



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

January 2024

MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Whole School

On Wednesday, Jan. 10, we gathered as a whole school at New Garden Friends Meeting to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Seniors Jordan, Noah D, Chance, and AJ read the book "Martin's Big Words" while several Horizon students held up the words love, together, peace, freedom, and I have a dream for us. After the silence, Jenn Milton (US Counselor) and Serena Witherspoon (Asst. Athletics Director) led a call and response song, "This Morning When I Rose". They also sang a duet, "I Shall Wear A Crown", and Jenn sang one of Dr. King's favorite Mahalia Jackson songs. We concluded with two sing-alongs led by Music teacher Jeannie Sykes and Middle School students Max, Milo, and Jeffery: "Oh, Martin Luther King" and "What Can One Little Person Do". Click [here](#) to sing along with us!

GUILFORD CAMPUS

Lower School

- A Child's Garden Crocus class (preschool) read the story "No Two Alike" by Keith Baker and discussed how animals and humans are all unique in their own ways
- A Child's Garden Sunflower class (pre-K and TK) had a weeklong study on Martin Luther King and learned new vocabulary words, including *activist*, *segregation*, *boycott*, *justice*, *march*, *speech*, and *respect*. They watched videos, read stories, and made art projects centering around the idea of equality. They also talked about the idea that things can be different, not better or worse, just different, and that's ok. Because they model this idea all year long, students feel comfortable trying new things and being unique. For example, their "Counter" counts the children in attendance each day; on one student's counter day, she proudly announced to the class that she was going to count in Arabic.
- Sunrise (Kindergarten) learned about leaders of peace and activism. They read about Mahatma Gandhi with the "Little People, Big Dreams" story by Isabel Vegara. They shared "The Youngest Marcher" by Cynthia Levinson, which is about Audrey Faye Hendricks and her bravery in protesting segregation by spending a week in jail. They read "My Brother Martin" by Christine King Farris, who tells the story of her brother "ML" and the upbringing they had that helped to shape the leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr grew up to be. In discussing MLK, they shared their dreams for the world. The students especially loved singing "I Just Want to Sing Your Name," celebrating MLK, as well as "What Can One Little Person Do?" that celebrates other powerful black leaders that paved the way to tear down segregation and work towards freedom and equality for black Americans.

- Sunrise recently started a new unit for unit study called “Who Am I?”. They began by talking about what is special about each person and what they like about themselves. They discussed their pronouns by reading the book “What are your words?” by Katherine Locke. As they learn about themselves and each other, they are also learning about how to show empathy for others, aided by book reading including “The Bad Seed” by Jory John and Pete Oswald, “I Am Me” by Susan Verde, and “We Are Here” by Tami Charles.
- In Rainbow reading class, first grade finished a mini unit on religion. They learned about Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, including special holidays, prominent leaders, holy books, and places of worship. They also studied Early American Civilizations, including Aztec and Mayan.
- Horizon (grades 3-4) students are researching countries for a report Unit Study as part of their Countries of the World unit. They are learning about the country’s geography and climate, important holidays and celebrations, and cities and tourist attractions. They are looking forward to welcoming guest speakers next month to learn about firsthand experiences living in countries around the world.
- In advance of the whole school meeting honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Galaxy (grades 5-6) they read a book about him to build a schema. Later they listened to an illustrated, interactive recording of the 'I Have a Dream' speech and discussed their reactions to the words and visuals.

PAGE-FREDERIKSEN CAMPUS

Middle and Upper School

- Middle School participated in a multi-day lesson regarding inclusivity of all persons regardless of appearance. They started by analyzing song lyrics about unrealistic body image expectations, moved to presenting information about how media messages portray certain items (or their attainment/use) as attractive, then concluded with the students analyzing three media items (songs, advertisements, etc) for messages of unrealistic expectations of "attractiveness." Students worked with small groups after their independent work and created posters to showcase some of these harmful messages.
- The Middle School DEIJ committee worked on new information to post on the DEIJ hallway board for display for Black History Month. They are also working on two other initiatives: games to play when eating inside during cold weather to encourage conversation between everyone in their room and, with teacher guidance, a discussion tied to the National Day of Racial Healing.
- The Middle School S Quaker Life Committee led Quaker Meeting the Wednesday after the observance of MLK, Jr Day by having students listen to an abridged version of his "I Have a Dream " speech. They then reflected on four queries presented to them about the speech.

- English 9 students are reading and discussing Angie Thomas' "The Hate U Give" and comparing the book to the film adaptation.
- English 10/11 students focused on social justice as a part of their romantic poetry unit by reading about child labor issues highlighted in William Blake's poetry as a result of the laissez faire politics present during the industrial revolution. Next, students research and present on global human rights concerns related to labor in the modern world.
- Students in Upper School Astronomy watched the movie "Hidden Figures" and discussed racism, sexism, and culture in the space race.
- The Upper School electives book club is reading the 2023 Coretta Scott King award winning book "Freewater" this quarter.
- On January 19, several Upper School students attended the NCAIS Diversity and Inclusion conference, which was held at neighboring Guilford College. Topics for the student sessions included student affinity groups and building belonging, financial literacy and the racial wealth gap, and African American literature.
- A group of Upper School students attended the Quaker Youth Life Conference (QYLC) in Philadelphia, January 25-27, accompanied by MS Math teacher Dan O'Donnell and US Art teacher Jeannine Borzello. Dan shared about an excursion the group enjoyed during their time there:



"Our New Garden group, along with Friends Select and Brooklyn Friends Schools, went on a hike to the Looking West Statue In Wissahickon Valley Park. We were fortunate to have Chief Adam Depaul of the Lenape Nation join us. He shared about the statue, what it (incorrectly) represents, and what steps are being taken to remedy the injustices experienced by the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania that are still unaddressed by the state to this day. More information on the statue [can be found here.](#)"

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- On January 19, several staff members attended the NCAIS Diversity and Inclusion conference, which was held at neighboring Guilford College. Attendees included Upper School staff Tanisha, Allie, and Jenn M and Lower School staff Carolyn, and Cara. Topics included student affinity groups, mindfulness, storytelling, and ideas to promote a culture of inclusion and belonging.
- Staff Affinity groups met in January, providing an opportunity for staff to discuss topics related to identity, belonging, and creating an inclusive staff culture.

- At a Lower School Campus Staff Meeting, teachers shared about recent Professional Development experiences. This included Christian Ritter sharing highlights from the NAIS People of Color Conference and Cara Kiser sharing highlights from the NCAIS Diversity and Inclusion Conference.



NGFS staff and Upper School students at the NCAIS Diversity and Inclusion conference.

Stay Tuned for What's to Come

We are looking forward to celebrating Black History Month during the month of February.

Lower School staff will be watching the video “The Right to Read” as part of their professional development next month. 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.

Horizon will continue with their Countries of the World unit. Over the next few weeks, we look forward to having some guest speakers come in and share about different countries that they have lived in or visited for an extended period.

Middle School Quaker Life and Community Committees are working to schedule a field trip to the Greensboro Civil Rights Museum in March.

English 12 is beginning the novel “Homegoing” by Yaa Gyasi in February.