



# Annual Report

2020-2021



**Parkmont  
School** 50  
YEARS

Fostering Individual Growth and Enthusiasm for Learning  
Washington, DC | Grades 6-12, Co-Ed



# ParkmontSchool

Fostering Individual Growth and Enthusiasm for Learning

4842 Sixteenth Street, NW | Washington, DC 20011

(202) 726-0740 | [www.parkmont.org](http://www.parkmont.org)

Grades 6–12, Co-Ed

**Ron McClain**

Head of School

**Nijole Gedutis**

Dean of Students

**Willa Reinhard**

School Administrator and Internship Coordinator

**Erin Lidz**

Communications Director

## 2020-2021 Board of Trustees

Joe Ferber, President

Tom Yoder, Secretary

Walter Ailes, Treasurer

Deborah DuSault

Cassandra Hetherington

Cille Kennedy

Judy Lentz

Ron McClain, Head of School

Richard Roth

Mike Weaver

David Weisman

**Parkmont School** is a non-profit, independent school governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board, which includes the Head of School, draws its members from groups of concerned stakeholders with special expertise, including current and former parents, alumni, key friends, and faculty. The Board sets school policy, oversees finances, makes decisions that shape the long-term goals of the school, and strives to maintain the philosophies, standards, and quality of Parkmont.

The Parkmont School Annual Report is published by the Communications Office after each fiscal year.

We have attempted to make lists of donors as accurate as possible. If any errors are found, please contact Erin Lidz, our Director of Communications, and accept our sincere apologies.

For more information about Parkmont School's development efforts, please contact Erin Lidz at [elidz@parkmont.org](mailto:elidz@parkmont.org) or (202) 726-0740.

## On the Cover

**Top Left: The field at Carter-Barron Amphitheatre: one of Parkmont's green classrooms (and a great site for ultimate frisbee).**

**Top Right: Parkmont's fearless staff returns to campus after the first phase of the pandemic.**

**Middle: Paddling towards blue skies on the Potomac River: a metaphor for the past year.**

**Bottom Left: Firaol Hailu in her new persona of Class of '21 graduate.**

**Bottom Right: Parkmont staff and students tackle the slopes together at Whitetail Resort.**

# Annual Report 2020-2021

Dear Parkmont and Somerset Families and Friends,

This is our annual and mid-century report about the generosity that made last year an excellent one for Parkmont, as has so often been the case for the past 50 years. In the winter of 1972, Parkmont's founders directed their expertise and enthusiasm toward integrating the work of two leaders in the educational field – Maria Montessori and the more recent experiential efforts of John Bremer at the Parkway School in Philadelphia – for the fall launch of their new Northern Virginia middle school, Parkmont. Extraordinary contributions along the way have had much to do with our energetic presence today.

Start with the founders themselves and the ten years of parent help of all kinds in our initial cooperative model. The purchase of Parkmont's first home was made possible by support from the families of key staff members in 1977. In 1991, generous Board members funded our merger with the Somerset School and gave us the permanent home on 16th Street that is our base today. In 1992, Bob Pellaton, Parkmont parent and teacher in its first decade, started our Annual Fund, run for the next two decades by Christy Ross and responsible for more than two million dollars in support for programs and financial aid. Cari Gradison and the Gradison Family Foundation raised a million dollars in the Creating Futures Campaign. Starting in 2004, that saw us through the recession and still supports our work today. Last year's Fund contributors are listed within.

Although COVID has kept us close to home for the past 22 months, Parkmont's adventure courses and trips have been some of the many gifts bestowed upon us by the staff for decades. Debbie van Ryn, Tom Yoder, and Judy Lentz got us to the mountains, to Holland, and to England in the '80s; Debbie Williams to Algonquin Park in Ontario and to England; and Paul Hadfield on multiple rides down the C&O Canal. I started the Everglades sequence in 1988 and our first Grand Canyon adventure in 1991. Megan Rupp got us to the Yucatan in 1993 and Michelle Banks and Nijole Gedutis followed her steps a dozen or more times. Ginger Russell did the Okefenokee, the Everglades, a Smokies Trip, and our first Coastal ecology

*continues on next page*

**“In considering the contributions that have made Parkmont what it’s been for the past forty years, you have to include the hundreds of folks around the nation’s capital who have hosted and supervised our student interns.”**

adventure. Wendel Landes led a half dozen trips to some of the same places a decade later. We got to Panama in 2009 and California in 2011, and then Alex Jennison started Alaska trips and continued Grand Canyon and Everglades trips before adding Puerto Rico with Matt McClain and Ethan Kuhnhehn. You can’t pay folks enough to be on duty 24/7, and our program has always depended on staff not only doing their jobs, but going beyond.

In considering the contributions that have made Parkmont what it’s been for the past forty years, you have to include the hundreds of folks around the nation’s capital who have hosted and supervised our student interns. This program is single-handedly responsible for much of the maturity and confidence-building that takes place while students are with us. Our young people have clocked more

than 260,000 hours at work since Linda MacKenzie launched the program in 1982. That means generous and empathetic adults have donated more than 260,000 hours of opportunity and understanding to Parkmont students.

And we’ve had steadfast support from friends in the foundation world. The Frelinghuysen Foundation has been such a friend since 1988. In 1989, Phil Stern, partner of Board President Susan Willens, introduced us to the Cafritz Foundation who supported us as we supported folks whose options did not include private schools. The Fowler Foundation has regularly helped our support services programs and the Clark-Winchcole Foundation has bolstered our financial aid program (the biggest per-student awards among independent schools in the District). The Poole Foundation has helped with internships recently, and the Jenny Moore Fund helped launch our city-wide Poetry Festival, currently in its 40th year.

Fifty years made possible by remarkable gifts from literally thousands of families, staff, and individuals in our greater community. And the work of a Board unmatched anywhere by its experience at Parkmont and in the field of Independent Education.



Ron McClain  
Head of School





# Parkmont School 50 YEARS

## Parkmont's 50!

BY KIM SCHRAF AND RON McCLAIN

The 1960s and '70s were decades of political activism and cultural adventures, as much in the field of education as elsewhere. Washington's great faith-based and single-gender private schools go back much earlier, some of the Catholic ones now more than 200 hundred years old.

After World War II, Georgetown Day School started in 1945, Burgundy Farm Country Day School in 1946 (Green Acres has a slightly longer progressive heritage back to 1934), McLean School in 1954, and St. Patrick's in 1956. The very small Hawthorne School started in 1957, and Sandy Spring arrived in 1961, as did Aiden Montessori, and our best friend Nora (originally the Eberhard School) in 1964. Lowell opened in 1965, Washington International in 1966, Lab School in 1967 (as part of the Kingsbury Center), Edmund Burke (whose founders met teaching at Hawthorne and one of them still

*continues on next page*

serves on our Board) in 1968 along with Capitol Hill Day.

National Presbyterian came with the church in 1969, Field emerged as an offshoot of Burke in 1970, and Parkmont launched in 1972. Somerset was started by the McLean Assistant Head, his wife and another parent, along with a dozen-plus graduates of McLean at Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church in 1973. Thornton Friends, incubated at Sandy Spring for several years as the Interlocking Curriculum School, also emerged in 1973.

## Key Moments in Parkmont's Story

**1972:** The parent-designed and -governed middle school opens in Northern Virginia — an experiential, relationally intimate learning community for middle-schoolers.

**1977:** The move to DC to make great use of this amazing city and to be accessible to the communities that live here. In only four years the school managed to buy a building (1640 Wisconsin Ave. NW) in Georgetown.

**1980:** The Parkmont year of leadership torment — dividing families and staff. A year started with a fully-enrolled school of 65 in a now-million-dollar building in Georgetown.







1992



2021



2011



2021

**1981:** The reset. I always remember when the departing office manager gave me the key in June and told me we'd never open in September — 40% fewer students and a building gutted 40% by inflation.

**THE '80S:** Safe haven at Hearst Hall next to the National Cathedral and then six years at Temple Sinai in the most hospitable of communities.

**1985:** Parkmont confirms its commitment to remaining a very small school, a kayak perhaps forever, by starting the Washington Small Schools Association (WSSA) with Nora, Somerset, Thornton Friends, and Cynthia Warner. WSSA still thrives today with a dozen members, though not all the founders survived.

**1991:** The school's sustaining merger — Somerset had the space on 16th Street, Parkmont the leadership, confidence, and resources. Parkmont's program adds the high school.

**2011:** Eager to expand enrollment and to be even more accessible to the larger Washington community, Parkmont joins the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), created by Congress in April, 2011. The OSP is available to low-income students who reside in the District.

**TODAY:** 4842 16th Street is filled with 65 students annually, neurodiverse and typical, building relationships with dedicated staff that last through adolescence, using the world as a classroom, ready for adventure. ■

# The Return to Campus

BY KIM SCHRAF AND RON McCLAIN

The 2020-21 school year brought a partial but welcome return to our home base after a half year of remote schooling. It also brought a whole new set of challenges. Having gone through an Admissions cycle where we hadn't met in person the students we accepted, we found ourselves needing to integrate a group of young people we didn't yet know. At least not in the way that Parkmont staff and faculty know our students. One of the guiding goals in all of the decisions we made at this time was not to do anything radical that would put people through any more change than was necessary: a safe and gradual return to being together in the space.

In this effort to hasten "getting to know kids and families off-Zoom," Ron kept two lawn chairs in tow wherever he went, making it possible to have distanced, authentic conversations on a front lawn or in a backyard. It became clear in the course of these unusual in-person meetings that it was going to take forever to get to know people if we stayed on Zoom, and this became the foundation of our resolve to get peo-



ple – in small numbers at first – back on campus sooner rather than later. By the end of session one, near the end of October, we had devised a plan to invite back students whose teachers and/or parents expressed concern that they were not thriving by operating solely on the Zoom platform. And so 10-12 students in both the middle school and upper school returned in early November for two mornings a week – two days for middle school and two days for upper school. This necessitated a hybrid classroom, and we found that the tech-



**Above: Keonte Jones, Willa, and Bailey Maxwell "dress to impress" during Spirit Week.**

**Left: Parkmont pandemic therapy: go fly a kite!**





**Above: Nijole offers sideline coaching to Miles.**

**Left: Classwork at the picnic table. (But the Parkmont van beckons ...)**

nology for that was less than conducive to treating the in-person students and the at-home students equitably. But we made the best of it, as did all of our large- and small-school counterparts in the area.

For the rest of the year we had 30-40% of our population coming in two days a week, and the rest Zooming from home, many of them beginning or continuing to find success. An innovation that we introduced in the winter sessions was an outdoor activity session at school. Ethan and Matt led ultimate frisbee games and later other athletic events and hikes around town. As a few of our internship partners began accepting online or in-person interns, some students resumed internships, those all-important forays into the working world that are cornerstone experiences for Parkmont students, and some of which even lead to paying jobs. The remaining students participated in the Career Edge program, which we'd embraced after receiving rave reviews of it from students who'd encountered it in the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), in order to cultivate professional skills. Students and staff stayed actively connected outside the classroom with clubs (Anime,

Knitting) and movie nights. The Office sent out weekly surveys and contests with prize incentives that allowed us to get to know each other better, even while apart.

These changes were born out of dire necessity, but they taught us some things about our mission and how we realize it that we've chosen to retain. We got more inventive with Admissions visits by inviting people to come by on weekends, utilizing creative outside office spaces, and continuing Ron's practice of driving to meetings off-site. We got into the habit in early 2020 of regular online faculty meetings at the beginning and end of every day. Ron likened them to meeting your team before a game, checking in, communicating efficiently and giving mutual support. The faculty and staff did an extraordinary job of rising to each challenge thrown in their path and of staying safe at the same time. And we were enormously grateful that we were able to get 20-25 kids regularly on campus. For a number of them, it was a real life-saver. The experience left them more energized, more personally connected with staff, and much more engaged in their classes. ■

# Zero to 90 (With 100% Success!): Maggie McClain's Pandemic Slam-dunk

BY KIM SCHRAF

In the late spring of 2020, it became clear that Parkmont would need more help once staff and then eventually students returned to school. That's when Ron asked **Maggie McClain** – fresh from a position at George Washington University Hospital in preparation for possible future medical training – to become our COVID Health Coordinator. Here are some excerpts from my Zoom conversation with Maggie in June, 2021.

**Once you stepped into this brand-new position, did you do any sort of training or was it all “learn as you go”?**

**Maggie McClain:** Well, I had my BA from Denison College in Exercise Science and had been gearing up to do more health care work. I wasn't thinking specifically about public health but was definitely interested in it. The hospital job had exposed me to sanitation protocols; my ears were perked up about the pandemic, and I started paying attention to the numbers and what was coming. It was exciting to have an opportunity to dive into it more by way of helping Parkmont. One of my favorite parts of the job was keeping up with the public health situation – the webinars, CDC guidelines, WHO data. And I took a Certified Nursing Assistant's course at the start of the job that was helpful.

**How do you think Parkmont did in response to the crisis?**

**MM:** The shift to hybrid classrooms in the fall of 2020 was impressive. Parkmont's size really helped with that, and also the fact that the staff was so ready to respond and so up to date with the technology that would allow them to teach in this new way. It was so much work for the teachers. The pandem-

ic was the test that so many schools passed, but no one should have had to. Everyone — students as well — had to transform and transition.

**Was there a moment for you that was anxious or scary?**

**MM:** Oh definitely! The responsibility of making absolutely sure it was as safe as we knew it could be. I definitely felt the weight of that. Around the second or third wave, when the variants were emerging, was an anxious time. Kids were back in, but we wondered, “Can we keep them here? And what would it mean to send them back home?” It was hard.

**You seemed so even and cool throughout all of it. But as things were spiraling in many directions, how did you address your own self-care?**

**MM:** I had to remember that I'm just one person and I'm getting my messaging out the best way I can. You learn to trust the rest of your community, just as Parkmont staff have to trust each other to get things done.

**What an extraordinary opportunity this was for you to step up and provide this service in such a dire moment!**

**MM:** I think about how it will serve me in the future. Having to speak up more, to be the advocate. Saying, “No, THIS is the most safe thing.” Sometimes I had to push back a little.

I learned that I am a quite straightforward person. Sometimes you can't go roundabout and make everyone happy; I learned to be direct.

**It's an amazing leadership story, Maggie. And all of us at Parkmont are better for it. Congratulations! ■**

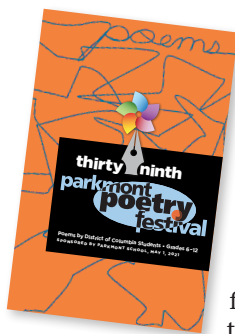




## Parkmont Poetry Festival Roller Coaster: Riding the COVID Waves

BY KIM SCHRAF

In its 40-year history, the Parkmont Poetry Festival has undergone some gentle transitions, but nothing like the shape-shifting it has had to do since the spring of 2020. From the time we took up residence in the big house on 16th Street in 1991 until 2014, we celebrated our 40 winners in the Parkmont Commons and spilled out onto the front porch for a reception afterwards. But when our crowds had burgeoned beyond the recommended capacity of that space, we spent a year in the Meeting Room at Sidwell Friends School and two at Edmund Burke, before ending up just across Blagden Avenue at our neighbor Zion Baptist Church's Fellowship Hall from 2017-19. All of these were welcoming and gracious homes for our Festival of DC student verse.

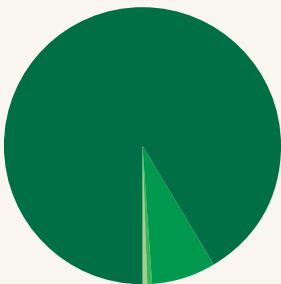


The onset of the pandemic tested our resilience and our ingenuity; for the past two years, it hasn't been safe for students, teachers, poet-judges, friends, and families to share an intimate space. In the spring of 2020, newly quarantined and sequestered, we created a filmed Festival from the self-taped readings of our winning poets. The 2021 Festival, our 39th, found us not yet ready to gather in person, but able to hold a real-time event on the Zoom webinar platform. The poets, by then accomplished at navigating virtual school, shared their winning verse live from their homes, their backyards, or from our Zoom studio in the Parkmont Commons. The webinar platform allowed friends and family to enjoy the Festival from across town, across the country, or even across the world. ■

Gifts for Current Operations

Annual Giving, Unrestricted:	\$93,084
Annual Giving, Restricted:	\$3,800
Immediate Financial Aid Fund:	\$70,600
Internships Fund	\$5,000
Support Services Fund:	\$20,000
The Parkmont Poetry Festival:	\$13,455
<hr/>	
Total Voluntary Support	\$205,939

Fiscal Year: 2020-2021\*



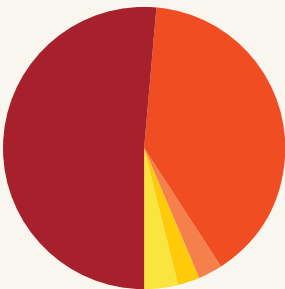
Tuition Income  
\$2,578,500

Fundraising  
\$205,939

School Programs  
\$18,550

Financial Income & Other  
\$29,805

Total Revenue  
\$2,832,794



Instructional & Administrative  
\$1,500,617

Financial Aid  
\$1,151,145

Program & Student Activities  
\$81,701

Property  
\$67,617

Other Expenses  
\$110,870

Total Expenses  
\$2,911,950



## ANNUAL GIVING: \$ 93,084

### Current Parkmont Families 2020-21

Shirlena Barnes  
Pamela and David Bone  
Rebecca and Larry Maxwell  
Clem Rastatter

### Parkmont and Somerset Alumni Families

Joann Albert  
Patricia Jayne and Chris Barr  
Sally Pfund and William Bush  
Cynthia Carrette  
Bob and Rhoda Chanin  
Elizabeth and Robert Doherty  
Sean Duffy  
William Eby  
Carl Englehart  
John and Terry Fassl  
Verrick and Patricia French  
Mary and Richard Gathercole  
Charles and Barbara Gholz  
Patricia Glowacki  
Cari and Bill Gradison  
Alison Gray  
Ezra Hausman  
Michael Hussey  
Tom Kawecki  
Laura Middleton and Rich Krauzlis  
Al and Ann La Porta  
Jeannine Ladd  
Matthew Ladd  
Bob Bonner and Laura Lester  
Susan Vitale and Henry Levin  
Cintia Lombardi  
Candyce Martin  
Amy and Paul Moroney  
Arnold Nicholson  
Sydney Jacobs and Mark Otto  
Judy Peabody  
Eric Randall  
Peter Roemer  
Evan and Carolyn Rosser  
Paul Nissenbaum and  
Addy Schmitt  
Elsa Silverman  
Janice and Lawrence Smith  
Shirley Thompson and  
Clyde Solomon  
Susan Schwartz and  
Howard Stanislawski  
Mary and David Stevens  
Shelley Sturman and Noam Stopak

Estelle Tarica  
Suzanne Tarica  
Lee and Fred Tyner  
Peter and Beatrice van Roijen  
John and Kathleen Volpe  
Nicole and Derrick Wade  
George Watson  
Jonathan Weisman  
Reed Wirick  
Deanna and Douglas Wolfire  
Gail Coleman and Mark Yost

### Friends, Staff, and Board of Trustees

Walter Ailes  
The Bench Trail Fund  
Ann Breen  
Debbie DuSault  
Joseph Ferber  
The Frelinghuysen Foundation  
Nijole Gedutis  
John Gordon  
Samuel Graul  
Mariam Haidar  
Cille Kennedy  
Ethan Kuhnhenh  
Judy Lentz  
Erin Lidz  
Andrew and Dorothy Mason  
Matthew McClain  
Pam McClain  
Ron McClain

Jean Mooskin  
Mike Moyer  
Bridget Mullins  
Willa Reinhard  
Christy Halvorson Ross  
Dick Roth  
Gina Rothbaum  
Kim Schraf  
Debbi Shannan  
Christie Trott  
Tom and Linda Yoder

## RESTRICTED ANNUAL FUNDS

### Lentz Fund

Ron McClain

### Pellaton Fund

Ron McClain  
Bob and Lynn Pellaton  
Ryrie and Kara Pellaton  
Amy Ward

### Popkin Fund

Ron McClain

## IMMEDIATE FINANCIAL AID FUND: \$ 70,600

Clark-Winchcole Foundation  
Catharine and David Frisk  
Maureen Mahon and  
Michael Waterman

### Lentz Fund

Established by Parkmont for John Lentz's training of Parkmont staff and support for our adventures out in the world. The Lentz Fund helps us fund trips, one of our signature programs at Parkmont. In the spring of 2019, a group of Upper School students visited the Coastal Carolinas with the support of the Lentz Fund.

### Pellaton Fund

Established by the Pellaton Family in memory of their son, Randy, a Parkmont alum. The Pellaton Fund supports Middle School outdoor field trips and adventures at Parkmont. These include trips to Great Falls, Greenbrier State Park, and camping trips to the Shenandoah Mountains and the Eastern Shore.

### Popkin Fund

Established by Belle Popkin's daughter, Susan Willens, during her tenure on the Parkmont Board in 1991. The Popkin Fund enriches our program by covering the cost of our Gift-a-Book program, which allows each student and staff member to receive a book of their choice to read during the holiday season.

# Voluntary Support

## **INTERNSHIPS FUND: \$5,000**

The Harry and Zoe Poole  
Foundation

## **SUPPORT SERVICES FUND: \$20,000**

John Edward Fowler  
Memorial Foundation

## **THE POETRY FESTIVAL: \$13,455**

### **Epic Poem Donors**

Ron McClain  
Jacqui Michel and David Weisman  
Anne and Fred Woodworth

### **Villanelle Donors**

Paul and Jean Gurman  
Judy Lentz

### **Sonnet Donors**

Joseph Ferber  
Susan Vitale and Henry Levin  
Jean and Bob Nordhaus  
Kim Schraf

### **Haiku Donors**

Harriet Patsy Davis  
Rebecca Farnum  
Lechi Gallagher  
Cille Kennedy  
Shannon Burkart Morris  
Joseph Ross  
Karen Sade  
Sharan Strange  
Tom and Linda Yoder

Internships are a cornerstone of a Parkmont education, and we are delighted to be sending students back into workplaces to learn about the world of work. While our host sites were closed during the height of the pandemic, we engaged our students with the Career Edge online program to hone workplace skills, refine resumes, and prepare students for career paths.

We want to thank some of the community partners who have mentored and hosted our students in past years:

A Wider Circle	Latin American Youth Center (LAYC)
Black Student Fund	Lewis and Hitchcock
Bridges Public Charter School	Lost Sock Roasters
Chevy Chase Neighborhood Library	Ludlow-Taylor Elementary School
City Bikes, Tenleytown	Mary's Center
DC Central Kitchen	OneDC
DC Scores	Oyster-Adams Bilingual School
District Dogs	PetMac
Flying Kick Martial Arts Studio	Rock Creek Park Horse Center
Forest Hills Senior Home	Round House Theater
Frugalista	Sankofa Cafe
Gearin' Up	SED Center
Horace Mann Elementary School	Silver Cycles
Howard University Hospital	Silver Spring Library
Ignite Good Health	Sitar Arts
Jubilee Jumpstart	Woodley Park Ace Hardware
Keegan Theater	

### **Friends of the Poetry Festival**

Gigi Bradford  
Hiram Larew  
Fan Liang  
Ayana Machen  
Susan Willens

### **Sincere thanks for the hard work and dedication of our Poetry Advisory Committee**

Jean Gurman  
Cille Kennedy  
Judy Lentz  
Jacqui Michel  
Anne Harding Woodworth

## **GIFTS IN KIND**

American University  
Mentorship Program  
The George Washington  
University PsyD Program  
Hogan Lovells LLP  
Aruna Seenauth

Follow Parkmont School on  
Facebook! We also invite alumni  
and staff to join our Facebook  
group [Parkmont Past](#).



Our 2021 8th-grade class





**Above: The graduate, Nahom Zemedkun, with proud father and Advisor.**

**Right: Matthew Kilpatrick and his graduation entourage.**

**Bottom: Brianna Campoverde, in cap and gown, has made her parents very proud!**



## Our School Philosophy

At Parkmont we build a community where students ally themselves with creative adults whose driving concern is their success and well-being. We challenge them with an academic program that fuses adolescent interests with traditional disciplines and respects the variety of their talents and motivations. We provide them with substantial experience in the world beyond school that invites them to see more clearly the possibilities ahead. Our students get ready to chart their own course, and we make sure they're prepared for the journey.

**ParkmontSchool**

Fostering Individual Growth and Enthusiasm for Learning

4842 Sixteenth Street, NW | Washington, DC 20011

(202) 726-0740 | [www.parkmont.org](http://www.parkmont.org)

Grades 6-12, Co-Ed

# ParkmontSchool

4842 Sixteenth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20011



Follow [Parkmont School](#) on Facebook!  
We also invite alumni and staff to join  
our Facebook group [Parkmont Past](#).

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SUBURBAN, MD  
PERMIT No. 6439