



Annual Report

2023-2024



ParkmontSchool

Fostering Individual Growth and
Enthusiasm for Learning

Washington, D.C. | Grades 6-12, Co-Ed



Parkmont School

Fostering Individual Growth and Enthusiasm for Learning

Grades 6-12, Co-Ed
4842 Sixteenth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20011
(202) 726-0740
www.parkmont.org

Ron McClain
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Nijole Gedutis
DEAN OF STUDENTS

Christy Halvorson Ross
DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Siobhan Roth
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

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, D.C.-area educational leaders, 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 Christy Halvorson Ross, Director of Institutional Advancement, and accept our sincere apologies.

For more information about Parkmont School's development efforts, please contact the Development Office at comm@parkmont.org.

ON THE COVER:

Top: Hurrah for the Parkmont graduating class of 2024!

Middle right: Isla and Matt at the National Museum of the American Indian

Bottom left: Javonne and fellow Parkmont Middle Schoolers at the National Museum of American History's Spark!Lab

Bottom right: Madz interning at A Wider Circle

2023-24 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Joe Ferber, President
Scott Wichansky, Treasurer
Tom Yoder, Secretary
Ron McClain, Ex-Officio
Walter Ailes
Deborah DuSault
Nijole Gedutis
Cassandra Hetherington
Anthony Hynes
Dale Johnson
Mike Weaver
Mary Wichansky



Dear Parkmont and Somerset families and friends,

I'm pleased to present our Annual Report for the 2023-24 school year. It contains the numbers, financial and otherwise, that are important from that year and some articles about our unique (for 50+ years!) program elements. There is also a lovely piece by Siobhan Roth about kindness at Parkmont. Siobhan joined Christy's Institutional Advancement efforts by becoming our Director of Communications in January of 2024. Her father, Dick Roth, co-founded the Edmund Burke School, served on Parkmont's Board for 34 years, and is as responsible as anyone for my own career in alternative education.

The summer will give us time to finish the Parkmont Schoolhouse Project, wonderfully delightful for those of us in the building every day, and generously supported by so many of you. We remain, as always, indebted to the leaders of the Somerset School who turned this 1911 "mansion" into a school. They had to spend most of their money on the emergency fire stairs that get you from the third floor to the street. We've been lucky enough to be able to spend the \$400k raised in this campaign to make the whole interior a bright, energizing, and educational space, with needed security, and ultimately to build new science and art spaces.

Parkmont was fully enrolled in 2023-2024, and we're happy to say that's true this year and next year as well. It was last full in 1980 when our parent co-op met their goal of 65 students. When I arrived 12 months later, we had barely survived a Board-Head fracas, and in many ways we ended up restarting the school. We started a streak of now 44 years of amazing Board-Head collaboration, and for the past 12 years, half of our board have been enormously successful local educational leaders, joined by current parents, alumni, and other talented professionals

continues on next page

who've come to admire Parkmont's remarkable community and service to young people.

Some of you might ask what I am still doing here. In my office, I keep photos of our 1991 17-day Grand Canyon Havasupai Reservation adventure, and another of me in a rubber duckie, leading — with Ginger Russell's grand help — a Parkmont rafting adventure down the Youghiogheny River in Pennsylvania. I had my fun and my own adventures along with our students for decades. At this point, at 76, I think the smartest thing I've done at Parkmont is to put up a railing on the outdoor stairs that connect my exit door to my car.

I'm still here because I'm having as much fun co-leading Parkmont with Nijole Gedutis as I've had working here in the past 25 years. She joined us as an intern in 1998-99 and moved quickly to teaching, then led the Middle School for 8 years, and since then, Dean of Faculty and Students. She is a remarkable educator blessed with the sense of humor



you need to help make every day at Parkmont a good one for as many folks as possible. And many good things are possible at Parkmont always because Christy Ross, who started here in 1994 and left us for 5 years in 2017, has returned to run Admissions and Institutional Advancement and Accreditation and our Schoolhouse Project, so we have quite a team.

So I am not teaching or climbing mountains, but we are doing great work on behalf of Parkmont's future and we'll have more to say about that in the coming years.

Thank you for your support. Parkmont is doing its best work ever because of that support and because of our remarkable staff. Our founding parents wanted a school that would lift up students. You can find that at 4842 16th Street. Great things happen here.

Sincerely,

Ron McClain
Head of School

Theo, Javonne, Zoey, and Kia
on a Middle School trip to
Butler's Orchard



Parkmont's Culture of Kindness

At a time when distrust, intolerance, and a fraying sense of community dominate the news, Parkmont students are learning a different lesson: Kindness and appreciating the strengths of each individual create an environment where everyone can thrive.

Parkmont's culture of kindness is a throughline connecting every class discussion, every field trip and travel class, every lunchtime game. Our attention to kindness and acceptance isn't impractical idealism. It's essential to helping adolescents succeed in school and find their path. It shapes how our students collaborate and learn and how they engage with the world outside of school.

The hallmarks of our program — small size; a rich diversity of learning styles, talents, and cultural backgrounds; individualized instruction and attention; and experiential learning and outdoor adventure woven throughout the curriculum — all contribute to the culture here. The adults

who work with the students, though, alchemize those elements into something extraordinary by combining them with the patience, acceptance, and encouragement they model every day. For many students, the result is a transformative educational experience.

Parkmont graduate Zoe McLean arrived in 11th grade “under the impression that I was never going to succeed,” she says. “What really had an impact on me was how much everyone kept trying to make school work for me. They could see I had potential when I didn't think so.” Zoe remembers teachers taking the time to sit with her outside when she felt overwhelmed. There were also days when she felt unable to come to school at all. “Ron would have the office call my mom, and they would say, ‘Zoe, you don't have to go to class. Just go sit and talk with Ron for 30 minutes.’ And once I was there, I would think, ‘OK, maybe I can do more.’”

continues on next page

It's not unusual to witness a student unfurl, fernlike, during their time at Parkmont. "A meaningful relationship with staff" often begins that process, says Mel Kates, School Administrator. "It can start with just one teacher fostering a strong connection, and then they form relationships with other kids and teachers," she says. "The student sees that 'these are people who are interested in what I have to say, and who are happy I'm here.'"

The students also internalize and adopt the ways teachers engage with them and their peers. Mel remembers one student starting at Parkmont full of energy and eager to make friends but struggling to channel that energy productively. "Parkmont staff cultivated a meaningful relationship with her, coaching her and helping her understand the disconnect between some of her behaviors and her goals, such as making friends." A couple of years in, the student was "light-years ahead of where she'd been," Mel says. When a prospective student with complex challenges visited, our student immediately "took the visitor under her wing. She was so sweet and kind to her. So patient."

"We model acceptance

and celebration of everybody's strengths," says Nijole Gedutis, Parkmont's Dean of Students. "The individualization that we do is very much about recognizing that everyone has their own story." She mentions a student who had needed extra help in class. Now, without being prompted, he routinely turns to a younger, newer student who needs similar support. "He's so sweet with him," Nijole says. "And he's setting the tone for the other kids in the class: Here is how we treat this student. We treat him with kindness, and we treat him with patience."

One very public way that teachers and staff celebrate students' varied strengths is PPOP, the weekly Parkmont Pupil of Prestige award. Teachers nominate students for PPOP every week and vote for the winner at their faculty meeting. During Announcements, a teacher reveals the nominees and the reasons for their

nominations, saving that week's PPOP winner for last. Snapping and clapping ripple through the room as students hear the names. PPOP helps students absorb the message that "there's something delightful about everyone," Nijole says. "Another person's strengths may




Above: Buddies Mikiyas and Mak in the Great Smoky Mountains with Ethan's Ecology class



Left: Nijole and Ameen in The Commons



Right: And the PPOP winners is ... Sean!

A photograph of three children at an outdoor school cookout. A girl with curly hair sits on the ground on the left, wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts. A boy stands in the center, holding a red cup. A girl on the right is crouching on a swing, holding a drink. They are in a park-like setting with trees and a playground in the background.

Milo, Wesley, and Z at an all-school cookout at Carter Barron

not be ones that you value, but you recognize and celebrate them.”

A student can be nominated to be PPOP for anything positive. It could be for working hard on a school project, helping a classmate, or even making a great frisbee throw at lunchtime. Emma, a Parkmont staff member and former student, has witnessed its effect on others and experienced it herself. Not long after she arrived, she won PPOP for her kindness. “To have your kindness recognized publicly in front of everybody is powerful,” she says. “It has done something to me in how I live beyond school.”

Of course, Parkmont isn’t the first to recognize kindness and empathy’s personal and societal benefits. Godfather of progressive education, John Dewey, argued that schools must cultivate critical thinking, active participation, and a sense of community to sustain a thriving democracy. More recently, academic philosopher bell hooks wrote that if educators want to create the best conditions for learning, they must “teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students.” Parkmont’s program allow us to put these ideas into practice in an immersive way for our students.

Because our students do so many hands-on projects and take so many field trips, they interact in a variety of environments and roles. While they’re discussing a book in Reading Group, psyching themselves up to clip into a Calleva zipline, navigating their way downtown by Metro, and paddling a canoe, they’re also figuring out how



Alums Divine Shabazz, Kory Otto-Jacobs, and Zoe McLean, with Si Ross (Christy’s son!) and former Parkmont teacher Alex Jennison, on a 2012 Parkmont trip to Alaska

to make room for each other emotionally, intellectually, and spatially. “Every day, the kids are building that muscle,” says Nijole. “They can go into the world and be actively kind, actively thoughtful. And they’re able to work with a variety of people because they’ve learned to see the strengths of all people.”

They may also feel inspired to pay forward the lessons of their Parkmont experience. “What I got from Parkmont is helping people find their path, says Zoe, who will study social work at University of North Carolina at Wilmington, “I hope that I can support at least one person to be comfortable and to figure out how to make this world, their school, their job, work for them.” ■

The City as a Classroom

Collectively, Parkmont students take about 60 field trips to D.C. sites every year. Having a homebase in the nation's capital puts us in an unparalleled hub for national and international policymaking, cultural organizations, media outlets, and diplomacy. Historic sites are everywhere!

Proximity to the city's museums, monuments, and other resources is one reason Parkmont relocated from Northern Virginia to D.C. in 1977, and we've never looked back. Where better than the Lincoln Memorial to reflect on rhetoric, power, and progress, or the National Press Club to consider the lives of journalists? With so many resources nearby, our teachers constantly find new and creative ways to add dimension to their students' learning.

Embracing the city as a primary Parkmont Classroom reflects our belief that when students learn through experience, they learn deeply. You can read about

religion and burial rites in ancient Egypt, or you can read about them and then examine actual mummies at the National Museum of Natural History. Now you're curious about ancient technology and the lives of the people who prepared the mummies. The lesson has come to life.

Occasionally, our D.C. field trips result in meeting national heroes, as Nijole's Civil Rights Movement class did when they visited the late Rep. John Lewis in his Congressional office. A student on the trip remarked later that it had been the best day of his entire life.

Embedded in Parkmont's experiential approach are the social-emotional learning and life skills so vital to students' development as they approach adulthood. They interact with adults in professional settings. They learn to navigate the city with confidence and begin to identify themselves as part of a broader community. Less exciting



Shwe and her Ancient Civilization class at the National Museum of African Art.



**Pierce, Reign, Leo
and a cute little toad
in Rock Creek Park**

lessons about the world of work and sometimes pop up. During a visit to the U.S. Capitol, Shwe's Ancient Civilizations class secured passes to the House gallery, where they witnessed a debate about dishwasher regulations — a crash course in paperwork and legislative minutiae!

In addition to the destinations on and around the National Mall, our students

often visit lesser-known landmarks and meet D.C.-based experts on topics ranging from aviation to zoology. In Ethan's ever-popular D.C. History Main Lesson, students tour each quadrant of the city, discovering connections between the past and the current life of our city. They also make sure to sample D.C.'s own food and culture,

continues on next page

The city around us is a natural extension of our campus and a favorite Parkmont Classroom! Below is a partial list of the many D.C. sites Parkmont students visited on field trips last year.

14th Street, N.W.	Hains Point/East Potomac Park	National Zoo
Australian Embassy	Holocaust Museum	Navy Yard
Ben's Chili Bowl Blagden Alley	Kingman island	Peirce Mill
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	Library of CongressMedia Lab	RFK stadium
C&O Canal	Lulubelle's ice cream	Rock Creek Park
Cherry Blossoms	National Air and Space Museum	Safeway
Chinese American Museum	National Archives	Senate buildings
Columbia Heights	National Gallery of Art	Spark!Lab at the National
Downtown	National Mall	Museum of American History
Egyptian Cultural & Educational Bureau	National Museum of African American History and Culture	Spy Museum
Feature Story News D.C. Bureau	National Museum of American History	Tidal Basin
Ford's Theater	National Museum of Asian Art	U Street, N.W.
Fort Totten	National Museum of Natural History	U.S. Capitol
Georgetown	National Museum of the American Indian	U.S. Supreme Court
German-American Heritage Museum of the USA		Van Leeuwen Ice Cream
		Washington Monument
		Wilson Building



Anthony's Anatomy and Physiology Main Lesson at the National Museum of Natural History



Sam and Nick at the U.S. Capitol

including the half-smokes and shakes at Ben's Chili Bowl!

D.C.'s built environment has a lush counterpart in Rock Creek Park's 1,754 verdant acres, a favorite Parkmont Classroom. The Park supplies inspiration and materials for art classes. Biology and ecology classes conduct fieldwork and collect samples from the stream. Astronomy students glimpse swaths of stars above the unlighted canopy. Our PM hiking classes never run out of new trails to explore. We also enjoy the park simply as a place to relax and have fun, especially at the Carter Barron fields just a block from our schoolhouse.

We love sharing D.C.'s wealth of resources with our young people. Students engage in their learning more deeply when they can explore, question, and connect what they're studying to the world around them. From Rock Creek Park's tadpole ponds to the Rotunda in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. gives us that opportunity every day. ■

Fiscal Year 2023-24

Revenue

Tuition Income	\$ 3,022,715
Fundraising	\$ 176,032
Annual Giving	\$ 91,439
Building Campaign	\$ 50,000
Financial Aid Fund	\$ 15,175
Staff Development Fund	\$ 3,000
Internship Fund	\$ 2,500
The Parkmont Poetry Festival	\$ 13,918
School Programs	\$ 54,067
Financial Income & Other	\$ 10,727

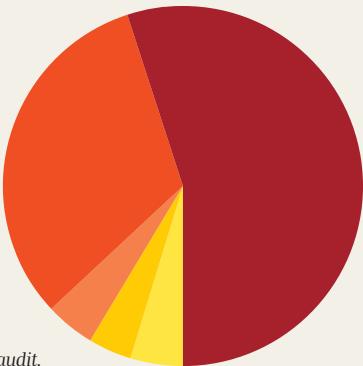
TOTAL REVENUE: \$ 3,263,541



Expenses

Instructional and Administrative	\$ 1,693,254
Financial Aid	\$ 981,838
Program & Student Activities	\$ 138,703
Property	\$ 123,688
Other Expenses	\$

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$ 3,075,360



Note: These numbers have not been finalized by the school audit.

Parkmont Schoolhouse Project

While we reflect on the generosity of gifts to Parkmont in the 2023-24, it's important to draw the spotlight to the current year as well, when we are raising money to update our building in lieu of our typical Annual Giving Campaign. Over the past two summers, we have given a facelift to almost all of our classrooms and common spaces. The bright paint colors, fresh carpet, new security system, and upgraded technology are a breath of fresh air for all of our students and teachers!

In October 2024, we launched the **Parkmont Schoolhouse Project** to cover improvements to the final spaces: building out a science lab, updating the kitchen, computer room, main office, and bathrooms. The response has been incredibly gratifying and exciting. An anonymous donor pledged to match up to \$150,000 in gifts from other donors this year. As of time of print, Parkmont parents, alumni, and friends have donated more than \$140,000! There is still time to give, and we thank you in advance for your support.



For more information or to donate, please scan this QR code or visit parkmont.org/schoolhouseproject.

Voluntary Support

ANNUAL GIVING \$91,439

Current Parkmont Families

June Cash
Michele Jolin and Kevin Downey
Rebecca Kirch Huitfeldt
Pamela Meyer and Fred Kempe
Paola Martino and Robert Krikorian
Kerry and Timothy Lang
Nancy Youssef and Vijay Ravindran
Traci and Brian Richmond
Jeanett and John Yonemoto

Parkmont and Somerset Alumni Families

American Online Giving Foundation
Ameritrade Institutional Giving
Anonymous
Pamela and David Bone
Sally Pfund and William Bush
Cynthia Carrette
Bob and Rhoda Chanin
Elizabeth and Robert Doherty
Debbie DuSault
William Eby
Carl Englehart
David and Beth Frank
Mary and Richard Gathercole
Charles and Barbara Gholz
Trish Glowacki
Cari and Bill Gradison
Ezra Hausman
Peter Higgins
Mary Jordan
Laura Middleton and Rich Krauzlis
Matthew Ladd
Jeannine Ladd
Paula and Phillip Lantz
Cintia Lombardi
Judy and Larry Lorber
Candyce Martin
Amy and Paul Moroney
Arnold Nicholson
Judy Peabody
Eric Randall
Peter Roemer
Evan and Carolyn Rosser

Follow Parkmont School on Facebook, Instagram, and Bluesky! We also invite alumni and staff to join our Parkmont Past Facebook group.



Charlie and Matt

Paul Nissenbaum and Addy Schmitt
Elsa Silverman
Janice and Lawrence Smith
Susan Schwartz and
Howard Stanislawski
Shelley Sturman and Noam Stopak
Estelle Tarica
Suzanne Tarica
Lee and Fred Tyner
Beatrice and Peter van Roijen
John and Kathleen Volpe
Nicole and Derrick Wade
George Watson
Jacqui Michel and David Weisman
Jonathan Weisman
Reed Wirick
Deanna and Douglas Wolfire

Friends, Staff, & Board of Trustees

Rhodes Daigle
Zulma Dunn
Debbie DuSault
Joseph Ferber
Joe Fiorill and Siobhan Roth
The Frelinghuysen Foundation
Nijole Gedutis

Sam Graul
Thor Halvorson
Dale Johnson
Leslie Keller
Ethan Kuhnenn
Linda MacKenzie and Steve Shevick
Andrew and Dorothy Mason
Matthew McClain
Ron McClain
Jean Mooskin
Mike Moyer
Anthony Muehlberger
Bridget Mullins
Paypal Giving Fund
Stephen and Ruth Pollak
Willia Reinhard
Christy Halvorson Ross
Pat and Dick Roth
Kim Schraf
Michael Shoup
Christie Trott
Mary and Scott Wichansky
Susan Willens
Regan Wind
Linda and Tom 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

BUILDING CAMPAIGN \$50,000

Anonymous
Anonymous
John Gordon

FINANCIAL AID FUND \$15,175

Anonymous
Robert McClenon

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FUND \$3,000

Anonymous

INTERNSHIP FUND \$2,500

The Harry and Zoe Poole Foundation

POETRY FESTIVAL \$13,918

Rebecca Farnum
Joe Ferber
Fidelity Charitable
Siobhan Roth and Joe Fiorill
Cynthia Hamilton
Rollin Hawley
Cille Kennedy
Hiram Larew
Ron McClain
Nothing Bundt Cakes
Red Bandana Bakery
Christy Halvorson Ross
Joseph Ross
Pat and Dick Roth
Kim Schraf
Jacqui Michel and David Weisman
Ann Woodworth

Lentz Fund

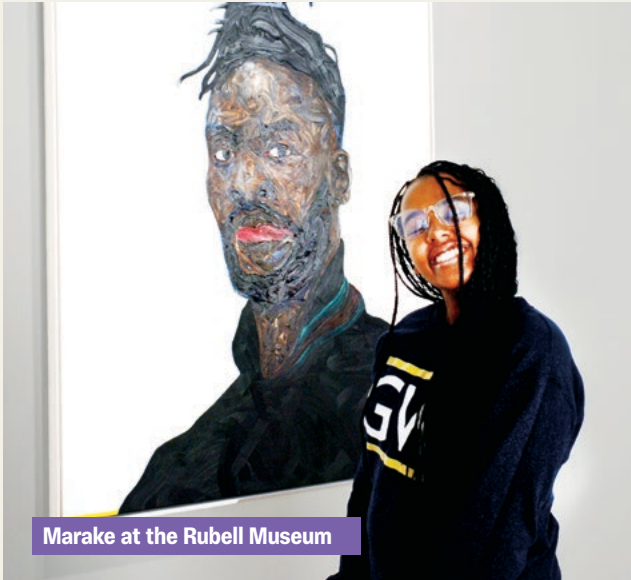
Established by Parkmont for John Lentz's training of Parkmont staff and support for our adventures out in the world, the Lentz Fund helps fund the student trips that are a signature of Parkmont's program. In 2023-2024, the Lentz Fund supported a travel class to the Great Smoky Mountains and a variety of day-trips to rivers, forests, and parks closer to home.

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. These include trips to Great Falls, Greenbrier State Park, and camping trips in the Shenandoah Mountains and the Eastern Shore.

Popkin Fund

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



Marake at the Rubell Museum

Tom and Linda Yoder
Julie Ziegler

Poetry Festival Volunteers

Laura Castro
Chris and Kaare Copetas
Mira Davidovski

Grace Gavin
Cassandra Hetherington
Paola Martino
Traci Richmond
Heather Schneider
Sarah Shapiro
Jeanett Yonemoto



**Beza at Sankofa
Video and Books**



**Henok at Howard
University Hospital**

2023-24 Internship Sponsors

A Wider Circle
 Bach to Rock, Bethesda
 Bald Eagle Recreation Center
 Because Science
 Bicycle Trash
 Black Student Fund
 Bolt Parkour
 Bread for the City
 Children's Legacy Theatre
 Create Arts Center
 D.C. Office of Labor Relations
 and Collective Bargaining
 D.C. Peers
 D.C. Scores
 The D.C. Arts Center
 Friends of the Library, Montgomery
 County, Rockville Bookstore
 Fort Stevens Recreation Center
 Howard University Hospital
 Jah Kente International
 Joe's Record Paradise
 Jubilee Housing
 Kilwins
 Kumon Math and Reading Center
 of Bethesda-Chevy Chase
 Langston Golf Course
 Lemon Slice



**Nick at Joe's
Record Paradise**

Leveling the Playing Field
 Lift Me Up!
 Little Flower Montessori
 Little Folks School
 Madison Forest Designs
 Mexican Cultural Institute
 Midtown Youth Academy
 Mount Pleasant Library
 Oyster-Adams Bilingual School
 PetMAC
 Potomac Horse Center
 Reading Partners
 Rolling Terrace Elementary School
 Sacred Heart School
 St. Augustine Catholic School

Salon Macomb
 Salvation Army
 Sankofa Video, Books & Cafe
 SED Center
 Shepherd's Table
 Sitar Arts Center
 Smithsonian National Air
 and Space Museum
 Street Sense Media
 The Posh Mallow
 The Potter's House
 VisArts
 Washington Studio School
 Words, Beats & Life
 Zion Baptist Senior Day Care Center

Parkmont School

Grades 6-12, Co-Ed
4842 Sixteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011
(202) 726-0740
www.parkmont.org



PARKMONT 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.



- 1 Regan's Comparative Government Main Lesson at the Egyptian Cultural and Educational Bureau
- 2 Regan, Peter, and Zulma celebrate graduation.
- 3 Middle Schoolers find their balance together.
- 4 Ecology students scout for wildlifeat Kingman Island.

ParkmontSchool

4842 Sixteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



FACEBOOK

ParkmontSchool



INSTAGRAM

@parkmontschool



BLUESKY

@parkmont.bsky.social

SUPPORT PARKMONT SCHOOL

parkmont.org/schoolhouseproject

