



*A monthly update on the
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
work happening at NGFS*

February 2024

GUILFORD CAMPUS

Lower School

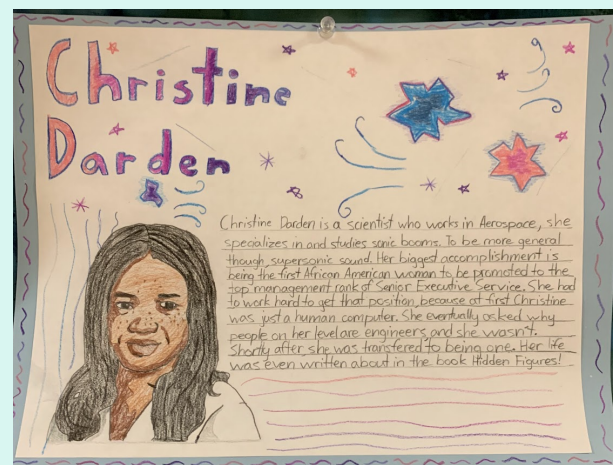
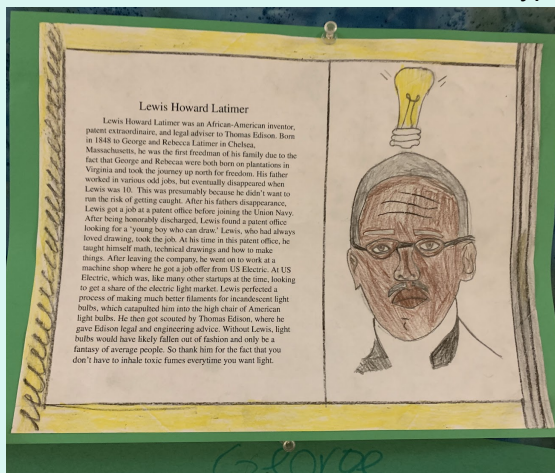
- A Child's Garden Iris class (Pre-K) enjoyed doing yoga with a Chinese New Year calendar animal theme. They learned which animals and qualities are associated with their birth year.
- A Child's Garden Sunflower class (Pre-K and TK) built upon their studies of holidays by celebrating Black History Month. They learned about various African American inventors and the artist Alma Thomas. The children recreated her unique short brush strokes to make nature-inspired paintings at the easel with paint sticks and glued skin-toned paper squares to make human rainbows. In another activity, Sunflowers compared a brown egg and a white egg and found only one difference: the color of the shell. They then predicted if the inside would be different. The students loved having the opportunity to crack their own eggs to find out if their hypothesis was correct. The Sunflower teachers shared, "It was heart-warming to hear the children make the connection between eggshells and people's skin color without any prompting. We were once again reminded that we can always find at least one thing in common to connect with another even if we appear different at first glance."
- Sunrise (Kindergarten) celebrated Chinese New Year by wearing the color red (or other bright colors), reading stories about the holiday, and watching dragon dances. In unit study and classroom meeting for worship, they explored what it means to have integrity. They read the book "Cloud Country", talked about being their true authentic selves, and painted clouds and admired how different each was. They also read the story "Ruthie and the (not so) Teeny Tiny Lie" and talked about what happens when you lie and how that makes you and others feel. Related, they read the story "The 'I' in Integrity", and reflected on times when they had or had not shown integrity. Sunrise also celebrated Lunar New Year and shared a story called "Goldy Luck and the Three Pandas", a tale of how Goldy's family in China celebrates the New Year. The story also reaffirmed their learning about what it means to show integrity, even if we make a mistake (or a few). As part of this celebration, they sampled cara cara oranges with their snack to bring wealth and good luck to the new year.
- In honor of Black History Month, Sunrise learned about many influential Black Americans, starting with Nichelle Nichols, Mae Jemison, Maya Angelou, and Josephine Baker. The students were especially inspired by Mae and how she followed her dreams to NASA, becoming the first African American woman to go to space! They learned about Josephine Baker, and tried to do the "Charleston" as well as "bees knees" dances. They learned about Raye Montague, a famous engineer and mathematician and about Dr. Dre and listened to him sing at the Superbowl. Sunrisers talked about what it means to be an activist and stand up for others. They listened to Amanda Gorman wow the world with her incredible "The Hills We Climb" inauguration speech and read her book "Change Sings". They learned about actor and musician Shameik Moore, who plays the voice of Miles Morales in the Spider-Man: Spider-Verse movies, and about activist Nina Simone and how she used her piano and powerful voice to stand up for African Americans. They loved hearing about the inspiring journey of John Boyega and how his deep love of "Star Wars" put him in a position to use his acting skills to become a major character in the Star Wars universe. They also watched him lead and speak out against injustice during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, comparing his activism to that of Dr. Martin Luther King and showing how activism is important and relevant to our world today.

- In Rainbow (grades 1-2), first graders learned about the Incan civilization and how they were similar and different to the Aztecs and Mayans in their Knowledge unit. Second graders studied westward expansion and discussed the hardships and tragedies that Native Americans endured due to westward expansion.
- Horizon (grades 3-4) “traveled the world” by welcoming guest speakers who shared about Uganda, the Netherlands, Canada, Vietnam, England, Nepal, Peru, Cuba, and France.
- Galaxy (grades 5-6) started their Integrated Studies unit on Mexico. They began by learning about the great ancient civilizations in Mexico.

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Middle and Upper School

- Middle School (grades 7-8) and Upper School (grades 9-12) gathered for the campus Quaker Meeting on Wednesday, February 28. It was an educational and inspirational meeting featuring the drumline and dance team from Swann Middle School. Counselor Jenn Milton introduced the guests and shared about the connection with music and dance in many cultures. She then introduced the Swann band director (and her husband!), Rodney Milton who shared about types of drumlines and the sections and about the tradition of this type of music and dance at HBCUs. Then, the drumline and dance team hit the floor for an electrifying and joyful performance!
- This week in science, middle schoolers researched and created a one-pager on an African American scientist of their choice for Black History Month. Students learned about important figures like Katherine Johnson, Gladys West, and Neil DeGrasse Tyson. These one-pagers will be displayed in the hallway outside of Madison’s classroom all month to recognize these scientists whose achievements are typically overlooked.



- The Middle School Quaker Life Committee has done an outstanding job leading Middle School through Quaker Meeting this year and some social curriculum time. They sent a survey to Middle School students asking for opinions on which of the class’s queries they needed to work on. Based on those results, the committee led a Quaker Meeting on the topic “Speaking Your Truth with Respect”. Seventh grader Max shared an engaging video that they

invite you to watch: [How You Treat People is Who You Are](#). During social curriculum time, students took pride in taking care of their common spaces. Working in teams, they cleaned, organized, and rearranged furniture in the Middle School hallway and classrooms. Whenever a task was completed, students were actively seeking other ways to help. Afterward, we reflected on the feelings of ownership, pride, teamwork, and service we felt while working together for the afternoon.

- During the month of February, Upper School students learned about Black mathematicians in Algebra and scientists in Biology and Chemistry.
- Upper School History of Music and Mythology class studied Europe during the Romantic period. Next up, they will move to the USA and learn about blues and jazz and how the white community appropriated the music of enslaved people.
- English 12 students are reading "Homegoing" by Yaa Gyasi. They watched excerpts about West African ingredients and words in American cuisine through the documentary "High on the Hog" (based on Dr. Jessica Harris' research and book). They are learning about Greensboro's own Rhiannon Giddens's art and study of the West African roots of the banjo. Rhiannon plays the banjo on a new Beyonce song. Their current class projects all have the unifying theme of valorizing the survival of cultural legacy and how those connections are sometimes lost and found through different historical eras.
- Discussing the allegory in "Animal Farm," 9th grade has opened up discussions about power, equity, and inclusion in communities. Although this book was written in 1945, students made connections to their study of world history and the fight for human rights in American history.
- Throughout the month of February Nicole Cardoza curates a listserv that daily introduces important people in black history that have perhaps been overlooked. Using this, English 10/11 students have read about artists, activists, magicians, actors, fashion designers, and much more. For their last romanticism assignment, every student wrote an ode to one person from the list of those chosen for this year's 28 Days of Black History. What better way to celebrate than to look as close at someone as an ode requires? While not required, students were encouraged to write a romantic meditative ode, which includes a meditation on the subject, a slip into a state of euphoria informed by the meditation, and a return to reality. It is important to envision the many ways that the return to reality that ends a romantic meditative ode could open up a space to reflect on the ongoing need for equality, equity, justice, and diversity in the systems that define our society and culture.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- On Professional Development Day, Lower School staff viewed the film “The Right to Read”. The video shares the stories of an NAACP activist, a teacher, and two American families who fight to provide our youngest generation with the most foundational indicator of life-long success: the ability to read.
- Also, on Professional Development Day, Middle and Upper School staff engaged in a discussion on Restorative Practices with a focus on learning and taking something back into their respective classrooms to continue providing the best experiences for our students. This time was facilitated by Emily Janke, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and the founding director of the Institute for Community and Economic Engagement at UNC Greensboro, and Michael Hemphill, Ph.D., associate professor at UNC Greensboro in the Department of Kinesiology and the founder and director of the Restorative Youth Sports lab at UNCG.
- Middle and Upper School teachers Barry Bell, Carter Lawe, Chris Shipman, Laura Mae Allen, and Serena Witherspoon furthered their training in a tech-free “Introduction to Restorative Practices for Educators” workshop at Carolina Friends School. Participants were introduced to key restorative practices, including theory, essential frameworks, practice with proactively building positive relationships, and proactive circle practices.
- Middle and Upper School teachers Catherine Clawson, Chris Shipman, and Madison Burkhart, and US Academic Dean and College Counselor Allie Blosser attended the NCAIS “Grading for Equity” Conference with the author Joe Feldman. He wrote “Grading for Equity”, which was a summer reading book for NGFS staff. Conference attendees explored the impact of traditional grading practices on effective teaching and the importance of addressing opportunity gaps and alleviating classroom stress.
- Upper School teacher Marc Alley attended a First Day forum at New Garden Friends Meeting on white privilege and hidden biases.
- Maura Way, Upper School English teacher, rewatched “High on the Hog” on Netflix from a teacher’s perspective to find connections to specific foods and traditions from the Ashanti kingdom. She also researched Ghana’s “Year of the Return,” and the way African Americans have been welcomed as brothers, and the role of Afrofuturism in movies and literature in a West African renaissance in Ghana, especially.

Stay Tuned for What’s to Come

Galaxy (grades 5-6) will continue their Integrated Studies unit on Mexico.

Celebrating Women’s History Month in March

Maura Way is looking forward to arranging a time for the senior class to eat at a local West African restaurant.