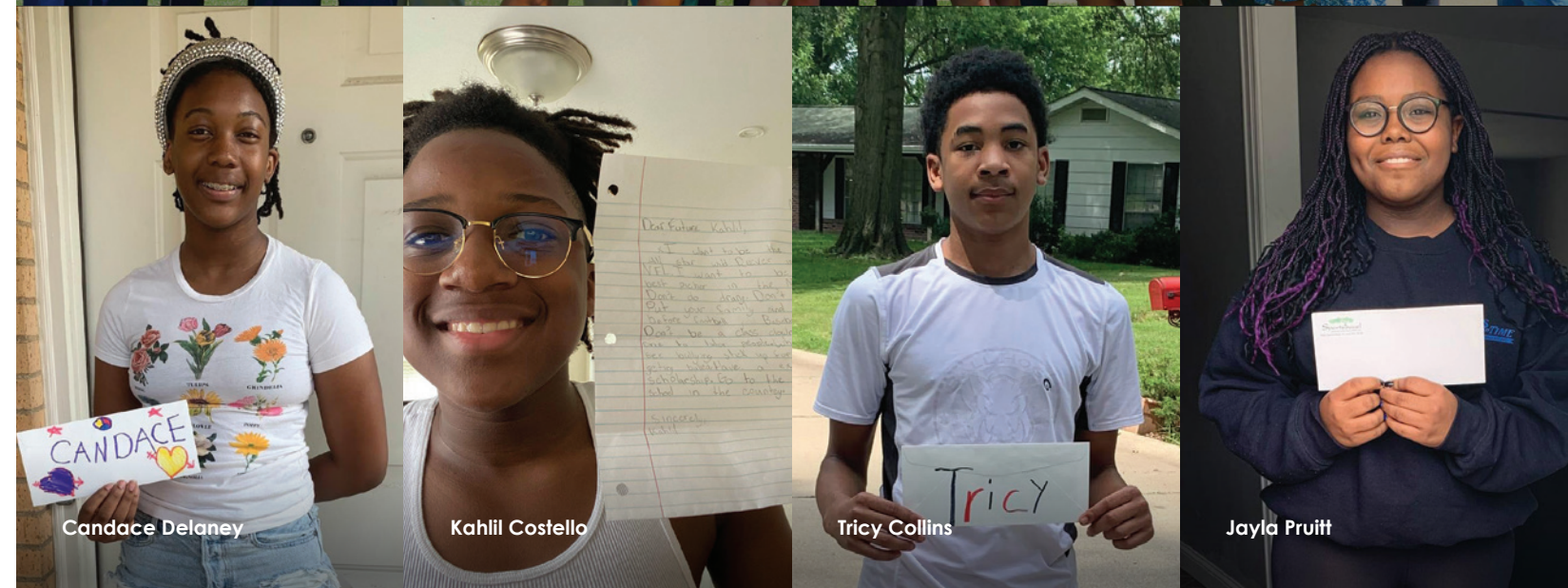
Katie Martin,  
*President*  
 Harmena Walker,  
*Secretary*  
 Mara Wansong,  
*Development Liaison*

Since the Class of 2020 was not able to finish their sixth grade year in person or have a graduation ceremony due to COVID restrictions, we welcomed them back for a celebration on May 1. At this event, we gave out the Martin Mathews awards. Congratulations to our recipients D’Nija Ammons and RoVaughn McCoy!

Earlier in the year, Jen Glassmeyer, Director of Alumni and Community Partnerships, caught up with these students in order to deliver the letters they wrote to their future selves in Monette DeSimone’s second grade class, which are typically delivered just before graduation.

**“The Class of 2020 was the first class I had write letters to themselves and they were probably the most interested in it, because every year after when I would see them in the hall they would ask ‘Do you still have our letters?’ I haven’t experienced that with any other class, so it really mattered to them.”**

– Monette DeSimone







4175 N. Kingshighway Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63115



**Save the Date** for  
City Academy Trivia Night!

Get your team together for a  
fun evening of trivia and treats.

**Saturday, March 4, 2023**

Tickets will go on sale in January.

All proceeds will benefit the Scholarship  
Program and help more children  
experience an exceptional education.

