



Annual Report

2019-2020



ParkmontSchool

Fostering Individual Growth and
Enthusiasm for Learning

Washington, DC
Grades 6-12, Co-Ed



Parkmont School

Fostering Individual Growth and Enthusiasm for Learning

4842 Sixteenth Street, NW | Washington, DC 20011

(202) 726-0740 | 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 Coordinator

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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 Communications Coordinator, and accept our sincere apologies.

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

On the Cover (clockwise from upper left)

A typical morning of PHS (Parkmont Home School). | Alex Harry at Flying Kick Fitness Center, where he interns as a Taekwondo assistant. | Parkmont middle-schoolers trying out a favorite Parkmont Classroom: the slopes at Whitetail Resort. | Lily at her internship desk job. | Ethan's middle-school band of hikers pause at an Old Rag lookout. | This mid-air high-five epitomizes the team-building spirit of the annual Calleva trip.

Dear Parkmont and Somerset Families, Alumni, and Friends,

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2019-20, our thank-you to our community and the larger metropolitan area for the support that helps make Parkmont possible. I'll start here by thanking Erin Lidz and her team of Kim Schraf, Mel Kates, and John Bray, for pulling this together again.



2020 on Ron's deck with his quarantine team.

I was hired by the Parkmont Board in April of 1981, soon to be 40 years ago, and next year will be Parkmont's 50th. Four decades of adventures for me and almost five for the school, but perhaps none will be more memorable than the last 12 months and what's immediately in front of us: responding to whatever form the victory, despite great casualties, over Covid takes. The Mayor announced the shutdown on March 13th, Troy Burki introduced everyone at Parkmont to Zoom in the remaining two hours of school that day, and we went home to be safe. And safe our families and staff largely have been with staff vaccinations about to be finished in March.

Taking only two days to regroup after the shutdown, we began teaching via Zoom on the 18th, gradually growing out the program we called Parkmont Home School (PHS) over the next several weeks. The teachers taught from home, we made adjustments to accommodate Zoom fatigue, and found ways to use multiple platforms to maintain our personal connections

with students and parents. We spent considerable resources making sure our economically diverse community had the connectivity and devices they needed to be active participants. We provided other forms of support for families whose employment disappeared overnight once the virus appeared. And despite the lurking fear, we made PHS our next adventure, not in the mountains or the Gulf of Mexico, but in our homes in the midst of a pandemic.

So please enjoy our reports about the help, much of it familiar to regular readers, that made a difference at Parkmont last year. Our 39th year at internships around the city, our 38th Parkmont Poetry Festival, our 26th Annual Fund, cumulatively topping 1.5 million, foundation support for our financial aid program, internship work, and support services. But let me finish here by thanking those who've done the heavy paddling since March:

- The staff who we already knew were excellent teachers and organizers but also, not surprisingly, turned out to be remarkably great learners and continue to creatively make PHS an exceptional opportunity for our students;
- Our parents, who have supported and encouraged us from Day One of this expedition, and whose feedback and spirit have been fuel for the rest of us;
- And Parkmont's students — who are doing an excellent job despite the pandemic and the shuttering of so much of their normal activity and routine — whose friendship and humor make every day a good one for their teachers!

Ron McClain
Head of School



Kim repurposes her basement as a classroom, a new twist on taking your work home with you.

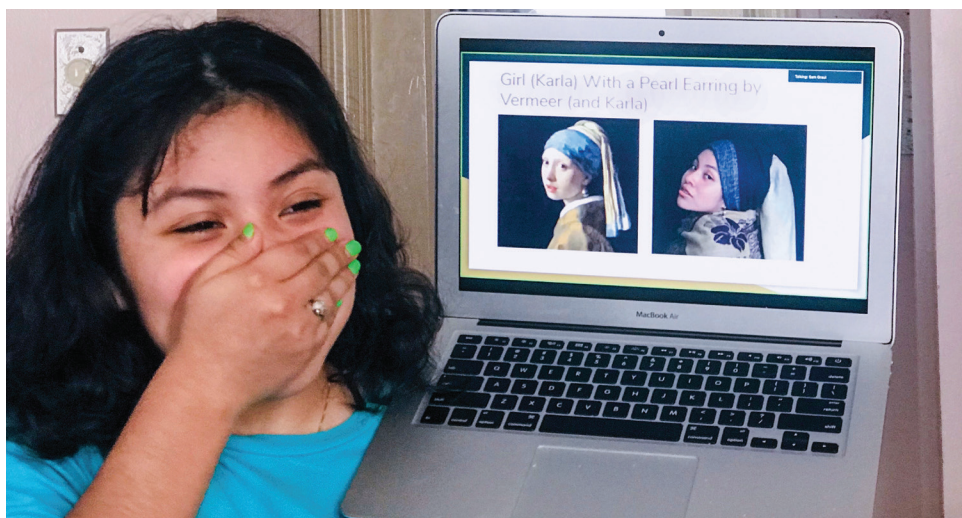


The Incredible Journey of Parkmont Home School

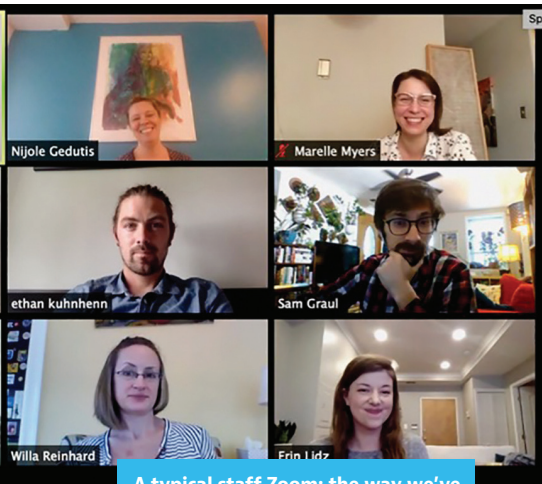
No one could have had any idea – at the end of February 2020 – what was about to happen. The occasion of an Episcopal pastor in Georgetown delivering communion rapidly led to Georgetown Day School shutting down, followed by Sidwell Friends and St. Albans, because members of their communities had been in that congregation and were falling sick. No one knew what to think, how

concerned we ought to be, until thankfully, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser shut everything down on March 13th. The imminent advent of spring break bought the private school community some time to get organized, and they came back a week later to a radically different educational world.

Parkmont, just two weeks into session four, introduced a graduated program of



Karla can't believe how great she looks on Vermeer's virtual canvas.



A typical staff Zoom: the way we've been seeing each other for a year

morning classes with a progression of afternoon components added in. We consolidated sessions four and five, keeping the continuity of a single Main Lesson along with English and Math, and reduced class time each week to accommodate the fatigue of all that screen time. Over the next ten or eleven weeks, staff acquired iPad Pros to facilitate demonstration, and benefited enormously from the prior five years of experience using Google Classroom with our students to exchange work, assignments, and resources. Teachers met every day before and after school to share what worked, what they figured out. According to Ron, “We didn’t send them out to get trained on all of this technology; we turned them into an amazingly fertile, resilient study group on how to teach online.”

It was critical to know that our audience was receiving the lion’s share of what we put out, and so the daily oversight and reporting of tech capacity in students’ homes became an administrative priority. It was a huge learning curve for us — unlike any in our history as a school — and we tried out a lot of new things: Wednesday afternoons were reserved for creative exploration and

continues on next page

Journaling to Make Sense of the World

Almost as soon as Parkmont Home School was underway, our ever-innovative English teachers had the instinct to get students to respond to the massive shift in their lives by reflecting about it on paper. The Corona Chronicles were born, and the chronicling hasn’t abated one year later. Here are some of their responses to a typical prompt:

What objects bring you comfort? What are the tangible things in your life you value most? What is the story behind one thing you own that means more than its monetary worth?

ALEX: One of the things that means more than its monetary worth is my black belts (my first and second degree black belt). The story behind both of the belts is how hard I have worked for them, and how many years of dedication I have put into getting them.

ARSIEMA: The second thing that gives me comfort is books. Because of the lock down I can’t get out much like I used to, so reading books is really comforting because I can use my imagination.

LUCAS: Another thing that I really value is we have an old collar for my old dog, Lubby. We had her since before I was born, and she died while we lived in Texas, we had to put her down. Her collar is in what’s called a Mesa, which is like a collection of items that you really cherish and have a lot of meaning for you. Our Mesa used to be in an old unused fish tank, but since we moved to D.C. it’s now in a small box, with a few items set out.

BAILEY: I really like my journal because I can write in it and look back at it whenever I want to. I like my journal so much because I let out my emotions. I also watch movies where the characters look back at stuff from the past, and I want to be like those people.



A recreation from Picasso's blue period by a very clever Jackson.

innovation, fun art projects, or physical activity; staff-led PE teams raised the bar on fitness and self-care and celebrated each other's successes; staff auditioned a raft of new afternoon class ideas and retained what was most promising. Never had Parkmont's guiding principle of flexibility been more in evidence or more required. And the kids were great. Attendance on our online platform was as high or higher than it typically had been for an onsite school day.

This is not to say that some students didn't struggle with attention, engagement, or morale during this difficult time. Teachers had to work hard to maintain connections with students when we weren't sharing the same physical space. But they found ways to keep the channels of access open and the private conversations possible. The 'Corona Chronicles' journaling, the movie-sharing nights hosted by staff, and the team spirit of the PE cohorts have become essential components of the '20-21 program. We now know that we can move from live instruction to a remote platform and back again with ease as needed and still serve the best interests of our students. Parkmont remains a place where students can collaborate with caring adults who come to know them well. Even in the time of Corona. ■

Finding the 'Verse' in Adversity

One thing you can count on is that the Parkmont Poetry Festival will reveal the beating hearts of area poets. It has never failed to be the case for 38 years, and 2020 – a year unlike any before it – was no exception. With the pandemic in full force by May, it was certain that we would not convene at Zion Baptist Church with the 40 winners as we'd done for several years. The dilemma was a familiar one for many event organizers: to cancel, to postpone, or to attempt a virtual version. We opted to capture the live poets reading their words on video; it was as close to the essence of the actual Festival as we could get, preserving the power and pleasure of seeing the diverse faces and hearing the myriad voices, with the added treat of seeing them in the spaces where they chose to film themselves.

The result was joyous, poignant, and provocative. Winners hailed from 20 different DC public, private and charter schools; Parkmont boasted two winners: Henry Rosser and Karla Rodriguez. And if you're curious to know what is on the minds of young people right now, you need only read the 2020 booklet of poems. Themes include love of family, loss of family, cultural identity, navigating a racist world, rescue, escape, and what it means/costs to be who you are. The poems cherish memory, gaze skeptically at the present moment, and hold audacious hope for the future.





KIMANI JOHNSON
HOWARD UNIVERSITY MS

We produced the 2020 video with help from Hiram Larew's The Cynipid Fund. Hiram, an accomplished poet-activist, has been a champion of our work for several years, serving twice as a semi-finalist judge. He shared the following words about our Festival: "Now more than ever, let's celebrate the role that the Parkmont Poetry Festival plays in building pride and care among so many young people. To hear them present their poems is a wonder not to be missed." You can watch the Festival Video and read the winning poems on our website: www.parkmontpoetry.org. ■

2020 PARKMONT POETRY FESTIVAL

By the Numbers

409	poems submitted from 25 public, private, and charter schools
80	semi-finalists
40	winning poets



Parkmont Students On The Job

Parkmont students packed their internship timecards as long as they were able in 2019-2020, amassing a grand total of 3,893 hours before Covid-19's spring strike that shuttered job sites. Internships play a vital role in the Parkmont curriculum, giving students a chance to test their career interests, contribute and build their skills and get their bearings in how business operates.

Parkmont's workplace partnerships involve nearly three dozen local businesses and organizations, an invaluable fold the school always seeks to further develop and diversify.

"At the end of each year," says longtime Internship Coordinator Willa Reinhard, "even a year like this one when our internship relationships were shortened, it's amazing to look back and see how much the students have learned in so many different places. We are so fortunate to have these valued partnerships that help students connect the dots between academic learning and the world of work." ■

A person's hand is shown pouring dark brown beans from a black plastic scoop into a large brown paper bag. The background is a workshop or storage area with various items, including a red bucket, a scale, and other bags of beans.

At Lost Sock Roasters, Lucas bags sustainably grown beans.





Thanks To Our Parkmont Internship Partners

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

Front Lines ...

"Because of my internship, I've learned that coffee is very scientific — you need an exact ratio of coffee to water, the water needs to be the right temperature, and the grind level is very important. There are also things I've learned about the sustainability of coffee. Lost Sock [Roasters] gets coffee from specialty-grade coffee farms. The philosophy is that they support and help the farms grow as the company grows." — **Lucas Whitworth**

"When I first arrived at Gearin' Up Bicycles for my interview, the first person I spoke with was my supervisor. My first impression of him was that he was a strict-looking person who wouldn't allow any mistakes or excuses to be made. Luckily for me, he was a kind guy that didn't care if I had experience because he valued my curiosity to learn about bikes and mechanical engineering. I hope that in the later days of my internship I will have learned, achieved, and experienced a multitude of different things that will help me grow as a person." — **Nahom Zemedkun**

"I have changed tremendously over the course of my time at internship. At first I was nervous to communicate with my supervisor and I was scared to ask for help when I needed it, but now I am able to ask a lot of questions and make sure that I'm completing the tasks correctly." — **Salem Tesfaye**

Parkmont Hails Three New Stars In Alum Sky

Unity and perseverance prevailed over academic hurdles and Covid-19, as the Parkmont School flock gathered remotely to recognize its 2020 graduates: Rob Allen, Henry Rosser and Graham Velsey.

“These are really interesting young men and they’ve worked very hard to get to where they are today,” Head of School Ron McClain said. Teacher Sam Graul emceed the June 14 assembly, toggling through the on-line face-mosaic as teachers feted the heroes.

Bridget Mullins rolled out the superlatives for Rob: Mr. Congeniality, best smile, one who “lights up any room he enters”, an accomplished thespian with depth of insight into character, a generous and leading presence on the basketball court, and one who loves, respects and admires his family. “If it were the Oscars, Rob would get best actor for his dedication to improving his performance,” Bridget said. Rob’s attitude led him to take the plunge into surf-swimming on the Coastal Carolina trip, with Matt McClain and Ethan Kuhnhehn. She noted Ethan’s evaluation: “Rob was diving over freezing waves like he was in a Baywatch commercial.”

Rob flashed the signature smile. “The only reason I was able to get in that water

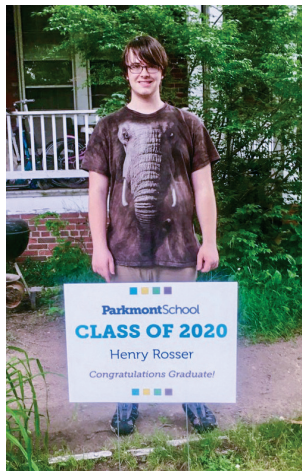
was the model of Matt and Ethan.” Nijole Gedutis was Rob’s first reading group teacher, someone he called the “embodiment of the Parkmont spirit. You can always count on Nijole being there for every student. Thanks, I’m the first in my family to graduate from high school.”

For Henry, there was a “tremendous transition” at Parkmont, Alex Jennison said. Henry is a “supremely nice guy,” YouTube channel curator, and writing collective activist, whose keen curiosities took school programs in fresh directions, including a Norwegian language class. Alex called out Henry’s advocacy for his peers. “You’re not afraid to speak to authority,” Alex said, closing with a commendation in the specified Scandinavian. “Sounded good,” Sam said. Henry, thanking the team, said his college of choice, Kenyon, is going to “feel massive” in comparison to Parkmont, “tiny, but beautiful in its own way.” “Have a fantastic rest of your life, everyone.”

Graham stood out for an exceptionally early jump on one aspect of his Parkmont career, signing up faculty to serve on his graduation petition committee. “Here was a young man with an eye toward his future



Rob flashes his “Class of 2020” smile.



Days before official graduation, Henry looks ready.



Graham stands at the crossroads of high school and his future.

even as he was wrestling with his present,” said the recruited Kim Schraf. “It is with sweet satisfaction that I speak about him today — two years later.” Kim recalled Graham at the podium of the Parkmont Poetry Festival, “delivering an homage to his family in the literary device of his choice: hyperbole. He slew the crowd.” Kim noted that Ron, seeing Graham at his final petition meeting, said it was like meeting someone

“Ron said it was difficult to take notice of people who were off-screen, including some family members and friends, but the technology had allowed for people far away to participate.”

anew. “And, perhaps, you, Graham, are just beginning to get to know yourself with new clarity and compassion.” She noted his fuel of nature, big ideas and music, including an internship in organ maintenance. “Seek out the conditions where you thrive,” Kim counseled. “We don’t want the joints of your bellows to become moldy.” Graham thanked his parents and grandparents for their help accessing his internship and “this crazy organ-building career. It’s not every day that somebody signs up to do that.”

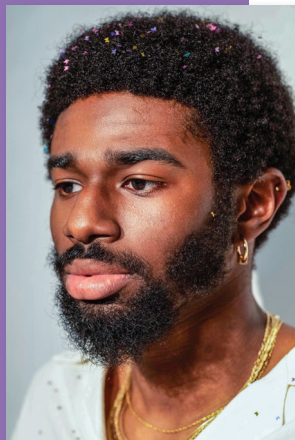
Ron said it was difficult to take notice of people who were off-screen, including some family members and friends, but the technology had allowed for people far away to participate. Great creativity and energy had been required in completing the school year under the cloud of coronavirus. He said the school had not come up short on allies, among them families and the school’s Joe Ferber-led, 10-member Board, with 150-plus years of combined service. Ron said

Alumni Update

Dwayne Latimer, Class of 2019

“I have been well, or as well as I can be during COVID-19. I am still attending

Marymount University, with a focus in Psychology and Criminal Justice, and currently ending my first sophomore semester. I also happen to be an RA, resident assistant, at my school which is a great position to have while in college if you get picked for the job. I miss everyone at Parkmont so much, from the staff to the students, and I can’t wait for COVID-19 to be over so I may come and visit you all again.”



Dwayne representing a “cocoon” in a modeling project involving the evolutionary stages of a butterfly. Modeling is a hobby he enjoys during his time at Marymount.

Parkmont has thrived through much adversity, including the Great Recession in 2008 and now the pandemic, saying Parkmont will be around for many more years to come.

Sending off the trio, Ron said: “We thank you for the great use you made of our staff and program and we’ve been honored to help you get ready for what lies ahead. Let’s hear it for these guys.”

Sam cued Bruno Mars, and let the tile disco spin full circle, giving people a chance to stand up and bust a move. From the peanut gallery, “That was a bit embarrassing.” ■

Making Opportunities Possible

In 2012, three or four years into the recession, and in response to enrollment challenges that impacted a large percentage of the independent school community, Parkmont accepted our first class of five Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) students. OSP is a federal voucher program that allows families living at or below the poverty line to attend private schools for nominal tuition. That year, several students in the program joined a Parkmont trip to Alaska. And we have been grateful to participate in the program every year since.

Through the Opportunity Scholarship Program, Parkmont welcomes a collection of DC's immigrant, first-generation, and historic African-American populations, many of them born in other countries or from multicultural families, deepening Parkmont's already diverse pool of students with various gifts, challenges, learning differences, and family backgrounds. It's one of the reasons why Ron calls us "DC's most diverse private school." He reflects that a number of students in the program bring firepower, ambition, and clarity about what they're looking for in school, even as others need additional help and skill-building. "It's been an enormous plus on multiple fronts for all of our populations to be witness to each other's successes, struggles, and contributions" both in and out of the classroom. The fact that we don't draw from a single student profile has made our classes more robust and more interesting.

For the past six years, Parkmont has provided financial assistance to our graduates with scholarships when they

share evidence of their financial aid as well as their academic progress at the next level. We joined the dual-enrollment program at Montgomery College as part of an effort to provide college classes to students seeking more challenge and to get them transitioned to college work by the time they graduated high school. A recent graduate transitioned from two years of community college to the University of Maryland this fall without any student debt.

And Parkmont's Internship program has only seemed more valuable in the last twenty years, heightened in large part by the experience of our kids who come to us with Opportunity Scholarships. We get our students prepared for the world of work by sending them to work, and they build a network of relationships and connections while they are still in high school. Each year we hear four or five stories of a success that originated in a Parkmont internship.

It has been a tale of two-way opportunity. In keeping with our mission of making the world our classroom, we have brought new parts of the world into our classrooms; we have also helped some of our students travel to new parts of the world — Alaska, the Grand Canyon, the Everglades — earlier in their lives than they might have. Ron remarks that "In a city that has been, and still is, divided in so many ways, you end up feeling that's less the case here at Parkmont." What a rare opportunity. ■

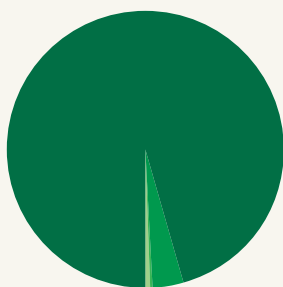
Intrepid learners pose for a shot from our Alaska Classroom in 2012, the first year of Parkmont's participation in the Opportunity Scholarship Program.



Gifts for Current Operations

Annual Giving, Unrestricted:	\$ 56,519
Annual Giving, Restricted:	\$ 1,900
Immediate Financial Aid Fund:	\$ 22,400
Internships Fund:	\$ 6,000
The Parkmont Poetry Festival:	\$ 10,618
Total Voluntary Support	\$ 97,437

Fiscal Year: 2019-2020 *



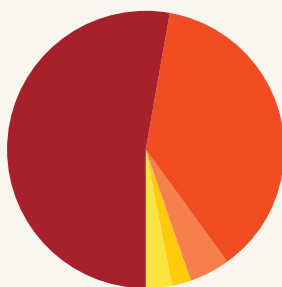
Tuition Income
\$ 2,458,357

Fundraising
\$ 97,437

School Programs
\$ 3,419

Financial Income & Other
\$ 12,228

Total Revenue
\$ 2,571,441



Instructional & Administrative
\$ 1,376,576

Financial Aid
\$ 964,532

Program & Student Activities
\$ 121,905

Property
\$ 60,589

Other Expenses
\$ 74,870

Total Expenses
\$ 2,598,472

ANNUAL GIVING \$ 56,519

Current Parkmont Families 2019-20

Murphy Antoine and Laurie Ballenger
Pamela and David Bone
David and Beth Frank
Rebecca and Larry Maxwell
Teri and Lloyd Trotter
Maureen Mahon and Michael Waterman

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Nancy Coleman and Paul Pitkoff

continues

* These numbers have not been finalized by the school audit.

Voluntary Support

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George Watson
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Anne and Fred Woodworth
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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.

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Willa Reinhard
Christy Halvorson Ross
Kim Schraf
Jacqui Michel and David Weisman
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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 \$22,400

Jaye Reyes and Lars Golumbic
Clark-Winchcole Foundation

INTERNSHIPS FUND \$6,000

The Harry and Zoe Poole Foundation

POETRY FESTIVAL: \$10,618

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Friends of the Poetry Festival

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Joseph Ross
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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

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Mentorship Program
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The George Washington
University PsyD Program
Hogan Lovells LLP
Doug McLean
Leila Shea
Emery Walton



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



Parkmont School, right where we left it, waiting to open its doors to full in-person instruction when it's safe!



Sam and Elijah test the voltage and current levels on an LED circuit.

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

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Grades 6–12, Co-Ed

ParkmontSchool

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

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