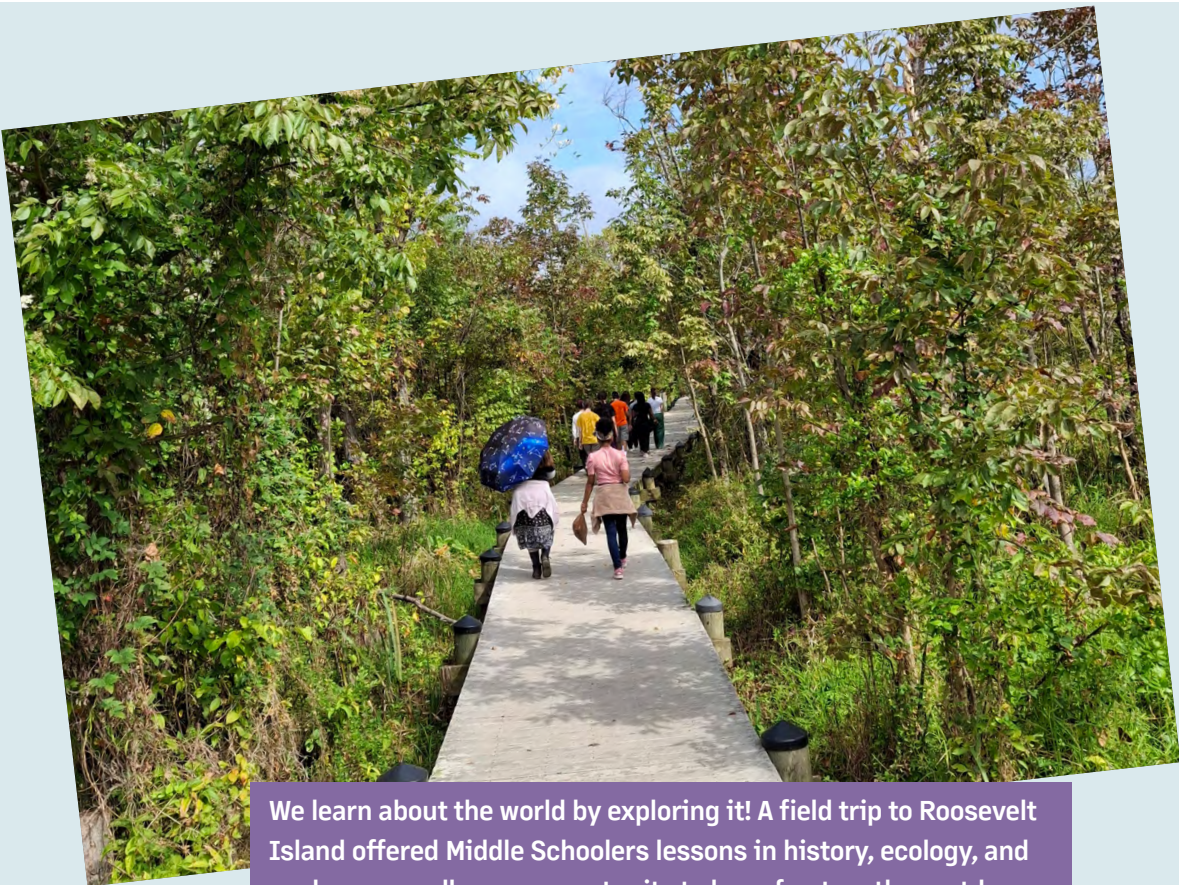




Parkmont School

Passing Notes

WINTER 2024-2025



We learn about the world by exploring it! A field trip to Roosevelt Island offered Middle Schoolers lessons in history, ecology, and geology, as well as an opportunity to have fun together outdoors.

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DC Public Library Welcomes Parkmont Poetry into its Collection!

Kim Schraf, teacher and Parkmont Poetry Festival Coordinator

The Parkmont Poetry Festival, now in its 43rd year (not a typo!), has long had a foothold in DC literary history. This fall, however, we reached a new milestone as the District of Columbia Public Library's Collections Department chose to add the Poetry Festival Booklet to three DC Public Library locations. This means that young



people can read their peers' poetry from all across the city's eight wards. And our winners are not only published, but on library shelves!

If students submit this year to the Parkmont Poetry Festival's competition and are selected to be published in the annual booklet, we are expecting their book to be in the library by the end of 2025.

The 2025 Festival will take place on

Saturday, May 3, 2025. Submissions are open on our website, parkmontpoetry.org, until February 21, 2025. Any student in a DC public, private or charter school (or homeschooled in the District), grades 6-12, may submit up to two original poems.

We hope to see you at the event in the spring! And do plan to check us out in the Teen Reading Room at a public library near you! ■

Field Trips Are Our Fuel!

**Christy Halvorson Ross,
Director of Institutional Advancement**

Parkmont loves to travel! We believe and practice that the world is our classroom. Travel here usually takes place in three different formats: Adventure Trips, Travel Courses, and educational Field Trips. We travel to see what is beautiful and needs to be conserved. We travel to meet people from other cultures and learn about their ways of life. We travel to understand the relationship between our studies and the concerns of the adult world. And we travel to expand our imaginations about what's out there and what's possible.



Z and Isla claim the NPR news desk while on a field trip with the Elections class.



In our Adventure Trips, we take students skiing, on ropes-course expeditions, camping, canoeing, and biking, among other activities within a few hours of our Parkmont homebase. We want our students to appreciate the natural world and acquire some of the skills needed to enjoy it. We want them to be confident and adventurous. This fall, a group of Upper Schoolers enjoyed a camping trip at Maryland's Cunningham Falls State Park.

Travel Courses are connected to Main Lesson classes in the upper school. We offer at least one travel course every *continues on the next page*

Right: Nick and Sam visited the US Capitol with their US Government class.

Below: Kavin reaches new heights while on an Adventure Trip at Bouldering Project.





Javonne, Zoey, and Theo enjoy a hayride at Butler's Orchard.

spring, and students travel farther afield than they do on field trips. The course often focuses on geography, history, and science, and the travel that goes along with it brings it all to life! This year, for example, the travel course is The History and Ecology of Alaska, and they will be going to ... Alaska! Our classrooms over the years have included the Panama Canal, the Potomac River and Shenandoah National Park, Algonquin Park in Canada, the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia, Everglades National Park, the Grand Canyon, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, where we've taken 16 groups of students!



Heaven, Mikiyas, Nick, Abe, and Tom relax while camping at Cunningham Falls State Park.

Educational Field Trips comprise an integral part of our Main Lessons. We visit close-by sites that bring to life the subjects of class studies. Classes may be developed around specific activities (i.e. animal observation) that can be done almost daily. We want our students to have a vivid understanding of the activities that engage adults in their community. We want them



Bronx and Kia at Butler's, proving you can look cool while riding a trike.

to have a feel for, along with knowledge of, the work being done.

This year there have already been too many field trips to list. But, for a sampling, our DC History Main Lesson went to RFK Stadium, Union Market, Georgetown, Capitol Hill, the Navy Yard, and more. Our Middle School students explored Planet Word, the Rubell Museum, the National Arboretum, the National Gallery of Art, the Hirshorn, the National Museum of the American Indian, and Kingman Island. They also picked apples at Butler's Orchard and skated at the rink in the National Gallery of Art's sculpture garden.

Lucky kids, and lucky us to learn and explore with them! ■

NaNoWriMo

Nijole Gedutis, Dean of Students

In November, Parkmont's middle schoolers participated in our annual National Novel Writing Month ("NaNoWriMo"). Students set a personalized word goal for the month and wrote between 200 and 500 words per day (every day!) through November 30. Cumulatively, students in the two Middle School English classes wrote just under 151,255 words – that's almost as long as *The Grapes of Wrath*!

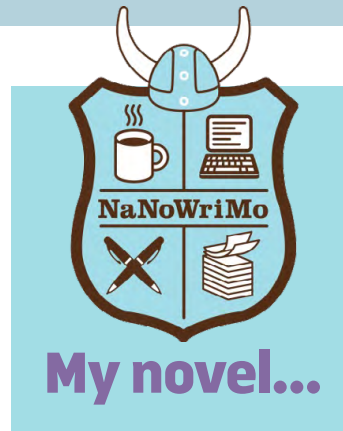
Every year, the students' novels showcase a wonderful variety of interests and styles. Here are students' summaries of the novels they wrote this year. ■

... is about a boy named Mathew who figures out he is connected to a prophecy, so he goes on an adventure with his friends to discover more about his powers and to hopefully save the world.

... is about a general of the Mongol Empire.

... is about a girl named Alicia who went on a cooking show and discovered that her competition was her co-worker, and in the end she won.

... begins by seeming to be about a group of police, some civilians, and a parent trying to recover missing children. It then turns to trying to take down a monster, which turns out to be the main factor of this story, due to having the final parts being the revelations of its creation and its vengeance.



... is about a kid named Devious and how he had no magic in a world where magic was everything. He was born in an orphanage because his mother had passed away and his mother's magic was to take magic, so that's why he had no magic. Then he finds a demon inside his magic book, but it turns out that he is just trying to kill him. Also, his brother, Spragod, is a gifted child that gets an angel but the angel is trying to kill him, and that's how he gets killed in the end — for his ego and foolishness.

... is about a girl named Maria and her little brother Liam. A fire starts in their hometown, which leads to tons of injuries and death. Unfortunately, their parents both die in the fire. Maria survives with injuries, and her little brother is unharmed. They are taken in by a neighbor and uncover secrets/clues about what led to the fire, why and how it happened.

... is about a girl who discovers a mysterious purple portal outside her house, goes through the portal, and is sucked into a new world.

... is about an Irish girl who is trying to escape the 19th-century famine in Ireland.

... is about a boy who is drafted into war without choice and goes through trauma, betrayal, and torture.



Parkmont Post Stories

All Posts News Profile Review editorial



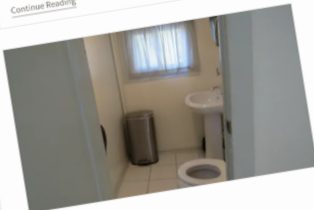
October 25, 2024 | News
Students outraged by the prices increasing on pizza

By Ashton Cohen
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October 25, 2024 | News
Parkmont Hosted Capitalism Class School Store Pop Up Last Week

Pictured above is the coffee that Pierce sold.
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October 23, 2024
Why there should be feminine hygiene products in school bathrooms

Every student who gets their period at school should have the resources to deal with it quickly and privately. Students should have access to feminine hygiene products in the bathrooms and not have to walk all the way to...

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October 25, 2024 | News
The Parkmont School gets a new update

By Noah Lane
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October 25, 2024 | News
New history classes at Parkmont

By Rafe Blackburn
Continue Reading

October 25, 2024
Chipmunk f

By Lillian Reed
Continue Reading



Click to go to the Parkmont Post site.

The Parkmont Post

What does it mean to write the first draft of history? Students in Ethan's Current Events and Journalism class examined the roles and responsibilities of contemporary journalists.

At the National Press Club, the class learned about covering the nation's capital and checked out the club's historical displays, including this phone booth from the US House of Representatives press gallery.

As a final project, they applied their learning by reporting, writing, editing, and publishing their own newspaper. They did a very impressive job! *The Parkmont Post* offers news, reviews, editorials, and a fascinating profile of a Parkmont teacher. Click [here](#) to read the full issue. ■



Photo Scrapbook



- A** Miles and Sean put theory into practice for their Capitalism class.
- B** On the pitch in a match against the Nora School.
- C** Theo made delicious Israeli salad for Health class.
- D** Rain brought our fall potluck inside, but Reign mesmerized us by deftly spinning sugar into clouds.
- E** Si'Miyah captures Klara's sartorial spirit on Spirit Week's Dress Like a Teacher Day.

What We're Learning, Session Three

Each session, students may choose one Main Lesson (based on needed credits) and one Afternoon Class. Check out the options for Session 3!

MAIN LESSONS

Middle School

Earth Science: Students will explore the forces and processes shaping Earth and our solar system. Through hands-on projects, collaborative investigations, and field trips, students will develop a deeper understanding of how scientists learn about Earth's history, our place in the universe, and how Earth's surface changes over time. The course is designed to spark curiosity and encourage critical thinking about how Earth's processes affect our lives and the environment.

Art & Music: Students will explore history through the lenses of art & music. From prehistoric art to modern day, students will discuss and analyze what makes each artistic period unique. Students will learn what materials, techniques, locations, and subjects characterize each period.

Upper School

Research Writing: The course prepares students for college writing by introducing MLA style and guiding the creation of two research papers, a five-to-seven-page practice paper and an eight-to-ten-page paper with greater scope and depth. Expect daily work on vocabulary, grammar and syntax, as well as outlining, note-taking, crafting a thesis, and supporting arguments.

Genetics and Evolution: Why do you have brown eyes and not purple? Why do people walk upright and not on four legs? Where did we come from and where will we go? These are all questions we will explore in Genetics & Evolutions class. We will begin with large-scale evolution, then go into theories of evolution, processes of evolution, and evidence of evolution. We will dive into natural selection and learn about Darwin & his observations. We will then go into genetics of individuals, alleles, and how genes are selected and expressed. There will be daily class activities, presentations, videos, and games. We will also take field trips to places where evidence of evolution and genetics can be observed.

Science of Science Fiction: We will explore some of the basic terms and definitions of science fiction. We will read some science fiction classics, with Frankenstein as an example, for the origins of the genre. We will focus on common subgenres. For each, we will study the current known and emerging science for that topic, look at example works from SF, and discuss how accurate or realistic their speculations might be.

Paragraphs & Essays: This course will help students improve and polish their skills in writing compositions. We will focus on writing the well-structured paragraph, and then expand to 3-paragraph and 5-paragraph essays in various styles — expository, descriptive, comparison/contrast, narrative, persuasive, etc. To refine our paragraphs and essays, we will use the workshop method, a process of critique and revision (lots of revision!). Our goal is to achieve crafted essays that incorporate observation, analysis, and personal revelation.

Computer Science: This class explores the introductory ideas and concepts behind computer programming. We will look at how

continues

computers ‘think’ about numbers, learn how to represent numbers in the binary system, and learn classic programming techniques. We will start learning block-based coding in micro:bits and Scratch. We will then dive into object-oriented coding, primarily in Python. Each day, students will explore concepts through various projects, writing computer code, and reading/writing assignments about current events and historical context of Computer Science.

AFTERNOON CLASSES

Theater Arts: In this course we will play theater games to encourage collaboration and working in teams. We will read short classic plays, and rehearse and perform for each other in class. We will also watch musicals, plays, and other theatrical productions to learn from them.

Charcoal Drawing: The class will concentrate on observing and drawing different objects, creating the illusion of three-dimensional forms using pencil, charcoal, and pastels.

Yoga and Meditation: This course is designed to introduce students to the practices of yoga and meditation. Our classes begin with a few words of wisdom from the teacher, breathing exercises and light stretching before a 30-to-40-minute yoga practice. Students will be encouraged to push themselves physically and to check in with their minds and bodies throughout the day. Each class ends with a 15-to-20-minute meditation period, where students will learn a variety of mindfulness techniques.

Soccer: This session is dedicated to soccer. We will focus on getting students active by doing warmups, learning basic techniques and skills, and playing small-sided games at our gym in Takoma Park.

Study Skills: In study skills, students have dedicated class time to complete and make progress on classwork. They learn different time management and study techniques, including organizational skills. They receive incentives to complete work in order to encourage and reinforce completion of school work.

Cooking: Each week we will focus on a different type of cuisine to cook. Some highlights include basic Italian staples, delicious grilled cheese sandwiches, fluffy scrambled eggs, and homemade hummus. This class will also head to the grocery store a few times so students can select produce and essentials for cooking.

Board Games: The focus is on finding group games that kids can learn in a day so that we can learn a new game each week. We will tend to choose games students haven’t all played or that many of them already like. The goal is for students to build strategic-thinking skills, as well as to practice communicating and showing positive sportsmanship in a group — and hopefully have fun doing it. ■

Photo Scrapbook



A On our first day back after holiday break, lunchtime = snowball fight!

B Our front porch gave Noa and Mariam a cozy place to chat during the fall potluck.

C Quadruplets on Twins Day!

D The weather was perfect for a fun Middle School trip to the National Arboretum.

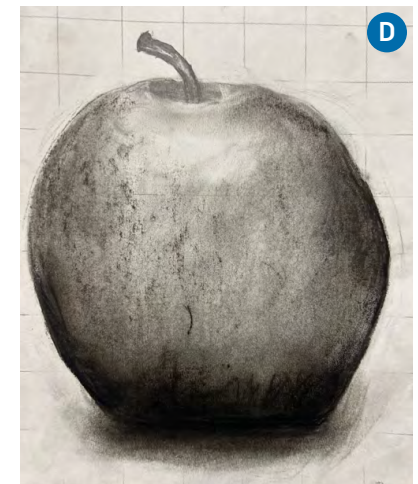
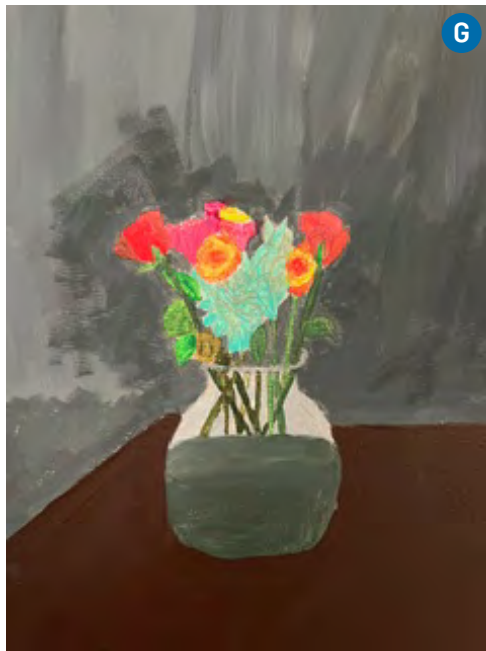
E Ready for the magic at a Wizards game.

Studio Notes

The students in Lexis's art classes continue to dazzle us with their beautiful work, some of which adorn the walls of Parkmont's central staircase. Here is a mini gallery for your viewing pleasure!



- A Collage self portrait by Abe
- B Dino leaf collage by Garrett
- C Turkey leaf collage by Isla
- D Charcoal apple by Reign
- E Charcoal apple by Estrella
- F Charcoal apple by Xavier
- G Floral still life in acrylic by Laila R.



The Parkmont Dish

For his Health Class cooking project, 8th-grader Kia followed a recipe he found on thekitchn.com for cheesy potato quesadillas. According to Kia, the recipe is “super easy,” making it a good choice for middle schoolers. Add a little hot sauce, he says, and these quesadillas will “taste fire.” He recommends trying Whole Foods’ bottled chipotle hot sauce.

Cheesy Potato Quesadillas

(adapted from thekitchn.com)

Quesadilla Ingredients

- 12 oz small red potatoes (about 5 to 7)
- 1 Tbsp kosher salt, plus more as needed
- 1/2 medium yellow onion
- 4 medium scallions
- 2 Tbsp olive oil, divided
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 (about 6”) flour tortillas (often labeled fajita-style)
- 1 c shredded Mexican cheese blend

Chipotle Sauce Ingredients

- 1/2 medium lime
- 1/2 c mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp canned chipotle in adobo sauce, plus more as needed
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt

Steps

- 1) Place the potatoes and 1 Tbsp kosher salt in a medium saucepan and add enough cold water to cover the potatoes by

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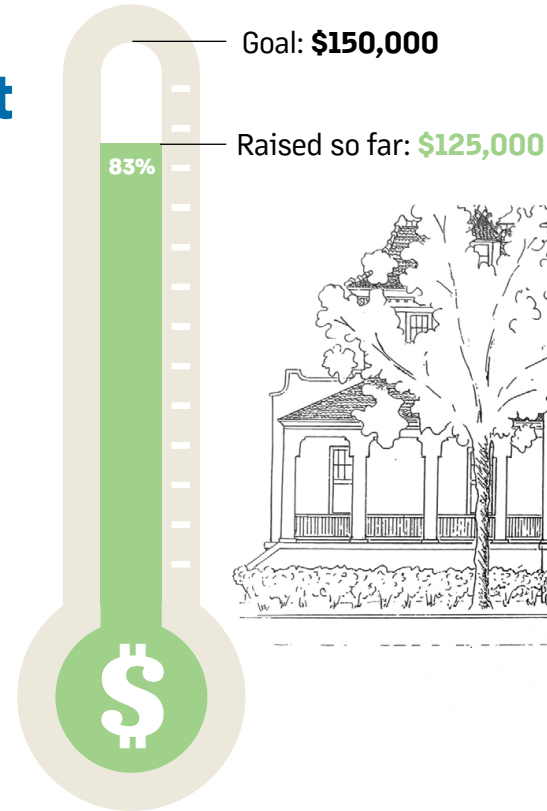
- about 1 inch. Bring to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, thinly slice 1/2 medium yellow onion. Thinly slice the green and white parts of 4 medium scallions.
- 2) When the water is boiling, reduce the heat to maintain a simmer. Cook until the potatoes are very tender, cooked through, and can be easily pierced with a sharp knife with no resistance, 15 to 20 minutes. Meanwhile, make the sauce.
 - 3) Juice 1/2 medium lime into a medium bowl (about 1 Tbsp). Add 1/2 c mayonnaise, 2 Tbsp canned chipotle in adobo sauce, and 1/2 tsp kosher salt, and stir to combine. Taste and stir in more chipotle in adobo sauce if desired.
 - 4) When the potatoes are ready, drain. When cool enough to handle, transfer to a medium bowl and crush with the back of a fork or a potato masher into rough 1/2-inch pieces.
 - 5) Heat 1 Tbsp of the olive oil in a large cast iron skillet or non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the onion and scallions and cook, stirring occasionally, slightly charred, 5-to-6 minutes. Add the potatoes and cook, stirring halfway through, until lightly golden-brown, about 6 minutes total. Taste and season with kosher salt and black pepper as needed. Return the potato mixture to the bowl. Wipe out the pan with paper towels.
 - 6) Place the pan over medium-low heat. Place 2 of the flour tortillas in the skillet in a single layer. Sprinkle 1/4 c of the Mexican cheese blend onto one half of each tortilla. Top each portion of cheese with 1/4 of the potato mixture, then drizzle each portion of potato with 2 Tbsp of the sauce. Fold the other half of the tortillas over the filling and gently press down.
 - 7) Increase the heat to medium high and cook, flipping once, until the quesadillas are golden-brown on both sides and the cheese is melted, 1-to-3 minutes per side.
 - 8) Transfer to a cutting board. Add the remaining 1 Tbsp olive oil to the pan. Repeat assembling and cooking the remaining 2 quesadillas. Cut each quesadilla in half (or quarters) and serve with the remaining sauce on the side or drizzled on top.
- Enjoy! ■

Parkmont Schoolhouse Project

In October we launched the Parkmont Schoolhouse Project, a special campaign to fund major improvements to our classrooms and other interior spaces. The response has been incredibly gratifying and exciting. As of mid-January, Parkmont parents, alumni, and friends have donated more than \$120,000 toward a \$150,000 matching grant.

Thank you to all of you who have given so far! We can't wait to put the funds to work this summer, building out a science lab, updating the kitchen, computer room, bathrooms, and more!

If you would like to contribute to the Parkmont Schoolhouse Project, please visit parkmont.org/schoolhouseproject.



4842 Sixteenth Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20011
(202) 726-0740 • **Admissions:** Ext. 2
Email: info@parkmont.org
www.parkmont.org