

Collegiate Life

Two Years in Review:
History Celebrated, Future Ready



The Bridge Builder

By Will Allen Dromgoole

An old man going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast and deep and wide.
Through which was flowing a sullen tide
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near,
“You are wasting your strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day,
You never again will pass this way;
You’ve crossed the chasm, deep and wide,
Why build this bridge at evening tide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head;
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said,
“There followed after me to-day
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been as naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!”

As read by Susan Garlinghouse at the Founder's Brunch, Sept. 17, 2022



Table of Contents

A Note from Dr. Lyn Rantz, Head of School	4
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Section No. 1 — School News

Four Decades Rooted in Inspirational Foundation	6
40 Years of Excellence	7
Celebrating Milestones	8
Leaving A Legacy: Carl Graves.....	9
Empowering Eagles: The 2023 Graduation Celebration	10
Our 2023 Graduates	11
Words of Wisdom: The 2024 Graduation Celebration	12
Our 2024 Graduates	13
Citizens of the World	14-15

Section No. 2 — Building Our Future

Funding Our Success: The Sustain Campaign	17
Opening New Doors: Two Ribbon Cuttings	18-19
Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder	20-21
Snapshots of Giving.....	22-23

Section No. 3 — Beyond the Classroom

Excellence in Education	25-26
Philanthropy in Action.....	27-29

Section No. 4 — Honor Roll

Sustain Campaign Donor list.....	31
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A note from Dr. Lyn Rantz, Head of School

When it first opened in 1982 with only 43 students, Topeka Collegiate was a school with a bold dream and vision to provide exceptional education to young children.

Today, due to the dedication of countless volunteers, families, and remarkable teachers, Topeka Collegiate has evolved into more than just a school. It is an active community of like-minded individuals, with diverse backgrounds and experiences, who all value the power and potential of exemplary education. I believe it is a school of caring, collective individuals who reject mediocrity.

Topeka Collegiate prioritizes foundational exemplary education, and support from the passionate teachers, devoted Board, and invested families help to make the institution a gem. As we celebrate 40 years of growth, our focus remains creating transformative leaders through critical and creative thinking. We are committed to the strategic and conscientious advancement of our school, for a better and brighter future.

This special publication celebrates the past two years academic years. We honor the school's first 40 years and thanks to the generosity of supporters Topeka Collegiate completed a successful Sustain Campaign setting up the school's future. The Campaign raised \$6.4 million for construction and \$845,000 committed to Endowment. We are extremely grateful for every contribution.

Our entire school community has helped to create something grand, robust, and long lasting. Every student, teacher, and family member is a Topeka Collegiate bridge builder.

With gratitude and optimism,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lyn D. Rantz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lyn D. Rantz, EdD, P'19, P'21

School News

Section No. 1



Four Decades Rooted in an Inspirational Foundation

School's success and future stem from strong past

As Topeka Collegiate proudly commemorates four decades of educational excellence, we reflect upon the remarkable history of our school and the extraordinary individuals who have played vital roles in shaping its success.

It is a testament to their unwavering commitment and dedication that we stand tall today as a beacon of academic advancement.

Mac Rives, a visionary educator from Colorado, was entrusted with breathing life into Topeka Collegiate, then known as Shawnee Country Day School. Mr. Rives, armed with boundless determination and a passion for education, embarked on the journey of establishing a school that would cultivate young minds and foster a love for learning.

Mr. Rives called upon the expertise of Dr. Carl Graves, a distinguished history professor from The University of Kansas. Creating the first curriculum from scratch, Dr. Graves fearlessly took on the challenge,



Former Topeka Collegiate alumni and staff including Dr. Carl Graves returned for the 40th anniversary celebration.

meticulously crafting a program offering students a well-rounded education while instilling values such as critical thinking, empathy, and responsibility.

However, tragedy struck just as the school was on the brink of its highly anticipated opening. In an inexplicable turn of events, Mr. Rives was involved in a car accident that claimed his life during the summer of 1982. Yet, his legacy and unwavering commitment to education would endure.

Although the loss of Mr. Rives was profound, the founding board and staff carried on with a determination to honor his vision with the appointment of Bill Rowlings as the new Head of School. This

decision played a pivotal role in shaping the future of Topeka Collegiate. Rowlings' leadership set the stage for the following success, making him a cherished figure in the school's legacy.

Over the years, Topeka Collegiate flourished under the guidance of exceptional leaders. As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we owe a debt of gratitude to the remarkable individuals who have played pivotal roles in our school's journey. From Mr. Rives, whose dream laid the foundation, to the courageous board members, dedicated faculty, and inspired students who continue to shape our community, their contributions will forever be etched in the fabric of Topeka Collegiate's history.

As we embark on the next chapter of our school's legacy, remember the words of Mr. Rives' motto, "Freedom with Responsibility." These words remind us of our duty to instill in our students the capacity to think critically, act with integrity, and embrace the ideals of citizenship.

Together, we will continue to forge a path of academic excellence, preparing generations of young minds to become compassionate and impactful leaders of tomorrow.

40 Years of Excellence

Topeka Collegiate proudly celebrates its storied history

The 40th Anniversary of Topeka Collegiate in 2022-2023 was filled with nostalgia and pride.

Celebrations began Friday, September 16, with a memorable weekend that brought together guests from across the country. From California to Washington D.C., alumni gathered to celebrate the school's impact on over 1800 students since opening as Shawnee Country Day School in 1982. It was a weekend filled with nostalgia, joy, and a strong sense of community as we commemorated this remarkable milestone in our school's history.

"It's inspiring to see multiple generations of parents getting involved at Topeka Collegiate - to see school leadership innovate and adapt in ways we never thought possible when we opened 40 years ago," said Susan Garlinghouse, founder.

The festivities kicked off on Friday afternoon, as current students gathered to witness the unearthing of the 20th and 30th-year time capsules. It was exciting to see the student's enthusiasm as they caught a glimpse of the past, reminiscing about the memories and milestones of those eras. A brand-new time capsule capturing the 40th year was placed to mark the present moment, ready to preserve the school's ongoing legacy for future generations.

The celebrations continued into the evening with a special alumni event.



The five Topeka Collegiate Heads of School — Kevin Freed, Dick Patterson, Dr. Lyn Rantz, Mary Beth Marchiony and Dr. Michael Roberts — gathered for the 40th anniversary. Together they make up 31 years of the school's leadership.

Attendees had the opportunity to tour the original campus, which served as home to the Shawnee County Day School, where Topeka Collegiate's journey first began. It was a trip down memory lane as graduates reconnected with the place that laid the foundation for their academic and personal growth.

Saturday morning, the school hosted a founder's brunch. This intimate gathering brought together the visionaries and key figures who played instrumental roles in establishing Topeka Collegiate. The festivities included a lively carnival on Saturday afternoon, where families enjoyed rides, games, and delicious treats. The weekend's

highlight was the Decade's Dinner on Saturday night, a celebration that honored the past while looking toward the future.

At the end of the celebration, Board Chair Kent Lammers and Head of School Dr. Lyn D. Rantz surprised the audience by announcing our Sustain Campaign.

"As an independent school, campus improvements aren't available through taxes or bond issues," said Kent Lammers, Board of Trustees Chair. "It's incredible to think about the generous philanthropy - and the investment of families - that has allowed the school to remain debt-free for more than twenty years and independent for 40 years."

Every school anniversary holds a special place in the hearts of its community members. It is a time of reflection, appreciation, and celebration of the remarkable journey that has taken place. Topeka Collegiate has had its fair share of memorable events and is honored to have several alumni return to share our great school's impact in their lives and beyond.

Celebrating Milestones

Four decades of speakers share Topeka Collegiate's impact



The 1980s

Matt Garlinghouse

"The founders of this school, my parents among them, put in motion what we have today. But what we have today is the cumulative contribution of forty years of the teachers, parents, students, and greater Topeka community."

Matt is a graduate of Topeka Collegiate's class of 1990, Topeka High School and Stanford University. He is a co-founder of Recurrent Energy and works in the solar power and lower carbon economies.

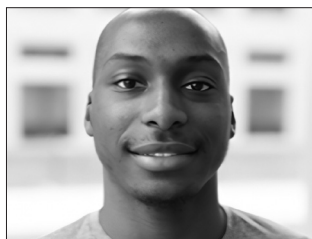


The 1990s

Maria Malandao

"(Topeka Collegiate teachers) saw something in me that I perhaps could not see in myself at that moment, and they encouraged me to truly spread my wings and fly; to strive towards developing a mind of a scientist, the heart of a poet, and the ways of a gentle person."

After graduating from KU, Maria got a master's degree in social work and public health. She now treats undocumented families dealing with trauma.



The 2000s

Nyalia Lui

"Ms. Kareem Thomas, Chair of the Board level Equity and Justice Committee, and Ms. Leilani Grey, Director of Diversity and Social Responsibility — You are tangible examples of progress, hope, and the possible fulfillment of a truly inclusive school that models how to be a citizen of the world."

A Purdue grad, Nyalia serves as a software engineer in D.C. His work includes compatibility testing for RedPanda.



The 2010s

Laura Nicolae

In July 2016, Laura told Dr. Rantz that following graduation, "I just hope that Harvard University will challenge me the way Topeka Collegiate has."

Laura is a 2012 Collegiate grad. She was inducted into Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa and graduated magna cum laude, earning a bachelor's with highest honors in applied mathematics. Laura is now a Ph.D. student in business economics at Harvard where she studies monetary policy and macroeconomics.

Leaving a Legacy

Teacher Carl Graves brought history to life at SCDS

As the first faculty members hired at Shawnee Day School, Carl Graves' journey into the world of education was built on a solid academic foundation.

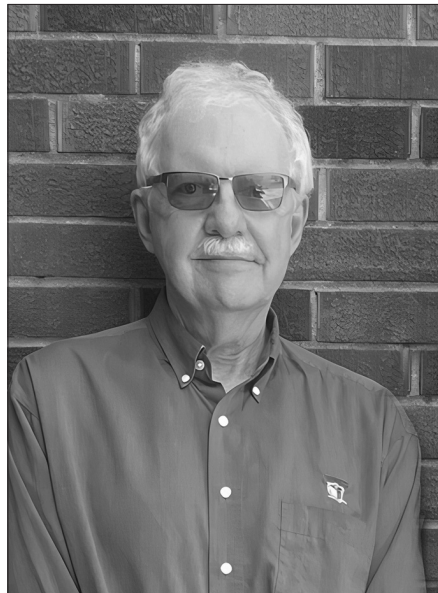
Between 1969 and 1980, he pursued his passion for history with a bachelor of arts degree at Central State University in Oklahoma. Carl continued on to the University of Kansas, where he earned a master of arts in US History. His dedication didn't stop there. He went on to achieve a Ph.D. in US History from Harvard.

Carl's pre-college teaching began when he became the first teacher hired by Shawnee Country Day School (SCDS) after he was recruited by Headmaster Bill Rollings during the summer of 1982.

During his three years at SCDS, Carl assisted in the development of curriculum in world history, social studies, and government for Grades 4-8, where Carl's dedication shone through in every class.

Transitioning from college-level academics to pre-college teaching wasn't a walk in the park. Carl faced challenges, especially in his first year. Adapting to the needs of younger students required a shift in teaching style and approach. Those initial years were all part of his journey toward becoming a remarkable educator.

Bill Rollings, SCDS's headmaster, recog-



Carl Graves, pictured at the 2023 graduation, was the first teacher hired at the Shawnee Country Day School the summer before it opened and helped shape the social studies program.

nized Carl's dedication and potential. Bill's decision to rehire Carl for a second year spoke volumes about his faith in Carl's teaching abilities.

Carl's second-year evaluation noted his growth, highlighting that he had "become more comfortable in dealing with junior high students." It was a testament to his students and his ever-improving teaching skills.

Carl's connection with SCDS was not only academic. His connection with students and families was clear. Carl commuted from Lawrence with his daughter Karin and would transport additional SCDS students in a vehicle provided by the other Lawrence-based families. It was a beautiful testament to the tight-knit, supportive community at the school.

One of the most memorable aspects of Carl's teaching was his creative approach. He introduced history classroom debates that brought the subject to life in a fun and engaging way. Students got to choose sides, conduct research, and participate in critical discussion — all while dressed in costumes and armed with posters. It was an innovative teaching method that not only made history exciting but also helped students develop important skills.

Carl Graves isn't just an educator; he's a person who brought warmth, creativity, and dedication to his role as a teacher. His story is a reminder of Topeka Collegiate's dedication to providing educators with opportunities to make learning an enjoyable and memorable experience for students.

Carl's legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of the students he taught at Shawnee Country Day School, leaving a lasting impact that goes beyond the classroom.

Empowering Eagles

Special guests share uplifting message at 2023 graduation

The 2023 commencement took on extra meaning this past year as Topeka Collegiate honored its 40th graduation class in school history.

The celebration included such special guests as Jennifer Rives, daughter of Mac Rives, a name that holds immense significance to Topeka Collegiate.



Dr. Hari Osofsky

Jennifer's presence reminded us of our great beginnings as she commemorated the 40th graduating class alongside some of her former classmates.



Phyllis Hoyt

One of the ceremony's highlights was the keynote speaker, Dr. Hari Osofsky ('85).

A member of Topeka Collegiate's third graduating class, Dr. Osofsky is currently Dean

and Myra and James Bradwell Professor of Law at Northwestern's Pritzker School of Law and Professor of Environmental Policy and Culture at the Weinberg

"As I experience the joy of reconnecting with teachers who meant so much to me, it only reinforces the critical difference that they and the administration and staff here make in our graduates' lives."

Dr. Hari Osofsky
2023 Graduation Keynote Speaker

College of Arts and Sciences. Her leadership focuses on advancing the innovation needed in legal education at this time of change.

During her speech, Dr. Osofsky shared a powerful anecdote about discovering an article as a child that reinforced the belief that boys were inherently better at math than girls. The article went so far as to claim that girls could never achieve strength and power in mathematics.

Dr. Osofsky defied these stereotypes by excelling in math including earning a perfect score on her SAT math before she was 14 years old. Her parents hired

a tutor to challenge her further and later enrolled her in Shawnee County Day School.

"As I experience the joy of reconnecting with teachers who meant so much to me," Dr. Osofsky said while reflecting on her time at Topeka Collegiate, "it only reinforces the critical difference that they and the administration and staff here make in our graduates' lives."

After enrolling, Dr. Osofsky continued with her math tutoring from Phyllis Hoyt. Her positive experience and growth at SCDS influenced Phyllis to apply for a position at Topeka Collegiate. Beloved to the Topeka Collegiate community, Phyllis remained an integral part of the school community for 36 years.

Dr. Osofsky's message resonated deeply with the audience at the 2023 graduation ceremony as she defied the prevailing gender biases and pursued a successful career in law and academia.

Her story reinforces the key focus for Topeka Collegiate to challenge students to become critical thinkers and leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you, Dr. Osofsky, for sharing your journey with us as the 2023 graduation speaker.



Back row from left: Owen Lathrop-Allen, Estella Forstein, Campbell Dawson, Zain Moler, Halle Owen, Ameria Thomas, Riley McMillan
Front row from left: Saylor Classi, Will Boyd, Kennedy Wright

Congratulations, Class of 2023

In 2023, Topeka Collegiate held a ceremony for its 40th graduating class. The following is a look at the graduates and their chosen high schools.

Will Boyd
Washburn Rural High School

Saylor Classi
Washburn Rural High School

Campbell Dawson
Topeka High

Estella Forstein
Topeka High

Owen Lathrop-Allen
Topeka High

Riley McMillan
Topeka High

Zain Moler
Washburn Rural High School

Halle Owen
Washburn Rural High School

Ameira Thomas
Topeka West

Kennedy Wright
Washburn Rural High School

Words of Wisdom

2024 graduation speaker shares memories, message

Topeka Collegiate was thrilled to have Blake Whitaker, a distinguished alumnus from the Class of 1998, as the 2024 graduation speaker.

Blake is a historian of the British Empire and a Psychological Operations (PSYOP) officer in the U.S. Army Reserve. He holds a Ph.D. in history from Texas A&M.

His publications include the book "Built on the Ruins of Empire: British Military Assistance and African Independence," published by the University Press of Kansas in May 2022.

Whitaker has also contributed to "Securing Africa: Local Crises and Foreign Intervention," "Dictionary of African Biography," and "War and Peace in Africa: History, Nationalism and the State," among others.

"TCS had a huge impact on both what I learned and how I learned," Blake shared during his graduation speech. "I struggled as a student in elementary school, but my teachers at TCS took the time to help identify my learning challenges.

"My 1st grade teacher Sharon Nolde was the first to figure out that I needed some tailored assistance. This set me on a path



"TCS had a huge impact on both what I learned and how I learned. "I struggled as a student in elementary school, but my teachers at TCS took the time to help ..."

Blake Whitaker

2024 Graduation Keynote Speaker

where I was not only able to continue to develop, but able to thrive, and find ways to mitigate my learning challenges.

"My teachers at TCS also fostered my love for history and helped push me to have more confidence in my own abilities. It was clear in both high school and college that the educational foundation that helped me succeed was built at TCS."

Dr. Lyn Rantz, Head of School, said Blake's graduation message to current Eagles and his life's work exemplify the values of Topeka Collegiate.

"We were honored to welcome Blake Whitaker back to Topeka Collegiate as our distinguished guest speaker," she said. "His accomplishments serve as a shining example for our students, illustrating the limitless possibilities through a commitment to academic excellence and the humanitarian ideals we instill in our students."

Blake and his wife have two lovely kids, Avery (7) and Alexander (6), and reside in Virginia. He plans on continuing his career in public service and the U.S. Army Reserve.

Additionally, he has plans to continue his research and writing on the history of military decolonization.



Back row from left: Winter Frendle, Ivan Beach, Cooper Wells, Jay van Doren, Maci Alderson **Front row from left:** Megan Alderson, Laurel Sorrenti, Nithya Suravarapu, Jay van Doren, Noah Harrison, Delaney Williams

Congratulations, Class of 2024

In 2024, Topeka Collegiate held a ceremony for its 41st graduating class. The following is a look at the graduates and their chosen high school.

Maci Alderson

Washburn Rural High School

Megan Alderson

Washburn Rural High School

Ivan Beach

Washburn Rural High School

Winter Frendle

Topeka High School

Noah Harrison

Topeka High School

Laurel Sorrenti

Washburn Rural High School

Nithya Suravarapu

Blue Valley Southwest High School

Cooper Wells

Washburn Rural High School

Jay van Doren

Free State High School

Delaney Williams

Washburn Rural High School

Continuing to Grow as Citizens of the World

Three diverse speakers introduce students to new ideals

In honor of our 40th anniversary, Topeka Collegiate hosted three speakers throughout the school year, focusing on learning from others with diverse backgrounds.



1 Jimmy Beason Native American Author

On Sept. 23, 2022, Topeka Collegiate welcomed Jimmy Beason in conjunction with the Kansas Book Festival. His presentation focused on Native American language, culture, and history.

An Osage Nation of Oklahoma member from the Eagle Clan, Mr. Beason is a professor in the Indigenous and American Indian Studies Department at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence,

Kansas. He spoke to students about his book, "Native Americans in History."

In his book, Mr. Beason brings Native American history to life for children and young adults through beautiful illustrations and impressive detail. This presentation worked to increase awareness and appreciation of Native American traditions and culture.



2 Luis Estrada CEO of the Topeka Latino Professionals Association

In recognition and celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, Topeka Collegiate invited Luis Estrada to speak

to students in October 2022. Mr. Estrada is the CEO and co-founder of the Topeka Latino Professionals Association, founder of Somos KS: Resource platform, a YWCA Advisory Committee member, and a Woman and Minority Business Development Council member.

His presentation followed the story of his early childhood in Mexico, his move to California as a young child and eventually his migration to Topeka. Each time he moved, Mr. Estrada said, he grew his world. It was a simple but powerful concept that resonated at every grade level.

"I shared a concise version of my journey from Mexico, Southern California, and Kansas," he explained. "It is important to have creativity and curiosity, respectfully asking questions when meeting new people from different backgrounds and how this may offer opportunities for both."

Thank you, Luis, for sharing your story with our students and increasing their understanding of Hispanic heritage here in Kansas and beyond!

3 **Wanda Holland Greene** Head of School at The Hamlin School

Topeka Collegiate continued its focus on equity and belonging by hosting Wanda Holland Greene, the head of school at The Hamlin School in San Francisco and member of the Columbia University Board of Trustees.

Holland Greene spoke with students and



staff on understanding socio-emotional competencies and academic equality.

Having Holland Greene hold these discussions with our students was a fantastic way to celebrate our 40th anniversary. She started the morning off with a discussion about vision. Grades 3-5 talked about what it meant to have a vision for change in the world and how they can do their part to bring about that change.

Next, the Prekindergarten through 2nd grade students discussed friendship and what it means to have empathy for those who may be causing us problems. They talked about how to handle that situation, and we were all very impressed with the emotional intelligence displayed by our youngest Eagles.

Finally, our middle school came togeth-

er to discuss their personal stories. The conversation focused on what their names mean, what defines home, and how their early life stories built them into the wonderful people they have become and continue to grow into.

It's been wonderful having Wanda Holland Greene visit Topeka Collegiate, and we appreciate her taking the time to share her passion for education with us.



Section No. 2

Building Our Future



Ceremonial Groundbreaking, May 16, 2023

Sustaining Our Success

\$6.6 million and rising raised for Sustain Campaign

On the evening of the school’s 40th Anniversary Celebration Dinner — with more than 200 school community members in the audience — Topeka Collegiate proudly announced the public launch of the Sustain Campaign.

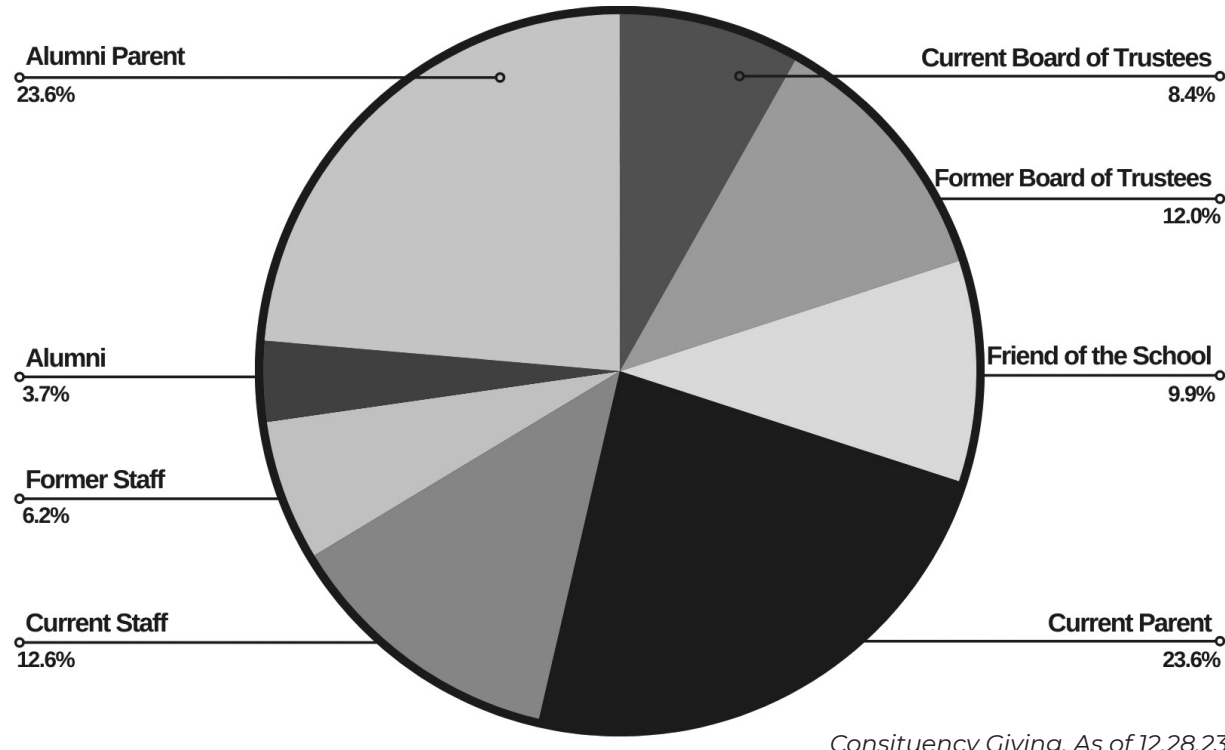
“Topeka Collegiate is a powerhouse in the education ecosystem in Topeka and Shawnee County,” said Matt Pivarnik with the Greater Topeka Partnership. “Its leadership is involved in community-

advancing initiatives in every corner of our region, and it is intimately involved in preparing our future citizens for success. Topeka Collegiate is in its 40th year as the only independent school in our region. They are a tight-knit and innovative school serving 150 students. Offering an 8:1 student-to-teacher ratio on a centrally located campus, they are ready to grow!”

Driven by the school’s 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees established

priorities for the next 40 years.

The Sustain Campaign has and will enhance the school in two key areas: the campus and the school’s endowment. The campaign steering committee, led by Chair Sean Frost, raised \$3.4 million during the campaign’s silent phase. As of this publication, we have raised more than \$6.6 million of the \$7 million goal from just over 300 donors.



Consituency Giving, As of 12.28.23



Above, students and staff took a number of construction tours during the Sustain Campaign renovations. A highlight in November was the signing of the storm shelter block wall by all faculty, staff, and students. The storm shelter doubles as the Fine Arts corridor. **At right,** crews work to build the new modern front entrance of Topeka Collegiate, which opened Jan. 4, 2024.



Opening New Doors

Ribbon cuttings kick off a bold future for Topeka Collegiate

Launched in 2021, the Sustain Campaign, — Topeka Collegiate's third capital campaign in 40 years — aimed to address the school's deferred campus needs and critical infrastructure improvements.

Schwerdt Design Group was tasked with designing the project with KBS Constructors overseeing its 12-month completion.

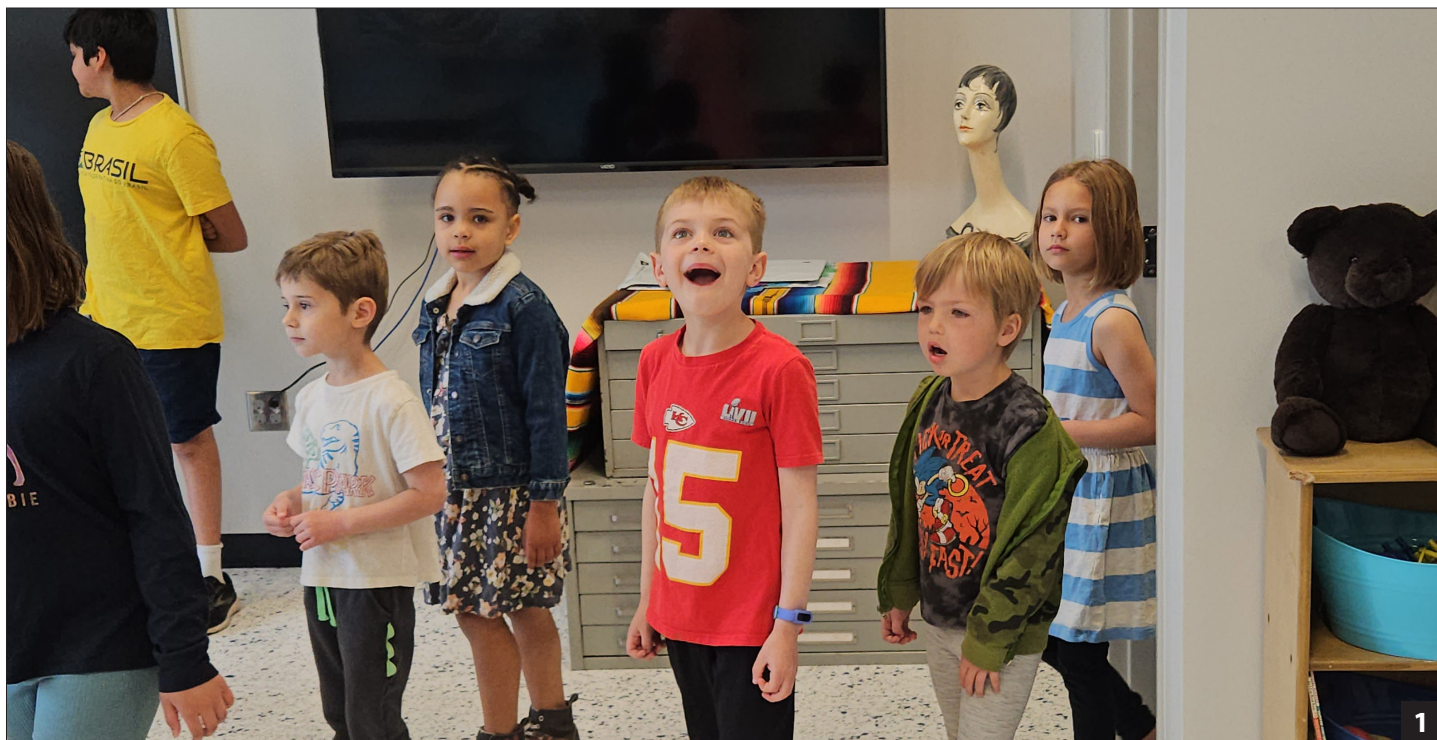
The original school underwent extensive renovations including a new HVAC system, roofing, security system, and front entry. The grand opening of these projects took place Jan. 4, 2024, reflecting the school's commitment to creating a safe and modern learning environment.

The Center for Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder, which was part of the next phase of construction, opened April 23, 2024. This new building offers a beacon of academic excellence with four middle school classrooms, collaborative spaces, and music and art facilities. Not only does it replace outdated trailers, but it also serves as a secure shelter during severe weather.

The school celebrated these significant renovations with two ribbon-cutting ceremonies. The 8th-grade class and the five most tenured teachers, who collectively had nearly 150 years of teaching experience, had the honor of cutting the ribbon at both events. It is indeed a remarkable milestone, marking the school's unwavering commitment to providing an exceptional learning experience for students.



Topeka Collegiate's Eagle mascot poses in front of the new entrance funded by donations from the Sustain Campaign.



Curiosity, Awe, & Wonder

New building designed to foster learning, creativity

The Center for Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder officially opened April 23, 2024, with a second Sustain Campaign ribbon cutting ceremony for students and staff.

Just days later, friends of the school joined in the opening celebration at the first annual "Evening on Eveningside," held April 27, 2024, at the school.

Named by Susan and Kent Garlinghouse and family, The Center for Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder is inspired by the school's

commitment to fostering a learning environment that encourages curiosity, imagination, and creativity. Susan, Kent and their five children recognized that traditional methods of education could only take students so far. They wanted to create a space that would allow students to explore their passions and develop their critical thinking skills.

The Garlinghouses believed that by providing state-of-the-art facilities, advanced

equipment, and modern classrooms, they could create an environment that would not only challenge students academically but also inspire them to see the world in new and exciting ways.

The Center for Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder will encourage students to embrace their innate curiosity and encourage more out-of-the-box thinking. It is poised to help students unlock their full potential and expand their horizons.



Photo 1 Topeka Collegiate students get their first look at the new art classroom while touring The Center for Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder after the ribbon cutting.

Photo 2 Long-tenured staff members and eighth-grade students cut the ribbon on the new Center for Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder.

Photos 3 and 4 Students celebrate the newest Topeka Collegiate facilities that include collaborative spaces, middle school classrooms, and art and music rooms.



Snapshots of Giving

School hosts first ever
Evening on Eveningside



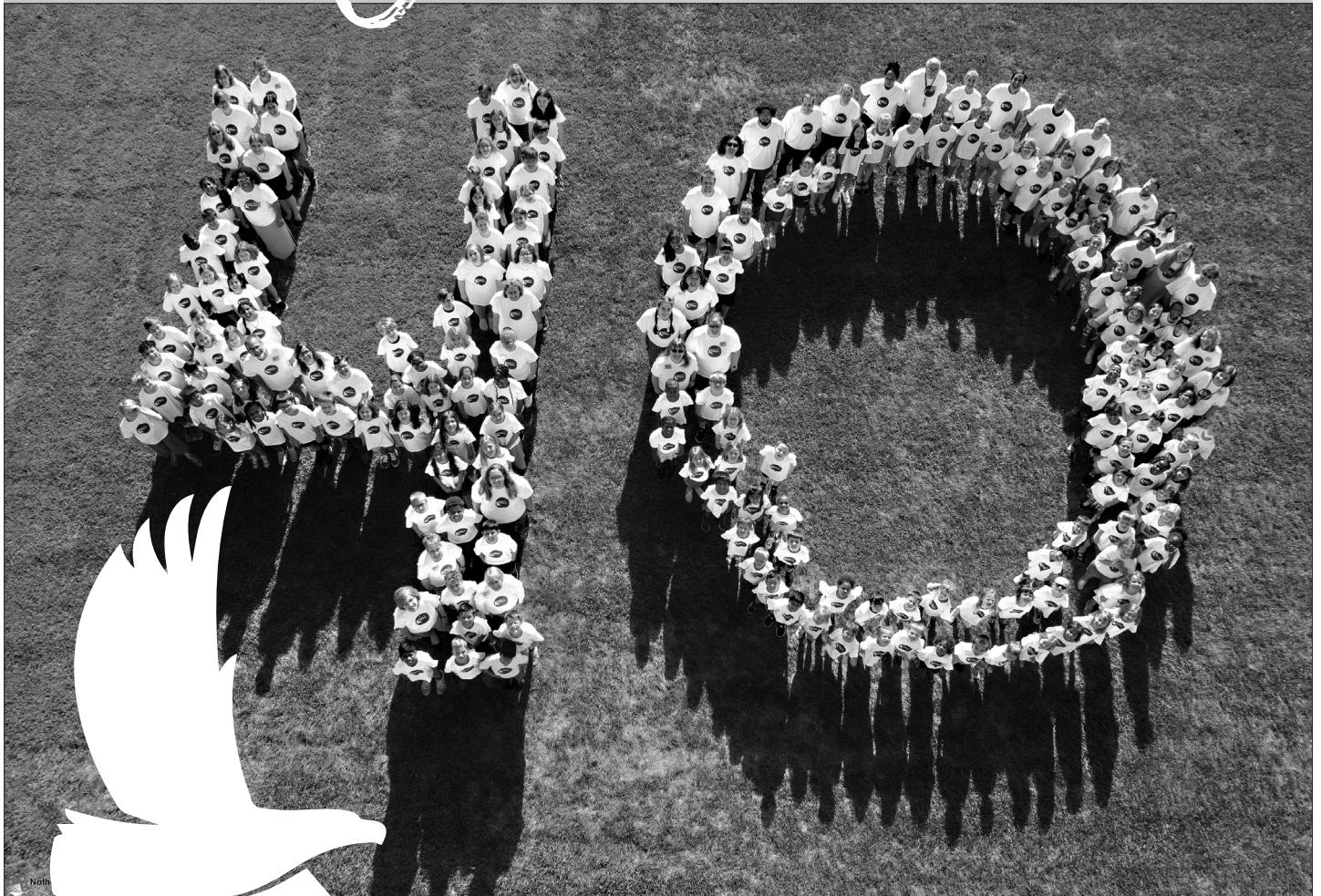


Photo 1 The school's gym was transformed for the first annual Evening on Eveningside, an auction and fundraiser for Topeka Collegiate. **Photo 2** Juan and Megan Leon **Photos 3** Cory and Grace Mitchell, Diane and Paul Brown **Photo 4** Martha Patterson, Susan Garlinghouse, Maggie Mahood and Jane Greene laugh after a night well spent fundraising. **Photo 5** Crowd enjoys the evening together at the fundraiser. **Photo 6** Brooke Smith, Jill Gary, Kathleen Heit, Maggie Doll



Beyond the Classroom

Section No. 3



Teachers recognized for Excellence in Education

Local lifestyle magazine touts school's and staff's success

This article was written by Sue Baldani and originally published in Topeka City Lifestyle.

Founded by a group of families in 1982 with an enrollment of only 43 students, Topeka Collegiate has grown tremendously in the past 41 years.

As of today, over 2,000 students in the community have passed through its doors, and later, found themselves walking through the doors of Harvard, Yale, Duke, Georgetown, and many other esteemed universities. It remains Topeka's only independent college preparatory school for children in pre-K through 8th grade.

With a curriculum focused on math, science, history, reading, and writing, students are also heavily exposed to Spanish, computer science, music, and art in a way that promotes a lifelong love of learning.

In addition to an exemplary education, students reap the benefits of the school's mission, which is to inspire and prepare every student for a successful future through academic excellence, active citizenship, and humanitarian ideals. Its students are greatly involved in giving back to charity such as the Nancy Perry Day of Caring, Senior Center, and Harvesters.

Athleticism and team spirit are also promoted through physical education classes in every grade and with co-ed soccer, volleyball, basketball, and track and field in middle school. Its sports teams compete against different schools within the Topeka Parochial League.

Every student is valued for his or her own uniqueness and the school provides a nurturing and inclusive environment where students are allowed to shine in their own individual ways. Integrity and compassion is fostered during every school day.

While the leadership is top notch, so are the teachers. Students' standardized test scores have consistently placed them among the highest-achieving independent school students in the country. Here, let's get to know some of the educators who create the magic in the classroom.

Kelley Berryman Kindergarten Teacher and Middle School Volleyball Coach

Having just finished her 26th year of teaching at Topeka Collegiate, Kelley Berryman understands the perspective of being both a teacher and a parent at the school; her two children attended Topeka Collegiate



from pre-K through 8th grade.

"My hope is that every child takes away the gift of the love and excitement of learning, confidence in themselves and their abilities, and feeling valued as an individual and as part of a team," she says.

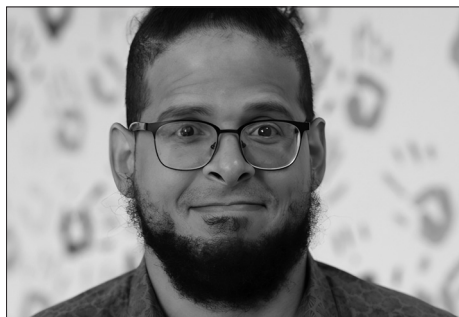
She also truly values her own team – at school and at home. "I was able to teach through chemotherapy treatment this past fall and winter with the support of my amazing colleagues and family," she says.

During her free time, Kelley loves watching and attending sporting events as well as doting on her grandchild. "I became a grandma for the first time to a beautiful baby girl at the end of April!"

Please see 'Excellence' on page 24

Excellence: Collegiate's top teachers share their inspirations

Continued from page 23



Elian Mota

Middle School Language Arts Teacher

For Elian Mota, sharing his love of language arts with children is a joy. "I have a knack for and enjoy explaining things, and helping others is fulfilling to me," he says. "Teaching is one of the things that lets me engage with all of those aspects of myself."

A teacher for 18 years, he joined Topeka Collegiate in 2015. "The freedom, trust, and support the school leaders give their teachers here was particularly attractive to me."

In his classroom, Elian hopes every child feels like they have "a voice, a language, and a faculty for critical thought that is as valid, as beautiful, and as powerful as anyone else's."

Outside of the classroom, Elian enjoys playing the digital collectible card game Magic: The Gathering and spending time with family. "We just got a puppy; his name is Peanut Butter Ignacio, but we call him Nacho."



Ken Park

4th Grade Teacher and Assistant Director of Summer Blast Camp

Ken Park credits his own teachers with giving him the desire to educate others. The one who made the biggest impact though was his drum/percussion teacher.

"He had a passion for teaching and instilled in me the desire to learn and to make a difference in the world through teaching and education," he says.

Having just completed his 27th year of teaching, he still carries that passion for music.

"I've given drum lessons since I was in high school, and over the years I've played in pop, rock, blues and jazz bands, and orchestras."

Ken joined Topeka Collegiate in 1996.

"What attracted me most was the independent school philosophy, the high academic standards, small class size, inclusiveness, and parents who are actively involved in their child's education." He hopes his students will continue to learn and try new things, without the fear of failure.



Sheri Rippel

Pre-K Teacher

For Sheri Rippel, being an educator is in her blood. "I've been teaching since I was 5 and had a class full of stuffed animals," she says. "My grandmother taught in a one-room schoolhouse, and I have a dozen other close relatives who were educators."

A teacher for 11 years, she joined Topeka Collegiate in 2019. "When I saw a vacancy in Topeka Collegiate's early childhood program, I jumped at it, not realizing I would find my school home. When I interviewed, I learned a lot about the school's history and mission, and most importantly for me, its focus on providing a diverse, beyond-the-book learning environment that encourages critical thinking and embraces social emotional learning."

Sheri's other passion is theatre. "Being a community theatre volunteer has brought immeasurable riches to my life. Connections, relationships, growth opportunities, leadership challenges - it has transformed my life."

Philanthropy in Action

Five stories of giving to the school's Sustain Campaign

The education. The future. The community. Every donor has their reason for giving to Topeka Collegiate. These five profiles demonstrate the how and why behind a few of those who chose to be part of the Sustain Campaign.

The Eagle Puffs

Students, faculty, and members of the Leadership team spent time in the spring of 2023 brainstorming strategies to help students feel more engaged and be more active in their middle school years.

Students wanted cross-grade level opportunities to learn, grow, and lead together. The "Advisory Group" concept that we developed had these needs and wants as key features of its design. The new middle school advisory program started at Topeka Collegiate in the fall of 2023.

Specifically, each Advisory Group was able to develop action-oriented projects that promoted community engagement, supported the Sustain Campaign, and provided service to others. The Eagle Puffs Advisory, led by Mrs. Smith, social studies teacher, and Mrs. Buche, math teacher, were eager to get started.

During the fall semester, the Eagle Puffs hosted a movie night as a community engagement activity with proceeds going to the Sustain Campaign. One Friday



night in early December, five movies were shown throughout the building, and over 100 children attended. One of the movies was shown in the gym on a 20ft blow-up screen donated by Steven, a Sustain Campaign construction team member. It was a very fun and successful night.

Attendees were able to choose between various movies, purchase snacks, and enjoy a night at the school together. It was a great success, raising nearly \$700. The students not only enjoyed organizing and running the event, but they found value in its purpose: to raise funds for their school's improvement and growth.

"In our opinion, the most important work Topeka Collegiate does is prepare students for the future," one 6th grader said.

"We hope that the Sustain Campaign will help our school grow and create a bigger student body."

An eighth grade student added: "The school prepares us, as a student body, to do bigger and better things in our future." Eagle Puff members recognize that the middle school program allows students to have multiple long term academic projects such as History Day, Science Day, and Model UN, which help students develop time management and organization skills. They appreciate all of the donors to the project because it is a clear effort to improve education for all current and future students. Furthermore, the Sustain Campaign will create a safer school because "we will all be

Please see 'Philanthropy' on page 28

Philanthropy: Donors share why they joined the campaign

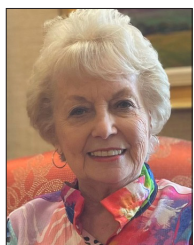
Continued from page 27

under one roof, with new doors, new locks, and a new security system.”

The new middle school advisory program has been and continues to be a success. Students learned to work together, develop leadership skills, and think critically about the “why” of what they were doing. Thank you, Eagle Puff Middle School Advisory, for your involvement with the Sustain Campaign.

Joanne Harrison

It was in elementary school when Joanne Harrison was first asked to help others. Among her many talents were penmanship and creating art. In fact, her first and only trip to the principal’s office was to demonstrate her artwork!



Joanne grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. After high school, Joanne studied education at the University of Missouri and traveled to the Orange Bowl two consecutive years

as a cheerleader. After graduation, she was a student ambassador for the People to People program in Europe.

When she returned, she worked at Barnes Hospital as a research assistant. Through this work, she met a medical student who loved to dance as much as she did. Their romance quickly blossomed, and she married Dr. Hall Harrison. They settled in Topeka in 1972. Dr. Hall was Topeka’s first cardiologist.

Joanne was aware of Shawnee Country Day School in its earliest days. Hall, an independent school alumnus (John Burroughs School in St. Louis), was a strong advocate for the need for a robust independent school in Topeka. Joanne, too, became quite fond of Topeka Collegiate, its faculty, and its students. She shared her passion with Dr. Rantz. “I love how it has such beautiful personal attention and appreciation for what each kid brings to the school and to each other. The fabulous teachers! Each of them cares so much and is able to bring out the best in each student.”

Joanne attended the first Ribbon Cutting ceremony, beaming with pride at what her gift helped create. “Being able to name the new middle school science classroom after Hall gives me such pleasure. How wonderful it is to have a school full of devoted families who are dedicated to their child’s education. Every person in this school wants each child to do well — what a fabulous thing to be a part of.”

We are so proud to have our middle school science classroom named in honor of Dr. Hall Harrison. Thank you, Joanne, for continuing to help others.

The Rao Family

Dr. Kavitha Rao and Dr. Seshu Rao believe that contributing to society starts at the grassroots level, particularly through supporting education. They are honored to donate to the Sustain Campaign because they understand how their gifts enhance their children’s school.



Though they live in Lawrence, they commute to Topeka daily where Kavitha is an infectious disease specialist and Seshu is a cardiologist at Stormont Vail. Kavitha played an essential role in the school’s Eagles360 planning during the pandemic. Additionally, Seshu has facilitated the 1st grade’s heart dissection tradition for years, making him one of the school’s renowned parent-volunteers.

Originally from India, Kavitha and Seshu moved to the United States for their respective medical residencies. They joined the Topeka Collegiate community with their children — Arjun, Anya, and Nikhil — in 2018. They were drawn to the school by multiple recommendations from their professional colleagues and were impressed by its independent nature, high academic standards, small class sizes, and emphasis on whole-child development. Over the years, their love and commitment to the school have only grown, and they’ve continued to show their dedication to the school community.

Their support of the Sustain Campaign stems from their belief that it will secure

Topeka Collegiate's ability to continue to provide students with an environment conducive to the free flow of ideas and the inspiration to challenge themselves and be challenged by their teachers, fostering curiosity and resulting in lifelong learners. They know their contributions ensure that the faculty will have the best possible resources to provide the best possible education to students.

Thank you, Dr. Kavitha Rao and Dr. Seshu Rao, for being integral parts of our school community.



The Gary Family

In their tenth year as Topeka Collegiate parents, Jill and Dusty Gary love Topeka Collegiate. Jill, who is from the small town of St. Francis, Kansas, remembers the first time she was introduced to the school. While at a Topeka Chamber event, she was amazed to meet and observe Topeka Collegiate students as they confidently walked the room, introduced themselves, shook hands, and made eye contact. This impressed her. So, after having their first child, she and Dusty toured the school, and that tour turned into over a decade of involvement in the school community and three current Eagle scholars: Lorelei (7th), Arabel (3rd), and Dexter (K).

Dusty, born and raised in Topeka, received his bachelors and masters degree in Architectural Engineering from Kansas State University. Since founding DM Holding Company in 2018, he currently serves as Sole Stockholder and Chairman. Jill graduated with her Master of Accountancy degree from Kansas State University. She is a Certified Public Accountant and is the Financial Manager of Wolf Construction, Inc.

There wasn't just one thing about Topeka Collegiate that appealed to Dusty and Jill. They love the tradition of walking their children to class everyday and being in the school hallways touching base with teachers and other families. They support the Sustain Campaign as one way to "put our belief in the school into action and show our support to keep Topeka Collegiate growing and succeeding."

Each day, Dusty tells his kids to have fun, work hard, help as many people as they can, and make mistakes so they can learn from them. This philosophy is heard at home and is echoed throughout the kids' day at Collegiate. Dusty shared that the Sustain Campaign was "very well executed and professional in its presentation and communication," and is a great example of tenacity and of the success that comes from hard work.

"We try to be actively involved and support the school that we are so proud to be a part of. Seeing the amazing changes taking place thanks to the Sustain Campaign has been exciting, and we can't wait to see the finished product," shared Jill.

Thank you, Jill and Dusty. We are excited to share its completion with you, too!

Brad Garlinghouse

Brad Garlinghouse T('85) was a boy growing up in Topeka in the early 1980's when his parents founded Shawnee Country Day School. Brad's parents were determined to start a school that would support children during some of their most formative education years and inspire them to be creative, critical thinkers.



Brad entered Shawnee Country Day School as a 6th grader, and later graduated from Topeka High School, the University of Kansas, and Harvard Business School. He believes

that some key philosophical tenets learned at Shawnee Country Day School have guided his educational and career journey. Having a solutions-oriented approach to situations is primary among those. Another is the belief that it is important to challenge the status quo through constructive feedback and novel ideas, even when facing established viewpoints.

Because Topeka Collegiate's values and core competencies are congruent with his beliefs, Brad has a strong history of giving back to the school that was a critical piece of his formative years. To him, "supporting the Sustain Campaign was a no-brainer!" Brad is thankful that Topeka Collegiate gave him the very best start and is hopeful that his gifts to the Sustain Campaign will spur the next generation of minds to think big, contribute to their communities, and work on innovative technologies to serve the world for the better.

Thank you, Brad, for your dedication.

Honor Roll

Section No. 4 Donor List



Thank you, Donors

Community generosity on display during Sustain Campaign

Topeka Collegiate is honored by the generosity shown during its first capital campaign in 15 years.

School founder Susan Garlinghouse shared the importance of taking part in the Sustain Campaign for not just the

students but the community as a whole.

"We committed to a truly stretch goal in the belief that this financial investment — in education, in our young people — is the most positive impact investment we can have on the future of our city,

state, country, and the planet."

The school would like to thank the following donors listed on pages 32 and 33 for their gifts. These donations are as of May 1.

The infographic is set against a dark blue background with a pattern of small, glowing yellow and orange dots, resembling a starry night sky. At the top left is the Topeka Collegiate logo, which includes a stylized white bird and the text 'Topeka Collegiate' with the tagline 'Limitless Learning Potential.' below it. To the right of the logo, the words 'Sustain Campaign' are written in a light green, cursive font, and below that, 'DESIGNATED SPACES' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. The main content is enclosed in a white rectangular box with a thin green border. Inside this box, the title 'Center for Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder' is centered in bold dark blue text, with the subtitle 'Made possible by Susan and Kent Garlinghouse and Family' in a smaller, italicized font below it. Below the subtitle, five specific spaces are listed in bold dark blue text, each with its donor information in a smaller font below it. The spaces are arranged in two rows: 'Collaboration Space' (Grace Brown-Mitchell and Cory Mitchell), 'Health Room' (Jane and Dr. Russell Greene), and 'Outdoor Amphitheater' (KBS Constructors Foundation) in the first row; and 'Science Classroom and Lab' (In Honor of Dr. Hall Harrison) and 'Visual Arts Classroom' (Tim, Jett, Bridget ('91), and Stacy ('93) Elmer) in the second row.

Topeka Collegiate
Limitless Learning Potential.

Sustain Campaign
DESIGNATED SPACES

Center for Curiosity, Awe, and Wonder
Made possible by Susan and Kent Garlinghouse and Family

Collaboration Space
Made possible by Grace Brown-Mitchell and Cory Mitchell

Health Room
Made possible by Jane and Dr. Russell Greene

Outdoor Amphitheater
Made possible by KBS Constructors Foundation

Science Classroom and Lab
In Honor of Dr. Hall Harrison

Visual Arts Classroom
Tim, Jett, **Bridget** ('91), and **Stacy** ('93) Elmer

THANK YOU

Sustain Campaign

DONORS

Champions Level (\$100,000 and beyond)

Tim, Jett, **Bridget** ('91), and
Stacy ('93) Elmer
Jennifer and Cody Foster
Anonymous Foundation
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Brad Garlinghouse (T)('85)
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As of May 1, 2024

Calling All
 Alumni



Give us an update
 by scanning the
 QR. Stay tuned
 for a Spring 2025
 Alumni Music
 Celebration
 Reunion.

Photo 1 Topeka Collegiate students celebrate in front of the new windows.

Photo 2 Dr. Roberts and Dr. Rantz toured the construction progress at Topeka Collegiate in September 2023.

Photo 3 A KBS crew member high-fives a student as work is underway at Topeka Collegiate. **Photo 4** Teachers are thankful for the new facilities.

Photo 5 Students watch as construction continues at the school. **Photo 6** Renovations at Topeka Collegiate took about a year to complete.








An Abundance of Gratitude

Students and staff grateful for Campaign contributions



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Do you know a future Eagle?

For information, contact
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and Social Responsibility
Leilani Grey at 785.228.0490 or
sayhello@topekacollegiate.org

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