



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

*November 2023*

# ***GUILFORD CAMPUS***

## **Lower School**

- ACG Iris (Pre-K) read “Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story” by Kevin Noble Maillard.
- Sunflower (Pre-K and TK) students celebrated Native American History Month with books and songs and learned Cherokee words for "I am grateful" and the seasons.
- Sunrise (Kindergarten) students welcomed a guest from the Upper School, an 11th grader who shared how his family celebrates Diwali. He brought food for the class to try and a craft he prepared so the students could make their own lantern. As a class, they read "Let's Celebrate Diwali" by Anjali Joshi as a way of introducing the magical holiday of Diwali. Sunrise teacher Lanae shared, “The children loved his presentation and especially the craft he planned! The food was absolutely incredible and the kids were so excited!



- In late November, Sunrise began their “Holidays of the World” unit. They began their travels by “visiting” Saudi Arabia, Palestine, and Italy.
- In Rainbow (grades 1-2), first grade wrapped up their unit called “Different Lands, Similar Stories” and read “Little Red Riding Hood”, which originated in Germany; “Hu Gu Po” from China; and “Tselane” from Botswana.
- In late November, Horizon (3rd and 4th grade) began their “Countries of the World” unit. They are looking forward to learning from their grandparents and grandfriends at GrandFriends Day on Dec. 7, when they will interview them about any experiences they have had around the world and any traditions they noticed that are different from ours.
- Galaxy (5th and 6th grade) students celebrated Native American Heritage Month by considering this year's theme of 'Celebrating Tribal Sovereignty and Identity' through some current events. The Galaxy Quaker Life group planned and led a meeting for worship on the theme of appreciating differences and read the book “Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You” by Sonia Sotomayor.

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### Middle and Upper School

- In Middle School English, students read short stories related to the World Religions Unit being taught in their History class. One example is Shirley Jackson's "[The Lottery](#)", which spurred interesting discussions about why some traditions endure, while others are abandoned with the acquisition of new information. Students also presented points during class discussion centered on the need to not be a bystander, that complicity in immoral acts is often coerced, as well as the notion that one cannot simply wait until it is "their turn" to be treated unjustly to protest injustice. English teacher Barry shared, "I am proud of the students for delving deeply into concepts that can be unsettling and for participating so fully and thoughtfully."
- Journalism class (made up of 8th-12 grade students) launched an online storytime series, *Beary Good Read Alouds* with the book "Thank You, Omu" written and illustrated by Oge Mora, a Nigerian children's book illustrator and author. The book features African American and Nigerian cultural traditions of sharing food and friendship, as well as messages of kindness, gratitude, and community. Check it out [HERE](#)!
- Prady P., an 11th-grade US student, shared how his family celebrates Diwali with Sunrise (kindergarten) students. He brought food to try and prepared a craft so the Sunrise students could make their own lantern. As a class, they read "Let's Celebrate Diwali" by Anjali Joshi as a way of introducing the magical holiday of Diwali.



- Upper school elective, Cultures and Cooking, studied the cultural, religious, and racial demographic makeup of Appalachia, which is one of the most diverse regions of North America. Despite most stereotypes, early settlers were not limited to white Europeans. Post 1800s, many classic "Appalachian" recipes align directly with what would be considered "soul food" in modern America. The cross-cultural connections between Native groups, European settlers, Melungeons, Russian, and African people led to many practices, dishes, and linguistic phrases we have today.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Staff affinity groups met again in November and focused on allyship and community building within each group. Reading included the article “A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice” by Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens.



Horizon teacher Christian Ritter and Middle and Upper School counselor Jenn Milton attended the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) People of Color Conference in Saint Louis. PoCC is the flagship of NAIS's commitment to equity and justice in teaching, learning, and sustainability for independent schools. The theme for this year's conference was “A Confluence of Truth, Knowledge, Joy, and Power”.

- Lauren Dean, Upper School Learning Specialist, has been reading about autistic and neurodivergent adults in the workforce and what resources organizations can provide to improve employee morale and retention.

## Stay Tuned for What's to Come

Many Lower School classes will highlight different winter holiday traditions during the month of December.

Horizon (3rd and 4th grade) is beginning their Countries of the World Unit.

A group of Upper School students will attend the Quaker Youth Leadership Conference, hosted by Germantown Friends School and William Penn Charter School.

Upper School students will watch the recently released movie “Rustin” about activist Bayard Rustin and the racism and homophobia he faced as he helped change the course of Civil Rights history by orchestrating the 1963 March on Washington.

A group of NGFS staff members will be presenting at the North Carolina Association of Independent Schools (NCAIS) Diversity and Inclusion Conference in January. This year's theme is “Balancing Joy and Justice: Encouraging Wellness and Fostering a Sense of Belonging in our DEIJ practice”.