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Read about our big plans for
the Cornerstone playground inside!



A Special Trip to the African American History Museum

This past February, 4th and 5th grade students from Cornerstone had the opportunity to visit the African American History Museum with Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos in honor of Black History Month. Not only did they get to visit this incredible museum, but they had free rein of the exhibits since the Department of Education arranged for them to come in the morning, before the museum was open to the public! Students, teachers, and parent chaperones alike could not say enough about how wonderful the museum was, telling us how much they learned from the beautiful exhibits and engaging interactive displays. Thank you so much to Secretary DeVos and the Department of Education for giving Cornerstone students this opportunity to reflect on the many contributions of African Americans to our country!





CORNERSTONE
Schools of Washington, D.C., Inc.

Hope and Academic Excellence
in the Nation's Capital

A NATIONAL GALLERY SCAVENGER HUNT



Classical education encourages students to search for beauty in everything around them as a reflection of their Creator. In support of this pursuit, the 9th and 10th grade Humanities classes took a field trip to the National Gallery of Art. This was no ordinary trip. The Humanities teachers created a photo scavenger hunt especially for the occasion to encourage the students to engage more fully with the masterpieces they were seeing. They prompted students to find specific works of art that they had studied, like *St. George and the Dragon* by Raphael, as well as to find portrait look alikes of people like our Assistant Principal, Mr. Newsome.

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3742 Ely Place, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20019
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THE CORNERSTONE Connection

SPRING/SUMMER 2019 ISSUE

Note from the Executive Director

This June marked the end of Cornerstone's 20th year as a school and my fifth as Principal. Fittingly, one of our graduates this year was the first student to attend Cornerstone for his entire educational career — Kindergarten through 12th grade. As I watched Melvin enter the chapel to "Pomp and Circumstance," my mind filled with memories of this young man over the years, from his chubby-cheeked elementary days (a picture of which I have had over my door for years) to our many lunchtime and after-school chats during his high school years about life, faith, grades, and (yes)...girls. I can still hear his young, high voice morph into the deep base it is today as the issues he faced morphed from childish worries to real adult challenges.

After the graduation ceremony on June 6th, I saw this graduate, in full graduation regalia, walking out of our front door for the last time after thirteen years. I ran after him, calling his name, hoping to get one last hug and whisper one final word of encouragement in his ear: "I love you, man, and am so proud of you. When college gets hard, work harder, pray harder, and know you can call me anytime for any reason." As my tears welled up, and I let him go...I watched him and his aunt disappear around the corner. "God," I said into the sky, head back, hoping to hold off the tears, "protect him and keep him and let him remain a man of God."



In so many ways, Melvin's journey at Cornerstone is an archetype of so many who have walked through Cornerstone's doors. A caring and hardworking parent or guardian, praying for the best for their child, eschews public school and places their hope in Cornerstone. From year to year, Cornerstone partners with this parent to pray for, guide, and develop the student through the foundations of elementary school, to the roller coaster that is middle school, to the demanding curriculum and expectations of our classical high school program. At the end, Cornerstone culminates in Junior and Senior years filled with prayer, college visits, SATs, prayer, sports, exams, and more prayer — all wrapped in a parent-student-teacher relationship designed to mold the student's character after the character of God. I pray that more and more young people will have this experience as we educate students here at Cornerstone for another 20 years and beyond.

Sincerely,
Derrick A. Max



Cornerstone Rises Against Hunger

We do not require service hours from students here at Cornerstone, a departure from the practices of many private schools. We hope that as our students grow in their relationship with Christ they will be compelled to serve others by his example. However, this past March, we partnered with an organization called Rise Against Hunger, along with Oakdale Church in Olney, Maryland, to pack 10,000 meals for children in Swaziland who do not have enough to eat.

During our Friday morning chapel time, all 155 students at Cornerstone gathered in our cafeteria to fill, weigh, and seal bags of food to be sent overseas.

What we worried would be a time of cajoling students to serve turned out to be an encouraging and inspiring time together. Students were singing and dancing to music while they worked alongside their teachers and parent volunteers. Every time they reached a 1,000-meal milestone, the leader from Rise Against Hunger rang a gong to loud cheering! As the event came to a close, students were stopping the representatives from Rise Against Hunger to ask for more bags to fill. "Let's keep going until we pack 20,000 meals," one fourth-grader said.

Thank you to Oakdale Church and Rise Against Hunger for giving our students this opportunity to serve people the way that they have been served by Christ!

A STAY AT PORT ISOBEL ISLAND

Cornerstone's Middle School program has been focused this year on hands-on learning and building community, in particular through educational field trips. They have driven, bussed, and taken the Metro all over their city this year to learn about our nation's capital, in terms of both geography and its significance to our nation. This spring, our Middle School teachers took their field trips to the next level by partnering with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to go on an overnight field trip to Port Isobel Island in the Chesapeake Bay. They learned about all the creatures that live in the bay in an up close and personal way — fishing off of docks and opening clams they pulled up in clam traps. They also went out on a boat where the trip leaders talked to them about the geology of the bay as he mapped out their route.

After a long day of trekking around the island and getting in touch with nature, the students came back to the main house to share what they had learned and share a meal they had cooked together. Students returned from the trip excited about the Bay and all they had learned, but even more so they came back as a solid community. We are so excited about how this group has come together this year. We have really seen how the communal spirit in the Middle School has translated into an incredible learning environment!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: COACH JONATHAN POWELL

Coach Powell has been teaching at Cornerstone longer than anyone. Here at the end of his twelfth year of teaching P.E. and coaching our sports teams, Coach Powell has seen a lot of life at Cornerstone. He describes teaching as, "intriguing, because you are presented with a lot of challenges day to day that are not typical. I have to be creative to figure out how to use limited resources and facilities to teach the material."

In addition to the creative part of his job, he loves the opportunity to disciple students, especially when it comes to coaching basketball. "The season takes forever so we really get to go deep with them and do life with them. When these relationships extend outside of the school building, I am really able to speak into their lives and share my own real life with them." He share his life with them so much so that his four-year-old daughter, when asked what his "other name" was besides "Daddy," replied, "Coach Powell!"

For the longest tenured teacher at Cornerstone, it was a surprise to learn that he never expected to be here for longer than a month or two. He graduated with a business degree and took the P.E. teacher job after college to help the school out for a few months while they looked for a permanent P.E. teacher, but, as he put it, "I've been here ever since." When asked what makes him stay, he talked about the culture of family and the safe place Cornerstone creates for students so they can let their guard down and be open. "I have seen God transform people. Students come in totally uninterested in learning — all they want to do is leave — and then I look up five years later and they are graduating with honors." We praise God for these transformations and the way that Coach Powell has been a part of God's work in these students' lives over the years.



Summer Needs

Even though our students are out for the summer, this season is an active time at Cornerstone. Our goal for the summer is to bring our facilities and staff up to the next level to serve our students even better.

We have an incredible staff and we want to equip them through trainings and conferences throughout the summer to be the best teachers they can be. We also want to replace our outdated playground equipment and add permanent basketball hoops because it is so important for our students to spend time outside in a neighborhood where they do not always have the freedom to play outside at home. We have set financial goals to make these plans a reality, and we need your help to meet them!

New, safe equipment for Cornerstone Playground — \$100,000

Built-in basketball hoops — \$15,000

Training and conferences for Cornerstone Teachers — \$20,000

