

THE OAKRIDGE SCHOOL

# OUTLOOK

WINTER 2019 • VOLUME 39, ISSUE 2



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**Outlook Winter 2019, Volume 39, Number 2**

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The Oakridge School is an independent, coed, college-preparatory day school for students in preschool (age 3) through grade 12. The Oakridge School does not discriminate on the basis of color, creed, sex, or national and ethnic origin in school-administered programs.



# MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Welcome to the winter edition of *Outlook* magazine. As the semester draws to a successful close, we take this opportunity to reflect on the whirlwind of exciting activity on campus over the last few months. During the fall semester, we welcomed new families from as close as Dallas and as far away as the Netherlands. We also brought eight new educators on board, all of whom embrace a lifelong love of learning and share our commitment to preparing students for college and life.

In this issue, you will learn about our newly adopted strategic plan, which includes a focus on wellness. Simply put, we aim to empower and support students and faculty as they endeavor to lead healthy, balanced lives. You will also read about our full-time nurse and athletic trainers — a highly qualified team dedicated to the physical, mental, and social health needs of all students and faculty.

I am proud to share that in the Early Childhood Center and Lower School, our young learners have been exploring lessons both independently and collaboratively, utilizing new and emerging technologies as well as good, old-fashioned play. Public speaking has been reconceptualized for Middle School students, and, in the Upper School, the newly introduced Engineer Your World program is providing scholars a rare opportunity to hone their critical thinking skills and also gain college credit. Fine

arts programming across the campus continues to inspire creativity in students and teachers alike.

We applaud six stellar students for their recent recognition by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, and we tip our hat to the thrilling varsity volleyball team, undefeated Middle School football team, cross country runners who competed at SPC, and all other hard-working students. And, of course, we celebrate alumni who are blazing career paths and congratulate those entering marriage or parenthood.

One of the highlights of the fall semester was Homecoming...a longstanding tradition all Owls enjoy. In typical Oakridge fashion, it was a grand event with a fitting theme: The Greatest Show on Earth. Finally, we are proud to announce that Upper School baseball and softball teams will play ball at our new Baylor Scott & White Orthopedic and Spine Hospital of Arlington Complex in just a few short months. This project is the grand finale of the Greatest Names in Sports Capital Campaign.

Whether you are reading this *Outlook* magazine through the eyes of a student, parent, graduate, faculty member, grandparent, or friend, this is most certainly a great time to be an Oakridge Owl. Here's to health and happiness in 2020!

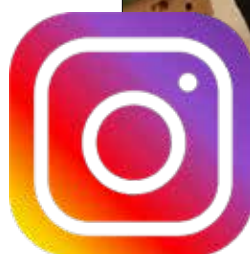
*Jonathan M. Kellam, Head of School*



# LET'S GET SOCIAL

This year marked the NFL's 100th season and the Dallas Cowboys' "Huddle for 100" campaign celebrated the milestone by encouraging individuals to get out and volunteer 100 minutes to support local nonprofits in the community. A photo showing Oakridge students' support of "Huddle for 100" was our top social media post on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter between May and November 2019. Here are some other popular posts.

@THEOAKRIDGESCHOOL



## INSTAGRAM

September 7, 2019

147 Likes

879 Reach

1,668 Impressions

## FACEBOOK

May 6, 2019

204 Reactions, Comments, Shares

3,350 Reach

1,114 Engagements



@THEOAKRIDGESCHOOL

## TWITTER

June 25, 2019

2,331 Impressions

4 Retweets

79 Engagements



@OAKRIDGEOWLS

\*Posts recorded between May-November 2019



# COMING BACK HOME

*From a vivacious pep rally and festive parade to savory and sweet tailgate foods, a football game victory, and exciting fireworks, Oakridge Owls combined 40-years of school spirit with many creative, fun, and family-friendly opportunities to make Homecoming 2019 an event to remember. Everything kicked off with Spirit Week, which allowed students and faculty and staff to get creative with themed dress days. Monday was Red and White Stripes and Crazy Hat Day; Tuesday was Cotton Candy (pink or blue) Day; Wednesday was Texas Rodeo Day; Thursday was Fashion Disaster Day; Friday was Homecoming T-Shirt Day. Friday evening, Sept. 27, Oakridge claimed victory in a 28-21 win over Casady (Oklahoma City, OK).*

*Here is a look at some of the moments that lived up to this year's theme: "Big Top Oakridge: The Greatest Show on Earth." More than 100 alumni returned home for this year's celebration. See the photos in the alumni section of this Outlook.*





# COMING BACK HOME





# COMING BACK HOME





# OUR VALUES. OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE.

Strategic planning is important to all schools, one of many ways they can grow, evolve, and meet the needs of today's students and families. Last spring, a group of 21 people – board members, administrators, faculty and staff – began a series of meetings to shape the school's next strategic plan. Co-led by Head of School Jon Kellam and Education Committee Chair Kelly Broadus, a steering committee and a larger committee forged the way.

The strategic planning process began with big-picture conversations. What is strategic planning? Why do schools engage in it? What are the opportunities and challenges in the marketplace, region, nation and world? The committee spent the first couple of meetings in the spring focused on trends, a "perfect Oakridge," and topics the school would address in the months and years ahead. And this was after committee members pre-read *The NAIS Trendbook* to ensure their understanding of the independent school landscape.

As a result of weeks of committee work, summer follow-up Steering Committee meetings, and retreat work by the administrative team and the board, the plan was written, finalized and approved by the September 2019 board meeting.



The Strategic Plan has six pillars: learning, creativity, leadership, wellness, inclusion and stewardship. Titled "Our Values. Our Community. Our Future.," the focus is first and foremost on learning.

This issue of *Outlook* looks at the wellness pillar. Stated as "empower students and faculty to lead healthy, balanced lives," the rationale of strategic plan focus is that a school attend to the social-emotional well-being of its community.

As stated in the strategic plan, the school will be evaluating the provision of support services at every division, determining how best to respond to day-to-day needs, expanding wellness programming, developing approaches to cultivate student resilience, educating faculty on care for the whole student, and offering parent education. Please see sidebar articles focused on the wellness initiative.

Mrs. Sarah Kramer  
Assistant Head of School



## Vaping Parent Education

In mid-November, parents attended "E-Cigarettes and the Youth Vaping Epidemic" at the John P. Flavin Fine Arts Center. Because youth e-cigarette use, or vaping, has been called a national epidemic by the U.S. Surgeon General, Dina Alessi, co-founder of PAVe (Parents Against Vaping E-cigarettes) spoke to ECC-12 parents about what schools, parents and students are facing nationally. Alessi spoke about health risks, devices teens are using, and the fight against the e-cig industry. PAVe was founded by Dina Alessi, Meredith Berkman, and Dorain Fuhrman in 2018. Among them, these three mothers have nine children, ages 7 to 19, and founded PAVe to respond "to the most serious adolescent public-health crisis our country has faced in decades."

## Counseling Model

At The Oakridge School, counseling services are available to ECC-12 students on a daily basis. Three counselors from Lifeologie Institute – Cassie Bay, Blythe Berkhadley, and Alana McCraw – are at Oakridge throughout the week. Primarily, Berkhadley works with the Early Childhood Center and Lower and Upper Schools; McCraw works with Middle School; and Bay works with Upper School. This partnership helps to foster student academic, mental and emotional growth. Though each division has a designated counselor, students are able to see any of the three. Work with the counselors is both one-on-one and in groups.





# FIVE QUESTIONS WITH OUR SITE-BASED HEALTH CARE TEAM

Among many other efforts, The Oakridge School has invested in the health and well-being of its students by employing a full-time nurse and two full-time athletic trainers. In this edition of Five Questions, Kim Campbell-Martinez, Adam Campbell, and Sara McMinn discuss why having such a team in place matters.

## 1. What do you view as your primary role?

**ALL:** The healthcare team strives to provide every student with the most comprehensive, highest quality individual health care available in a professional, efficient, compassionate, and service-oriented manner. For us, optimal health and academic success are synergistic goals.

## 2. Few schools have on their staff two full-time athletic trainers in addition to a nurse. What does this type of arrangement mean for families at Oakridge?

**SM:** There is interprofessional collaboration that allows us to better impact the overall health of our students. We work together to coordinate health care and provide wellness services. This model improves health outcomes

by efficiently meeting the needs of the school community.

## 3. The school nurse primarily supports student learning by focusing on the overall wellness of each student. What other services do you provide that parents and guardians might not know about?

**KCM:** As the administrator of health services and advocate for health rights of children, I evaluate and manage students' health concerns. I also provide services that include state-mandated screenings, first aid, emergency care, and emotional support. A school nurse supports student success by providing health care through assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children within the school setting. School nurses also address the physical, mental, emotional, and social health needs of students and support their achievement in the learning process.

## 4. What exactly is the role of an athletic trainer?

**AC:** Athletic trainers are highly qualified, multi-skilled health care



*Oakridge athletic trainer Adam Campbell, nurse Kim Campbell-Martinez, and athletic trainer Sara McMinn.*

professionals who provide service or treatment, under the direction of or in collaboration with a physician, in accordance with their education, training, and the state's statutes, rules and regulations.

## 5. How does the work of an athletic trainer mirror the work of a nurse?

**AC:** As a part of the health care team, services provided by athletic trainers include primary care, injury and illness prevention, wellness promotion and education, emergent care, examination and clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention, and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions.

**SM:** A diversified program of prevention, evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation assures a positive healthy recovery experience, an improved quality of life, a safe return to full athletic participation and continued athletic success.

# HOW DO YOU GET MOVING?

Oakridge students at every level are exposed to countless activities that are meant to benefit their physical and mental health and wellbeing. But, whether it's lifting weights or water yoga, we wondered how faculty and staff get moving. Here are a few responses to our inquiry:



- **Zuri Moreno/US Spanish:** Breathing and stretching exercises
- **Shawna Wright/MS English:** Vinyasa yoga, elliptical, weight lifting
- **Stacy Bauer/2nd Grade Teacher:** Runs and recently completed the Chicago Marathon (her seventh marathon)
- **Adam Campbell/Athletic Trainer:** Running
- **Kendra Walton/Alumni Relations Coordinator:** Impromptu dance parties with my daughter.
- **David Languell/Facilities Management Director:** Kayak camping
- **Jennifer Bonner/History Department Chair:** Lifting weights, walking, running, elliptical
- **Bennett Mitchell/US English:** I work out 2-3 times a week, and I also run at least 3 miles at a time, maybe twice a week, if there's time
- **Karen Messer/Database Specialist:** Walking and yoga
- **Lidia Abbott/MS Spanish:** Work out 5 times a week with either the elliptical, exercise bike, weights, and walking
- **Melanie Butts/LS Administrative Assistant:** Walking outside or yoga
- **Kerry Kajihiro/Baseball Coach:** Lifting weights
- **Michelle Emmert/US Administrative Assistant:** Walking and intense jumping and screaming during any sporting event
- **Brittany Snelson/4th Grade Teacher:** I go walking almost every night
- **Shawn Meadows/Athletic Director:** lifting weights, walking, jogging
- **Nicki Morgan/ECC Director:** I take walks with my three precious kiddos
- **Amy Wilson/Admissions Director:** Walking/running on my treadmill
- **Andre Walker/Varsity Basketball Coach:** Running, walking, and lifting weights
- **Emily Savage/ECC Administrative Assistant:** Yoga

Other faculty and staff said they get their workout through swimming, kayaking, Peloton indoor cycling, hot yoga, Zumba, and boot camps.





ACADEMICS



# MORE THAN CHILD'S PLAY

Thinking back on childhood, my mind is flooded with colorful memories of running down grassy hills, swinging with friends as we sing at the top of our lungs, endless games of hide-and-seek, and enjoying a breath of fresh air as my little mind processed everything that had happened that day.

Author Ruth Wilson says, “Most of what children need to learn during their early childhood years cannot be taught; it’s discovered through play.” This is one of my favorite quotes about our precious children. Childhood is a true gift. Often times it slips away before we’ve had the chance to really sit back and savor it. We are fortunate to unwrap this gift of childhood every day in the Early Childhood Center.

As the new school year kicked off, our students were in awe of the playground construction zone as community helpers were hard at work creating a special place for them to play. Businessman and alumni parent, Mark Kundysek of NexCourt (Garret ’19 and Dawson ’18), partnered with us in the design of our renovation. NexCourt provided us with beautiful, weather-resistant



turf grass surrounding our new “tree house” decking and whimsically-winding sidewalks.

Each of us longs for an opportunity to run wild and free, while still being safe, and this new playground provides just that for our youngest Owls. Students can take refuge from the Texas sun under the canopy of our cypress “treehouse,” immerse themselves in sensory play in our sandbox, or cruise through the winding “roads” of our Oakridge Neighborhood on their tricycles (be careful not to go too fast; you’ll be issued a speeding ticket).

Research shows that playgrounds get children into action, which helps them grow physically. Students can be encouraged to develop balance, build their muscles, exercise, and overall, be more active. Another incredibly important aspect

our students need daily is an area to grow their social skills. The playground offers a place for students can learn to resolve conflict, share spaces and places with peers, and play together. We are thankful for this incredible space where students are free to be themselves while also sharpening their social skills.

Not only has this playspace proven to be a total winner during our recess times, students are also experiencing nature in new ways as our teachers transform the space into an outdoor learning area. Whether it’s enjoying a good book with their teacher under the shade of the cypress, sharing in a walk-and-talk with classmates, or searching for little critters they’ve recently learned about, our students have the opportunity to grab some fresh air and reset their brains as they soak up the beauty all around them.



The next time you're tempted to spend a few spare minutes checking out social media, I encourage you to take a note from our Little Owls and step outside. Take a deep breath, look for the life happening all around you, and maybe even go for a little run down a grassy hillside. The smile it will bring to your face will be well worth it.

*Mrs. Nicki Morgan  
Director, Early Childhood Center*



## SPRING 2020 ADMISSIONS EVENTS

### **JANUARY 15 | SPEAKER & SPAGHETTI DINNER**

Location: Student Activity Center, 6 PM

**FOR FAMILIES OF STUDENTS ENTERING PRESCHOOL – GRADE 12**

### **JANUARY 25 | INTERACTIVE OPEN HOUSE**

Location: Library, 11 AM – 1 PM

**FOR FAMILIES OF STUDENTS ENTERING PRESCHOOL – GRADE 12**

### **FEBRUARY 11 | ECC VALENTINE STEAM ACTIVITY**

Location: Early Childhood Center, 8:30 AM

**FOR FAMILIES OF STUDENTS ENTERING  
PRESCHOOL, PRE-KINDERGARTEN, AND KINDERGARTEN**

### **FEBRUARY 21 | STUDENT-LED TOURS & FACULTY SOCIAL**

Location: Sky Bridge – Broadus Campus, 6:30 PM

**FOR FAMILIES OF STUDENTS ENTERING GRADES 5-8**

### **MARCH 28 | BUNNY BRUNCH & EGG HUNT**

Location: Broadus Campus, 10:30 AM

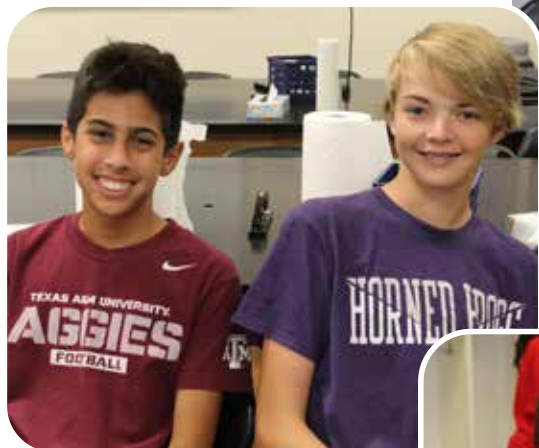
**FOR FAMILIES OF STUDENTS ENTERING PRESCHOOL – GRADE 12**



# COLLEGE T-SHIRT DAY



Gimme a C-O-L-L-E-G-E!  
College T-Shirt Day at Oakridge  
allowed students across every  
division to show their college  
spirit. Schools from around the  
country were represented.





# NATIONAL RECOGNITION



Six Oakridge seniors have been nationally recognized for academic excellence. Congratulations to National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists Annemarie Roos and Colin Skinner. Hannah Didehbani, Eric Johnson, Roman Scott, and Alita Whitaker were named Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Program.

## COLLEGE: FIND THE RIGHT FIT

On a wall in the College Advising Office, you will see Frank Sachs quote, “College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won.” Finding the right college fit is a term that families will hear and see often through the college search process. A good college fit means a college matches a student’s academic, social, and financial needs and wants. When a good match is made, students are more likely to thrive, be happy and graduate.

One of our responsibilities in the College Advising Office is to help students determine their wants and needs. College Advisor Peggy Pfursich and I do this by providing one-on-one attention, giving students the opportunity for self-reflection and self-expression. We offer personality and learning assessments so students can determine how they learn and the type of environment that will best support their learning style. We take sophomores on a college trip to visit

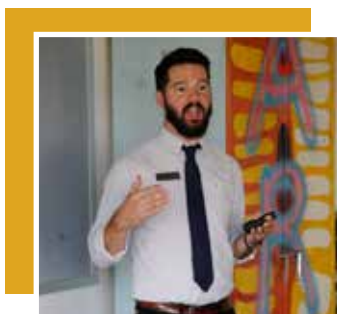


a large public university and a small private university that are within driving distance. Our goal is for students to identify the characteristics on a college campus that are important to them. Where we visit is not the important factor; learning what to look for in finding fit is the objective. As students enter their junior and senior years, our one-on-one meetings become more frequent. We discuss each student’s individualized needs and craft a list of colleges that best fit their personalized requirements.

Our favorite part of this process is when the student makes their college choice; it’s the final piece of the puzzle that we have been working on throughout upper school. When it’s the right fit, the puzzle is complete.

*Mrs. Kellen Lewis*  
Director of College Advising

# NEW FACULTY AND STAFF



## ZACH ALLEN | MS Art Teacher

**Why are you an educator?** Designing and creating are important in my daily life. I get excited to share my passion for art with students and to guide them through the creative process.

**What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?** Camping, rock climbing, biking, running, and spending time with my family and Australian shepherd mix, Millie.



## MELANIE BUTTS | LS Administrative Assistant

**What do you enjoy about working with children?** I love seeing children grow and make progress, especially when they press through a challenge.

**Read any good books lately?** My last great read was "A Family Shaped by Grace: How to Get Along with the People Who Matter Most" by Gary Morland.



## CHRISTINE METOYER | Assistant Head of Upper School

**What made you want to work in education?** It's my calling! I started teaching at 22 to pay for law school. I fell in love with education and kids, and I never looked back.

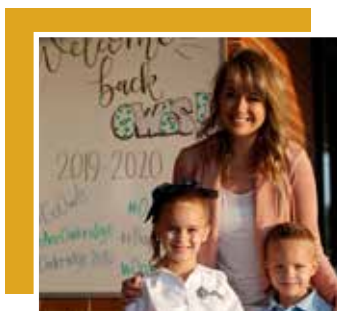
**What brought you to Oakridge?** I visited Oakridge three years ago for LLI Southwest. At that time, I was so impressed with the students. They were engaged, polite, and curious. I returned to Houston with an affinity for the school. A few years later, my husband was transferred to the DFW region, and I found this position open. I was so excited about the possibility. I eagerly applied and went through a relatively long interview process. Each time I encountered someone from Oakridge, my desire to join the community was affirmed. I could tell this is a special place.



## BENNETT MITCHELL | US English Teacher

**Why did you decide to teach?** I chose to teach because of the impact left on me by my teachers. I want to have that same impact on my students.

**Have any pets?** I have three dogs: Lola, Chloe, and Dolly.



## NICKI MORGAN | ECC Director

**What do you admire most about being an educator?** It gives me the opportunity to live out my purpose, and I get to help others to discover their own. Being an educator is a gift. To have the opportunity to inspire, encourage, instill, direct and guide young children is nothing to be taken lightly.

**What makes Oakridge a good fit for you?** Oakridge opens a window of limitless possibilities. With its small-town community feel, core values, and rich history, there is nowhere else I'd rather be!





## VICKI REED | LS Tech & Idea Lab Instructor & Extended Day Coordinator

**What inspires you to teach?** To quote poet William Butler Yeats, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” I want to pass my love for learning onto the children. Their social, emotional and academic growth inspires me to teach.

**Who are your heroes in education?** Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan.



## EMILY SAVAGE '96 | ECC Administrative Assistant

**How does being an alumna shape your role as an educator?** I loved Oakridge as a student, I loved it as a parent, and now I love it as a member of the team. I sometimes joke that Oakridge is the magical unicorn of schools, but in my heart, I truly feel that way. My time here as a student molded me into the person I am today and it is everything I want for my children as they grow up.

**What other fields have you worked in?** In my previous career, I worked in the aviation industry for a company that partnered with the Southwest Transplant Alliance. We provided charter services to support organ donation.



## KENDRA WALTON '05 | Alumni Relations Coordinator

**What made you want to work at your alma mater?** Oakridge feels like home. It has a unique, talented, and diverse alumni community that spans across the globe, and working to strengthen the connections of our graduates will truly be gratifying.

**Have you worked or lived abroad?** I previously lived in Germany, Turkey, Cyprus, and Croatia.



# NAVIGATING OUR DIGITAL WORLD

The world today is exciting, fast-paced, challenging, yet quite different from what many adults encountered during childhood. Technology is a part of the landscape of this ever-changing world affording opportunities to communicate effectively, collaborate and connect globally, think critically, and express oneself in creative ways. Through partnerships with platforms, including Common Sense Media, Cyber Civics, and The Social Institute, The Oakridge School and its Office of Technology & Modern Learning are empowering students to think ethically.

As The Social Institute explains, “By reinforcing character and leadership strengths like empathy, integrity, and teamwork, and by teaching students and their role models to champion high character on all social platforms,” students are empowered to act responsibly and ethically while using technology and in everyday life. Students in grades 1-4 participate in weekly hands-on activities and discussions selected from curriculum designed by Common Sense Media.

Topics covered include:

- Media balance and well-being
- Privacy and security
- Digital footprint and identity
- Relationships and communication
- Cyberbullying, digital drama, and hate speech
- News and media literacy

Every three weeks, students in grades 5-8 engage in lessons from the Cyber Civics curriculum. Lessons include hands-on and active lessons that provide students opportunities to role-play scenarios, hold lively discussions, and debate topics among peers. Level 1 of Cyber Civics is centered around Digital Citizenship, the safe and responsible use of digital tools, Level 2 is focused on Information Literacy, and Level 3 of the curriculum focuses on Media Literacy. As



*Eighth grade students were able to put their Spanish lessons to the test when they engaged with students in New York as part of a “Mystery Skype” class activity.*

students progress through the middle school years, students will be exposed to all three levels.

Gamified sprints and challenges, designed by The Social Institute, are utilized with students in grades 9-12. By taking part in The Social Institute, the goal is to empower students to positively approach the use of social media focusing on “do’s versus don’ts.” Over the course of the school year, students discuss, debate, analyze and apply concepts and skills centered around the following strands:

- Play to Your Core
- Protect Your Privacy Like You’re Famous
- Strike a Balance
- Cyber Back
- Build a Strong Team
- Huddle Often
- Use Your Mic for Good

The partnership with Common Sense Media, Cyber Civics and The Social Institute, equips students to intuitively lead with empathy, integrity, grit and moral thinking in their everyday life choices. In addition to student empowerment, Oakridge will be hosting quarterly “Parent Coffee Chats” centered around “Navigating Our Digital World” with parents to discuss and share resources.

*Ashley Read and Michelle Vaughn  
Office of Technology & Modern Learning*



# FIVE QUESTIONS WITH MATT KNAUF



Engineer Your World: Engineering and Design Analysis is a new course offered in the Oakridge Upper School. It is the first entirely engineering based course that has been offered at The Oakridge School. Upper School Teacher and Coach Matt Knauf tells us more about what makes the course so unique in Five Questions...

## 1. Who developed the Engineer Your World curriculum?

**MK:** Engineer Your World was developed by the faculty at the Cockrell School of Engineering at The University of Texas, with NASA engineers, and high school teachers.

## 2. What makes the course so unique?

**MK:** The curriculum is an innovative student-centered curriculum that engages learners in authentic engineering experiences

and inspires them to embrace an engineer's habits of mind. The basis of the curriculum centers around the six design principles of engineering, which students learn. Collaborative, student-directed projects build resilient problem-solving skills and empower students to think like engineers, to adopt engineering processes, and to pursue engineering disciplines for the betterment of our world.

## 3. Can students enrolled in the course earn college credit?

**MK:** Yes, Engineer Your World is a dual-credit course. Students enrolled in this course have the ability to apply to the UT Austin Cockrell School of Engineering to take a college-level course: Engineering Science 301. Students who are accepted into the dual credit program may earn three credits that show on an official University of Texas transcript, and are accepted at most major

universities as a general education requirement. Students are graded by University of Texas faculty as if they were enrolled in a freshman college-level engineering course on campus.

## 4. Is it mandatory that Oakridge students pursue the dual credit option?

**MK:** Students in Engineer Your World are encouraged to apply for and accept the dual credit option. Students in the course are graded at a collegiate freshman level, and therefore, we are respecting the work of Engineer Your World by treating it the same as an Advanced Placement (AP) course. Students receive the same grade point average (GPA) boost of an AP course when taking Engineer Your World.

## 5. Should an Oakridge student consider Engineer Your World only if they are interested in engineering?

**MK:** Yes, Engineer Your World is for all students. All students can benefit from learning a process to solve problems. By the end of the course, students learn how engineers design and think, to make data-driven decisions, and how programming and system design play a role in making better solutions for our world.

# OAKRIDGE IN THE COMMUNITY

*More than 300 students, faculty, and staff from Oakridge made a difference in the community when they assisted seven nonprofit organizations in need of help. The students and educators worked side by side for the Upper School's annual community service day, which allowed them to do everything together from organizing canned goods and clothing, to painting offices, and any other tasks the organizations needed. Among the Dallas-Fort Worth area organizations served, were: the Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Clubs, Union Gospel Mission, Mansfield Mission, Meals on Wheels, 6 Stones, and Mission Arlington. Student photographers Lilly Deane, Caroline Walker, Mackenzie Yentes, and Rohma Zaidi recorded the day in photos.*





# CULTIVATING GRIT

Our job and privilege in the Lower School years is to build a strong foundation for our students. When you remember your years in first, second, third, and fourth grades, you might think it was mostly about reading, writing, and math.

At Oakridge, we believe even more important than those basics are the character qualities that are instilled during these critical years. It is with great intention that we focus on a different attribute each month in Lower School. We know that people who exemplify these qualities are both happier and more successful than their counterparts. We want to do all we can to set our students on a path toward being good people who do good for their communities and enjoy life. All of that starts in the childhood years learning how to manage yourself and how you can best contribute to your community.

A big part of both of these goals is grit. It is hard work to become self-



*Third graders (l-r) Grace Gully, Kamdon Persaud, and Gavin Hernandez, are among the Lower School students exploring what it means to have grit.*

controlled. Even adults know how difficult it is to control such things as appetite and temper. For children, moving from being controlled by adults, to being self-controlled is a lengthy process. It requires a great deal of patience and many small steps forward. It is important during this time to allow children to experience setbacks. This is hard to watch, but it is essential for children to experience failures and get back up and try again.

When I am with a child who is struggling with

something, whether it is academic or a physical challenge and the child cries, “This is hard!” I like to say to them quietly, “You’re right, this is hard, and you can do hard things.” It is important for children to know they are capable. They can push through. They can do hard things. Later I have heard a child say to him or herself, “I can do hard things.” This is a helpful internal message that can serve a child well into adulthood. When positive internal messages are planted in children in these formative years, it makes all the difference.

*Dr. Sarah Schecter  
Head of Lower School*

**grit** noun  
ˈgrɪt

## Definition of *grit*

: firmness of mind or spirit : unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger  
// managed to survive by his *grit* and guile

# MIDDLE SCHOOL RECESS

Swinging. Balls bouncing.  
Playground negotiations.  
Motion. Running. Sharing.  
Laughing.

These sights, sounds, and variety of student interaction provide a glimpse into the seemingly simplest part of a student and teacher's day: recess. At first glance, the mission is simple - no preparation, no expectations, and certainly no grades. Yet, one could argue that this 20-minute respite is a crucial part of a Middle School student's day.

Until this school year, recess at The Oakridge School was reserved for the youngest of students. The Lower School and Early Childhood Center have recess figured out and are leaders when it comes to unstructured play. Admittedly, through the years, Middle School would "try" to fit recess in, but with a focus on other initiatives and a stingy schedule, recess would often be the first place to look to recapture time for other activities. Responding to a confluence of factors that impact today's students in the middle grades, recess has now become a much-welcomed cornerstone of the Middle School schedule.

"Among the contributing factors that have sparked a renewed interest in recess

"PLAY GIVES CHILDREN A  
CHANCE TO PRACTICE WHAT  
THEY ARE LEARNING."

*Mr. Fred Rogers  
Host, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood  
Children's Advocate*

are: increases in screen time, both in and outside of school, children coping with more mature topics that were once seen only in older grades, and a Middle School schedule overhaul," says Head of Middle School Britt Robinson.

"The physical and emotional health of our students is crucial to their future success, especially at this time of developmental transitions in their lives.

Assistant Head of School Lori Lane agrees, and adds: "Unstructured play, even at the pre-teen and teenage years, allows the kids to still feel like they can be kids and not have to grow up too quickly."

To have this level of impact on the day, a schedule change was needed. For a variety of reasons, the Middle School faculty felt

that a block schedule was most conducive to adding time into the day for extra-curriculars, including recess, digital citizenship, and a plethora of electives. While sacrificing a minimal amount of study hall time, students can breathe fresh air, compete in a pick-up basketball game, or sway on the tire swing.

Robinson adds that after watching the news or reading the newspaper, it is refreshing to see a 14-year-old climbing the monkey bars, swinging, and having fun on the playground. "There are plenty of opportunities to grow up and be challenged academically, but for now, recess is a time to get to know school friends better, time to practice being a good friend, opportunities to choose what to play, and simply feel the rush of the wind on a beautiful day."



## The Benefits of Recess

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recess is a regularly scheduled period in the school day for physical activity and play that is monitored by trained staff or volunteers. During recess, students are encouraged to be physically active and engaged with their peers in activities of their choice.

### Recess benefits students by:

- Increasing their level of physical activity
- Improving their memory, attention, and concentration
- Helping them stay on-task in the classroom
- Reducing disruptive behavior in the classroom
- Improving their social and emotional development (e.g., learning how to share and negotiate)

*Excerpt from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Healthy Schools (2019-cdc.gov)*

## BY THE NUMBERS

A survey given to all of the Middle School students found that the majority think favorably about recess being added into their daily routine. Of 178 responses recorded, 134, or 75.28 percent, said it is valuable to them. Just 44, or 24.72 percent, said it is not valuable. In those cases where students answered both yes and no, their answers were counted as a yes. Below are a few of the reasons given for and against recess.

### Fifth grade

*"Yes, it gives us time to calm down from stress and get in extra minutes of fitness."*

*"I don't like having recess with 6th graders. I want it to be one grade at a time."*

### Sixth grade

*"Yes, because it helps you be active and if you have a lot of work and stress, you can relax and calm down when you play outside."*

*"I do not think recess is necessary because it takes time out of study hall."*

### Seventh grade

*"Recess let's us release our energy and gives our brain a break for a while."*

*"No, we are assigned a ton of homework and with athletics, we don't have much time as it is. Then, we cut study hall short for recess."*

### Eighth grade

*"I really love how recess was added into our day. Even if I'm having a bad day, I always look forward to playing outside."*

*"I would prefer a longer lunch, study hall, or library time."*

## WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT ADDED TO RECESS?

More balls! They asked for more volleyballs, as well as a football, soccer, tether, and gaga ball. Others requested: a zipline, seesaw, merry-go-round, and long jump rope.



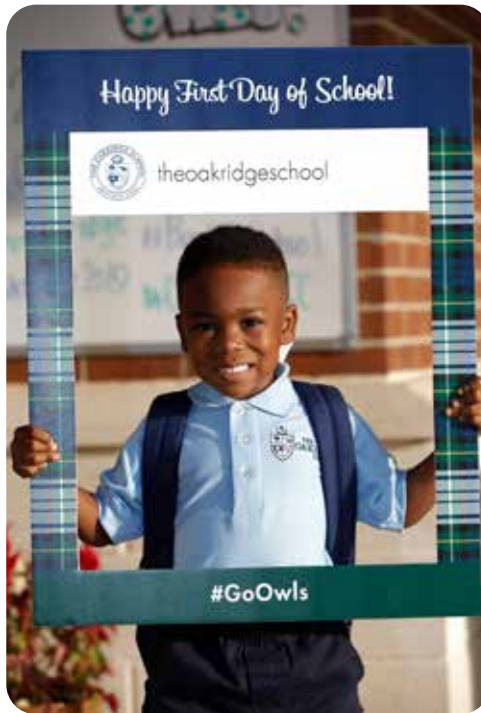
# WE ARE OAKRIDGE

Just months from now, we will say farewell to the Class of 2020. For just a brief moment, we look back at the first day of the 2019-2020 school year. There were new faces, redesigned spaces, new curriculum, and countless opportunities. Owls, big and small, continue to unite in a warm, friendly environment that many say feels like family. We are...Oakridge.





# WE ARE OAKRIDGE





# GRANDPARENTS' & GRANDFRIENDS' DAY



More photos on page 40.



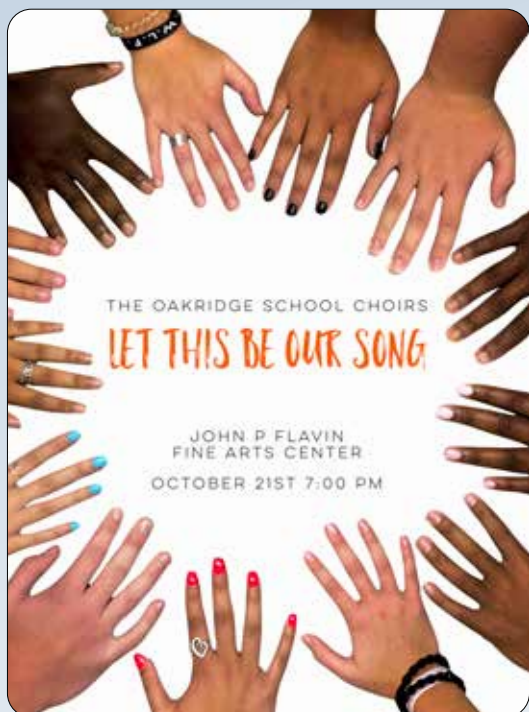


ARTS



# LET THIS BE OUR SONG

There were many beautiful moments during the school choirs' fall concert, "Let This Be Our Song." Many people were moved to tears after seeing the talented group perform at the John P. Flavin Fine Arts Center.









# MUSICAL MOMENTS







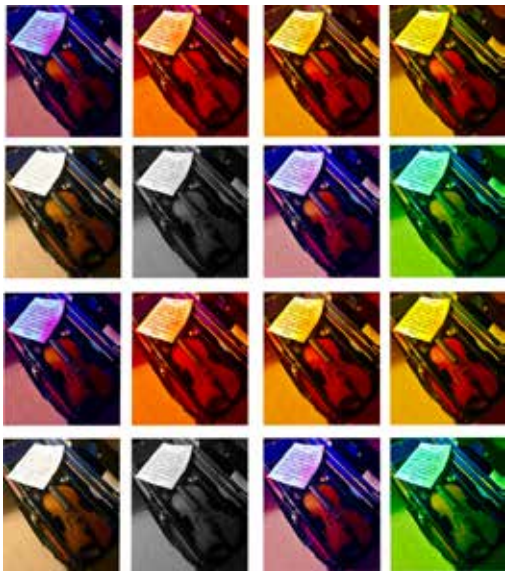


# COLORS

The Oakridge School Orchestra's fall performance, "Colors," shared stories through music at the John P. Flavin Fine Arts Center.







The Oakridge Orchestra  
presents

## COLORS

Wednesday, October 16, 2019  
7:30pm  
Flavin Fine Arts Performance Hall





# UPPER SCHOOL ART: DO YOU SEE ME?

Upper School students in Mrs. Lindsey Lane's art class produced various mediums that included mirrors, plaster, charcoal, and paint.



Annie



Daria



Gracie



Jeff



Linda



Luisa



Rylee



Vanessa



Victoria



# MIDDLE SCHOOL ART: I SEE YOU

Middle School students in Mr. Zach Allen's art class produced images of themselves using paint or color pencil.



Addison



Brody



Prapti



Jackie



James



Kate



Diana



Safiya



Kenedy



# BUDDING ARTISTS





# BUDDING ARTISTS

*From bright sea creatures to donuts and leaves, and even interpretations of Georgia O'Keeffe's work, Lower School students tapped into their inner artist this fall. ECC students also explored many lessons through colorful creativity and imagination. Among these photos are some taken by student photographer Rohma Zaidi.*



# BUDDING ACTORS

*Photos by Jade Parker and Rileigh Robinson*



Fifth grade drama students in Mrs. Linda Hoffer's first quarter class performed "Totally Red" in October. The play retold the classic tale, "Little Red Riding Hood."









# AND THEN THERE WERE NONE





Congratulations to the cast and crew of “And Then There Were None,” which is a dramatic adaptation of the best-selling crime novel by Agatha Christie. The story follows 10 strangers who receive an unusual invitation to a solitary mansion based remotely off Britain’s Devon Coast. Among the guests is an unstable doctor, an anxious businessman, and a governess with a secret. As people start to mysteriously die, the members of the group realize there is a killer among them. Scenes from the fall play are provided courtesy of student photographers Zach Cunningham, Lilly Deane, and Rohma Zaidi.





# GRANDPARENTS' & GRANDFRIENDS' DAY







# ATHLETICS



# CONSTRUCTION OF OAKRIDGE'S NEW BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL COMPLEX NEARS COMPLETION

Oakridge Owls will soon hear the crack of a bat and the cheers of baseball and softball fans at the school's new athletic gem. Construction on the Baylor Scott & White Orthopedic and Spine Hospital Arlington Baseball and Softball Complex broke ground in May of 2019 and will wrap up at the end of the year. But how did the project come to be? Head of School Jon Kellam provides some perspective.

In 2006, the Oakridge Class of 2020 was reciting ABC's and learning to play nicely with others. Elsewhere, Italy defeated France in the FIFA World Cup Final, Roger Federer beat Andy Roddick

to win the singles tennis title at the US Open, and the St. Louis Cardinals nearly swept the Detroit Tigers to win the World Series. Closer to home, Headmaster Andy Broadus and the school's Board of Regents made a historic decision. They brokered a deal to purchase 50 acres of undeveloped land across the street from the school for \$2.1 million, thus, securing the future site of the Oakridge Athletic Complex (OAC).

In the years that followed, site plans steadily became strategic initiatives. Funds were raised through generous gifts to the Greatest Names in Sports Capital Campaign, and



architectural renderings were transformed into fields, courts, and parking lots. Between 2010 and 2015, practice fields and first-class competition venues were erected for field hockey, football, soccer, track and field, and tennis. A playground, sport court, and picnic area went in behind the stadium, creating a shaded, park-like amenity – ideal for fans with small

children. At the 2019 Homecoming football game, an alumnus described the return to his alma mater: "We always enjoyed competing as Owls in the 1990s, and we thought we had it all. But this new complex is awesome! Now, Oakridge student-athletes have facilities as nice as any in the SPC Conference."





The excitement generated at the OAC from 2010-2015 was palpable. Field hockey, football, cheerleading, soccer, tennis, and track and field athletes now enjoyed home field advantage at their new, state-of-the-art facility. Oakridge fast became a local favorite for tennis tournaments, track meets, and ballgames. And, of course, Homecoming and Field Day were moved across the street as well. One major project, however, still remained on the master site plan. The missing piece at the OAC was a baseball/softball park. This void became a priority in 2016, and efforts to fundraise accelerated. With financial support from scores of generous donors, \$4 million was raised – enough for the school to build a two-phased, 12-acre campus enhancement.



Phase 1 of the project (completed in 2017) included a road with 100 parking spaces, an additional entrance/exit to Pioneer Parkway, a concession and restroom building, and sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping around the tennis center and parking lot. Phase 2, now in progress, is the baseball/softball complex itself. Scheduled for completion at the end of 2019, this new facility will be the envy of the conference. Both fields will boast top of the line natural grass surfaces, metal outfield fences, brilliant scoreboards, scorers' booths, spacious dugouts complete with changing rooms and storage, bullpens for both home and visiting teams, and lights to accommodate evening games and tournament play. Three batting cages are strategically placed between the two fields for shared use.

This mission-aligned OAC project has been a strategic focus for over ten years. It has changed the landscape of the Oakridge campus, and it provides unlimited opportunities for student-athletes. Come celebrate with



us as the Owls host season-opening baseball and softball tournaments February 20-22, 2020 on the new fields.

Families and friends who have donated to the OAC project are listed on the school's website. Limited naming opportunities are still available. Contact Mr. Jon Kellam, [jkellam@theoakridgeschool.org](mailto:jkellam@theoakridgeschool.org), to learn more.

**PAVE THE WAY FOR THE OWLS...**

**GREATEST NAMES IN SPORTS BRICK CAMPAIGN**

Purchase your personalized brick at the new Baseball/Softball Complex.

4" X 8"	BRICK	\$300
8" X 8"	BRICK	\$500
12" X 12"	BRICK	\$2,500

Go to [www.theoakridgeschool.org/makeagift](http://www.theoakridgeschool.org/makeagift) today!



# SPORTS NOTES

*Congratulations to the varsity volleyball team, which placed 5th at the SPC Championships in Houston in November.*



*Varsity football ended the regular season 3-3 (tied for 3rd place) in conference and 5-4 overall. Middle School football finished the season undefeated! The future is bright for these fighting Owls.*





# THE ROAD TO THE XFL

The XFL, first introduced in 2001 as a potential competitor of the NFL, is making a comeback and an alumnus of The Oakridge School is in the mix. The league, owned by Vince McMahon's Alpha Entertainment, held its first draft for the 2020 season October 15-16, 2019. Several well-known former collegiate stars were picked in the 70-round affair that allowed each team one selection per round, designated into categories such as skill players, defensive backs, and linemen. Oakridge alumnus Tayo Fabuluje '10 was selected in the 20th round by the Houston Roughnecks.



*Fabuluje, seen here in an Oakridge yearbook photo, was named the most valuable lineman in 2010.*

Fabuluje previously played offensive tackle for the Oakridge Owls, leading them to a 9-2 record in 2009 and he was awarded the most valuable lineman in 2010. Head Football Coach Phillip Farhat remembers Fabuluje as a standout for more reasons than just his commanding figure.



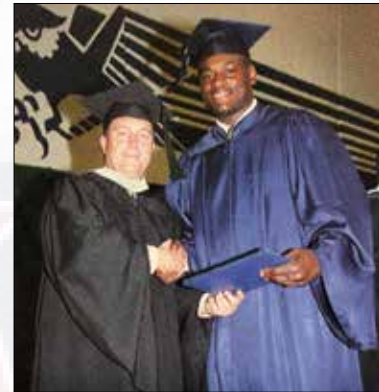
*The Houston Roughnecks selected Fabuluje in the XFL's inaugural draft in October 2019.*

"He was 6-7, 300 pounds in 11th grade. Tayo had the rare combination of size and athleticism that made colleges across the country want him," Coach Farhat said. "He was also a gentle giant, one of the biggest-hearted athletes I have coached."

From Oakridge, Fabuluje entered TCU, where he was an impressive player for the Horned Frogs, starting all 13 games on their 12-1 Peach Bowl championship team in 2014. Fabuluje, an All-Big 12 selection, was then chosen by the Chicago Bears in the sixth round of the 2015 NFL Draft.

Joining Fabuluje on the Roughnecks is his former TCU teammate, and another Arlington product — running back Kyle Hicks. Both players will have a chance to play in their hometown in the coming season, as the Dallas franchise will play at the

Globe Life Park in Arlington for the 2020 season. You can see the Owl alum in action when Houston faces off with the Roughnecks on Sunday, March 1, 2020 at 3 p.m. The game will be broadcast on Fox Sports 1 (FS1).



*Fabuluje with Head of School Jon Kellam at the Class of 2010 graduation ceremony.*

In addition to the Houston Roughnecks, the XFL consists of eight teams, including the Dallas Renegades, Washington DC Defenders, Los Angeles Wildcats, New York Guardians, St. Louis BattleHawks, Seattle Dragons, and Tampa Bay Vipers. The XFL season begins Saturday, February 8, 2020, the weekend after Super Bowl 54. The XFL regular season will span ten weeks through April 12. Followed by two playoff games April 18-19, with the championship game held on April 26.

*Karli Karanges  
Class of 2020*

# OAKRIDGE'S "MUMENTOUS" ROLE

The Oakridge School and Oakridge Varsity Cheerleaders played a major role in a unique fall exhibit at the Arlington Museum of Art. "MUMENTOUS: The Upsizing of a Texas Tradition," was the brainchild of North Texas-based writer and photographer Amy J. Schultz, the museum's first ever artist-in-residence. MUMENTOUS included photography, narrative, an original video about the history of Texas high school homecoming mums, an audio installation, and an homage to mums and garters created in large part

through the generosity of the DFW community.

Several photos were of Oakridge homecoming pep rallies and parades from years ago. Oakridge alumni and students' perfectly preserved mums also were included. Oakridge Varsity Cheerleaders - all of whom were scheduled to cheer at Oakridge's Homecoming festivities the next day - cheered for visitors arriving at the MUMENTOUS opening reception on Sept. 26. Many of the cheerleaders wore their Homecoming 2019 mums to the event, which had a fun gametime feel.

"Through MUMENTOUS, I journeyed beyond the sheer size of mums and garters and focused on the people who create, give and wear (or don't wear) them," Schultz said. "What I discovered is that while there's nothing like a Texas mum, the drivers of the tradition are completely universal. There's the human desire to both fit in and stand out; the cultural and economic factors that influence the way we celebrate special occasions; and the variable that never varies: women and their role as defenders of this and all of society's traditions."









# SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

It was an electrifying season for the varsity volleyball team and many other student-athletes. This spotlight on just a few of our Owls includes moments captured by student photographers.





# SPORTS SPOTLIGHT





# SPORTS SPOTLIGHT





# SPORTS SPOTLIGHT





# OAKRIDGE SIBLINGS SET TO MAKE FIELD HOCKEY HISTORY AT SMITH COLLEGE

Many siblings have had the opportunity to grow up together on the campus of The Oakridge School. For sisters Channy '18 and Senior Coco Cornell, that is true - both are members of the school's Alpha and Omega society, meaning they have been Owls since at least their first grade year. But these two sisters share an even deeper bond forged on the fields of the Oakridge Field Hockey program. Channy graduated from Oakridge and secured a spot on the Smith College field hockey team in 2018. Now, Coco is set to join her big sister as a Pioneer after she graduates this spring. The two will become the first Oakridge siblings to play a sport together at the collegiate level.

Channy was the first to pick up a stick, playing for Coach Mara Townsley in middle school. There, she quickly fell in love with the position of goalie, working over the next several years to become an elite prospect and earn the opportunity to keep playing at the next level. Smith College is a private women's liberal arts college in North Hampton, Massachusetts. She has started for the Pioneers



the last two seasons in goal, winning a NEWMAC conference championship as a freshman. The adjustment was challenging, according to Channy, "the intensity definitely ramps up at the collegiate level, where everyone is so knowledgeable and committed to the game and improving their skills." But the challenge didn't dissuade Coco from following in her sister's footsteps; it only inspired her to work harder in her quest to join her.

"I'm very excited to play at Smith. Though I know from talking to Channy how intense field hockey is at the next level, getting to this point is the culmination of a lot of hard work and I am ready for the challenge ahead," Coco said. Ultimately, both sisters share

the same feelings, in not only their love of the game, but also for the opportunity to play together once again. "I'm so excited to play with Coco again," Channy said. "It's so interesting because we both learned how to play field hockey at the same time so we have the same 'base layer' of the game." For the younger Cornell, being back on the field will not just be a great experience as siblings, but for the extra level of communication the two share on the field. "Working with her is what I miss most. She's great at telling me what to do on the field - she isn't afraid to tell me what I'm doing wrong, what I'm doing really well, or anything that I might need to work on." Coco said.

*Karli Karanges  
Class of 2020*



**OAKRIDGE  
GOLF CLASSIC**



## **Save The Date Oakridge Golf Classic**

**Monday, May 4, 2020  
Walnut Creek Country Club**



The Oakridge Golf Classic supports The Owl Club, whose mission is promoting school spirit, character development, and the physical well-being of our students through financial and other forms of support for physical education and athletic programs in every division.

**All proceeds benefit the Oakridge Physical Education  
and Athletic programs.**

**For more information about sponsoring the 2020  
Golf Tournament, please contact  
Ronda Lane at 817.925.6094**



Ronda and Richard Lane  
2020 Oakridge Golf Classic Co-Chairs



Dennis Brown  
President, The Owl Club



# OAKRIDGE RECEIVES NEARLY \$200,000 DURING NORTH TEXAS GIVING DAY

Kind-hearted families and friends across North Texas opened their wallets and donated \$198,088 to The Oakridge School for this year's North Texas Giving Day. The online event is the largest 18-hour giving extravaganza designed to benefit local nonprofits in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. North Texas Giving Day also served as the official campaign kickoff to Oakridge's 2019-2020 Annual Fund. This year's theme is "All in for Oakridge."

"We are thankful for the generosity of every single person who gave in support of Oakridge," said Head of School Jon Kellam. "No matter the size of the contribution, these gifts have a tangible impact in the lives of our students, faculty, and staff. Such philanthropic commitment confirms that we are all in for Oakridge."

Director of Development Lauren Matocha expressed her appreciation for Oakridge's supporters and acknowledged the school's 40-plus year tradition of giving. "North Texas Giving Day aligns with our school's mission and helps us to provide an incomparable academic experience for our students in the Early Childhood Center, Lower, Middle, and Upper School. Because of our donors, we will be able to strengthen current initiatives and consider or create new ones."

Visit the Annual Fund, Super Supper and Auction, and Owl Club Golf Classic links of our school website, [theoakridgeschool.org](http://theoakridgeschool.org), to learn more about how to make a gift and how the contributions are used. Supporters may also email Mrs. Matocha at [lmatocha@theoakridgeschool.org](mailto:lmatocha@theoakridgeschool.org).

North Texas Giving Day is coordinated by



the Communities Foundation of Texas. The main donation day was Sept. 19, 2019, but the annual event is actually 11 days of raising awareness for donations for nearly 3,000 nonprofit organizations across North Texas. Final numbers posted on the North Texas Giving Day website show there were 169,464 donations totaling \$50,192,976 in 2019. Dallas Mavericks legend Dirk Nowitzki and his wife, Jessica, served as honorary chairs.

## GIVING TUESDAY

Oakridge supporters also showed their commitment to our school's Annual Fund on Tuesday, December 3. Thanks to many generous donors, we raised nearly \$10,000 on Giving Tuesday.

# A NIGHT IN AFRICA

*An Oakridge Safari*

## SUPER SUPPER AND AUCTION

Let the adventure begin...Join us on a journey in your sophisticated safari chic attire for A Night in Africa – An Oakridge Safari. A globally, glamorous expedition of dinner, dancing and auction with your friends.

### DATE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2020

### TIME

5:30PM – 11:00PM

### LOCATION

THE RESERVE AT THE FORT WORTH ZOO



### AUCTION CHAIR

RYAN BRENTLINGER WORTHINGTON '99





When Anita and I were approached about chairing Oakridge's 2019-2020 Annual Fund, we enthusiastically responded: "Yes!" Having three of our four children as Oakridge alums (Marin '96, James '01, Michael '18) and with our son Mason in his senior year, we can attest to the excellent education and opportunities that Oakridge provides. Each of our children was energized to learn and take advantage of their college prep education. Since the school's inception, Oakridge continues its quest to provide exceptional experiences in academics, the arts, and athletics in a challenging and nurturing environment.

What is the Annual Fund? The Annual Fund is Oakridge's top philanthropic priority and it supports the daily operating budget. It is essential to our school and we could not operate without it. All independent schools are faced with the same need: to bridge the gap between tuition dollars and the actual cost of a private education. The Oakridge Board of Regents deliberates thoughtfully on setting tuition, considers what is affordable while staying competitive and offers the best value. The Annual Fund generates the funds that make up the difference. Tuition, Annual Fund, and the Super Supper & Auction make up the revenue stream for

our school. However, unlike other fundraisers, 100 percent of your tax-deductible gift to the Annual Fund goes directly back to the school.

Who benefits from Annual Fund? Your children benefit directly from your gifts. The Oakridge School is able to recruit, train and retain talented faculty and staff, as well as, explore new ways to educate our students, creatively and forwardly, in the classroom, on the field, and on the stage. The students are provided cutting-edge technology and new equipment in a top-notch, safe environment and facility.

What does Annual Fund pay for? The Oakridge School invests its greatest dollars in the people who make up our talented, dedicated and caring faculty and staff who touch your children's lives every day. The Annual Fund pays for all the visible and invisible, tangible and intangible things that make our school unique.

Why should you participate? When you participate, you are automatically part of something big and it feels good. Our school's success depends on EVERYONE'S participation and EVERY GIFT MATTERS, no matter the size. Diversity is a big part of what makes Oakridge stand out above the rest, and the diversity of means is no

exception. Your gift, large or small, makes a difference.

How and when do I make a gift? NOW or LATER! It is easier than ever for you to participate.

You can:

- Write a check
- Send in cash
- Use a credit card online
- Transfer stock options
- Schedule a recurring monthly payment online
- Make a pledge online

Please remember that matching gift programs are available at many of your places of employment. Check with your human resources department to see how you can double your gift!

Our goal this year is twofold: to raise \$430,000 and to achieve 100% school-wide participation!

Now that you have all the facts, let's go "All In for Oakridge!" We invite you to join in The Oakridge School's 2019-20 Annual Fund campaign and thank you in advance for considering your gift thoughtfully.

Thank you, all,  
Anita and Michael Heiskell  
2019-2020 Annual Fund Chairs

# OAKRIDGE PARENTS' CLUB

The 2019-2020 school year is in full swing, and the Oakridge Parents' Club is All In! Our volunteers have been hard at work hosting several events already this year. We started the year with the Back to School Fair and Picnic, where families could gather together and gear up for the upcoming year. We also delivered pre-purchased school supplies for Lower School students so they would be waiting for them at the Meet the Teacher events during the picnic. On the first day of school we hosted our annual Cheers & Tears event for parents after they dropped off for the first day, some cheering and some tearing up just a bit. They enjoyed coffee and breakfast, and catching up with parents and friends they hadn't seen all summer. We also provided our Upper School students with cookies and milk from Tiff's Treats at lunch on the first day to welcome them back to school. As the school year has moved

along, so have we with several other divisional activities like dessert parties and healthy eating days, as well as staff lunches and uniform resales. We hosted our first big special event of the year with Owlfest on Oct. 23rd, which was a huge success. This event is always a crowd favorite for our smaller Owls. A special thank you to our National Junior Honor Society students, as well as several US students, who put in the hours to volunteer alongside our parents and make this event a success every year.

As with all OPC events we host throughout the year, we could not do it without our amazing parent volunteers. They are an invaluable part of our success as an organization. If you have not had a chance to volunteer, please consider signing up and getting involved. It is not only a great way to help your child's experience at school be a positive one, it is a wonderful



way to meet other parents and make new friends. We have several larger events coming up soon, two of my favorites - Holiday Treasures Gift Shop and the Scholastic Book Fair - will need lots of parent support. There are several smaller events happening in the near future as well; there is a volunteer opportunity sized to fit anyone!

Another way you can help the OPC is by simply joining. The money we collect through memberships each year is what allows us to provide our students, families, and staff with over 30 events and opportunities each year. We could not make these things happen if it weren't for our members. Every member is an important piece of the organization.

Sometimes I ask myself how I ended up in this role. How did I end up the president of OPC? When my family first moved to Oakridge, I still had a little one at home. My availability for volunteering my time was minimal, but I did what I could when my time would allow.



*OPC provided a wonderful appreciation luncheon for faculty and staff in November.*



I soon met some amazing people and through the next several years made some wonderful friends. Volunteering at Oakridge is something I really enjoy. I was a classroom teacher and technology support staff for 14 years before moving to Arlington. I got into teaching because I had several teachers in my lifetime that were instrumental in my well-being and growth as a person. I always wanted to be that kind of teacher and influencer in someone else's life.

Before I left the classroom, I promised that if given a chance to be on the parent side of this equation, I would do what I could to help support my kids' school, teachers, and fellow parents. So, as I've volunteered throughout the years at Oakridge with OPC, Annual Fund, Super Supper, and more, I've grown to love so many people and have had so many more love on my family in return. It is a win-win in my book!

*Shelley Hodges  
2019-2020 OPC President*



*The OPC Owlfest is a fall favorite for young students.*

# REAL-WORLD LEARNING

Oakridge students stepped out of the classroom and into new environments for a different type of lesson: learning through experiencing. A class trip for freshman students led to some serious team building at The Outdoor School at Camp Champions in Marble Falls. The eighth grade class toured civil rights sites in Little Rock, Arkansas and Memphis, Tennessee. Seventh graders learned about our state history while in San Antonio and Austin. Some first grade students ventured a little closer to home, visiting Mainstay Farm.





# REAL-WORLD LEARNING







*Taylor Miller '05*

A large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Wisconsin seal is visible in the bottom left corner of the image. The seal features a five-pointed star in the upper left, a shield with various symbols in the center, and the text "UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN" and "THE DILIGENT PURSUIT OF WISDOM" around the perimeter.

# ALUMNI



# ALUMNI LEGACY BREAKFAST

Oakridge legacy families came together August 30 for the school's first Alumni Legacy Breakfast. Who is a legacy Owl? A current or graduate Oakridge student whose parent(s) graduated from The Oakridge School. Alumnus and legacy parent, Chef Kyle Slater '95 of Wooden Spoon, catered the event where 48 of the 52 legacy students enrolled in the 2019-2020 school year gathered for breakfast in the Library on College T-Shirt Day.





# ALUMNI LEGACY BREAKFAST





# ALUMNI NEWS: WINTER 2019

## CLASS OF 1993

**Philip Farhat '93** and his family: wife, Marissa, and legacy owls Ford (6th), Jack (4th), and Duke (1st) enjoyed the Baylor University vs. Oklahoma University game and caught up with sophomore Baylor Football Tight End/Oakridge alum, **Christoph Henle '18**, after the game.



says Taylor. She and her husband Blaine live in Arlington, TX, with legacy owls Emma (10th) and Wyatt (4th) attending The Oakridge School. Follow her on Instagram @ontherocksbyfs and visit her website [ontherocksbyfs.com](http://ontherocksbyfs.com).



## CLASS OF 1996

**Stephanie Murray '96** has been a global meeting & event planner for the past 19 years. She left Dallas for the bright lights of New York City back in 2011, when she was running the hospitality division of a sports marketing agency to help build the NY business and event team. She then took an opportunity to work with J.P. Morgan's Private Bank at the JPMC Headquarters in Manhattan, where she has been the last five years and was recently promoted to become the Head of Western Region Events. This summer, she relocated to work out of the firm's Los Angeles office and is now residing in Santa Monica, CA.

## CLASS OF 1995

**Taylor Gray '95** is loving life on the rocks with extra salt and lime! She is the founder of On the Rocks by SFS - a stylish accessory and gift line featuring Brazilian geodes and cowhides. "Stylish entertaining and accessories are my passion, and I love that they are all made locally."





## CLASS OF 2001

**Adam Meltzer '01** and Frances Meltzer welcomed their third child, Teddy, on September 23, 2019. The Meltzer family resides in Austin, Texas.



## CLASS OF 2003

**Eric Balch '03** got engaged to Jennifer Smith September 13, 2019.

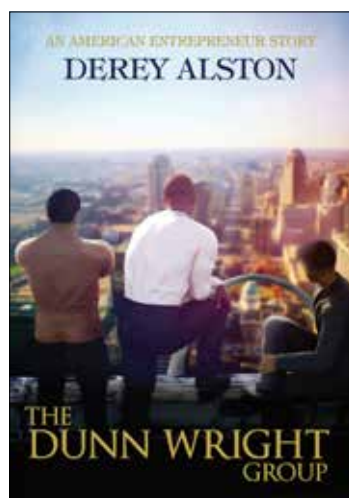


**Kenitha Ellis '03** earned her master's degree in Strategic Public Relations from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and recently received a Digital Marketing certificate from Southern Methodist University.



## CLASS OF 2004

**Derey Alston '04** published his first fiction novel, *The Dunn Wright Group: An American Entrepreneur Story*. "I wrote this book first and foremost to inspire and encourage all entrepreneurs to chase their dreams and never give up," Alston says. He received his degree in business administration from Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia. Derey was a registered investment advisor at Edward Jones Investments and has over nine years of experience working in the financial services industry. Derey was a registered investment advisor at Edward Jones Investments. He has also worked with Fortune 100 companies, including the Teacher's Insurance & Annuity Association, as a wealth management consultant working directly with high net worth individuals. Derey's book can be found on Amazon.





# ALUMNI NEWS

**William Van Wagner '04** is the owner of South of the Line, a food truck that is unlike anything else in town: imagine if Nashville Hot Chicken and Buffalo Wings got married in Fort Worth, Texas. This chicken is that marriage with heavy influences of all three places, they have been able to create a fried chicken that is unlike anything you've ever had. Follow South of the Line on Facebook @SOTLChicken and Instagram @southofthelinechicken for more information on their next fry.



## CLASS OF 2005

**Kathy Nguyen '05** married Hien Vo on November 10, 2018, celebrating one year of marriage. The couple loves to travel and recently vacationed to Santorini, Greece, and Rome, Italy.



**Kaylee Perry '05** got engaged to Christopher Land on April 20, 2019.



**Taylor Miller '05** shares his hike adventure at Dirty Harry's Balcony Trail in North Bend, Washington, which overlooks Mount Kent, McClellan Butte, and Mount Washington. Taylor lives in Mercer Island, Washington. Follow Taylor on Instagram @that\_miller\_guy9000 to view breathtaking images of his hiking adventures.





## CLASS OF 2006

**Abbey Soto Cheek '06** and her husband, Cody, welcomed Spencer Vaughn Soto-Cheek on October 8, 2019. He weighed 10 pounds, 14 ounces, and joins big sister, Coco, and big brother Anderson who are legacy owls in preschool and third grade this year at Oakridge.



**Derek Ray '06** and **Allison Brown Ray '06** welcomed their second child, Thomas Scott, on March 29, 2019. Thomas joins a proud big sister Caroline. The family lives in Charlottesville, VA, where Derek is attending the University of Virginia getting his Ph.D. in Foreign Affairs.



## Class of 2007

**Millie Zandi '07** is an artist living in Los Angeles, California. Search for @artofmilliezandi on Facebook to follow her work.



## CLASS OF 2008

**Brittney Gooden '08** visited Chefchaouen, Morocco, and Madrid, Spain, to celebrate her 30th birthday. Brittney went specifically to take pictures in Chefchaueon (nicknamed the “Blue Pearl of Morocco”). Her favorite part of the trip was taking pics in the blue city (pictured), riding camels, and eating dinner at night in the Agafay Desert in Marrakech, as well as riding a mule up the Atlas Mountains. “It was definitely a trip to remember, and I recommend everyone visit,” she said.





# ALUMNI NEWS

**Mariam Shafi '08** earned her certification to be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker - Board-Approved Supervisor (LCSW-S) from the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners. Mariam also celebrates her engagement to Sameer Jaffri. The couple will wed in December 2019.



## CLASS OF 2010

**Christopher Grubb '10** graduated with a medical degree from the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons (VP&S). Christopher also



married Neda Bionghi, a classmate from Columbia VP&S '19. Alumni **Danny Martinez '10**, **Chris McCartan '10**, and **Jeremy Keith Gooden '10** were groomsmen. Both Christopher and Neda will be continuing their medical training in the Internal Medicine residency program at New York-Presbyterian / Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

## CLASS OF 2011

**Grace Cuda '11** is now an attorney with the Department of Energy in Washington, D.C., and lives in Arlington, Virginia.

## CLASS OF 2012

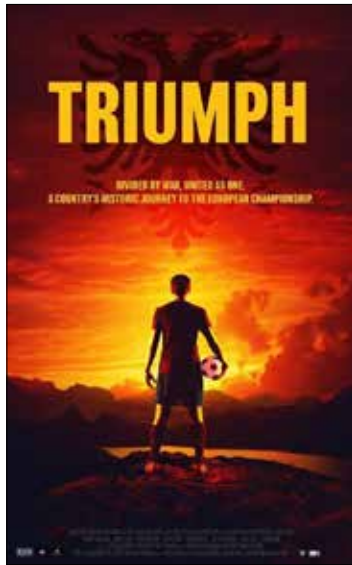
**Andrew Read '12** and **Samantha Caroline Read '13** started dating at Oakridge in 2009 and married on July 20, 2019, at Trinity United Methodist Church. Their wedding party included **Ashley Brentlinger Read '05**, **David Read '06**, **Christine Read Da Silva '03**, **Paulo Da Silva '05**, and legacy owls Avery Kate Read (Kindergarten), Addison Da Silva (Pre-K), and Aiden Da Silva (Preschool).



# ALUMNI NEWS

## CLASS OF 2013

**Lejla Korca '13** started her own production company, Two Heads Production. Her first film to produce is titled "Triumph". "Triumph" is a film chronicling the Albanian national team and their journey to their first qualification to a major tournament. "Triumph" won the audience award at the Dokufest film festival. Lejla recently celebrated the theatre premiere in Tirana, Albania, with the Albanian national soccer team. You can follow the film and watch the trailer on their Facebook and Instagram page @triumphthemovie.



## CLASS OF 2014

**Thomas Cuda '14** earned his Masters' Degree in Accounting from the University of Dallas and currently works for Ernst & Young in Dallas, Texas.



**Jon Vecchio '14** graduated in May 2018 from Austin College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. On June of 2019, he was accepted to the J.D. program at St. Mary's University School of Law and began his first semester of law school on August 10, 2019.





# ALUMNI NEWS

## CLASS OF 2016

### Angelique Southern '16

is a senior International Studies and Chinese major at Spelman College. She is a semifinalist for the prestigious Luce Scholars Program. The program selects graduates from 75 colleges and universities or young professionals under age 30.

The program intends to provide an immersion experience in Asia for an outstanding group of young Americans who would not otherwise have the opportunity to come to know Asia intimately. The finalist announcement will take place in the 1st quarter of 2020. Recently elected Montgomery, Alabama Mayor Steven Reed, visited the Atlanta, GA office where Angelique currently interns and captured this photo with her.



### Abigail Hurd '17

recently performed in her first opera, "Charon." She has been awarded a scholarship to study abroad in Italy next summer and will be returning to Italy for a music competition with her vocal coach, Twyla Robinson. Abby was recently elected Independent Greek Council VP

and newly elected president of Mu Phi Epsilon. We are proud of her continued academic successes in the John V. Roach Honors College.



**Jacob Pakele '17** was accepted to the ACU study abroad program at Oxford University in the spring of 2019. He had the opportunity to study and experience the British and European contributions to the world and deepen his faith through a community in service-learning opportunities. He spent his weekends traveling throughout Europe, appreciating the beauty of different cultures.



## CLASS OF 2017

In addition to studying Astronautical Engineering at the University of Southern California, **Noah Gladden '17** is singing and arranging music for UnderScore a cappella. Check out the new EP "Enter" on Spotify or Apple Music.



# ALUMNI NEWS

## CLASS OF 2018

**Avery Pennywell '18** is a sophomore men's tennis player at Southern Methodist University (SMU), where the team was recently honored with the Long Ellis Intercollegiate Award by the Southern California USTA. The award is given to a program that exhibits excellent sportsmanship. Avery is studying finance with a concentration in pre-medicine and plans to become an orthopedic surgeon.



## CLASS OF 2019

**Austin Foster '19** was recently named "Mr. Texan" by the Optimist Club of Texas. Austin was among twelve finalists selected. Austin is a freshman studying business and political science at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He is Pledge Class President of Delta Sigma Pi, Commons Council Homecoming Vice-Chair, and actively involved in Wesley House ministry and intramural soccer. Austin's professional goal is to become a business attorney and has already received admittance to the Dedman School of Law.



## Alumni News Submissions

Do you have news you'd like to share with fellow alumni? Are there any changes in your life such as new job, promotion, new degree, marriage, engagement, children, or any other announcement?

Please send us your news along with a photo to  
[alumnirelations@theoakridgeschool.org](mailto:alumnirelations@theoakridgeschool.org)  
or use our online form at  
[www.theoakridgeschool.org/alumnioutlook](http://www.theoakridgeschool.org/alumnioutlook)



# ALUMNI SOCIAL: HOMECOMING 2019



More than 100 alumni returned to campus on Friday, September 27, to celebrate Homecoming 2019. Alumni reconnected with their classmates, enjoyed a spread from On the Border Mexican Grill & Cantina, reminisced about their time at Oakridge, and created new memories with friends and former teachers at the alumni social.

To guarantee you don't miss any alumni fun, please make sure we have your updated contact information. Call the Alumni Relations Office at 817-563-9781, send an email to [alumnirelations@theoakridgeschool.org](mailto:alumnirelations@theoakridgeschool.org), or visit online at [www.theoakridgeschool.org/alumniupdate](http://www.theoakridgeschool.org/alumniupdate).





# ONCE AN OWL, ALWAYS AN OWL





# ALUMNI KICKBALL

Old school sports are making a comeback, at least with our alumni! Thank you to all Oakridge alumni and family who came out to play in the first alumni kickball events in summer 2019.

Oakridge's softball field was an excellent location for alumni to run the bases. Head of School Jon Kellam grilled outstanding hot dogs and hamburgers. There was also music and laughter during this fun-filled alumni event like no other. Be on the lookout for next year's kickball schedule.

Next up is winter dodgeball on December 21. There will be giant Connect 4, Cornhole, and Jenga to play, as well. The alumni association will provide refreshments. Come ready to play or cheer on your fellow alumni Owls!









# RAISING THE BARRE

Earlier in this issue, we provided a glimpse at Oakridge's new strategic plan, which includes a wellness pillar. While we aim to empower our current students and faculty to lead healthy, balanced lives, we also encourage and applaud our alumni for their focus on wellness.



**Hillary Blair Cornell '03** is among our Oakridge graduates putting her best foot forward when it comes to wellness. Her commitment to her health intensified after she became a mom. She recently detailed her journey for *Outlook*.

I married my high school sweetheart, **L.D. Cornell '04**, almost 12 years ago. We met at Oakridge when he started 6th grade in 1997. We live in Aledo with our three children, Walker 11, Vivianne 5, and Barrow, who is six-months-old. I started taking Pure Barre classes to get back in shape after Vivianne was born and quickly became hooked. I had the opportunity to buy the studio in 2017 and haven't looked back.



Highly-trained instructors lead Pure Barre classes. Pure Barre features four group class formats that deliver an effective total body workout focused on low-impact, high-intensity movements that lift and tone muscles and improve strength, agility, and flexibility for everybody. With Pure Barre, you'll strengthen, lengthen,

and tone your muscles for a stronger, leaner physique.

At Pure Barre, our mission is to be a destination for people of all shapes, sizes, and ages to empower their bodies and minds through a supportive, safe community rooted in confidence building, transformative barre exercise.

Follow Pure Barre Fort Worth on  
Facebook @PureBarreFortWorth  
3400 West 7th Street, Fort Worth, TX  
817-999-9127



# BALANCED NOT BUSY



**Ciji Tatum Townsend '02** is the chief motivator at Balanced Not Busy, a lifestyle brand for people who want to thrive and recharge. Townsend says finding your balance is the alignment of what you think, speak, and do. It's creating harmony in all areas of your life and showing up as the best version of yourself during each of life's seasons.

## Who is Balanced Not Busy for?

Balanced Not Busy is for go-getters who also want to rest. It's for people who want to shift from hurry to harmony, rigor to rest, and "crazy busy" to "confident calm." Townsend specializes in public speaking and workshops that focus on issues such as time management, increasing productivity, and prioritizing wellness.

Follow Balanced Not Busy on Facebook and Instagram @balancednotbusy or visit [www.balancednotbusy.com](http://www.balancednotbusy.com).





# FARM TO TABLE

**Maggie Brentlinger Loudermilk '05** started Maggie's Farm with her husband, Taylor, and two-year-old daughter, Eleanor Rose, as her family's passion for creating a sustainable agrosystem in their backyard. They have since expanded their Mansfield operation to a six-acre plot to provide healthy, high-quality, organic food to the local community.

"We grow vegetables and herbs. We have chickens, which provide us with fresh eggs and manure," said Maggie. "We have a potato box and a peach tree too!" Their salad mix features nutty sunflower shoots, flavorful microgreens mix, and spicy arugula that are washed and ready to eat. Maggie will be at Arlington Foodies Farmer Market at New Main Brewery Co. from 6:30-10 p.m. on December 14, 2019. She hopes to see new and familiar Oakridge Owls.

Follow Maggie's Farm on  
Facebook @Maggiesfarm or visit online  
at [www.maggiesfarmtx.com](http://www.maggiesfarmtx.com).





# UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS

2019 Alumni Games  
**CO-ED SOCCER**  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21  
10:30 am  
Lunch provided



CONATSER STADIUM  
5900 West Pioneer Pkwy  
Arlington, TX 76013

THE OAKRIDGE SCHOOL  
Alumni Association

2019 Alumni Games  
**DODGEBALL**  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21  
12:00 pm  
Lunch provided



CONATSER STADIUM  
5900 West Pioneer Pkwy  
Arlington, TX 76013

THE OAKRIDGE SCHOOL  
Alumni Association

*Save the Date*  
*April 4 and 5*

**The Oakridge School is heading to New York City**

NYC Owls, Head of School Jon Kellam wants you to join us for an alumni event.

Stay connected for details. We are Oakridge!



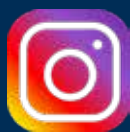


# ONCE AN OWL, ALWAYS AN OWL.

*Stay connected through all of life's best moments.*



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# OUR MISSION

To inspire students to seek their full potential in academics, the arts, and athletics in a challenging and nurturing environment that cultivates social responsibility, mutual respect, and personal integrity.

# OUR VISION

To attain national recognition as a college preparatory school that provides educational excellence grounded in responsible character development and ethical leadership.

# PHILOSOPHY

We believe the role of The Oakridge School is to provide a challenging educational program that emphasizes the total development of each child, encompassing intellectual and social skills as well as cultural, emotional, and physical development, thus preparing students for higher education and life.

We believe an environment that employs a variety of teaching techniques and learning activities best enables each student to succeed as an individual and as a member of a group.

We believe an orderly environment, stressing personal and academic self-discipline, provides an atmosphere most conducive to success.

We believe in academic excellence and in the pursuit of knowledge as a lifelong experience.

We believe in high moral and ethical standards, honor, and mutual respect.

We believe The Oakridge School functions most effectively with the involvement of students, parents, faculty, staff, and members of the community.

We believe the graduates of The Oakridge School should be men and women of good character who have developed a healthy respect for self, an awareness of the privileges and obligations of citizenship, and a keen sense of empathy for and responsibility to fellow human beings.



## *Board of Regents 2019-2020*

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**Chairman of the Board**

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Mr. Andy Schoening

Mr. Don Starnes, Lifetime Member

Mr. Steve Wall

Mr. Ron Widup

Mr. Matt Worthington

**Associate Regent**

Mrs. Lorraine LaRovere

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