DARPA ANIREDDY '19
SELF-PORTRAIT:
IN FRAGMENTS

In this diptych, I chose to highlight the different shades of my face or each individual part that makes up the whole. This showcases, as a society, how often we fail to recognize each respective aspect that contributes to the uniqueness of a person.

*In Fragments* was selected for the 2017 National Art Honor Society and National Junior Art Honor Society exhibition at the National Art Education Association Studio & Gallery in Alexandria, Virginia.
The Other Face Time

Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, text messages and emails have given the illusion that we are engaging in human relationships. Each year, technologies advance to augment physical and intellectual human activities. But no matter how far technologies develop, they have an intrinsic limitation: their lack of real intimacy. Humans flourish through emotional and social relationships. Making eye contact and sharing moments in time and place with others create that real intimacy. People need responses in person to what they are feeling.

When he was a professor of the application of mathematics at Harvard, Danny Goroff said the following: “A technological revolution should, ideally, make you reexamine and reemphasize what is and is not most essential about what people have been doing all along without the machines. Before the agricultural revolution, reading, writing and civic living in towns were all possible and were done to some extent. By automating somewhat the need to hunt and gather, the invention of the plow freed people to concentrate on civilized activities that humans can do and plows cannot. So for me, the biggest challenge of the Information Revolution is not to figure out what we can do online, but rather what the internet cannot do.”

What the internet cannot do is engender a real face-to-face conversation—one of the most human and humanizing interactions we have. Through these types of conversations, we develop empathy and shape our humanity. In college, I can remember sitting in dorm rooms with classmates talking about politics, religion and baseball until it was too late in the evening for any meaningful homework. We would disagree, tease, challenge, banter and drag someone from the hallway into the room to support our perspective. It was open-ended, spontaneous and passionate—but now I realize it was also intimate.

Dan Chambliss, a professor at Hamilton College, says, “Isolated from the people who carry them out, programs, practices and pedagogies seem to have little impact [in schools]. What matters instead is who meets whom and when. [Academic] programs succeed only when they bring the right people together.”

Chambliss’ message to students is that they should choose teachers over curriculum, and the people they meet for face-to-face conversations at school will be important to them for the rest of their lives. Faculty should be doing all they can to increase the face-to-face hours spent with their students. The conversations and relationships made within a class are often more valuable than the course content.

At LJCD, we do our best to help our students grow. Our learning model combines challenging courses with opportunities to ponder, daydream, share a story and exchange thoughts. Let’s call this relational time “Torrey Time.”

LJCD will always be defined by relationships, and we hope you come by the campus often for some Torrey Time.

Gary Krahn, Ph.D.
Head of School
AGNES CHU

30

Contents

FEATURES

24
Working in the Shadows to Bring Light to Others
Evan Skowronski ’87 is committed to public health and safety by tracking and preventing global infectious disease outbreaks.

30 | COVER
The Magic of Storytelling
Walt Disney Imagineer Agnes Chu ’98 creates immersive experiences at Disney establishments around the world.

IN EVERY ISSUE

02 A Word from the Head of School
04 Social @LJCDs
06 On Genesee Ave... Campus news and notes
18 …and Beyond Trending in alumni news
22 Overheard Notable quotes
36 Milestones Alumni celebrations
38 1926 ∞ Looking back at our history
40 My Inspiration

ERRATA
In the spring 2017 issue of the magazine, we inadvertently omitted class of 2004 alumna Stefanie Kreamer’s maiden name, Lenz.

ERRATA
In the spring 2017 issue of the magazine, we inadvertently omitted class of 2004 alumna Stefanie Kreamer’s maiden name, Lenz.
1. Grade 4 visited our state capitol and met assembly-member Todd Gloria.

2. There was so much talent at Lajollapalooza 2017. Kudos to all the performers! Pictured: Pip Lewis ’20.

3. Upper School students traveled to New Orleans for the annual summer community service trip to repair and paint homes. Pictured: Sincere’ Blackmon ’19.

4. Congratulations to Christine Campbell ’13, who was named Patriot League Pitcher of the Year and was one of eight Lehigh Mountain Hawks named to the All-Patriot League teams.
On Genesee Ave...

RETIREMENT

Cheers to the Next Chapter

Lower School faculty Ginny Bial, Upper School faculty Gideon Rappaport, Ph.D., and Head of Lower School Marna Weiss have contributed a combined 44 years of service to the school. They concluded their LJCDS chapter having made profound differences in the lives of their students and colleagues.

“Mrs. Bial had intense, exacting standards. She placed an emphasis on craftsmanship. If ‘great’ was achievable, ‘good’ was never good enough. But above all else, she cared so deeply about her students, so it was crystal clear from the outset that her intensity came from the best of places. That’s what made Mrs. Bial brilliant.”

Ginny Bial
Lower School fourth-grade teacher
Joined LJCDS in 1993

Ginny Bial believes that a teacher’s role is to help children build self-esteem. She also believes that in order to inspire excellence in this world, you must start within yourself. Confidence, curiosity and passion for learning are contagious. Bial has loved every minute of her 24 years teaching fourth-graders at LJCDS, and the students have loved her right back. Her classroom motto was “Bial [Be All] That You Can Be!” She taught her students not only academic subjects but also humanity, respect and other lifelong skills. Some alumni referred to her classroom as “Bial Boot Camp,” where study skills were solidified and a love of learning was instilled.

“Mrs. Bial had intense, exacting standards,” says Samir Junnarkar ’09. “She placed an emphasis on craftsmanship. If ‘great’ was achievable, ‘good’ was never good enough. But above all else, she cared so deeply about her students, so it was crystal clear from the outset that her intensity came from the best of places. And that’s what made the magic work. That’s what made Mrs. Bial brilliant. She had a large impact on me, both during and after my time at LJCDS.”

Growing up in Wilmington, N.C., Bial attended the University of North Carolina, graduating with a degree in elementary education. She earned her master’s degrees in curriculum development and special education from San Diego State University. She also holds a certificate in education therapy.

Bial was presented with the 2017 BAK’D Apple Award, which recognizes a faculty or staff member who makes special contributions to students’ total personal growth, extends himself or herself on a personal level to be a friend and mentor to students, identifies and develops unrecognized talent in students, and has such a passion in his or her area of expertise that students are inspired to share that enthusiasm.
Gideon Rappaport, Ph.D.
Upper School English teacher
*Joined LJCDS in 2007*

As a teacher, Gideon Rappaport, Ph.D., strives to embody the principle taught by his own mentor: that there is teaching (the passing on of a discipline) and there is educating (the bringing of individual students out of the limits of themselves into the broader world of human discourse), and that the best teachers do both. Rappaport has a keen passion for teaching and has spent many hours mentoring and helping students, especially with their writing. Rappaport’s belief that Shakespeare is the greatest poet in the English language has led to his involvement in drama productions this past year, including the Middle School production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. As a tribute to “Dr. Rapp” in his final days of teaching, the AP English Literature students performed a dramatic reading of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Students have commented on how Rappaport really gets to know them as individuals and helps them grow as people. They understand they can talk to him about anything, and they know he cares about them because he gives his most valuable assets—time, truth and friendship. His colleagues claim his passion for teaching how literature can transform us is unrivaled.

“Dr. Rappaport really opened me up to that love of literary analysis,” says Arielle Algaze ’17. “His class has forced me to think about the morality of my actions and what I want to do in life and what kind of life I want to lead. … He teaches you not just to be a better writer or a better student but to be a better person.”

Rappaport has worked as an English, humanities and Shakespeare teacher in high school, college, graduate school and professional theater. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in literature and art history at Cowell College, University of California, Santa Cruz, and his Master of Arts and Ph.D. in English and American literature at Brandeis University.

“His class has forced me to think about the morality of my actions and what I want to do in life and what kind of life I want to lead.”

Marna Weiss
Head of Lower School
*Joined LJCDS in 2007*

Marna Weiss’ top priority has been preparing students for the challenges of tomorrow. What’s most important to her is character and how people treat others. By supporting teachers to be masters of their craft, and by supporting families so they can feel comfortable in a community of shared values, Weiss has built a strong program that supports all types of students and helps families feel connected.

Weiss could be seen at every Lower School event, always maintained an open-door policy, and welcomed teachers to stop by her office to chat about students and curriculum and to solve problems. She was always willing to take the time to meet with faculty, visit their classrooms, and support them in developing opportunities to foster community in the Lower School, ensuring best practices vital to a strong program that supports all types of students. One parent expressed gratitude to Weiss for helping her child thrive, citing Weiss’ guidance and the hard work, patience and kindness of the Lower School teachers.

“Marna’s dedication to our Lower School students and her support of the faculty to provide rich learning experiences are what we appreciate and will remember her for.”

—JENNIFER FOGARTY
BEING SELF-AWARE

Mindfulness in the Classroom

Have you ever stopped to notice your breath? We don’t normally have to think about breathing; it just happens automatically. What would happen if you took a deep breath in and slowly let it out, focusing on it the whole time? In simplest terms, that is mindfulness—being conscious or aware of something. The more specific definition of mindfulness, according to Oxford Dictionaries, is “a mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.”

“t’s simple, but it’s not easy,” explains Upper School science teacher Debrah Fine, Ph.D. “Doing a plank is simple, but it’s not easy. It’s the same with mindfulness.” With a doctorate from Harvard in virology, Fine approaches it from the scientific side. “I’ve seen the studies and research proving mindfulness has a positive effect on the brain, and I’ve also seen it firsthand in my classroom.” Fine takes as little as three to five minutes to guide students through a meditation before chemistry exams and can feel the energy of the room shift from frenzied to calm.

Educators in the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools and the Learning Resource Center have dedicated professional development opportunities to learn more about the benefits of using mindfulness in the classroom. Attending conferences, workshops and seminars, including several mindfulness specialists’ presentations on campus, LJCDS teachers have gained tools to help students manage stress, regulate emotions and develop positive habits.

Lower and Middle School counselor Ashley Marlow shares that the benefits of mindfulness also give students coping skills to overcome challenging or difficult situations. “Mindfulness isn’t just about breathing. It’s about being self-aware. When students are mindful, they have time to reflect. I think mindfulness can help build resiliency in students and help them problem solve when they are feeling frustration or anger.”

Speech and language pathologist Kristy King, who has completed the first two of three levels of YogaKids certification, uses age-appropriate practices that inspire exploration and curiosity in her students. “It’s a fun time for them; they don’t even realize they are working. One student who had trouble writing a sentence in the classroom was freely writing a paragraph after our yoga and guided imagery sessions.”

In the era of overloaded schedules and 24/7 access to the internet, children and adults need quiet moments to refocus and reflect. This is just the beginning. LJCDS will continue to develop tools that promote wellness in students, faculty and staff in this Connected Age.

—JENNIFER FOGARTY

“I’ve seen the studies and research proving mindfulness has a positive effect on the brain, and I’ve also seen it firsthand in my classroom.”
Interested in learning more about mindfulness and meditation? Here are a few resources that LJCDS faculty use to get you started. All you need is to dedicate a brief moment to make a difference in your day.

### APPS
- HEADSPACE
  - headspace.com
- CALM
  - calm.com

### WEBSITE
UCSD CENTER FOR MINDFULNESS
Free guided audio meditations, research links, videos of speakers and mindful poetry
- bit.ly/ucsdmindfulness

### VIDEO
MINDFUL
The basics on getting started, plus how mindfulness fits into the workplace and personal relationships
- mindful.org
NOTABLE

Hail to the Scholar

Posy Stoller ’17 was named a 2017 U.S. Presidential Scholar—one of the nation’s highest honors bestowed upon high school students. Stoller is one of 161 American high school seniors who received this prestigious award for her outstanding academic achievements, artistic excellence, leadership, citizenship, service and contribution to LJCDS and the greater community.

The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars selects students annually based on their academic success, artistic excellence, essays, and school evaluations and transcripts, as well as community service, leadership and commitment to high ideals.

Of the some 3.5 million students who graduated from high school this year, more than 5,100 candidates qualified for the 2017 awards, determined by outstanding performance on the SAT and ACT exams, and through nominations made by chief state school officers, other partner recognition organizations and the National YoungArts Foundation’s nationwide YoungArts competition. In April, Stoller was named one of 722 semifinalists.

In California, only 11 students were selected for the 2017 U.S. Presidential Scholars, five of whom were selected in the main category, four in the category of the arts, and two in career and technical education.

“Posy is a young woman with a keen intellect,” says Assistant Head of School for Enrollment Management and Outreach Inez Odom. “She is a deep thinker who possesses an almost ethereal spirit. She’s made a great impact on our community as an academic scholar, the captain of the varsity field hockey team, a member of varsity Torrey Mock Trial, the editor-in-chief of the student literary magazine, a director of student plays, a published researcher on Ebola, and the list of accomplishments goes on. I am excited to see her impact in the world as she joins the Harvard community.”

In June, Stoller was honored in Washington, D.C., for her accomplishments.
—TIFFANY TRAN

TORREYS OF NOTE

Middle School math teacher Pam Madigan was named Educator of the Year by the La Jolla Golden Triangle Rotary Club. Of the teachers who were nominated from public, private and charter schools, two were honored as finalists.

Anna Harrison ’18 was recognized as an Emperor Science Award winner for her essay about the need to find a cure for cancer. Of nearly 800 applicants, Harrison was one of 100 high school students from across the country honored by PBS LearningMedia and Stand Up to Cancer’s Emperor Science Award program. As an award recipient, she spent summer 2017 conducting research in the lab of James D. Murphy, M.D., M.S., in the Department of Radiation Medicine and Applied Sciences at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine.

Ken Lew ’20 earned first place in the senior division engineering fuel and transport category and received the U.S. Navy Science and Technology award at the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair for his project analyzing the aerodynamic performance between the Kline-Fogleman and standard airfoil wings.
In the Fly Your Ride Flying Car Competition, hosted by the San Diego Air & Space Museum for students in grades 6–12 throughout California, Gabriella Herman ’23 and Daniela Mendoza-Diaz ’23 were awarded honorable mention for creativity in engineering and creativity in design, respectively.

Elaina Sassine ’18 was awarded an honorable mention in the women and gender studies category in the final round of the MIT INSPIRE national research competition for her report, “The War Within the Sex: Examining Barriers to Solidarity Within the U.S. Feminist Movement.” The competition had nearly 600 total entries; Elaina was one of 105 finalists who was invited to MIT to present and defend her research findings to a panel of MIT professors.

Nine students and three faculty members embarked on a thrilling and humbling 16-day journey in Vietnam exploring Saigon, Can Tho, Da Nang, Hoi An and Hanoi in June 2017. The cultural immersion trip challenged students to examine the complexities of the Vietnam War through multiple perspectives. Students visited iconic war sites, including the Hanoi Hilton, a prison that kept U.S. prisoners of war, and the Cu Chi Tunnels, an underground space for shelter and combat operations. They listened to first-person narratives of the war—meeting a Viet Cong officer, spending time with children affected by Agent Orange and eating lunch with one of the survivors of the My Lai massacre. The adventure extended to riding water buffaloes, catching catfish in waist-deep mud, learning about Vietnamese farming, and connecting with pen pals at Can Tho University and Hanoi University.

“When we think about the better world that our students will create, I hope that they are inspired by this trip to see all humans with complexity and with empathy,” said Blair Overstreet, chaperone and history department chair. “This will allow them to seek the greatness that comes from treating each other with dignity in service of our common humanity.” —Tiffany Tran

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Discovering Vietnam

In the Fly Your Ride Flying Car Competition, hosted by the San Diego Air & Space Museum for students in grades 6–12 throughout California, Gabriella Herman ’23 and Daniela Mendoza-Diaz ’23 were awarded honorable mention for creativity in engineering and creativity in design, respectively.
Lauren Mikuriya '18 earned first place in the Southern District of California's 2017 Civics Essay Contest for her piece titled “Standing Against Injustice: The Struggle Between the Supreme Court and Executive Branch,” which speaks to legal lessons learned from the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and their relevance to current initiatives post-September 11 to protect the nation from terrorism.

ATHLETICS

Going the Distance

Alexis Watkins ’18 is a force of a long-distance runner. She owns six LJCDS records: 1,600 meters, 1 mile, 800 meters, the sprint medley relay, the distance medley relay, and the school record at the cross country state meet.

Watkins won the 1,600-meter and 800-meter runs at the Coastal League Championships and earned the conference’s best times in the 800-, 1,600- and 3,200-meter runs. She finished third in the 1,600 during the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) San Diego finals at 4:59.52, making her the first LJCDS distance runner to qualify for the state meet.

When Watkins first started running cross country, she did not foresee record-breaking success. Scott Sanders, men’s and women’s cross country coach, reveals that her initial experience had been discouraging: “When she first came out for cross country, it was at the urging of her brother, Ryan ’16, a junior at the time. Lexi had never run as far as she did that first day. She hated it and wanted to quit. There were tears. But her parents told her she had to stick with it at least until the end of preseason (about two weeks). She did, and by the end of those two weeks, she loved it.”

Watkins started running during her freshman year. Three years later, she has broken multiple records, including her own. Several times throughout the season she continued to lower her time in the 800 and 1,600 meters.

Watkins runs six days a week and averages 30 to 40 miles per week, taking only four weeks off out of the whole year. Coach Sanders attests to Watkins’ outstanding work ethic and mental toughness: “She has earned everything she has accomplished as a runner. She has a ton of natural speed and talent, but it’s through dedication and putting in the hard work that she’s making the most of her talent. She is typically the last one to leave, and she is smart. She listens to her coaches, sticks to her training plan, and does the little things to both take care of her body and make her a better runner.”

Watkins does not set out to break records. She seeks to reach her potential and exceed it. “I just try to be a better me every time, try to better myself every race and every practice,” she says. Watkins was named LJCDS’ 2016–2017 Female Athlete of the Year, High School Athlete of the Week by the San Diego Union-Tribune, and Coastal League Athlete of the Meet at the Coastal Conference Championships. —Catherine Florendo

LJCDS Business Club leaders Rostam Reifschneider ’17, Julian Davis ’17, Alex Burch ’17 and Tommy Kim ’18 earned first place in the regional competition and fourth place in the global competition of the Diamond Challenge for Youth Entrepreneurs, created by the University of Delaware Horn Program in Entrepreneurship. Alongside more than 700 qualified teams worldwide, they pitched their product, Nyocell, a concussion-detecting headband.

Lauren Mikuriya ’18 earned first place in the Southern District of California’s 2017 Civics Essay Contest for her piece titled “Standing Against Injustice: The Struggle Between the Supreme Court and Executive Branch,” which speaks to legal lessons learned from the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and their relevance to current initiatives post-September 11 to protect the nation from terrorism.

The Pine Tones, LJCDS’ youngest choral group, placed first in their group with an “excellent” overall rating at the Music in the Parks festival at SeaWorld.
IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Danah Fayman

Former La Jolla Country Day School Board of Trustees President Danah Fayman died peacefully on June 18, 2017, at 97 years old. Fayman was a loyal advocate of the school for several decades as the parent of sons Corey ’76 and Bruce ’77 P ’15 ’17 ’19 and a member of the board of trustees from 1974–1978 (honorary trustee from 1978–1982).

Fayman gave generously of her time, wisdom and resources to the school. As the first female board president from 1975–1977, she was known as an inclusive and collaborative leader whose kindness, compassion and optimism brought the best out of people.

“Danah cared so much about all the students and teachers. As a member of the board, Danah listened to ideas from teachers and administrators so that plans would reflect the wisdom of many people,” said Moreen Fielden, former head of Lower School. “Her democratic approach helped the school thrive. Her devotion to the school also inspired her to support it financially.”

The Fayman family’s philanthropic contributions led to the creation of the Fayman Library. Today, the Fayman Library serves Lower School students, faculty and families with more than 17,000 books and programs designed to inspire and encourage a love of reading. She also supported the Building on Excellence Campaign and the school’s annual fund, the Country Day Fund.

Beyond LJCD, Fayman was known as a longtime San Diego arts champion and a tireless philanthropist who supported numerous arts programs and initiatives. The arts runs deep in the family as Fayman’s late husband, Lynn, a former LJCD board president, was an experimental photographer and son Bruce is a photographer and long-time visual arts teacher at LJCD.

Fayman is survived by daughters Kate, Ann and Laura Colby, and three sons, Fred Colby and Corey and Bruce Fayman, as well as by five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Grandsons Fritz ’15 and Flynn Fayman ’17 are LJCD alumni, and granddaughter Faith Fayman ’19 is a current LJCD student.

Fayman’s impact on the school and the San Diego community will be remembered with gratitude.

—Tiffany Tran

“Danah cared so much about all the students and teachers.... Her democratic approach helped the school thrive. Her devotion to the school also inspired her to support it financially.”
VISUAL ARTS

The Art of Alumni Connections

Upper School students in AP Studio Art partnered with Porschia Talbot ‘03 in their final thesis exhibition titled “Artslackerz: Deconstructing Complacency,” which explored the themes of dreams, emotions, self-awareness and questioning.

With the first-time partnership, the seven students in AP Studio Art publicly displayed their work in Talbot’s art space, My Art Shed. Since opening My Art Shed in 2009, Talbot’s goal has been to provide a “creative center of inspiration, hope and a gateway to the creative dreams of all who step into it.” She currently holds art classes, seasonal camps, workshops and private parties for all ages.—RACHEL BAXTER

Ewa Zheng ’17
University of San Diego

A dream is a sequence of images, emotions and thoughts passing through a sleeping person’s mind. Dreams are often intense, disorganized, illogical and difficult to remember, and my works explore these characteristics. My concentration progresses from the more literal and scientific interpretation to the more abstract visual representation of a dream’s intensity and absurdity. The series of three photos concludes my concentration by capturing the fleeting quality of dreams.

Andrew Levine ’17
Berklee College of Music

My concentration’s central theme explores the complexities beyond “stage 1” of Kubler-Ross’ “five stages of grief” model through film stills, language, color, lighting and composition. In choosing to be ambiguous about the source of grief, I was free to explore the intricacies of personal psychological processes and how they vary among humans by focusing on the complexities of one individual’s journey through stage 1 of the five stages of grief—which has been dumbed down to a single emotion: denial. By focusing on grief, I was able to deconstruct the Kubler-Ross model and utilize it as a vehicle for portraying psychological complexity. For example, pieces 3, 5 and 10 highlight various degrees of vulnerability expressed through language, color and exposure. Pieces 5 and 9 explore themes of anger and confusion through color, language and obscurity. The blurred-out, dim compositions of pieces 7, 8 and 11 force the viewer to make assumptions about the subject’s surroundings and consider how and why the subject is acting the way he is. This highlights the ambiguity between the subject’s own psychological process and the relationship to his surroundings. Additionally, each piece typifies isolation, loneliness and personal progress, unfolding slowly between pieces 1 and 12. Denial is not a constant but a piece of the puzzle put together to reach “stage 2.”
Jackie Xiong ’17  
New York University

The central idea of my concentration [CD4] is the study of personal dimensions. Everyone has a different perspective and perceives the world differently and creates her own blueprint. The purpose of my concentration is to explore how the mind works and to delve into the web of perceptions that creates a single identity. My concentration [CD5] is inspired by the many different shapes, colors, lines and images I see daily. I wanted to express and create drawings that portray the different objects we see and how they apply to our own dimensions. As my concentration progresses, architecture morphs into other daily objects like plants and electronics.

Alex Agahnia ’17  
Northeastern University

My work explores the concept of feelings through many different types of media. A feeling, unlike an emotion, is a quick and intense reaction to a presented environment or specific stimulus. I examined feelings like those of relaxed isolation as well as anxiety and tension. The body of work ranges from direct imagery that evokes these feelings, coupled with abstracted depictions of the feeling itself through a captivating composition.

Giana Mitchell ’17  
University of Redlands

My work explores the nuances of my multiracial identity, an identity that straddles European and Latinx cultures. Latinx identity stems from a mixture of black, brown, indigenous and European roots that manifests uniquely across each Latinx being. As I work through understanding my mixed Ecuadorian and White heritage, the process of collage helps me visualize the experience of carrying around the many fragmented identities and histories within me. I use mixed media not only because it is an amazing pun, but also because I have come to enjoy working with various textures and tools to capture the experience of being multiracial.
“When we position our children in environments that allow for a broader range of human potential, we push our collective thinking beyond the conventional to the transformative, making learning come alive.”
American cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner is best known for his identification of seven distinct intelligences. He introduced his theory in a book titled, appropriately, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. The year was 1983. I was 7 years old, the daughter of first-generation Irish-Americans, the sister of two brothers, and a middle child. My mother was a crafter and oil painter, my father a longtime director at Bell Laboratories. As human beings, they couldn’t have been more different, and yet together, as parents, they formed a curious amalgam of both old-world Ireland and the modernity of New York City.

When Gardner’s book came out, my father was managing a team of lab engineers and scientists who were working on a tactile interface, where a person could place his hand in a box and look at an image of something; this interface allowed the individual to feel and connect with an image that was not physically present. When I visited the lab as a sprightly 7-year-old, my father placed my hand in the box, and an image of an apple appeared. I could feel the apple, its smooth, waxy skin, the wiry pedicel, and the tapering of the blossom end. As you can imagine, the experience sparked a series of questions resulting in a lengthy and complex dialogue between father and daughter. When I think back to that afternoon some 34 years ago, I recall it so viscerally because the learning experience was preceded by a personal curiosity about the world outside of my own, a visit to a place where adults worked, and a rich dialogue where I gained a better understanding of why I could feel the apple.

My father focused on spatial, linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, while my mother emphasized interpersonal, musical and naturalist strengths in her children. Weekend trips to the American Museum of Natural History and the Met were followed by brown-bag lunches in Central Park, where my siblings and I would run freely as my mother watched from under her wide-brimmed hat, taking in the fresh air while smiling at her family. These experiences, led by both my mother’s and my father’s strengths, allowed me to develop a wider variety of intelligences and provided opportunities—to choose my areas of interest, to develop my strengths, and to solve problems. My childhood gave me a forum in which to dialogue with invested and loving adults.

As Gardner discovered, the traditional notion of intelligence is far too limited, but when we position our children in environments that allow for a broader range of human potential, we push our collective thinking beyond the conventional to the transformative, making learning come alive.

—Colleen A. O’Boyle
Three Things Everyone Should Know Before Growing Up

BY TANIA LOMBROZO ’98

Tania Lombrozo is a contributor to the NPR blog 13.7: Cosmos & Culture. She is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, where she directs the Concepts and Cognition Lab. She and her students study aspects of human cognition at the intersection of philosophy and psychology, including the drive to explain and its relationship to causal and moral reasoning.

Students sometimes ask me about the relevance of basic research in psychology to their lives and careers. It’s hard to know where to begin—every action we take and every thought we entertain is a consequence of psychological processing. But here are three things that stand out: lessons I wish I’d learned much earlier than I did.

1 People don’t judge you as harshly as you think they do.

In a 2001 study, psychologists Kenneth Savitsky, Nicholas Epley and Thomas Gilovich asked college students to consider various social blunders, such as being the sole guest at a party who failed to bring a gift. Some students—the “offenders”—imagined experiencing these awkward moments themselves, while others considered how they, or another observer, would respond to watching someone else commit the blunder.

The researchers found that offenders thought they’d be judged much more harshly than the observers actually judged others for those offenses. In other words, observers were more charitable than offenders thought they would be.

Why do we expect others to judge us more harshly than they do? One of the main reasons is our obsessive focus on ourselves. If you fail to bring a gift to a party, you might feel embarrassed and focus exclusively on that single bit of information about you. In contrast, other people will form an impression of you based on several different sources of information. They’ll also have plenty to keep them occupied besides you: enjoying a conversation, planning their evening, or worrying about the impression they’re making. We don’t loom nearly as large in other people’s narratives as we do in our own.

What studies like these show is that others judge us less harshly than we think they will, not that they don’t judge us harshly at all. But that should be enough to provide some solace. We can take it as an invitation to worry less about what others think of us and as a reminder to be generous in how we judge them.
You should think of intelligence as something you develop.

Is a person’s intelligence a fixed quantity they’re born with? Or is it something that can change throughout their lives?

The answer is probably a bit of both. But a large body of research suggests you’re better off thinking of intelligence as something that can grow. Psychologist Carol Dweck and her colleagues have been studying theories or “mindsets” about intelligence for decades, and they find that mindset matters. People who have a “growth mindset” typically do better in school and beyond than those with a “fixed mindset.”

One reason mindset is important is because it affects how people respond to feedback. Suppose George and Francine both do poorly on a math test. George has a growth mindset, so he thinks to himself, “I’d better do something to improve my mathematical ability. Next time I’ll do more practice problems!” Francine has a fixed mindset, so she thinks to herself, “I’m no good at math. Next time I won’t bother with the honors course.” And when George and Francine are given the option of trying to solve a hard problem for extra credit, George will see it as an attractive invitation to grow his mathematical intelligence, while Francine will see it as an unwelcome opportunity to confirm she’s no good at math.

Small differences in how George and Francine respond will, over time, generate big differences in the experiences they expose themselves to, their attitude toward math and the proficiency they ultimately achieve.

The good news is that mindsets are themselves malleable. Praising children’s effort rather than their intelligence, for example, can help instill a growth mindset.

Playing isn’t a waste of time.

We take for granted that children should play. By adulthood, that outlook often gives way as we make time for more “mature” preoccupations. In her recent book, Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time, Brigid Schulte takes a close look at how American adults spend their leisure time. She isn’t too impressed: We don’t have much of it (especially mothers), and we don’t enjoy it as much as we could.

Young adults are somewhere in the transition: too old for “child’s play” but not yet adults. But the lesson from psychology is that there’s a role for play at all ages, whether it’s elaborate games of make-believe, or art, music and literature. Playing is a way to learn about ourselves and about the world, and it brings with it a host of emotional benefits.

It’s thus perhaps ironic (but fortuitous) that play is also a means to greater well-being and productivity, even outside the playroom. So make time for play; it’s not something to outgrow.
Next-generation baby monitor hopes to deliver a good night’s sleep to new parents

Sleep deprivation is as much a part of parenting an infant as changing diapers. But thanks to Andrew Berman ’03 and his co-founders at Nanit, that might not be the case for much longer. Nanit, a revolutionary new baby monitor that uses computer vision to monitor your baby’s sleep patterns, aims to ease parents’ anxiety about when and how their baby is sleeping. Given that parents lose an average of 44 nights of sleep during the first year of their baby’s life—and approximately three in 10 babies have difficulty sleeping—Nanit is being hailed in tech circles as a welcome addition to the nursery.

Nanit is breaking ground with its advanced technology: It is a baby-safe smart camera that hangs over the crib, collecting data about the infant’s behavior and sleep patterns. Alerts are transmitted to the parents’ smartphones, informing them if the baby is awake, crying, or has fallen asleep on its own. But the Nanit camera is not just another watchful “eye” on the baby; it creates benchmarks by counting sleep interruptions, and contextualizing milestones in individual sleep environments to show parents when—and how well—a baby is sleeping.

Nanit tracks and makes sense of important scientific measures of sleep but without the use of wearable sensors or monitors that other advanced baby monitors employ. It can also provide time-lapse video of the baby, and utilizing night-vision technology, can show high-definition live-stream video. For an additional bit of soothing, Nanit has a built-in night light and lullaby sound box.

Before joining his co-founders, Assaf Glazer and Tor Ivry, to create Nanit, Berman worked as an investor at Norwest Venture Partners, a global, multistage venture capital firm, where he focused on sourcing early-stage tech and internet investments. For Berman, the move is paying off. Nanit recently announced the close of a $6.6 million round of seed funding, and there have been so many orders that the company is installing additional manufacturing capacity to meet the high demand.

In the near future, the parents of infants will have Berman and company to thank for a restful, restorative night’s sleep.

—MICHELLE CHOATE
You’ve got Tinder for dates, Instacart for groceries, Lyft for rides and Wag for dog walking. And if you’re in San Diego, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Denver or Houston and need a musical act, you’ve got GigTown.

Launched in January 2015 by Andy Altman ’08 and his father, Steve, the startup is connecting local musicians, music venues and local fans through its streamlined GigTown app. As music enthusiasts in this on-demand economy, the Altmans wanted to simplify how people discover local artists and book live music for big and small occasions, such as corporate events, private parties, weddings, restaurants and music venues.

Here’s how it works:
• Musicians can create an artist profile, which includes bios, photos, videos and music uploads of their best hits. Once approved, they can browse gig postings in the area and bid on them. Artists can increase their visibility on the app by getting fans to “heart” their profile.
• Looking to hire an artist? Users looking for live entertainment for their next event can simply log in, post details, and wait for artists to reach out via the app. Booking and payment are completed easily with a few clicks.
• Fans have a local live music calendar (and radio) in their pocket that displays upcoming shows, their location, and a feature to add events to their calendar.

Supporting local music is the mission. Today, there are currently 6,000 artists on GigTown, and the number is growing. And occasionally, Altman can be spotted joining GigTown bands with his ukulele in hand. When asked who some of his favorite local artists are in San Diego, Altman recommended the Grim Slippers, the Verigolds and Dawn Mitschele—on the GigTown app, of course. —WENDY SIMARD

Andy Altman ’08 returned to LJCDS to speak with Upper School students during Career Day 2017.
The people in this community are amazing because they all care so much about helping you succeed. They’re focused on you as an individual.

Julian Davis ’17, Georgetown University, video interview

I decided to live my life [by] not checking off boxes on college applications but to truly do what I am passionate about. And that, I think, is a value that Country Day definitely tries to instill in its students. We are not just trying to create cookie-cutter people; we are actually trying to create great minds.

Arielle Algaze ’17, Stanford University, video interview

You could say I learned a lot in high school. I learned about Confucianism, the end behaviors of polynomial functions, gene expression and Nigerian culture. But where I found myself learning the most was on that same yellow bus with the same brown seats, because that’s where I learned how to gather my experiences and absorb their significance.

Michelle Geller ’17, Wellesley College, senior speech

This school has the ability to take you at your worst form and nurture you into something beautiful, to remind you of your potential, and then push you to achieve it, and maybe even a little more.

Sydney Guenette ’17, University of Southern California, senior speech
As soon as I saw my pen pal’s handmade college banner, tears of nostalgia welled up in my eyes. For the first time, I thought about the future of the school and the legacy I’m leaving behind. Time passes so quickly, and soon my pen pal will be in the same position as I am now. I hope that I’ve inspired her.

*Posy Stoller ’17, Harvard University, Pen Pal Picnic with third-graders*

I have always felt that there was someone who believed in me and believed that I could achieve something. The teachers’ generosity and genuine care for students are what make LJCDS so special.

*Jackson Bolado ’17, Loyola Marymount University, lifer profile*

Music has the ability to transcend language. It serves as a universal form of communication and culture, bringing people together from all walks of life.

*Rachael Mow ’17, Columbia University, Reflections blog*

It’s time to do all the good you can, Country Day, in all the ways you can, for all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

*Charlie Brown ’17, University of Chicago, senior speech*
Working in the Shadows to Bring Light to Others

By Michelle Choate
Run 2 SDS-PAGE gels, post-dialysis samples

Electroblot for Western

Block 1% NFDM/PBS-tween 0.1%

1st AS incubation
  Overnight @ 4°C

Wash 3x, mild Stringency

2nd AS incubation
  1hr @ RT

Wash 2x, mild Stringency

HRP exposure - 1 min

Development
  - 15 min

Densitometry
  Quantification

Western PCR assay

exchange column

protein +

cation exchange

= column +

protein +
We’ve all watched the stories on the news with horror and panic: An Ebola outbreak in Africa. Anthrax found in a mail room in New York City. The Zika virus spreading across Brazil and beyond. We see footage of courageous doctors and aid workers stepping in to treat the victims with little regard for their personal safety. What we don’t see are the biosurveillance specialists, the scientists who toil in the field and the labs, collecting and analyzing a seemingly endless stream of blood vials and swabs to characterize the biological threat and develop a plan for its containment and eradication. Though they work mostly anonymously, biosurveillance specialists play as critical a role in international public health as the folks we see on the news—and they’re as personally invested.
I look for the bugs, and I don’t care what bug it is. If it’s toenail fungus, TB, AIDS, [or] Zika, my job is enabling the technology to define the problem and transmitting that information to the right people who can then go and fix the problem.

**Evans Skowronski ’87** is one of those behind-the-scenes scientists who helps provide safety and security in matters of public health. Currently the principal and chief scientific officer at TMG Biosciences, Skowronski works with the U.S. government, NGOs, global health and safety agencies, and international universities on matters of biosurveillance and microbial characterization programs.

Biosurveillance encompasses a broad range of diseases and disease sources, from insect-borne diseases and other “acts of nature” to acts of bioterrorism, such as the Anthrax threat of 2001. Skowronski and his colleagues play specific roles. “I’m a bug guy,” he explains. “I look for the bugs, and I don’t care what bug it is. If it’s toenail fungus, TB, AIDS, [or] Zika, my job is enabling the technology to define the problem and transmitting that information to the right people who can then go and fix the problem.”

**TRACKING IT**

Though his work is extremely complex, Skowronski has a rather simple way of explaining it: What he and his colleagues do is the second step in a three-step process he refers to as “Notice it, track it, end it.” Step one is typically the purview of primary care physicians and public health officials, which starts when patterns emerge revealing something abnormal or unexpected happening in their patients. In the case of the AIDS epidemic, doctors in New York City noticed that a large number of young gay men were coming down with Pneumocystis pneumonia (PCP), a rare lung disease that was typically seen in much older people who had serious health problems. With Zika, there was a spike in the rate of children born with microcephaly, a birth defect.

“The doctors know that something is wrong and that the health community needs to figure out what it is,” says Skowronski. That’s where people like him come in to “track it.” The genomic sequencing they perform provides the strain identification and gene-by-gene characterization of the organism, which in turn allows for the development of assays to screen thousands of samples to identify the scope of the outbreak. Then medical countermeasures (e.g., vaccines and drugs), public education and other tools such as quarantine can end the outbreak.

**DETECTION FOR THE GREATER GOOD**

Skowronski’s commitment to public health and safety extends far beyond the lab. Given all that he knows about infectious disease, he feels compelled to leverage his knowledge for the good of others, anytime, anywhere. A few years ago, amidst the H1N1 flu outbreak, Skowronski was waiting for his plane to take off from Reno, Nevada, to Washington, D.C., when he noticed a teenage girl across the aisle exhibiting obvious signs of a flu-like illness. Skowronski knew that if the plane took off with the girl on it, she would expose her fellow travelers to the flu, particularly the elderly woman sitting next to her. After he talked to the flight attendant, who initially didn’t recognize the severity of the girl’s symptoms, the captain was finally brought in. “Knowing what I know, seeing what I’ve seen, I wasn’t about to give up,” he says. The passenger was assessed, and it was determined she was too ill to fly. While many would have been tempted to
ignore her condition, Skowronski forged ahead with a sense of urgency and obligation to the public good.

WHERE PASSION AND OPPORTUNITY MEET

As a child, Skowronski’s natural dedication and curiosity were nurtured by his grandmother, who was an elementary school teacher for more than 50 years. “My grandmother taught me to read and taught me what was out in nature,” says Skowronski. “She gave me science projects to do at home. We read the newspaper and medical textbooks together. She engendered a way of looking at the real world and wanting to learn about it. To me, that’s science in a nutshell.”

During his time at La Jolla Country Day School, he found two other mentors who encouraged his love of science: chemistry teacher Tom Perrotti and biology teacher Barry Fogwell. “Those two teachers had a profound impact on me,” says Skowronski. “Both disciplines are the underpinning of the work that I do, and these extraordinary educators set me on the path toward my future career. So many students avoid science and mathematics, citing poor quality teachers; I only wish there were more Fogwells and Perrottis out there.”

After receiving his bachelor’s from Duke University, Skowronski worked for a year doing clinical research for Sidney Smith, a world-famous cardiologist, father of Lucy Smith Conroy ’90 and former LJCDs board member. While doing a postdoctoral fellowship in cell biology at the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology, a former colleague invited him to work on the Human Genome Project, where he helped sequence the first human genome. In October 2001, that same colleague reached out again, this time with a request that would alter his career—and his life: “Please drop everything you’re working on now and join us in containing the Anthrax crisis.”

Skowronski shares, “It was one of the more excruciating times in my life, My grandmother taught me to read and taught me what was out in nature. She gave me science projects to do at home. We read the newspaper and medical textbooks together. She engendered a way of looking at the real world and wanting to learn about it. To me, that’s science in a nutshell.
but also one of the best.” Skowronski ran the wide-area surveillance labs for Washington, D.C., for about a month and then helped set up routine surveillance. That project later morphed into Biowatch, which tracks the air quality in the United States, looking for specific pathogens. “That’s how I got pulled into the response and public health arena,” he explains. “And I’ve been doing it ever since.”

Some of Skowronski’s most meaningful moments took place when he served as division chief for the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, which is the U.S. Army’s primary lab for non-medical chemical and biological defense. There he did research in pathogen genomics, bioinformatics, decontamination, structural biology, and other discrete fields of study to support soldiers in the field, to make them safer, better equipped, and more resilient to do their jobs. “It was really encouraging to work with the folks in uniform,” says Skowronski. “I feel like I’ve done a lot of things in my career to make a difference, but that was really special, for sure.”

Skowronski and his colleagues cannot rest on their laurels. For every outbreak that is contained and burned out (e.g., the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa), there is the fear of the next one. And there are questions about what can be done better next time to contain things more quickly and to prevent lives from being lost. How can a vaccine for Ebola that’s stored in the United States be transported promptly and effectively to remote areas in Africa?

“What I and my colleagues are trying to do is cut the corner. Sending lab samples back to the U.S. from a place that takes a week to get to may not be the most efficient way to do things. So a lot of push has been made for regional or distributed lab capabilities,” explains Skowronski. “I’ve been very involved in this fight, in Africa, Southeast Asia and South America. That push is going to help speed things up a lot.”

The hard work is already paying off in many areas. Distributed DNA sequencing capabilities continue to improve, which allow researchers to determine what strain and what variant of a virus they are confronting, and its origin. “For example, we can now tell if there is a new flare-up of an existing strain versus a new introduction of the disease,” says Skowronski. “And we hope to have the ability to do that analysis in real time, which is critical.”

Given all that he knows about the myriad hazards to public health, one might expect Skowronski to be reluctant to leave his house—or at least not without a mask or a hermetically sealed bubble. But he doesn’t let his abundance of knowledge keep him from living. He respects the rigor and integrity of science and its ability to make the world better. After all, Skowronski says, “Science is what keeps us safe.”
The Magic of Storytelling

By Tiffany Tran
“I don’t want to go to Disney,” said no child ever. The internet houses millions of videos of parents surprising their children with a trip to Disney. Shrieks of joy erupt as parents reveal, “We’re going to Disney!” And once you enter the parks where dreams come true, you leave your worries behind and experience the magic and wonder of it all.
One of the people responsible for this transcendent experience is Agnes Chu ’98, the story and franchise development executive at Walt Disney Imagineering. The creative division, created by Walt Disney, meticulously orchestrates the Disney experience for the millions of guests visiting its parks and resorts worldwide, and it has contributed to the Walt Disney Company’s success as one of the most admired and powerful brands in the world.

Visiting a Disney establishment is nothing short of an experience—diligently engineered by a team at Imagineering. Chu and her team of writers work closely with designers, architects and engineers to develop new attractions, lands and resorts that immerse guests in storytelling worlds. She is also charged with mapping creative opportunities from Disney brands, including Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm, into long-term content plans at Disney theme parks, resorts, cruise ships and other entertainment venues.

Immersive, high-quality storytelling is what brings Disney films and movie characters to life at its theme parks and resorts. The stories and experiences that Chu’s team produce are integral to consistent branding throughout the entire company. “We are telling a lot of stories that are based on The Walt Disney Company franchises, such as The Avengers, Spider-Man, Frozen and Mickey Mouse, so the challenge is to integrate those stories into the larger voice, tone and experience that the rest of the company is cultivating. When guests visit our parks, they are not meeting a Disney Park version of Mickey; they are meeting a Walt Disney Company Mickey,” says Chu.

Elevating the Franchises

Top of mind for Chu, her team and Imagineers from more than 100 disciplines are the superheroes that will be landing at Disney theme parks and hotels. Marvel fans will soon see Spider-Man and The Avengers at Disney California Adventure Park in Anaheim, which will join the Guardians of the Galaxy—Mission: BREAKOUT! to create a completely immersive superhero universe at the park. Guardians of the Galaxy-inspired attractions will be added to Epcot, and Disneyland Paris is reimagining Disney’s Hotel New York with a Marvel theme. All narratives will seamlessly connect these physical experiences with the stories and characters fans love.

“After watching a Marvel movie or reading a comic book, people want to see the characters they fell in love with or were intrigued by,” says Chu. “Translating and elevating the brand of Marvel from a 2D prosenium to a 4D space is part of telling a great story.”

Disney is also extending the reach of its successful Star Wars franchise, as Star Wars: The Force Awakens took in more than $2 billion at the global box office. Star Wars fans will witness storytelling brought to life with the newly unveiled Star Wars-inspired lands, Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge, coming to Disney World and Disneyland in 2019. These 14-acre lands are expected to be the most immersive ever built by a theme park. Additionally, the new Star Wars-themed hotel will feature new experiential concepts. Guests will participate in an interactive Star Wars story set on a starship complete with character interaction, costumes, secret missions and more. “It offers a chance to not only celebrate the films but live and participate in your own Star Wars adventure,” says Chu.
The Future

The magic doesn’t stop with Marvel and Star Wars. With the company’s constant new developments and continual growth, Chu and her team are juggling several projects, planning nearly a decade out. There are many projects in the pipeline that Chu cannot share; however, Disney recently announced some new developments to the public, including Pandora: The World of Avatar, a new Toy Story land, an Epcot makeover, new Disney Cruise Line ships, a Disney Riviera Resort at Disney World and more.

Disney’s strength is its ability to elicit nostalgia in children and adults alike. For Chu, the challenge is finding a balance in preserving the company’s history and original vision while staying innovative and relevant. With every new decision and project comes various shades and layers of conversation.

“The original park of Disneyland is Walt’s vision,” says Chu. “He crafted a very clear promise when you walk through the gates: ‘Here you leave today and enter the world of yesterday, tomorrow and fantasy.’ For Imagineers in 2017, that means not only shepherding and protecting the original brand vision, but also keeping it relevant for today’s audience. We won’t ever lose sight of what is special about the park, and like Walt also said, we never want to rest on our laurels and assume what made it great then is going to make it great forever.”

Storybook Path

Being on the Disney team is a dream come true for Chu. “I’ve been a fan of Disneyland all my life,” she says. “I grew up going every year with my family, but not in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would get the opportunity to do this.”

Before joining Disney Imagineering, Chu was the vice president to the office of the Chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, Bob Iger. During her tenure as Iger’s deputy, Shanghai Disney Resort—the first Disney park resort in mainland China—opened in June 2016.

“Getting to contribute to Shanghai Disney Resort was really special and meaningful to me,” says Chu. “Being part of how we worked with the Chinese government, how we presented the park to the world, and how we welcomed guests from all over China was a major milestone in my life.”

“I believe that everyone has to work hard to get lucky...”
Storytelling has been a foundation of Chu’s career. Early on, she served as the producer and director of documentary films at Jigsaw Productions, as well as at her film company, Anagogy Films, both in New York City.

She returned to the West Coast after accepting a position with Disney ABC Television Group in 2008, where she managed the development and production of online video content for abc.com, abcfamily.com, oscar.com and SOAPnet.com. The Web series LOST: Mysteries of the Universe, which she co-produced, garnered a 2010 Emmy nomination. Shortly after, Chu oversaw the Emmy Award-winning soap opera General Hospital and primetime comedies, Malibu Country and Don’t Trust the B---- in Apartment 23, as the director of daytime and current programming.

“I believe that everyone has to work hard to get lucky,” she says. “I worked really hard to prove myself as someone who adds value, who relentlessly pursues excellence. But every opportunity has been something more than I had originally planned. I’m incredibly grateful and proud to be part of this company.”

Finding Inspiration

With an incredibly busy role that requires extensive hours and business travel, Chu makes it a priority to stay creative by finding inspiration in all forms of entertainment. When not working, she is visiting museums in foreign countries, exploring immersive theater and escape rooms, and binge watching content. “There are so many ways to experience entertainment,” she says. “It’s important to be curious about what other people are doing, not just competitors but rather artists and other makers. Time is the greatest luxury, but I believe the only way to stay relevant is to actually have my two feet walk the pulse of a brave new world.”

Setting the Stage

The performing arts entered into Chu’s life at 8 years old, when she became involved with the San Diego Junior Theatre at Balboa Park, eventually directing her own shows. One summer, she rented the theater from La Jolla Country Day School to put on two productions: Into the Woods, by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim, and Rumors, by Neil Simon.

The LJCDS chapter in Chu’s storybook is filled with vivid memories of growing up in the Torrey community as a lifer, beginning in kindergarten. She remembers music teacher Keith Heldman’s influence as early as age 5, when she sang at the Grandparents Day show. Later she joined chorus in the Upper School and enrolled in his AP Music course. “Mr. Heldman had an enormous impact on my understanding of music and love for music,” she says. “He instilled an early interest in the performing arts.”

“I think all the teachers at Country Day were incredibly supportive,” she says. “People genuinely wanted to see me succeed and do good work. It was an enriching experience in terms of building my confidence, and my understanding of who I was, how I worked with other people, and the importance of community. I think the school does everything it can to bring out the best in people. Country Day continues to be a guidepost for me today as a leader, and I try to instill that same feeling and bring out the best in others.”
“The only way to stay relevant is to actually have my two feet walk the pulse of a brave new world.”

EDITOR’S NOTE

Shortly before 1926 went to print, Agnes Chu was promoted to senior vice president of The Walt Disney Company, reporting directly to Chairman and CEO Bob Iger. In this new role, Chu will lead content programming for Disney’s new streaming service, partnering Walt Disney Studios, Disney-ABC Television Group, Disney Digital Media, Pixar Animation, Marvel Entertainment, Lucasfilm and ESPN.

2. Alexandra Harbushka '01 is engaged to Bill Gaylord. They plan for a November 2017 wedding.


4. Jacquelynn Vanderlip Holly '06 and husband Geoff Holly welcomed daughter Savannah Grace on June 20, 2017. She joins older brothers Colten (5) and Hendrix (2.5).


Christian Malecot ’08 is engaged to Abigail Beard. They plan to have a July 2018 wedding.

Andrea Leverant Minor ’01 and husband Mark Minor welcomed daughter Elyse Faye Minor on May 17, 2017. She joins big sister Lucy.

ALUMNI UPDATES
We love hearing from alumni. Tell us what you’ve been up to. Share your professional or personal news with us, and we will share it on the LJCDS alumni webpage. Submit a class note or view updates from alumni at ljcds.org/classnotes.
From Country to City
Once upon a time, the “Country” in La Jolla Country Day School stood to be true. The land that the campus now occupies in the University City area of San Diego County was surrounded by acres of open land, rolling hills, mountains and greenery. In 1961, La Jolla Country Day School moved from Coast Boulevard in the Village of La Jolla to its current campus. The 10-acre campus opened with five buildings consisting of 16 classrooms, a science laboratory, an administration building and a temporary library. The new facilities accommodated 285 students from Pre–K through Grade 10, ushering in a new era at LJCDS that would allow the school to nearly double in size by the 1970s.

The dramatic and ongoing development of University City, also known as the Golden Triangle, makes it unrecognizable from the days of the 1960s and ’70s. In the mid-1980s, the area was one of the fastest-growing communities in Southern California.

The school grounds increased to 24 acres of land. Today, LJCDS is surrounded by the University of California, San Diego, apartment buildings, a police station, a fire station, pharmaceutical and biotech companies, restaurants and a one-million-square-foot outdoor shopping mall a half-mile down the road. Additionally, the San Diego Trolley will be operating on Genesee Avenue (the front of campus) around 2021, which will offer an avenue to better connect the school to the greater San Diego community. While LJCDS is no longer a school in the country, step onto campus, and the joyful feeling of a tight-knit community remains true.

—Tiffany Tran

**BONUS FACT:** In the 1960s, the west side of campus (where the University of California, San Diego now resides) bordered the Marine Corps Rifle Range Camp Matthews. In 1961, the Marine Corps closed the rifle range due to safety concerns related to having a school adjacent to the weapons training center.
I feel fortunate and inspired to provide a framework for children to begin their own explorations of the world. My own sense of wonder is rekindled when I see that spark in a child’s eyes when he or she discovers something new and it truly clicks. Witnessing the early stages of these essential developments is a privilege. I value the opportunity to begin the adventures with them, and I am also inspired by the innate wisdom of youth and their ability to unconditionally accept others. It is that undefinable relationship between student and teacher that deeply motivates me.

I am humbled by the gifts each child brings. As we become a teacher/student team, we collaborate, discover and share ways to make our world a better place.

Margi Bingham
First-grade Teacher
“I had unforgettable teachers who influenced my path and guided me. I see the same consistent experience now with my children, Alex ’17 and Niko ’20. We chose LJCDs again for our kids because the school is true to its mission, and it is a magical place, where children are encouraged to flourish in any of their fields of interest and become well-rounded artists, athletes and scholars.

The relationships between students and teachers go beyond the classroom. Teachers become mentors, a strong voice and a positive influence, fostering an invaluable learning experience. We are grateful to all those who have been so passionate and dedicated and have left their mark.

We give to the Country Day Fund because we are grateful for what the school has given us, and we want others to benefit from the same experiences. One of the most meaningful outcomes of being philanthropic is teaching our children the importance of being empathetic, giving back and helping actively where it is needed.”

Maite Benito Agahnia ’85 and Kayvon Agahnia