

Passing IN Notes

Parkmont School
Sessions 3 and 4 in Review

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A view from Amador Peninsula in Panama.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

JUNE 8-9
Middle School
overnight
beach trip to
Rehoboth Beach

JUNE 10
End of Session V

JUNE 12
Upper School
Graduation
6:30 pm
*Friendship Heights
Village Center, 4433
South Park Avenue,
Chevy Chase, MD*

Parkmont's All School Ski Trip: Shredding the Powder

To cap off Session 3 and hopefully inspire some plans for winter break, the school hit the slopes to do some skiing. Although it was a very early morning, everyone showed up excited and ready to head to Whitetail ski resort in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Once at the mountain we gathered our gear and suited up. The middle school headed off for their lessons and the upper school divided into snow boarders and skiers. The conditions on the mountain made for a perfect day for all levels. The sun was shining and the snow was soft and plentiful. Everyone spent the first part of the morning getting the kinks out, but by mid-morning students and staff were riding the lifts and shredding the trails. It was fun to



meet up at the lifts after each run to talk about who won the races between David Carrette, Reggie Hough and Shaun Moller, who claims when he's not teaching he is moonlighting as a downhill racer. It was clear at lunch by the smiles and yawns that everyone was having a good time and getting a workout as well. After lunch, a group of the more experience skiers even decided to head to the back-bowl of Whitetail, to step up to some black diamonds. By 3 o'clock everyone was ready to pile back on the bus and take a nap. It was a great to see everyone out having fun and trying new things.

(Left to Right) Upper school students, David Carrette, David Heath and Reggie Hough take a break from the slopes.

Inset: Middle school students take a beginner's lesson.

All-school Trip to Arabian Nights

On Tuesday, February 12, the whole school headed to the newly renovated Arena Stage, near the southwest waterfront, for a noon performance of Arabian Nights. Students and staff were excited to check out the “theater within a theater” in the beautiful new space, and even more exciting was the production itself. Most attendees admitted to being entranced by the humorous and intriguing tales of Scheherazade. She took the audience deep into ancient Baghdad, including players from jesters to thieves, and she succeeded in saving her own life through the enticing stories she spun for the troubled king.

Parkmont Goes to Panama

During the week of Winter Break, February 18th through the 27th, ten students and three staff members set off for an action-packed adventure in Panama. After a session spent learning about the geography, history and culture of the country, the group was well prepared when they arrived at Hotel Andino, in the



The group with kids from Portobelo's Escuela del Ritmo.



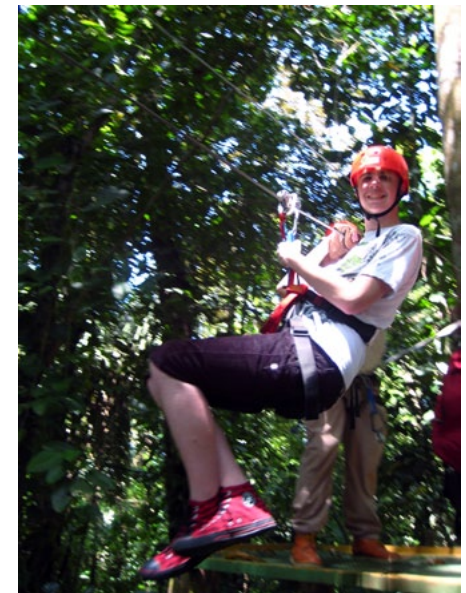
11th graders, Carlos Nall, Ben Lasso, and Kevin Mayes take in the Panama City skyline.

Caladonia district of Panama City. This thriving heart of an older metropolitan neighborhood was filled to burst with little local food stands, clothing stores, restaurants and the constant flow of cars and colorful buses. They dropped their luggage and ventured out into the Casco Viejo, or the old town of Panama City. This lovely historic district built up by the French and Spanish immigrants of the early 1800's was an enjoyable place to explore, photograph and dine.

Among the trip highlights was an eco-boat tour on the infamous Panama Canal. This included a visit to Monkey Island, where everyone watched as scores of monkeys descended upon the little boats in search of free peanuts. The boat made its way through winding water passages to a floating house, where everyone enjoyed lunch and

some swimming. The next day the team caught the 8:30am ferry to Taboga Island, a small, lightly populated island in the Pacific ocean which is a regular vacation spot for locals and international tourists.

Another exciting moment of the trip involved rising to new heights. Students and staff conquered their fears to take a zip-line tour in the rainforests outside of Colon, soaring over the trees and rivers. The group also traveled to Portobelo, a charming and sleepy village on the Atlantic Ocean, where they stayed in two large houses, perched at the very edge of the Bay of Portobelo, thought to be the final resting place of Sir. Frances Drake. Portobelo was a shining example of Caribbean culture the students spent their final days in Panama absorbing the rich food, culture, music and art. A group of local Congo dancers performed and shared the traditional music and dance that has been maintained since African slaves were brought to the region. A day at the beach, and a few days walking around the historic forts, churches and town square allowed everyone the opportunity to relax and reboot before the trip back to the United States.



Brennan Fitzgerald tries the zip line at Metropolitan National Park.

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Note about Spring PCs

Every spring, we schedule a second round of parent conferences. These conferences include the student, parents, the advisor, and the Head or Dean of Students (Nijole). Spring meetings focus on wrapping up academic work for this year, offer some opportunities to brainstorm summer plans and looking ahead to the upcoming year. It is always helpful to for the staff to get some idea of how different families support their children in school. We hope everyone leaves these conferences with a shared perspective on how things are working at school and how we might collaborate effectively to ensure success for our students. These meetings are always coordinated through Willa, and any family interested in scheduling a meeting before the end of the year may contact her.

2011 Accreditation Visit: This Is What We Do

For three days at the end of March, Parkmont was host to a visiting team of educators and administrators assembled by the Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS), the agency from whom we are seeking re-accreditation. It was a visit for which we had been preparing for well over a year. In the fall of 2009, our staff commenced a series of meetings, brainstorming sessions, and painstaking drafts of responses to an intensive series of questions about what we do. All of this culminated in a 300-page “self-study” demonstrating in meticulous detail the congruence of our philosophy with our daily practice.

We welcomed our committee of five to the school with an evening reception on Sunday, March 27, which was attended by Parkmont staff, Board of Directors and some parents.

Beginning Monday morning, the visiting team immersed themselves in school culture for two and a half days, observing each class, interviewing students, and scrutinizing the facility in an effort to hold a mirror up to our practice. They departed with warm words for the energy and commitment of the staff and the unique experience that Parkmont affords its students.



(Left to Right) The team: Christy Halverson-Ross, Sarah Everdell, Ron McClain, Ellen Mills, Brooke Carroll, Kim Schraf, and Becky Schmier.

Middle School Internships

Beginning on March 9th, middle school students have been spending their Wednesday afternoons at local internships. The goal of the internship program is to provide students with the opportunity to experience many layers of the world outside of school. By spending time at a job site over several months, they are exposed to many of the rhythms of workday life, and can get a sense of how different groups organize themselves and accomplish things. Their managers are encouraged to include them in as many aspects of the work as possible, so that they experience both the humdrum and the exciting. They learn to be part of a working-world team, and also learn some new skills. This year, middle school internships included Rock Creek Nature Center, Sullivan's Toy Store, Little Flower Montessori Daycare, So Others Might Eat, Montgomery County Park Service, and Hillwood Estate and Gardens.

Upper School Internship Spotlight: Internships that Have Paid Off

One of the great benefits of having an internship at Parkmont is that you might just fall into a summer job. This was the case for two students, Jennifer Benton, grade 11, and Reggie Hough, grade 12. Both students are upper classmen who have found summer jobs thanks to their required 180 hours of internship. Reggie Hough began to gain restaurant experience last year through his internship at Third and Eats, a downtown café and catering company, and he polished his skills this year at Busboys and Poets, a coffee shop on 14th Street, NW. Reggie was such a valuable asset to Third and Eats that they offered him a summer job working in the kitchen where he learned how to master the culinary arts. His favorite thing to prepare was strawberry cheese cake. Reggie says the internship program “gave me a chance to see

Other interns at work: Kory Otto-Jacobs, 11th grade, at the National Zoo.



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(Left to Right) Getting started: Emili Stopak, Jack Hussey, Noah Shiotani, and Josh Stanislawski.

what working was like” and it is clear that “work place experience pays off.” With two years of experience in the food industry on his resumé, Reggie plans to look for similar work while at college.

Jennifer Benton has had a slew of internships while she has been at Parkmont. She has worked in a pet shop, two local horse stables, and is currently working in the aftercare program at an elementary school. Her favorite experiences, by far, were at Meadowbrook and Rock Creek Horse Stables. As a long time equestrian, she has had the opportunity to translate that love of horses into internship hours and eventually a summer job at Meadowbrook. What has Jennifer learned most from internships? “Internships also help show you the jobs you don’t want to have,” she says. “I don’t ever want to work at a pet shop again, and I can tell you...that I don’t think I wanna be a teacher. It’s a lot of work!”



Another intern, Caitlin Doherty, 11th grade, at Fancy Cakes by Leslie.

Other Worlds: A Parkmont Art Exhibition

This year Parkmont school played host to the creativity and originality of its students in the form of a multi-faceted art exhibition that took place on the evening



of Friday, April 29th. Three afternoon classes, the Panama, Murals, and Exhibitions classes, created artwork, photographs, and an astounding full-room mural for Parkmont families and friends to enjoy. The Panama class contributed photographs, a slide show, and an on-line bird book, which captured the feeling and beauty of trip. The Murals class painted the walls of the student lounge with various images, from a samarai to hearts and happy faces to a rendi-

Left: Detail of one wall of the student lounge.

Center: Noah Shiotani and Emili Stopak work on a collaborative section of the mural.

Right: Jack Hussey puts finishing touches on his wall.



tion of the DC subway system. The Exhibition class made artwork surrounding the idea of ‘alternate realities’, or ‘other worlds’, which led to an extremely colorful and diverse collection of original drawings, paintings, and sculpture. Half way through the evening Caitlin Doherty, an 11th grade student who went to Panama on the class trip, talked an audience of parents, students and staff through the Panama slide show, sharing some of the more memorable stories from the adventure. The evening was a wonderful success, filled with delicious snacks, quality conversation, and extremely interesting artwork.



Parkmont School

4842 Sixteenth Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20011

Office: (202) 726-0740 • Development: (202) 726-0740, ext. 210 • (202) 726-0748 (fax)

www.parkmont.org