



CORNERSTONE
Schools of Washington, D.C.

Hope and Academic Excellence
in the Nation's Capital

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CORNERSTONE
LIONS

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THE CORNERSTONE Connection

OCTOBER 2021 ISSUE

Note from the Executive Director

Dear friends of Cornerstone,

For nearly two years, we have experienced a unique reality where isolation from social connection, engaged learning, and collective play has been the norm.

Our Cornerstone students have felt the disproportionate effects of the pandemic in their communities in a profound way, whether through disrupted learning or experiencing loss due to COVID-19. As much as we crave a return to normal, the reorientation process from such a difficult year can be daunting.

As we returned to in-person learning this year, we knew that we needed more interpersonal play which would only enhance learning. In this newsletter, we highlight a few places of **joyful play building teamwork, deepening friendships, and strengthening learning.**

The volleyball team was led by two teachers, Coach Salazar and Coach T, forged together with Makayla, our Senior captain, to lead students from Grades 7-12 with minimal experience to win four straight matches and a playoff berth and to proudly cheer and support one another.

Our Lion's Den after school program has brought together students in Grades K-8 to grow as readers and engage with gifted teachers in art, computer programming, cooking, and soccer. One day, a 6th grader was picked up early, and begged to stay, saying, *"We have guests today and I want to see what they will do."*

Caroline Coleman, our 6th grade teacher, brought passion to learning by having small groups work together to use their microscopes and grow as future scientists.

On October 29, we hosted our Partner Day after a year away with 58 community adults committing to partner with 75 Cornerstone students through 4 partner days, prayers, and notes of encouragement. Students rejoiced in one-on-one time with an adult who showed up to invest in their lives through playful projects and fun, engaging conversation.

I pray that you are finding some places for playful learning in your life this fall.

Thank you for your prayers and support for our staff, students and parents as we re-learn doing community and school together.

With joy in Christ,
Dean Luckenbaugh



LION'S DEN



As a part of our commitment to providing an excellent enrichment program for our students, we offer a robust after school program for our K–8th Grade students called the Lion's Den. The primary focus of the Lion's Den is **to provide an environment that increases literacy, academic support, and exposure to the arts.**

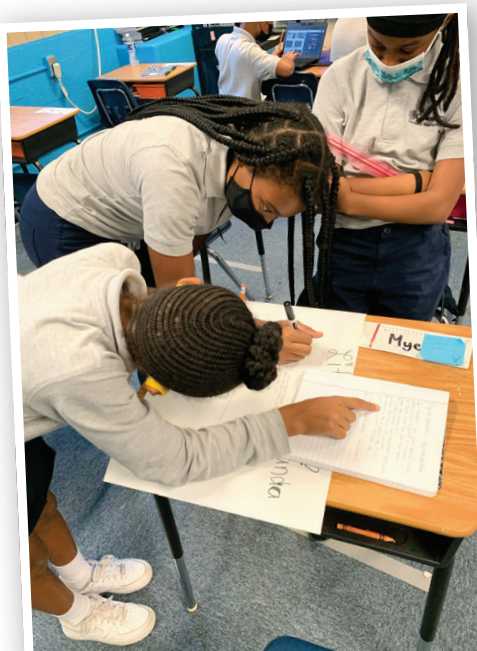
The Lion's Den currently offers a wide range of programs from sports to art and science projects both at Cornerstone and with community partners. This daily program helps develop cross-grade friendships while also serving as a safe place for students to spend time after school each day. Once a week at the Lion's Den our students can participate in a soccer clinic led by Washington Spirit players,

our cooking club to learn about cooking in a health-conscious way, and computer programming to enhance our students' ability to think logically, strategically, and analytically.

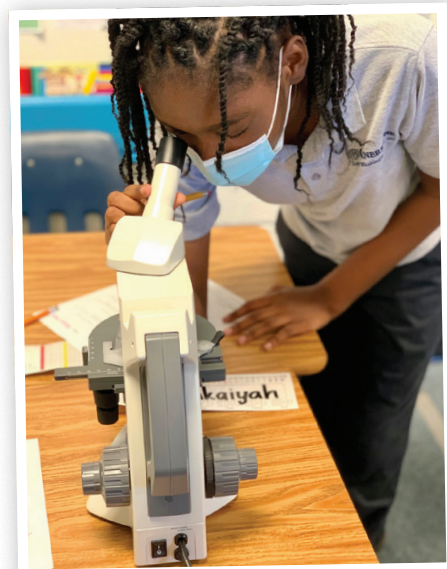
It is exciting to have such a breadth of programs for our students that allow them to participate in various activities that align with their interests and encourage them to try new things!

Student Scientists

At Cornerstone, we believe that teaching science from a Christian perspective honors God and his work in creation. Our role is to explore creation with students by engaging in excellent inquiry-based science that helps them to think and act like scientists, marvel, and reflect on their place as **God's image-bearers and earth keepers.**



In 6th grade science, our students are currently investigating matter and energy in ecosystems, specifically the ecosystems that we live near including Fort Dupont Park and the Anacostia River. They will conduct in-depth research on the properties of matter and participate in labs where they will put those learnings into practice. Miss Coleman is also integrating various STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) projects into the curriculum and leading her class through the Engineering Design Process to enrich students' understanding of the material. **It is our hope that through the study of science, our students will see the greatness of God, the beauty of God, the wisdom of God, and understand His creation!**



Lions Volleyball

Making it to the playoffs this year, our Lions volleyball team had an exciting season! The team was made up of 17 students, ranging from Grades 7-12, and was led by captains Makayla McDonald (senior) and Jada Veney (junior). Throughout the season, the **girls grew significantly in their knowledge of and confidence in playing the game, trust of one another as teammates, and willingness to encourage one another on and off the court.** The team's senior captain, Makayla, set the tone for the season through her consistent hard work in practices and strong leadership during games.



Some of the many highlights from this season include captains Makayla and Jada leading practices and steadily encouraging girls to try their best and winning a playoff game against the undefeated French School with fans present. When players were on the bench, they kept the energy high by creating and organizing chants to keep the momentum up throughout the game. **We are proud of the Lions' hard work, determination, and growth this season!**

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION: WASHINGTON SPIRIT

Cornerstone's partnership with the Washington Spirit professional women's soccer team began in 2020 when Cornerstone teacher, Jenny Twaddell, envisioned bringing soccer to the local community. Spirit midfielder, Jordan DiBiasi, was looking for opportunities to get more involved in the DC community when she came across Cornerstone and felt passionate about creating a soccer program for students.

In the last year, we have been able to collaborate with Spirit in exciting ways to bring soccer to our community. This summer we held a soccer clinic in which our girls learned basic skills, received soccer equipment, and spent time getting to know the Spirit players. Since then, our students have attended two Spirit games at Audi Field and we now have an after school soccer program in which two Spirit players come to Cornerstone for an hour each week to coach our girls.

We are grateful to the Washington Spirit players for **investing in our girls and modeling self-confidence, teamwork, and responsibility.** It is our hope that this partnership will continue to serve students both here at Cornerstone and in the larger community!



DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

First Partner Event

After several months of promoting the Partner Program through local churches and community organizations, we oriented a total of 58 Partners to our program for this year, including 36 new Partners. This exponential growth in our Partner Program has allowed for every student in Grades 3-7 to have a Partner, resulting in **73 Cornerstone students being paired with a loving adult who is committed to investing in their lives.**

On October 29, we welcomed the Cornerstone Partners through our doors as we hosted our first Partner Event on campus. Cornerstone teachers prepared engaging, interactive lessons and facilitated activities in which students and Partners could get to know each other. It was wonderful to see our students



showcasing their knowledge and enthusiastically sharing all that they have been learning with their Partner. One student excitedly asked her Partner, "When will I get to see you again?" as she walked her to the door at the conclusion of the event. It is moments like these that remind us that God is at work in our school community through the lives of our faithful supporters.

We pray that Cornerstone will always be known as a place where joy and love can be experienced. **Thank you, Partners, for loving and supporting our students as they grow into who God created them to be!**



GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL AT CORNERSTONE:

We are excited to have launched our Next Level campaign for 2021-2022 with a goal of raising \$1.25 million, a 25% increase over last year. To date, we have raised nearly \$508,000 which is over 40% of our goal! We invite you to consider making a gift to

join us in **taking Cornerstone to the Next Level of excellence and impact.**

To read more about our vision and learn how to make a donation, visit our website at **cornerstone-schools.org/next-level.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL SUPPORT!

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