

MEADOWBROOK

MAGAZINE 2025



SPRING 2025

The Meadowbrook Magazine is published by
The Meadowbrook School of Weston,
10 Farm Road, Weston, MA 02493

www.meadowbrook-ma.org

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ON THE COVER

Third grader Amy takes a closer look at a starfish during science class, using a loupe to explore the fine details of the natural world up close.

THIS PAGE

Gathered in the hallways of the Learning Commons, Grayson '27, Prithvi '28, and Bodie '28 circle up. In addition to their classrooms and breakout rooms, students frequently use the open space outside of their rooms to work together on projects and assignments.





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A culture of innovation empowers students and faculty to imagine boldly and creatively

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“Won’t You Be My Neighbor?”

BY ARVIND GROVER



This year, the Meadowbrook community rooted ourselves in a simple but powerful idea: the neighborhood.

Inspired by Fred Rogers—“Mister Rogers” to anyone who watched his iconic PBS show—we opened the school year by asking ourselves, “What kind of neighborhood will we build together?” That question has guided our community, shaped our learning environment, and offered a compass for our shared aspirations.

An educator who championed emotional intelligence, Fred Rogers believed that children thrive in environments where they feel a sense of belonging, where kindness is modeled with intention, and where adults take seriously the responsibility of creating trusting spaces. This summer, our faculty read *When You Wonder, You’re Learning* by Gregg Behr and Ryan Rydezewski, a book that distills the learning science behind *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. What emerges from those pages, and what we’ve seen in our classrooms this year, is that kindness, empathy, and connection are not just nice-to-haves—they are essential to how children learn and grow.

At Meadowbrook, “the neighborhood” is more than a metaphor. It shows up when 6th graders read to Junior Kindergarteners during buddy time, when a teacher pauses to acknowledge a student’s courage, when classmates listen deeply to one another’s ideas. It’s in the daily effort to cultivate empathy, strengthen relationships, and ensure every child feels valued.

Every class, every meeting, every interaction is another opportunity to shape the neighborhood we want. All year, I’ve seen students, faculty, and families actively creating community together. Our academic ambitions give us common cause, but the way we make each other feel—supported, included, and

safe—is what allows us to truly excel in developing great young people.

I’m inspired to try my best to make goodness attractive. In what can be a cold and daunting world, I have the highest faith in our faculty to help stoke this goodness in children and each other. It’s essential to build a thriving neighborhood if we want to aspire to the highest levels of academic excellence. The learning science is born out of what Mr. Rogers said: “Children love to belong. They long to belong.”

That sense of belonging is not incidental to great education; it is the foundation of it. When children feel safe and connected, they are more willing to take intellectual risks, more resilient in the face of challenge, and more capable of becoming the kind, curious, and confident humans we know they can be.

Mr. Rogers taught us that kindness is deliberate work—and that it’s among the most important work we can do. It’s a beautiful day in this neighborhood, where that work happens every day as we help children feel seen, supported, and inspired to grow. ♦



With paint-splattered hands and a creative vision, eighth grader Arden puts the finishing touches on his custom-painted stool.

Lower School Math Specialist Kevin Christensen gathers with a group of Junior Kindergarten students to explore math in Wonderwood, surrounded by nature, curiosity, and endless possibilities.



INNOVATION UNLEASHED

In the woods of Weston, Meadowbrook students can't wait to get stumped.

BY DEBORAH FELDMAN

On any given day, they're clambering to the school's outdoor learning classroom called Wonderwood, where they gather to sit on a circle of tree stumps, a classroom under the sky where they conduct experiments and learn to embrace the obstacles in their path. They are empowered by their teachers to be explorers and groundbreakers, navigating the stump-filled terrain of life not as passengers glued to classroom seats, but as innovators with the power to solve problems and shape solutions.

Whether brainstorming in Wonderwood or presenting at the Invention Convention, Meadowbrook students embrace every challenge as an opportunity to explore, create, and grow.

"At Meadowbrook, we want our students to be drawn to problems, to see problems as opportunities," says Chief Innovation Officer Jonathan Schmid. "We even take that one step further, encouraging them to be problem finders, to have a constant lens of looking at what's going on around them and thinking, here's something that if we make this better, it will really have an impact."

That spirit was on full display in February at Meadowbrook's third Invention Convention, which aims to teach students problem-identification, problem-solving, and creativity skills and builds confidence in innovation and entrepreneurship for life. This year, 2nd through 5th graders tackled a wide range of problems, from creating a better hairbrush for curly hair, to an AI robotic arm sorting trash and recycling, to developing a fire detecting fence.

"We start by generating a huge list of problems for students to think about and we give them time to go home and talk to family members and look around in their community," says Jessica MacManus, science chair in the Lower School, who launched the Invention Convention to inspire students to think of themselves as innovators. "Then, they get busy solving problems."

All of that work culminates in the Invention Convention, where students in teams of two display the process involved in their work, including identifying and understanding the problem, and then designing and building a solution. Fifth grade students Nora and Sophie tackled deforestation by developing an app that identifies where cattle are raised by adding a barcode to food packaging. "We realized that people know about cutting down trees to get palm oil and paper in the rainforest, but not that cattle ranchers

"At Meadowbrook, we want our students to be drawn to problems, to see problems as opportunities."

– Jonathan Schmid, Chief innovation Officer







At the Invention Convention, students present creative solutions to real-world problems, such as the Piano Projector by fifth graders Lilly and Maya.



“My favorite piece of it all is the way that Invention Convention builds resilience ... That resiliency is a life skill that they’re going to need no matter where they go, no matter what they do.” – Jessica MacManus, Lower School science chair

cut down trees to make space for their cows,” says Nora. “With our app, if you scan the barcode on the package, it takes you to a website that says if the beef is mostly from the USA or the beef is mostly from the tropical rainforest or something like that. Then you could realize, well if it was from the rainforest then it’s not sustainable and choose not to buy it.”

Based on a standardized evaluation system, all of the inventions are judged and top scorers head to a state convention; if they win there, they go to the national convention. Nora and Sophie, along with 15 other Meadowbrook teams, were selected by faculty judges to advance to the state level.

More important than advancing to the next level of competition is the process. “My favorite piece of it all is the way that Invention Convention builds resilience,” says MacManus. “We tell the students right at the beginning, you’re going to fail a whole bunch during this unit and that’s okay. And you can see them kind of being like, yeah, sure. But once they get in, then they make their first prototype, and it doesn’t work. You can see them kind of feeling crushed at first, but then they think of another way, or a different material, and they give it another shot and they’re all excited again and then realize, oh, this piece didn’t work. But you could see that each time they

need to make an adjustment, it’s affecting them less negatively. And it’s more like, oh, that didn’t work. Hey, let’s try this. That resiliency is a life skill that they’re going to need no matter where they go, no matter what they do.”

Innovation from the Ground Up

The idea of innovative existential growth through self-discovery and self-creation is built into the Meadowbrook experience—literally. Chaitali Thakar, a Middle School history teacher who is in her fifteenth year at Meadowbrook, joined a team of teachers and board members in 2017 that traveled to California to visit schools and businesses in anticipation of breaking ground on Meadowbrook’s new building, now known as the Learning Commons. “As we thought about the future of Meadowbrook, what did we want to include in the bucket of innovation,” explains Thakar. “We went to Google, to Apple, and to Facebook just to see how people work. What kind of skills will our kids need to be out there in the workforce? I think the fact that we were willing to go beyond our own borders to explore is important. The idea for the



“...we make them think about three different questions in relation to war and peace; One, can you afford it? Two, does it make sense? And then three, what are the consequences for that action?” – Peter Newby, 4th Grade Teacher

Danoff Family Innovation Center [home to the Eureka Lab] came directly from visits like that.”

Many other cutting-edge programs developed by faculty are supported by the Meadowbrook Leadership Institute (MLI), an internal research and development program. The MLI encourages faculty to seek out programs and initiatives that will have a lasting impact on the students. The MLI gives them the time and funding to explore a passion project, test it out, and bring it to fruition. Examples of MLI grants in action include Outdoor Classroom and creating the Broadcast Media Studio.

Fostering Global Collaborators

The determination to be innovative in the face of global challenges is also tackled in the school’s Model UN program, launched in part by Thakar in 2023, as well as the World Peace Games, brought to Meadowbrook by fourth grade teachers Emma Bain and Peter Newby. Both of these simulation programs foster an understanding of diplomacy, international relations and global issues, while helping students develop skills in negotiation, public speaking, and critical thinking.

“I think the big takeaway in Model UN is that the crises that they’re presented with are very

real,” says Thakar. “Whether it’s what’s happening in the Arctic or what’s happening in the Middle East, the case studies or the write-ups are done in a very age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate way. The students are realizing that diplomacy is not just about the country they are representing because the whole point is not who ends up with the upper hand, but how do we solve this issue? It’s more about collaboration than competition, and saying, ‘If this place wins... because we’re able to provide some sort of solution to this very acute problem they’re having, then we all win because there’s this interconnect- edness that we share.’”

Similarly, the Word Peace Games, part of the fourth-grade curriculum, focus on collaboration and finding peace in the face of imminent war. Over five days, students take on roles as leaders of different countries and agencies to solve global crises with the goal of inspiring students to think critically, collaborate effectively, and develop empathy for global issues through hands-on problem-solving.

Students quickly learn that critical thinking and collaboration are key to success. “At every point in the game, we make them think about three different questions in relation to war and peace,” says 4th Grade Teacher Newby. “One, can you afford it? Two, does it make sense? And then three, what are the consequences for that action? They’re working together, they’re trying to solve





Students dive into real-world diplomacy during a Model UN simulation, guided by Ms. Thakar and Mr. Schmid.



“We’re cultivating lifelong learners, and we hope this foundation will have a significant impact on students’ future success and their ability to navigate complex challenges.” – Lissa Iwasaki, Director of Library Services

problems, and they’re showing a lot of empathy. I think it gives them hope that if they can work to solve global problems, maybe their grownups can figure things out, too.”

Where Ideas Take Root

The spirit of innovating and collaborating is what drew Schmid to Meadowbrook 14 years ago. “Once we establish a project, we constantly check in and adjust and see where things go. Some projects are multi-year and mapped, while others are year by year. My goal is that we explore, reconvene, and evaluate the findings for each project to see where we go from there,” says Schmid.

Schmid is particularly excited about the school’s recent emphasis on outdoor learning and sustainability. “There’s a lot of interest in mental health and mindfulness and appreciation of our outdoor space,” explains Schmid. “Students are interested in sustainability, in exploring how we maintain the planet and make decisions that help reduce harm to the environment.”

That need is being met by the growing awareness and emphasis on outdoor learning across the school. “The outdoor classroom is both a peaceful place to be grounded and mindful and a living laboratory to investigate,” says

MacManus, who serves as the school’s outdoor learning coordinator while her science colleague Meredith Houghton serves as sustainability coordinator. Since joining the faculty in 2021, MacManus and Houghton have reimaged the Lower School science curriculum and worked with teachers across disciplines to incorporate outdoor learning into their syllabi.

MacManus is particularly excited to see the enthusiasm among not only students but also parents and teachers in every field. This year, the school introduced “Take Me Outside Week” in which 135 classes were taught outdoors. According to MacManus, evidence-based research shows that outdoor learning is as rigorous as classroom learning—and being outdoors benefits students and teachers alike, physically, socially, emotionally, and academically.

“Our commitment to innovation is grounded in our desire to ensure that students understand that the trickiest problems are the most valuable problems because you often have these moments where you feel like you’re lost and you’re not sure of what the right way to go is,” says Schmid. “And I think that’s a muscle that needs to be built. We’re cultivating lifelong learners, and we hope this foundation will have a significant impact on students’ future success and their ability to navigate complex challenges.” ♦

At the center of World Peace Games stands a towering four-level game board representing sea, land, sky, and space. These photos from 2024 show students navigating shifting alliances, scarce resources, and urgent conflicts.



Quadratics in Motion

In the bright, kinetic energy of the Eureka Lab, a marble arcs through the air. Eighth graders lean forward, eyes locked on its flight path, trying to gauge where it will land. There's a beat of silence, interrupted by the strike of the marble on the table and students scrambling, pointing to where on the paper target they think it landed. For the eighth grade students in Meadowbrook's Algebra classes, this isn't just play—it's parabolas in motion.

Designing a Different Kind of Math Lesson

Now in its fourth year, this interdisciplinary math project challenges eighth grade algebra students to design, build, and test their own catapults in a hands-on unit that brings quadratic equations vividly to life. What began in 2022 as a collaboration between Alifyah Patrawala, Middle School math teacher, and Leah Weintraub, Middle School math department chair, has evolved into a unit that encapsulates the school's commitment to create, student-centered learning.

At Meadowbrook, the use of physical tools and manipulatives is woven into math instruction from the earliest grades. The Singapore Math curriculum in the Lower School, for example, is rooted in a progression that starts with hands-on manipulation of

objects, moves into visual representations like drawings and charts, and eventually leads to using symbolic equations and abstract reasoning. This tactile approach to learning lays the foundation for deeper conceptual thinking. By the time students reach middle school, projects like the catapult unit build on this foundation, helping students bridge the gap between abstract algebra and real-world phenomena.

"Before starting this project," Patrawala explains, "we were teaching the exact same content that we currently teach, but without a hands-on opportunity for applying the concepts. We were doing a bunch of skill building and then looking at how we apply those things."

With the addition of this hands-on element, students are able to take the two-dimensional parabola off the paper, and into their own hands. In teams, students use materials like 2x4s, popsicle sticks, rubber bands, and aluminum



This year, Middle School Math Teacher James Davis joined Ms. Weintraub in leading the catapult project.

Middle School math catapult

In 2022, project's inaugural year, Ms. Weintraub and Ms. Patrawala track a marble's landing around the target.

Students can construct a working catapult. They launch marbles, record the flight path against a giant graph paper backdrop using iPads, and collect data by analyzing their video frame by frame. From there, students generate equations to model their projectile's arc—first manually, then using Desmos graphing software to compare results. Each group is also responsible for creating a final product—such as a poster or slideshow—that showcases their data, explains their calculations, and demonstrates their understanding of the math behind the marble's flight.

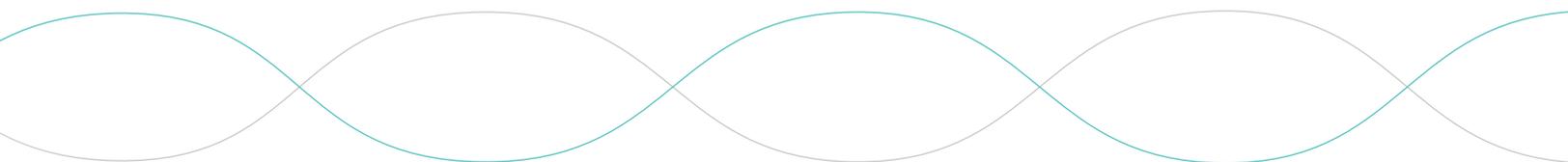
The project emphasizes flexibility and open-ended learning. At the beginning of the unit, students are given a video model of a basic catapult and a rubric outlining the elements to include in their final presentation. From there, they

take creative control—designing, refining, and problem-solving through every step. “They have a structure to start with, and then the possibilities are endless from that,” Weintraub said.

Confidence, Collaboration, and Curiosity

Months after the project ends, Patrawala and Weintraub still see students refer back to specific lessons and experiences. They remember how to move between different forms of equations, or how the shape of a parabola reflects flight. Anchoring those concepts to vivid memories like working with your group in the Eureka Lab





helps improve recall in a way that studying from a worksheet can't achieve.

"You're actually playing the data, you're actually creating the equation using something that is tangible and you can see," Weintraub explains. "For some students, that can be a moment where they really grasp a piece of the most abstract unit that we are in this entire year."

That tangible learning extends beyond math. Students work with new partners, navigate the dynamics of team collaboration, use creative solutions to solve problems, and adapt to a different kind of learning environment in the Eureka Lab.

It builds confidence—especially for students who don't typically see themselves as strong in math. They build something, collect

data, and make sense of it. Every phase of this project helps students better appreciate how they can use math to understand and model the world around them.

Students also get to experience the joy of iteration, experimentation, and even failure. Near the end of the unit, teams compete to see who can launch their marble closest to the center of a target using their catapult. Building towards this competition, students begin to understand how changing any variable of their catapult impacts the marble's flight. Groups add and remove rubber bands to see the change in distance, adjust the length of the catapult's arm to observe launch angles, and how different combinations of every variable will result in a different outcome. When competition day comes around, teams know

From colorful paint to careful engineering, students design and build their own catapults by experimenting with materials and making each project uniquely their own.



Middle School math catapult



exactly how to make adjustments in order to dial in their catapults. Every cause and effect happens because of changes that students are making themselves, and these hands-on experiments help them relate the letters and variables they see on paper to real-world applications.

Teaching the Whole Child Through Math

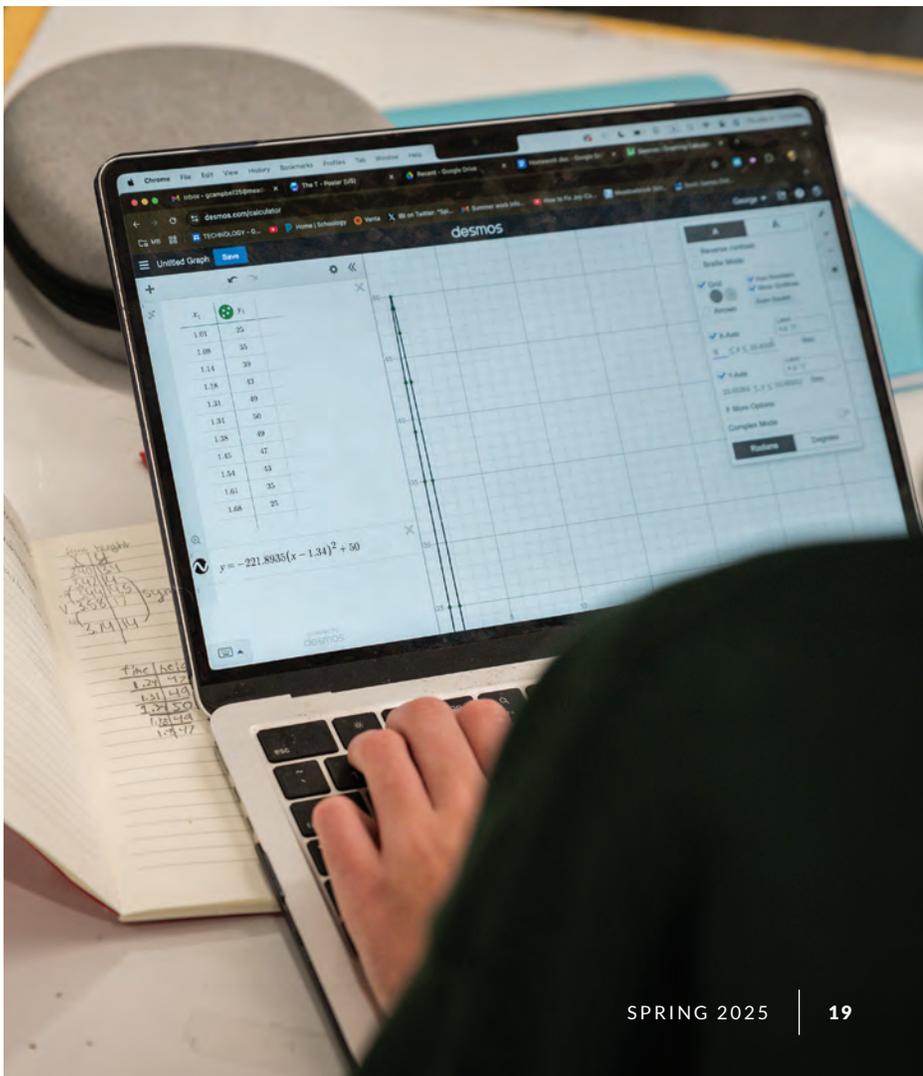
In many ways, the catapult project is a reflection of Meadowbrook's larger educational philosophy: hands-on, student-centered, and focused on the process as much as the product. It nurtures each student's strengths and passions, builds meaningful relationships, and encourages both rigor and curiosity. One

important strategy in this teaching philosophy, known as the zone of proximal development, focuses on keeping students in a space where learning is accessible but challenging.

"We don't want you to feel so overwhelmed that you have zero clue where to go, and we don't want it to be easy enough that you can coast and you're not really thinking or engaging in it," Patrawala explains. "That sweet spot is different for every kid in every class. I think this project really lends itself well to that because there are different ways in which the kids are going to feel challenged throughout the project."

That's the kind of arc Meadowbrook is aiming for—and one its students are learning to calculate for themselves. ♦

Students first model their marble flight paths by hand—on paper or even table-tops—before testing their equations in Desmos to analyze and compare results.



friday night hoops



Leprechauns and Layups at Friday Night Hoops

Every winter, one of the most highly anticipated events of the school year brings the Meadowbrook community together for an unforgettable night to support our varsity basketball teams. This year's Friday Night Hoops, held on January 31, 2025, was no exception. Hosted by friendly rival Belmont Day School, the gym was packed with energy as Meadowbrook students, faculty, families, and alumni came out in full force—decked in Meadowbrook blue, waving handmade signs, and cheering on our boys and girls varsity basketball teams.

Starting nine hours before tipoff, the day kicked off with a high-energy pep rally back on campus. Sitting on the floor of the Vinik Family Center, students were in for a touch of Celtics magic as Lucky the Leprechaun, donning his trademark shamrock vest and hat, made a surprise appearance. Lucky and his assistant performed some of their signature moves—a spinning basketball routine, some high-flying trampoline acrobatics, and even a leaping dunk over Mr. grover! With every “ooh,” “aah,” and roar of applause in the gym, a buzz of excitement spread through the halls and carried straight into the evening's games.

Following the pep rally, the varsity basketball teams stayed behind for a special visit from Ariann Williams, a class of '04 Meadowbrook alum who now works for the Boston Celtics. She spoke about her role in the organization and shared a highlight of her career—her 2024 NBA Championship ring.





friday night hoops



As tipoff neared and teams started warming up, fans filled the gym at Belmont Day for two thrilling games. The boys game started first at 5:30 p.m., and from start to finish it was a nail-biter. In the end, Meadowbrook boys narrowly fell to Belmont Day, 42–40. In the second game, the Meadowbrook girls started strong and never slowed down. With contributions from numerous players across the roster, and relentless energy on both ends of the court, they defeated Belmont Day decisively, 41–25.

From the morning's slam-dunk surprises to the roaring crowd at game time, Friday Night Hoops was an amazing event for our athletes and our community. Thank you to everyone who came out to cheer, support, and celebrate Meadowbrook spirit. Friday Night Hoops continues to be a shining example of what makes our community so special—when we show up for one another, incredible things happen.



Our School of Fish

This year's Arts Week at Meadowbrook was centered around one simple theme: fish. But the result was far more profound—a celebration of creativity, individuality, and collaboration.

Students across all grades were invited to design their own fish using a wide range of media — clay, cardboard, yarn, paper, paint, and more. Some fish were more literal, others wonderfully abstract, but every piece was uniquely imagined and uniquely beautiful.

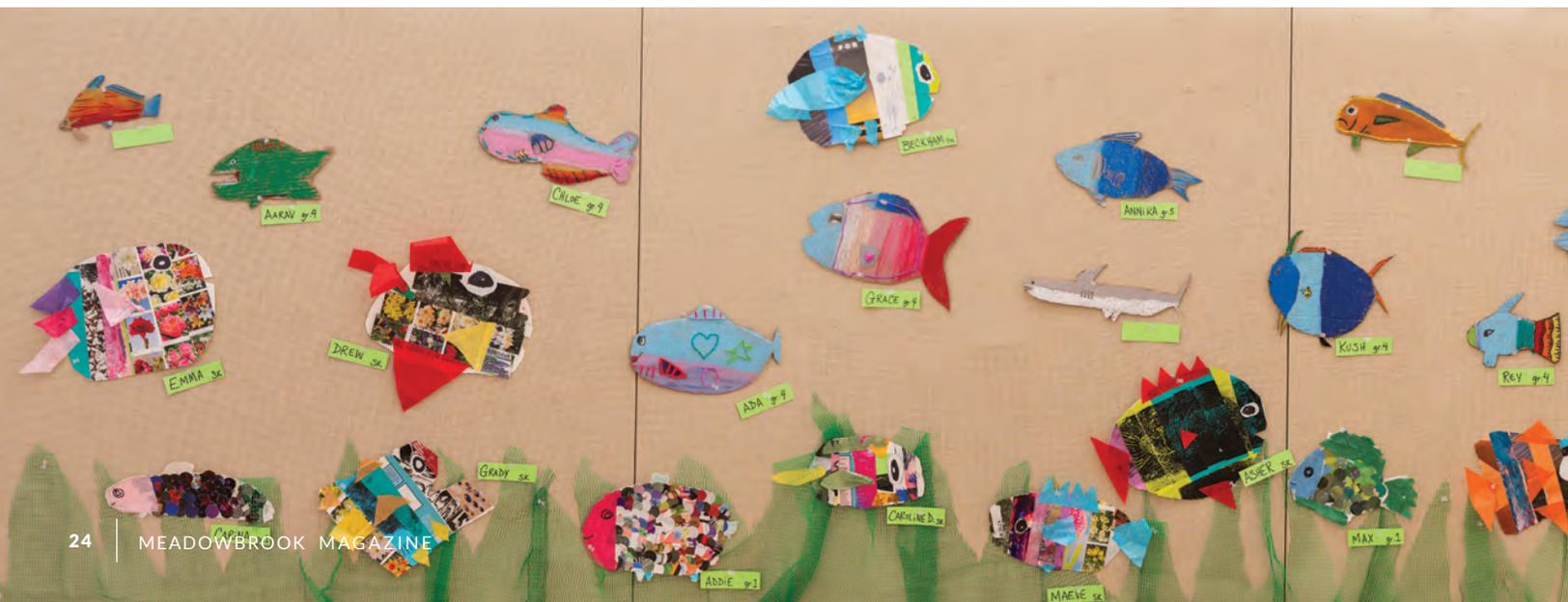
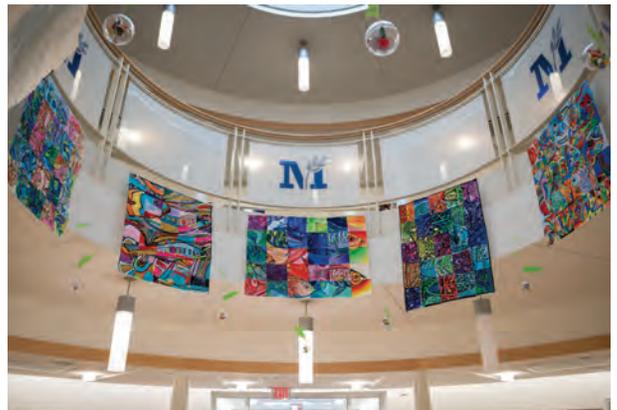
The real magic happened when these pieces came together. Lining the halls in a massive “school of fish,” the individual artworks formed a breathtaking whole—colorful, diverse, and full of life.

Many students also contributed to large-scale, mosaic-style ocean collages. Each created a single square in their own style, which, when reassembled, became a unified and stunning work of art. These projects were intentionally designed by our Art Department to help students see: that our individual contributions, when combined, can become something even more meaningful and magnificent.

A special highlight was the visit from Meadowbrook alum Fred Kahl

'77, a multidisciplinary artist who spoke with students about his creative process and sources of inspiration. During his visit, Fred set up one of his artistic projects—a programmed pen-and-motor drawing machine—in the school's entryway and gifted Meadowbrook both of the completed artworks.

With a live lunchtime performance by local musicians and a vibrant culminating Arts Assembly, Arts Week was a joyful reminder that when we create together, we grow together. ♦





Beyond the limits of the page

At Meadowbrook, poetry isn't just an assignment putting words on a page—it's a way for students to observe the world around them, reflect on their experiences, and give voice to their thoughts. This year, 29 Middle School students were recognized by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for work that demonstrated extraordinary artistic vision. Below is a small selection of some of this year's award-winning young authors.

Waving

by **Conor M. (Class of 2025)**
Gold Key Award

Too fast my vacation to Pittsburgh leaves us, I kiss
my grandparents good-bye, and as my family and I exit the house,
our rental car is there
to get us home once again
When I bend down to my grandfather's chair,
the one that he does everything in,
to hug him,
I feel his entire body shaking
He says, "I, I'll see you soon!"
That cheers my brother and me up,
but my mother,
I think she knows that could be
the last time
we'll ever see him.
We wave from the car to the window.
Seeing his frail, 6'2 body,
I wish I could see him during the prime of his life.
He's still waving until we see him fade from sight,
and a couple of weeks later
quickly
from life.

resilience in flowers

by **Tracey V. (Class of 2025)**
Honorable Mention

out in the yard purple and white flowers dance,
due to the eternally moving airs,
yet such delicate plants are unbroken
by this strong force
that tries hard to dry them up
or knock them down,
but they are resilient enough
to withstand the wind's insistent embrace
but if they were to snap then
new sprouts would start to dance too,
and replace the damaged flower
for a better chance
and perhaps the young green sprout may blossom
into a more resilient, stronger flower.

Blue Lehenga

by Arya L. (Class of 2025)
Silver Key Award

My blue lehenga twirls around me
And I laugh
And everything fades away.
Nothing matters for now.
Only this skirt
And my bare feet
Pounding the floor
In harmony with the people surrounding me.
I dance around
In circles
As the music pounds my soul
Because I am safe within these walls.
And soon
I will let the world fade back
So the car can carry me away
Far far away
Back home
Where I am the only brown person
And I must be normal,
Not Indian.
Where I long for the bright colors
And sparkling dupattas
And spicy pani puri
And sweet mango lassi
And safety to be myself,
To be Indian.
Where I look forward
to dancing again
In my beautiful
Blue lehenga.

all the summer night breathes is silence

by Arden Q. (Class of 2025)
Honorable Mention

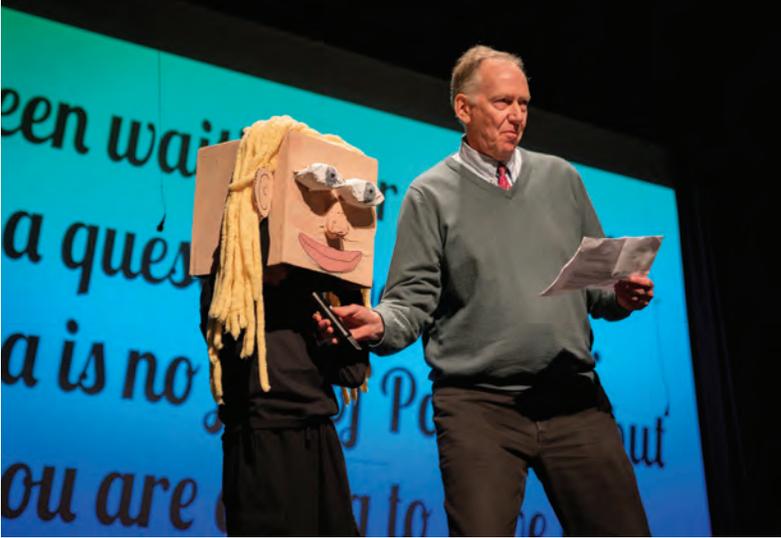
The air is left behind bittersweet from the sun,
Heat still radiates from beneath, but the sky is crisp and cool
The stars revolve only around you, the sky following it
The world curving around so you don't fall off
I imagine the bird's eye view,
Everything focused just on me
The black bike wheels hit the pavement like a lullaby
That nears the end
A night like this speaks for itself
Every single summer day,
Yet only once in a lifetime.

Seventh graders Nathan and Matthew kick off the first day of school with big smiles and energy, ready for the year ahead.



meadowbrook moments







Family Fun at Fall Fest

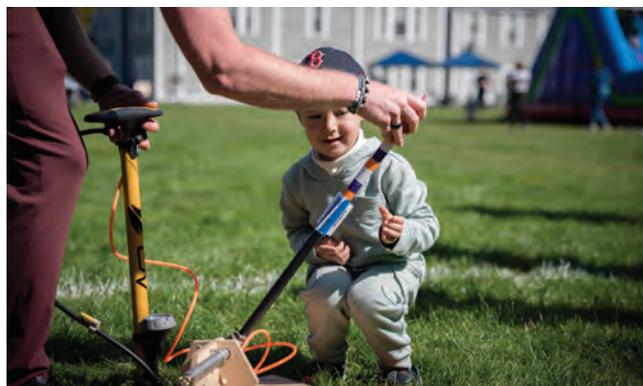
Meadowbrook's campus came alive on October 5 as families, faculty, and alumni gathered for Fall Fest 2024! Our community enjoyed classic activities like the petting zoo, giant bubbles, touch-a-truck, inflatables, crafts, and adventures through Wonderwood. Chef Luke prepared a spread of food that included his famous chocolate chip cookies. More than just an afternoon of play, Fall Fest was an amazing gathering that brought together the Meadowbrook community, and a great reminder that laughing and learning go hand in hand.



Missed this year's event?

Mark your calendar now for Fall Fest 2025, taking place on Saturday, October 4, 2025!







Generations of Joy at Grandparents and Special Friends Day

Held on Tuesday, November 26, 2024, Meadowbrook’s annual Grandparents and Special Friends Day brought nearly 800 guests to campus for a joyful morning of music, connection, and hands-on learning. The day began with a celebratory assembly featuring performances from every lower school class—from Jr. K. through 5th grade—as well as many talented middle school musicians and singers. Some highlights from the assembly included the 2nd grade’s spirited rendition of “I Just Can’t Wait to Be King,” the 6th grade jazz band’s performance of Chicago’s “25 or 6 to 4,” and the grand finale with all middle school students on stage singing “Let It Be.”

Following a coffee hour with Head of School arvind grover, guests visited classrooms to learn alongside their students. Whether co-writing stories, solving math challenges, or crafting keepsake art projects, these classroom lessons offered a glimpse into Meadowbrook’s mission in action. From the assembly to the classroom, the day was filled with smiles and memories across generations.



Tuesday, November 25, 2025
Save the date for Grandparents and Special Friends Day 2025!







Meadowbrook Day of Service 2025

Thank you, Meadowbrook, for making our Day of Service a tremendous success! On Saturday, April 5, more than 250 Meadowbrook community members—students, families, alumni, faculty, and friends—came together to give over 500 hours of hands-on service to eight local nonprofit organizations.

Volunteers packed fresh produce for food-insecure families with Spoonfuls, cleared trails at College Pond, and prepared gardens at Land’s Sake Farm. Students read to seniors at Maplewood, crafted Jared Boxes for children in the hospital, decorated pillowcases for troops overseas, and assembled hygiene kits for youth served by Hope & Comfort. They also created vibrant “thank you” art for Weston’s first responders.

Organized in partnership with our Community Service Club, the Day of Service was made possible by the energy of our volunteer site leaders, donations from Meadowbrook families, and generous support from sponsors including FLIK, Roche Brothers, and Verrill Farms. From logistics and t-shirt distribution to cleanup and coordination, every detail reflected Meadowbrook’s commitment to community, kindness, and action.

Together, we showed what’s possible when we lead with love and serve with purpose. We are so proud of this day—and the difference it made in our community.





Welcome New Trustees

Congratulations to the following Meadowbrook community members elected to the Board of Trustees in May 2024.



Jay Derenzo

Jay Derenzo brings a builder's vision and a deep sense of community to his work, and now, to Meadowbrook. As the founder and CEO of J. Derenzo Properties, Jay has spent over four decades developing residential, commercial, and mixed-use spaces that reflect his belief in thoughtful design, sustainability, and long-term impact. His approach is grounded in the idea that great spaces can bring people together and help neighborhoods flourish.

An active member of several professional organizations, including the Builders and Remodelers Association of Greater Boston and the Charles River Chamber of Commerce, Jay is also passionate about giving back. He supports the 100 Club of Massachusetts, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and the Alzheimer's Association. Jay and his wife Elizabeth live in Wellesley with their seven children. Their youngest, Brooke, is a member of the Class of 2032.



Elaine Dimopoulos

Elaine Dimopoulos is a children's author whose stories have reached readers around the world in both English and translation. A passionate educator, she has spent more than twenty years teaching writing, from middle school classrooms to graduate-level seminars. Most recently, she taught in the Department of Children's Literature at Simmons University.

Elaine began her career in independent schools and holds an MA in Education Leadership from Columbia University, an MFA in Writing for Children from Simmons University, and a BA from Yale. At Meadowbrook, she co-chairs both the Green Team and the Visiting Author Committee. Over the years, she has volunteered with the Community Committee and the Financial Assistance Task Force, and has been a room volunteer for both of her children, Nicholas '26 and Athena '29.

Elaine also serves on the boards of Powers Music School, the Andover Development Board, and co-chairs the Writer-in-Residence program for the Associates of the Boston Public Library. Elaine lives in Belmont with her husband, John Evans, and their two children.



A Life of Learning

Jean Alpert retires after 50+ years of inspiring students and colleagues alike.

From the archives, these photos highlight Jean Alpert's 29 year Meadowbrook journey, including more than two decades of collaboration alongside Lauren Jennings.

A six-year-old student skips down the hall, eyes bright with excitement. “Mrs. Alpert!” she calls, clutching a small trinket in her hands. “Look!” Jean turns to her with full attention, her hands pressed to her cheeks in delight. “Oh my, would you look at that!” The child beams, launching into an eager explanation—what it is, where it came from, how it’s her favorite color. Jean listens intently, nodding and asking a few questions before gently guiding her into the classroom. It’s a small moment, but one of thousands that define Jean’s teaching: attentive, direct, and full of purpose. Her students know they’ll be heard, and they know she expects their best.

Moments like these are why Jean Alpert’s students adore her. For nearly three decades, she has been a guiding presence and built a classroom where curiosity is celebrated, excitement is met with encouragement, and every child knows they are seen. Now, after 29 years at Meadowbrook—and more than 50 years in the classroom—Jean will retire at the end of the school year.

Since her arrival at Meadowbrook in 1996, she has shepherded hundreds of students through their first grade journeys. Her teaching philosophy rests on three pillars: helping children develop independence, encouraging them to embrace academic challenges, and fostering a classroom where every child’s contributions are valued. “It’s about helping children find their strengths,” she says. “You just watch them, see what they are drawn to, and praise them for it.”

A native of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Jean taught for 25 years in Austin, Houston, and San Antonio, Texas before coming to

Meadowbrook. She says that she wanted to be a teacher for as long as she can remember. “I always loved school and learning. I specifically remember being in second grade and having my teacher read to the class. It was magical. From then on, I knew that teaching was what I wanted to do and I never doubted it.”

She has taught all the elementary grades over the course of her career, but first grade was always her favorite. “I love the growth that occurs during first grade,” she says. “You really see the students become excited about reading, writing, and math. They become very confident and empowered.” Indeed, generations of Meadowbrook students have benefited from Jean’s passion, and countless teachers have learned from working alongside her. Lauren Jennings, who was Jean’s 1st grade co-teacher for 23 years, says, “She’s the epitome of what you would want your first grade teacher to be. She really goes that extra mile—getting to know the family, getting to know the child, their interests. She’s really all in.”

Over the decades, Jean has seen educational trends come and go—new teaching approaches, evolving classroom structures, and the increasing role of technology. Through it all, she has remained open and thoughtful, adopting changes that benefited her students while staying true to the fundamentals of great teaching. “Some teachers can get stuck in a routine, but not Jean,” says Jennings. “She was always looking for ways to improve and evolve, and she inspired the rest of us to do the same.”

As she nears the end of her final school year, Jean considers her legacy with a smile. “I hope [the students] remember how they felt in my classroom. I don’t expect them to remember every lesson, but I hope they remember the feeling of being a part of something special.”

“Teaching was my dream from the time I was a little girl, and to be able to live that dream all these years is really something. Not everyone gets to do what they love for this long,” Jean reflected. But for the countless students, teachers, and families lucky enough to know her, the real gift has been hers—the impact of a lifetime spent shaping young minds. ♦





Faculty Milestones



Vladimir Verdieu and Angelina Verdieu



Leah Weintraub and Emmanuel Salvati



Meredith Houghton-Granese and Andrew Granese



Ryan Parker Gelnwerks



Asa Fisher Maraist

Weddings

Angelina Verdieu married Vladimir Verdieu on July 21, 2024 in Boston.

Leah Weintraub married Emmanuel Salvati on August 17, 2024 in Chester, Vermont.

Meredith Houghton-Granese married Andrew Granese on July 20, 2024 in Castine, Maine.

New Arrivals

Sarah Nourie and Daniel Maraist welcomed baby Asa Fisher Maraist on May 9, 2024.

Evan and Cori Glenwerks welcomed baby Ryan Parker Glenwerks on December 13, 2024.

Sol Bencosme and Javi Oller welcomed baby Emmie Marie Oller-Bencosme on January 16, 2025.

New Faculty

Welcome to the following members of Team Meadowbrook who joined us for school year 2024-25!

Sara Akbari
1st Grade Teacher

Alicia Carter
5th Grade Spanish & Middle School French Teacher

Carolyn Corbe
Lower School Teaching Assistant

Owen Finnegan
Middle School English & History Teacher

Whit France-Kelly
Director of Alumni & Parent Engagement

Annabelle Frischling
After School Teacher

Alexandra Levin
Lower School Counselor

Gabriel Lopez
Director of Equity & Inclusion

Thomas Pomeroy
Auxiliary Programs and Accounting Coordinator

Erika Roderick
4th Grade Teacher

Jane Segale
Director of Finance & Operations

Dawn Szydlowski
After School Teacher

Angelina Verdieu
Director of Counseling

Michele Whyte
Assistant Director of Finance & Operations

Experts Speaking

Meadowbrook faculty members are often called upon to share their expertise with others. Here are examples of some of the work they have shared recently:

Barbara Campbell
Starting Potential and Reigniting Creativity in After School Programs

Summer Programs and Auxiliary Revenue Conference (SPARC) – Scottsdale, Arizona. October 8, 2024

Co-presenter: Katie McLean Assistant Director of Auxiliary at St Mark's School

Jane Segale
Effective Community Impact Statements

National Business Officers Association (NBOA) Annual Conference – New York City, NY. February 24, 2025

AISNE 2025 Business and Operations Conference – Norwood, Massachusetts. April 16, 2025

Co-presenter: Gwen Pojasek from Chapel Hill-Chauncey Hall

Mason Kaye
End the Loneliness of Auxiliary: How to Integrate Your Department and Yourself with Your School

Summer Programs and Auxiliary Revenue Conference (SPARC) – Scottsdale, Arizona. October 8, 2024

Matthew Fishbein
Alumni Engagement

Boston Area Development Directors Spring Gathering – Boston, Massachusetts. April 30, 2024

Meredith Houghton & Jessica MacManus
Creating Music to Connect Children with Nature

Nature Everywhere Conference by Children & Nature Network – Saint Paul, Minnesota. May 14, 2025

Co-presenter: Steve Rosloneck

Mike Scafati
Film & Broadcast Media: The Collaborative & Creative Skills Our Students Need
MassCUE Fall Conference – Foxborough, Massachusetts
October 16, 2024

Jonathan Schmid
Productivity Hacks for the Overworked and Overwhelmed

Summer Programs and Auxiliary Revenue Conference (SPARC) – Scottsdale, Arizona. October 8, 2024

Unlocking Intelligence: Streamlining Your Program with AI

Summer Programs and Auxiliary Revenue Conference (SPARC) – Scottsdale, Arizona. October 9, 2024

Class of 2020 College Decisions

AUDEN AKINC
McGill University

COLIN ANDERSON
University of Michigan

ELLA ANDREWS
Scripps College

NINA ANGELLA
Wake Forest University

JULIA ARBOLEDA
University of Michigan

TESS BARTEL
University of Colorado Boulder

MARISA BEARD
University of Vermont

ELLA BERGER
Georgetown University

MAX BERKENBLIT
Tulane University

SIMON BORNSTEIN
Syracuse University

THATCHER BROWN
University of Pennsylvania

LEIGHTON CALHOUN
Williams College

BERLEY CAMELIEN
Wake Forest University

KAITLYN CAPPILLO
Amherst College

EVAN DEEDE
Syracuse University

MARSHALL FISHER
Washington University at St. Louis

LIAM FOLEY
Lafayette College

PEYTON FOX
Princeton University

ZACHARY GREEN
Bowdoin College

MARGARET HENSON
University of Vermont

KATHERINE HILLERY
Bates College

LARA KARSLIGIL
Purdue University

MIA KIM
Tufts University

BENJAMIN LEE
Washington University at St. Louis

NETA LESCHLY
Tufts University

JOSHUA LEVINE
University of Pennsylvania

ASHLEY MCSWEENEY
Dickinson College

SUMMER MCSWEENEY
Union College

DYLAN MURPHY
McGill University

GRAYLYN RHEE
Duke University

SOFIA ROBINSON
Amherst College

THOMAS ROPER
University of Chicago

JAMES SABET
Washington University at St. Louis

AMITH SALIGRAMA
Stanford University

PAYSON SALYER
University of Richmond

HENRY LOCHLAN SETH
Colgate University

VIJAY THAKORE
University of Chicago

SOPHIA VERMA
Bryant University

MILLA VUOLTEENAHO
Brown University

KEVIN WELDON
Harvard University

LAUREN YOON
Dartmouth College

AUDREY ZHANG
University of Chicago

**Note: this list is inclusive of all members of the Class of 2020 for whom we have college information, including students who did not graduate from Meadowbrook.*



Honoring Years of Dedication

We are proud to recognize these exceptional faculty members who have reached milestone anniversaries in their Meadowbrook careers and were celebrated at Awards Day in June 2024. Their years of service are a testament to their unwavering commitment to our mission to know, love, and challenge every child. We are deeply grateful for their passion, care, and enduring impact on the Meadowbrook community.

10 years

Kristin Eisenhardt

15 years

Rachel Shuler

20 years

Alison Graham, Sharon Palmer, Pam Scafati

In Memoriam

We fondly remember these members of the Meadowbrook community who have passed away recently.

ALUMNI

Alissa Spielberg '79
09/18/2024

FRIENDS OF MEADOWBROOK

Lynne Weber
12/08/2024
Former Faculty

Josephine Blagden
09/02/2024
Sibling of Elizabeth Weitzel '48

Suzanne Murray
11/27/2024
Grandparent of Samantha '25, Charlie '27, Lily '28;
parent of trustee Megan Craigen and Joe Craigen

Ronald Gresser
12/29/2024
Grandparent of Logan Harper '11; parent of
former faculty Donna Harper

Kokila Patel
11/09/2024
Grandparent of Bela '23, Nayan '24, Nadia '25, Lila '26;
parent of Nirva Patel and former trustee Paresh Patel

Donald MacManus
05/02/2024
Grandparent of Finn '31; parent of faculty
Jessica MacManus and Leland Crawford

Richard Ferullo
03/01/2025
Parent of Rich Ferullo (Flik Dining Services)

Lance Chou
03/01/2025
Grandparent of Elsa '25, Milo '27, Otis '33; parent
of Elly Newbower and trustee David Newbower

James S. Kim
10/03/2024
Grandparent of Vivienne '26, Chloe '30, Collette '30;
parent of Irene and Aaron Levangie

Larry Schlager
03/17/2025
Parent of Robert Schlager '73, Eric Schlager '76, Joan
Weinsten '81; Grandparent of Spencer Schlager '06, Andrew
Schlager '08, Katie Schlager '10, Melanie Weinsten '10, Allie
Schlager '13, Charlie Schlager '14, Alexandra Weinsten '15,
Nicole Weinsten '15

Anne Weiskopf
03/15/2025
Parent of Jacob Weiskopf † '10



Celebrating our Newest Meadowbrook Alumni

On Wednesday, June 12, 2024, Arvind Grover and the Board or Trustees awarded 34 “Meadowbrook Ms” to the Class of 2024. This class of graduates—eight of whom had been at Meadowbrook since kindergarten—were exceptional leaders in our community both inside the walls of the classroom and out.

Every fall at Meadowbrook, the new 8th grade class steps onto campus not only as the oldest students in the school, but also as role models for every younger grade. Inspired by the class before them, the class of 2024 took on that responsibility well, and were exceptional leaders in the community.

The graduating class selected former faculty member and 6th Grade Dean K Fenstermacher as their Beloved Speaker. Ms. Fenstermacher spoke to the resilience and adaptability of the Class of 2024, and how their willingness and ability to embrace change was a trait that would serve them well throughout their lives. Student speaker Ella P. followed by highlighting the lessons of trust, resilience, and confidence that she and her fellow classmates experienced together at Meadowbrook.

Congratulations to our graduating class of 2024. As Ms. Fenstermacher so eloquently shared, “Your next chapter awaits you. As you start to write it, give yourself time to settle in, embrace the differences, and look for what is new and exciting that will challenge you. You can do all of that while holding Meadowbrook close to your heart.”





graduation 2024



Class of 2024 Secondary Schools

Our graduates are now attending the following independent and public secondary schools:

SONIA AGARWAL
Concord Academy

MIA ANDREEVA
Needham High School

CECILY BARON
Noble and Greenough School

AANYA CHAKRAVARTHY
Boston University Academy

ALEX CHRISTENSEN
Nipmuc Regional High School

CHRISTIAN ECKFORD
Noble and Greenough School

EMERSON GARDNER
Middlesex School

KHADIJA GHADIALI
Newton North High School

AMES JEGEN
Concord Academy

EMRE KAPANCI
Phillips Exeter Academy

MARINA KANG-NAKAYASU
Newton North High School

CECILIA KORB
Noble and Greenough School

RAVELLE LOTZ-MCMILLEN
Noble and Greenough School

AMANDA MARTIN
Rivers School

DREW MITTELSTADT
Holderness School

AYAAN MOHTA
Noble and Greenough School

MEGHAN MUNI
Rivers School

DYLAN ONG
Concord Academy

CHRISTINE ORDWAY
Noble and Greenough School

YARIEL PORTE
Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School

ELLA POWELL
Dexter Southfield

JACK POWELL
St. Sebastian's School

ANDY RUSSEL
Concord Academy

MILAN SHAH
Phillips Exeter Academy

RIAAN SHAH
Belmont Hill School

JANE SHOEMAKER
Milton Academy

SEB STAFFORD
Belmont Hill School

SARAH VASQUEZ MEJIA
Rivers School

GIDEON WEISS
Milton Academy

ANNABELLE XIA
Boston University Academy

JULIA XU
Phillips Academy Andover

ERIC YANG
Phillips Academy Andover

CAROLINA ZAMORA
Noble and Greenough School

ELLIE ZHONG
Weston High School

FINN ZINGER
Noble and Greenough School



Each morning, students pass over a historic version of the Meadowbrook seal stamped into the courtyard. This everyday walk connects them to over a century of tradition, community, and purpose.



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You Make This Possible

Every joyful discovery. Every bold question. Every inspired idea.

Each of these moments don't just happen—they're powered by people like you.

Your gift to The Meadowbrook Fund fuels the programs, teachers, and opportunities that define the Meadowbrook experience. It helps us keep knowing, loving, and challenging every child, every single day.

Whether unrestricted or directed to Academic Excellence, Faculty Support, or Financial Assistance, your contribution strengthens the foundation that allows every Meadowbrook student to thrive—today and into the future.

The next Meadowbrook moment starts with you.

Make your gift by June 30 at meadowbrook-ma.org/give

FSC
Here
Please?

The Meadowbrook School admits students of any race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, religion or disability in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Address Correction Requested

Parents: If you receive a copy of the *Meadowbrook Magazine* for an alum who is not living at home, please notify the Advancement Office at 781-894-1193.