

ADVANCING Development

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Mission Statement

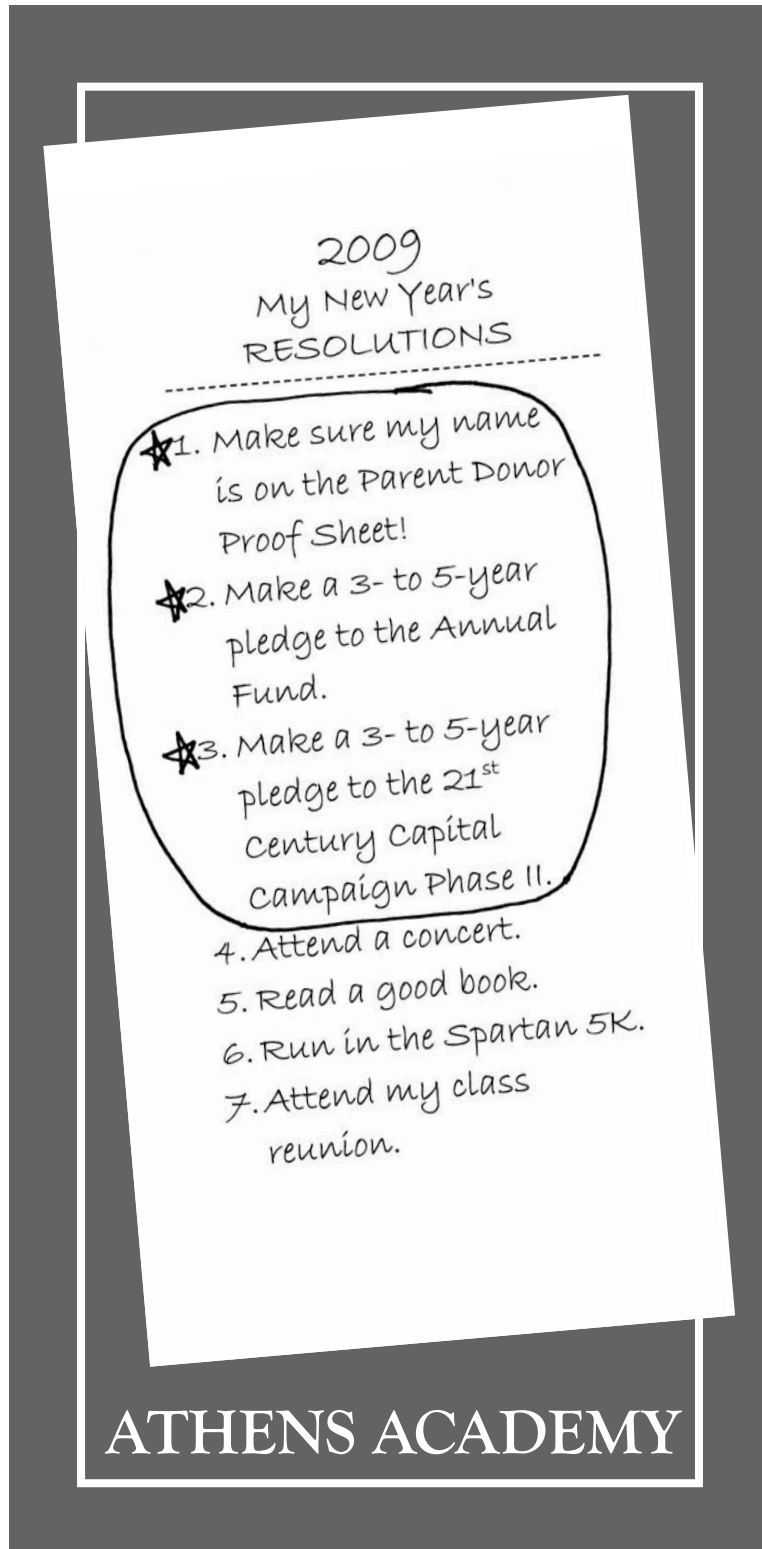
Athens Academy seeks excellence with honor in the educational and personal experience of each student.

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SUPPORTING

Parent Service Organization

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PSO Officers

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Happy New Year!

With the beginning of the New Year, the PSO is ready to go with many exciting events. Get your running shoes out and prepare for the 24th Annual Spartan 5K & Spartan Sprint. This will be a great way to stick to your New Year's resolution of being fit and healthy! The Spartan Sprint is a fun event for all ages, especially our younger Spartans.

Also, special thanks to Kaki Heath, Joanna Hill, and Pam Dillard for all their hard work with the Spirit Items Sale during the busy holidays.

And as we start the new year, please be sure to use your cash back cards at local stores--it's the easiest way to volunteer!

Mark Your Calendar

- The PSO Executive Board meeting is Tuesday, January 13, 2009, at 8:15 a.m. in the Science and Art Building.
- The PSO Board Meeting is Tuesday, January 20, 2009, at 8:15 a.m. in the Spartan Center. It is important that all chairs and co-chairs plan to attend this meeting.

Susie Malcom
 PSO Chair

Don't Forget!

Sign up today for the
 24th Annual
Spartan 5K & Spartan Sprint
 Saturday, February 14, 2009

Festival Day
 Saturday, April 18, 2009

LOWER School News

PRIMARY Points

Classes Resume

Monday, January 5
8:10 a.m.

Admissions Information Session

Saturday, January 10
10:00 a.m.
Presentation Hall

Grade Reps Meeting

Monday, January 12
7:30 p.m.
Presentation Hall

Fourth Grade Performance

Rumpus in the Rainforest
Friday, January 16
8:45 a.m.
Lower School Hall

Dress Rehearsal
Thursday, January 15
8:45 a.m.
Lower School Hall

School Holiday

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, January 19

Books, Just a Click Away

A major goal of the Pre/Lower School Media Center program is to foster a love of reading by making books readily available. We are excited to announce that our Online Catalog for the PS/LS Media Center is now accessible from home or wherever you have internet access. To connect to the collection, simply type <http://ismc.athensacademy.org> in the URL bar. The address should take you to the Online Catalog where you can search for books. When you find a list of titles you are interested in, just click on the title for more details about the book. Books and other resources from the Parent Shelf can also be found in this database.

After checking out the books, the best part begins--sharing the books with your children! Extensive research has shown reading aloud to a child is the single most important factor in raising a reader. There are only 44 sounds in the English language, and all 44 sounds can be found in *Goodnight Moon*, *Make Way for Ducklings*, and *Charlotte's Web*. During shared reading time, the child is learning not only how to read but, perhaps more importantly, learning to want to read. Many of our Athens Academy parents have already set up a user account for the PS/LS Media Center. If you would like to have your own "library card" for the PS/LS Media Center, just call 706-433-2431 or email eking@athensacademy.org.

Elaine King

Houses for Play

Our pre-first students have been collaborating with the Upper School 3-D Design Class on ideas for playhouses. Students in Dr. Lawrence Stueck's art classes visited the preschool to interview students to find out their ideas for the "perfect" playground playhouse. The Upper School students used these ideas to design and build 3-D models of playhouses. The pre-first students were amazed with the "designers'" models.

Melanie Hollis, Jane
Insko, & Robin O'Rear

Outdoor Lessons

During the past few months, students in first, fourth, and twelfth grades have had the wonderful opportunity to explore the outdoors and get better acquainted with the trees on our beautiful campus. Fourth graders in Jeri Burnette's science class and seniors in Anna Scott's biology class paired up to brave the cold temperatures to learn about the trees growing along the Athens Academy greenway (also referred to as the cross country trail). First graders took a shorter walk to the woods across from the Middle School and worked in small groups with parent volunteers. All those involved sharpened their observation, measurement, and description skills. Activities included finding the tree's diameter, collecting leaves, studying the condition of the bark and completing a bark rubbing. Soon the entire Athens Academy community will be able to improve their tree identification skills as well. LS science teachers Mary Kline and Jeri Burnette were awarded an Oconee Mini-Grant to fund their project to create permanent markers which identify and label the trees along our greenway. Look for information this spring for the date announcing the trail opening.

Mary Kline

Rumpus in the Rainforest

What happens when David Forest, known as D., arrives at the station at the rainforest? You are in danger from "d-forestation!" This is just one of many facts that the fourth graders will incorporate in their script for their play. Many animals from the rainforests have been given a voice by the fourth grade authors. The basic play, *Rumpus in the Rainforest*, has been adapted as a culminating activity for the interdisciplinary unit on the rainforest. In science, students studied the layers and the animals of the rainforest while in social studies they located and discussed the economic

impact of the rainforest on the regions in South America. Finally, in Language Arts, the classes identified character traits and wrote dialogues for their animal characters based on their research and creativity. The fourth grade will present their play, *Rumpus in the Rainforest*, on Friday, January 16, for their friends and families, with a dress rehearsal on January 15 for Pre/Lower School students.

Mary Ann Naclerio &
Jeri Burnette

Rising Fifth Grade Parents Meeting

On Thursday, January 29, we invite parents of rising fifth graders to come for a meeting in Middle School. We would like to introduce you to teachers, show you around Middle School, and talk with you about the excitement you have to look forward to as your child advances to the next stage in school. Please join us at 7:00 p.m. in the main building of Middle School. This meeting is for parents only; we will have the children come for a visit in May.

Brenda Klein

Admissions/Open House

Applications are still being accepted for students K3 through first grade. Please contact the Admissions Office to complete an application. Decisions for these grades will be mailed by the first of February.

An all-school Information Session will be held on Saturday, January 10, in the Presentation Hall at 10:00 a.m. Please share this information with potential families.

Recess Dress

One of our many favorite activities in our day is recess. Every class goes out for at least 30 minutes a day or more. As you dress your child for school, please remember to dress them warmly for recess, and please label all outerwear!

Bob Ulrich &
Melton Weekley

MIDDLE School News

TAKE Note

Classes resume

Monday, January 5
8:10 a.m.

End of Second Grading Period

Friday, January 9

Fifth Grade Greek Olympics

Friday, January 9
Spartan Center

Admissions Information Session

Saturday, January 10
10:00 a.m.
Presentation Hall

Grade Reps Meeting

Monday, January 12
7:30 p.m.
Presentation Hall

Report Cards

will be mailed
Wednesday, January 14

School Holiday

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, January 19

Rising Ninth Grade Student and Parents Meeting

Monday, February 2
7:30 p.m.
Presentation Hall

New Resolutions in a New Year

After a carefree and rejuvenating holiday break, the students often return to school with new energy and a resolve to improve their work habits. Experience has proven to us that the vast majority of them really do want to be successful and achieve excellence. In January we not only begin a new year but also a new quarter. It's the perfect time to revisit goals and to analyze work habits. If something is not working effectively, it's time to consider why and rethink the plan.

As parents, we want to support our children in the best ways to allow them to grow, gain independence, and achieve. A good strategy in beginning a new year is to talk with your students about their goals, study habits, organizational schemes, and activities. What is working? What needs to be adjusted?

Some strategies for parents in helping students develop strong study skills:

- Work with your student to plan for physical activity and other interests after school. Balance these activities to create a reasonable schedule.
- Provide a quiet place and consistent time for study. Some students work well with quiet music or "white noise" in the background. Generally, popular music does not aid good concentration.
- Make sure your student has a personal work space with all study materials handy.
- Monitor TV, computer, video game, and telephone use and the amount of time spent on these activities.
- Maintain consistent bedtimes. Most young adolescents need nine to ten hours of sleep a night.
- Set high standards with your child. Let him know you expect strong efforts.
- Be available during homework time, not to "do the work" but to support your child.
- It's a great plan to ask to see the agenda and then the completed assignments.
- Talk with your child about his classes, research papers,

science labs, arts activities, and what books he is reading. Ask open-ended questions that can promote good discussion.

- Remind your student to pack the book bag before going to bed.
- Help your child to plan ahead on long-term assignments or for busy weeks.
- Have a routine for signing test papers.
- Read together. It can be a class novel, choice book, the newspaper, or a magazine article. They are never too old to enjoy a few minutes a day of reading with parents!

By working together, the school and the parents, we challenge, support, and encourage the students during these formative years. Call on us as you have the need!

Honor Roll

Middle School would like to congratulate three new students in eighth grade who are named to the first quarter Honor Roll. Congratulations to Chloe Alexander, Frank DuBose, and Jessica Gross for their outstanding work! We apologize that an error caused them to be omitted from the original list. Great work, Spartans!

Coats and Jackets

Many students' jackets and sweatshirts are identical. Please clearly label all outerwear with students' names. We will make every effort to get the items back to the owner when they are left around campus!

Greek Olympics

A highlight of the fifth graders' study of the ancient Greek civilization comes on January 9 when they participate in the Greek Olympics of the Mind and Body. Students are divided into the various city-states, create banners, engage in intellectual competitions, and cap the day with assorted athletic events. At the conclusion the medals and crowns are awarded to the victors!

Thanks to the parents who have volunteered to assist! All are invited to view the competitions held in the Spartan Center.

Admissions Open House

On Saturday, January 10, we invite interested families to learn more about Athens Academy at an information session at 10:00 a.m. in the Presentation Hall. We encourage you to talk with friends in the community and share with them your enthusiasm for the school. To hear your child's personal experience with teachers, academics, fine arts, and athletics can be very helpful to prospective parents. Please share with us names of interested persons so that we might personally invite them to join us on the 10th.

Report Cards

Grade reports for the second quarter will be mailed to families on Wednesday, January 14. Once the honor roll and the "all 1's list" are determined, we will recognize named students in chapel. We know that you will join us in celebrating the strong efforts of the children.

Rising Fifth Grade Parents Meeting

On Thursday, January 29, we invite parents of rising fifth graders to come for a meeting in Middle School. We would like to introduce you to teachers, show you around Middle School, and talk with you about the excitement you have to look forward to as your child advances to the next stage in school. Please join us at 7:00 p.m. in the main building of Middle School. This meeting is for parents only; we will have the children come for a visit in May.

Winter Dance

On Friday, February 20, the eighth graders will host the seventh graders for a "dress-up dance." Attire will be party dresses (no strapless, please) for the ladies and coats and ties for the gentlemen. The faculty looks forward to enjoying this special occasion with the students on February 20 in the Tillman Center, 8:00-10:00 p.m. Invitations and more details will come later.

Brenda Klein

UPPER

School News

HIGH Lights

Classes Resume

Monday, January 5
Week 1

Grade Reps Meeting

Monday, January 12
7:30 p.m.
Presentation Hall

Report Cards

will be mailed
Monday, January 12

School Holiday

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, January 19

Red Cross Blood Drive

Wednesday, January 28
8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Spartan Center

US Talent Show

Thursday, January 29
7:30 p.m.
Presentation Hall
All US students are invited to participate. If interested, see Mrs. Farmer.
No homework night.

A New Year, A New Beginning...Begin Now

The Upper School certainly had a successful end to the first semester and to the 2008 year, and I am confident we will have an equally successful second semester. The Class of 2009 will continue leading the way as they move toward the end of their high school careers. They will continue focusing on their daily tasks with their teachers to ensure they have viable plans for their next big step. The juniors will begin learning about the complicated college admission process in junior seminar while the sophomores will begin learning about interpersonal relationships in sophomore seminar. The freshmen will continue learning about themselves, what is needed to be successful in the Upper School and, consequently, what is needed to be successful in college and beyond. There are daily lessons to be learned if we look for them. We can do so by learning to focus on the present.

The new calendar year brings with it the concept of new year's resolutions and what we hope to accomplish over the course of the next 365 days. Many of us resolve ourselves to lose weight, get into shape, save money, study harder, and not repeat the mistakes of our past. Few of us resolve to live in the moment and enjoy where we are and what we are doing now, today. We think about the past, worry about the future, and fail to live in the present. As such, we miss daily opportunities to better ourselves, and we fail to focus on what is in our immediate control. Certainly there is a need to remember our past, and there is an even stronger need to plan well for our future; however, we must not do so at the expense of today. As many of us are keenly aware, time passes quickly and opportunities soon pass unless we take advantage of them now.

As the second semester begins, take time now to stop and think about what has been accomplished first semester and what needs to be accomplished by the end of the school year. Take heed and do not lose focus on the daily events and experiences, for they will soon be what makes up the past and they will determine the future.

An Opportunity for Growth...

Kairos, along with *chronos*, are Greek words for "time." While *chronos* denotes time in minutes, hours, days, and years (we get the word "chronological" from this), *kairos* denotes the time of the spirit. It can be translated to "the right time" or "God's time." The Kairos Retreat provides student participants the opportunity to reflect on their life experiences, to develop their relationships with peers, and to deepen their understanding of the self, others, and spirituality. While on the retreat, participants—students and teachers alike—are able to have reinforced in a very meaningful way many of the values that Athens Academy seeks to instill during the school day, including integrity, self-knowledge, compassion for others, and spiritual wellness.

The first Kairos at Athens Academy took place during Interim Week 2005, for the Class of 2006, and Kairos VI will be held January 15-18, 2009, for members of the senior class, as well as selected members of the junior class. For information about the retreat, contact US English teacher Brian Connell at bconnell@athensacademy.org.

Calendars

As you plan your year, please do not forget to subscribe to the Athens Academy calendars. There are many wonderful events planned, and the new Google calendars will make it easier for you to plan your events and support your Spartans. To subscribe, please visit www.athensacademy.org and click on the News and Events tab. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to be in touch with me.

Read All About It

The Spartan Review has entered the 21st century and can now be found online. If you are interested in reading about many of the happenings at Athens Academy visit www.athensacademy.org and click on the News and Events tab, then on community news, and then select *Spartan Review* from the left hand column. The *Spirit* can also be found at this website.

DAR Good Citizen

Blake Sinyard has been selected as the 2008 DAR Good Citizen for Athens Academy. Blake was selected for her qualities of dependability, leadership, and patriotism. This selection allowed Blake to compete for recognition by the Reverend John Andrews chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. After the essay competition, Blake was named the 2008 DAR Good Citizen for this chapter in Oconee County.

Rotary Student/Teacher

Congratulations to Emily Rea for being named the Rotary Student of the fall semester for Athens Academy. Based on Rotary's motto, "Service Above Self," the award is given to students who have excelled in the classroom while giving of themselves generously in the community. Emily selected Thom Beaulieu as her Rotary Teacher for his influence on her life at Athens Academy. The two were recognized at the November 25 meeting of the Rotary Club of Oconee County.

GHSA Region 8A Football Scholar Athlete

Will Harris has been named the Region 8A Football Scholar Athlete, and will be competing with the other 39 region winners from all classifications for a scholarship sponsored by the Atlanta Chapter of the College Football Hall of Fame and the Chick-fil-A Bowl.

Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership

Congratulations to Jane Robbins Mize for being selected as Athens Academy's representative to the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Seminar. Jane Robbins will participate in the Georgia seminar at Berry College from June 12-14, just after school ends for the year. Carey Stewart was selected as the alternate and will be invited to participate if additional spots are opened. Please join me in congratulating these two for their selection.

Bob Sears

GUIDE

To Higher Education

COLLEGE Bound

Junior College Night

Thursday, February 5
7:30 p.m.
Presentation Hall

Sophomore College Night

Tuesday, February 24
7:30 p.m.
Presentation Hall

SAT Schedule

March 14
Register by February 10

May 2
Register by March 31

June 6
Register by May 5

Go to www.collegeboard.com to register.

ACT Schedule

February 7
Register by January 6

April 4
Register by February 27

June 13
Register by May 8

Go to www.act.org to register

Things to Know in 2009

Apparently some people don't think applying to college is stressful enough, as they've mixed in acronyms to add to the confusion. Here's our guide to what you need to know to start 2009:

- **HOPE:** Almost everyone knows that the HOPE scholarship is the lottery funded initiative of the state of Georgia to cover the cost of college tuition at public colleges or partial tuition at private colleges in Georgia for seniors who graduate from a Georgia high school with at least a 3.0 GPA. But did you know that HOPE stands for "Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally"? More importantly did you know that all seniors planning to stay in Georgia for college should go to www.gacollege411.org to apply for this scholarship? Athens Academy will send grades to the GSFC (that's the Georgia Student Finance Commission) so all students who register and earn at least a 3.0 will have access to this scholarship.
- **FAFSA:** It's more fun to say than "Free Application for Federal Student Aid," but no matter how you say it, completing the forms is not enjoyable. Also beware of websites as both fafsa.com and fafsa.org are third party vendors. Only www.fafsa.ed.gov will take you to the Department of Education's website, where students can apply for federal-based financial aid in the forms of loans, grants, and work study programs. Applications are based on the previous tax year and can begin to be filed on January 1. Funds do run out so applying as early as possible is highly recommended.
- **CSS Financial Aid Profile:** CSS stands for "College Scholarship Service" which helps to explain that it is a service provided by College Board to collect information used to award private grants and scholarship funds. Many schools require the FAFSA and/or the CSS profile to be filled out as part of the financial aid process. Not all schools require these forms, so check carefully to make sure that you are sending in the proper information.
- **UG!** – Our own acronym, to remind seniors to finish their college search well. To do so they must *update* their Naviance pages with college decisions and bring us copies of scholarship letters. Also very important is maintaining their *grades* as we will be sending midyear report forms and first semester grades to all colleges to which seniors applied, and we will be sending final grades to the one school they wish to attend.
- **PSAT:** Did you say PSAT stands for "Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test"? Wrong! Feeling good then about "Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test"? Wrong again! SAT no longer stands for anything. It is now known as the SAT Reasoning Test. Scores were sent home for the PSAT for juniors and sophomores over December break. These scores will be discussed in junior and sophomore seminars. SAT may no longer be an acronym, but PSAT/NMSQT still is. That's the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test through which high scoring juniors may receive college scholarships. Students with superior scores will be contacted by College Board if they qualify.

College Nights

Junior College Night is February 5; Sophomore College Night is February 24.

Details for those nights will be in next month's *Spirit*, but please mark your calendars now.

Colleen Pruitt &
Jeff Stachura

ARTS

On Stage and in the Studio

COMING
Soon

Exhibits

Myers Gallery

January 12-February 13
John Ahee, paintings

Reception

Sunday, February 1
Myers Gallery
2:00-4:00 p.m.

Student Gallery in Science and Art Building

Watercolors by the Painting and Drawing Class

Bertelsmann Gallery

January 6-21
Richard Patterson, photography
3D models by the Upper School science, math and art departments

January 26-February 13
Artwork by North Oconee High School students

Senior Portfolio Class Show

High Museum of Art, Green Family Education Center, Atlanta
January 15-March 29

Reception

Friday, January 16
7:30-8:30 p.m.

UGA High School Band Festival

January 15-18

Final All-State Orchestra Auditions

Saturday, January 17

Celebrating the Season

December was a busy month for Athens Academy music students. The Upper School Band, with guest percussionist Beth Shaw, performed during the Athens Academy holiday celebration on December 3. At the same event, *The Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy* was performed by a flute ensemble comprised of Eric Perkerson, Elizabeth Newcomer, Hannah Hays, Middle School student Jessica Gross, and Mrs. Taylor. On December 9, the Athens Academy seventh and eighth grade band students played holiday music for residents and staff at Iris Place and at Lanier Gardens.

The Middle School orchestras traveled to Athens Regional Medical Center on December 9, and the Upper School orchestra filled the lobby of the hospital with sounds of the season on December 10. These performances were greatly enjoyed by patients and staff of the hospital as well as parents who joined us.

In the Spotlight

On December 6 and 7 the Drama Club helped the Oconee County Library by serving as storybook characters at Barnes & Noble. Students dressed in costumes volunteered their time to read stories in the children's section of the book store.

On December 9, drama students gathered at Ms. Thompson's house to make holiday cards for the elderly. These cards were delivered to the Family Life Center in Oconee County.

The Freshman Film class had their annual Freshman Film Festival on December 10. Student-made film shorts were screened for an audience of family and friends. Selected shorts will be entered in the Atlanta area's Teen Screen Film Festival, to be held in April 2009.

On Thursday, December 11, the Advanced Acting Class presented *Snapshots: Shakespeare*.

Students performed several scenes and monologues from many of Shakespeare's plays. Performers were Libby Hansen, Sofe Wasserman-Smith, Christine Shaw, Anne Lanier Gilbert, CJ Brown, Drew Jacoby, Cate Jackson, Ansley McAllister, Mary Katherine Malone, and Billy Pate. These students will also be competing in the Georgia Shakespeare Festival's Annual High School Competition in February.

Before we dismissed for the holiday break, Ms. Townsend's fifth grade drama classes performed original holiday puppet shows for many Lower School students. And to wrap up the year, the Drama Club attended a performance of *The Nutcracker* at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta on December 20.

Lorraine Thompson

Band News

During December, Jason Fern auditioned for the Middle School GMEA District #13 Honor Band, and Eric Perkerson, Tavish Gantz, and Emily Dong auditioned for the High School GMEA District #13 Honor Band. Zoe Brewster, Nick Rorabaugh, and Max Ruston represented Athens Academy at the UGA Middle School Band Festival held December 11-13.

Several Middle School students have been nominated for participation in the Georgia Independent School Association Middle School All-Select Band. These students are Jason Fern, Nick Rorabaugh, Max Ruston, Taylor Payne, Jessica Gross, and Rebecca Edison. Upper School students selected to participate in the UGA High School Band Festival are Eric Perkerson, Esther Deaton, Aneet Patel, Tavish Gantz, and Shida Chen. This festival will occur January 15-18. Congratulations to all!

Jenny Taylor

MS Play Cast

After two successful days of auditions the Middle School play, *The Servant of Two Masters* by Carlo Goldoni, has been cast. Congratulations to the following students: Matilda Segal, Jason Hatfield, Anna Candler Kimsey, Aaron Conley, Keegan Argo, Moiranyah Daniels-Melear, Abby Woodard, Ward Archibald, Nilu Vyas, Ethan Jones, Sam Williams, Ann McKenzie Woodruff, and Joshua Netter. Also participating in the play are stage managers Donald Templeman and Jeremi Clemons. Others involved in the play include Matt Swan, Ben Smith, Jena Gregory, Ella Wasserman-Smith, Emily Anne Hansford, Jake Marrano, Samuel Suarez, Madeline Mullen, Whitney Stewart, Zoe Brewster, Rebecca Edison, Rachel Bonet, and Jessica Gross.

Performance dates are February 12-14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Presentation Hall.

Katie Townsend

Lower School Orchestra

The Third and Fourth Grade Orchestra enjoyed performing for their classmates and parents at their assembly on Friday, December 12. The fourth graders played "Carol of the Bells" and "The March" from *The Nutcracker*. Third and fourth graders joined together to play "Good King Wenceslas," "Jolly Old St. Nicholas," and "Jingle Bells." What a fantastic kickoff to the holiday season!

The Second Grade Orchestra students are preparing for their debut performance on Friday, February 6, during their assembly time. We look forward to demonstrating what we have learned in class this year. Parents and friends are invited to attend.

Debbie Schab

Curriculum and Instruction

CLASS Notes

Books, Just a Click Away

The Pre/Lower School Media Center program is excited to announce that its Online Catalog is now accessible from home or wherever you have internet access. To connect with this collection, simply go to <http://lsmc.athensacademy.org>. When you find a list of titles you are interested in, you can get more details about each book by clicking on the title line. Books and other resources from the Parent Shelf can also be found in this database. For more information, see the full article on the Pre/Lower School page of Spirit or contact Elaine King, Pre/Lower School Media Specialist at 706-433-2431 or eking@athensacademy.org.

Robotics Team Recognized for Outstanding Teamwork

Eight fifth and sixth graders on the Middle School Sparbots robotics team traveled to Conyers Middle School on Saturday, December 6, to compete in an FLL (FIRST (For Recognition of Science & Technology) Lego League) tournament. Over the past several months, students have met on Mondays and Wednesdays after school to design, build, and program a robot to run autonomously on a challenging obstacle course. At the competition, the students' robot had three attempts to score points by completing challenges on the course. The students also performed a skit demonstrating what they learned while conducting research on this year's theme, "Climate Connections." For their skit, the students chose drought as the most obvious climatic concern to our hometown. Several panels of judges graded the Sparbots on robotics design, research presentation, table/information display, and overall professionalism. The Sparbots garnered a second place trophy for their overall teamwork and had a great time meeting students from fifteen other schools in the area. If you would like to learn more about the FIRST program, please visit www.usfirst.org.
Mike Callinan

Faculty Development Spotlight

In late November, Upper School chemistry teacher Julie Boyd, Middle School Counselor Carrie Olson, and Ninth Grade Coordinator and Wellness Instructor Brian Olson attended the Georgia School Counselor's Association Conference held in Augusta, Georgia. Topics of sessions attended included updates on eating disorders, how the media influences our beliefs about beauty, strategies for building better relationships, resources for promoting a more inclusive school community, and the importance of developing career maturity in students. The participants are eager to share what they learned with their colleagues and students.
Pat Cuneo

View from the Stacks—In 2009, Resolve to Read!

If you have begun the year by promising to eat less and exercise more, or spend less and save more, or perhaps by making some other potentially painful resolution, do yourself a favor and also resolve to read more. And resolve to encourage—maybe even to require—that your children do so too, particularly in light of a recent report from the National Endowment for the Arts. The report, entitled "To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence" and released in November 2007, reached some discouraging conclusions (especially if you are a librarian, *sigh...*). Succinctly put, Americans are reading at "significantly lower rates than 10 or 20 years earlier." Worse still: "The declines were steepest among young adults." Some alarming statistics:

- Less than one-third of 13-year-olds are daily readers.
- The percentage of 17-year-olds who read nothing at all for pleasure has doubled over a 20-year period.
- 65% of college freshman read for pleasure not at all or less than an hour per week.
- Nearly half of all Americans ages 18-24 read no books for pleasure.

Note the emphasis on reading for "pleasure." Of course we require our high school and college students to read for their classes, and most adults must do some reading in their professions. We read all day long, really, from the moment our eyes open in the morning until they close at night—street signs and directories and email and advertisements and billboards, etc. We are a highly literate society, if you define literacy as simply possessing the ability to read. But beyond these reading "assignments," the NEA study examined voluntary reading of fiction and nonfiction genres in various formats such as books, magazines, newspapers, even online reading. And essentially what they found was that when we are not required to read for one reason or another, we simply choose not to, and in overwhelming numbers.

Well, so what? Apart from breaking a librarian's heart, what does it really matter that we are doing so much less voluntary reading? Anne Cunningham, a professor of Education at the University of California Berkeley and co-author of a study entitled "What Reading Does for the Mind," says it matters because "reading has cognitive consequences that extend beyond its immediate task of lifting meaning from a particular passage." Stephen Krashen, author of *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research* says that free voluntary reading results in better reading comprehension, improved writing style, increased vocabulary, better spelling, and more advanced grammatical development. The NEA report noted that good literary readers are also more likely to visit museums, attend plays or concerts, play sports, and create their own artwork. They are also more than twice as likely to volunteer or do charity work (perhaps because reading creates greater empathy and feelings of connection and compassion? I am just speculating.) And the report went on to observe that non-readers are more likely to drop out of school and (I am not making this up) also more likely to go to prison; only 3% of adult prisoners read at a proficient level. Jim Trelease, author of *The Read Aloud Handbook* and a long-time proponent for the measurable benefits of reading, says that research shows that "students who read the most, read the best, achieve the most, and stay in school the longest." People who stay in school longer get better jobs, and live healthier, longer lives. Am I suggesting that reading more might save your life? Well, yes, I guess I am.

And all of these benefits are so easy to acquire! Nothing to buy or install, no equipment or new set of skills to master, no muscles to strain or personal trainer to obey! Of course we are busy. The number one reason I hear from people who don't read regularly is that there is no time. But there is always time for the activities that we believe to be beneficial. We practice piano or basketball, for example, we try out for the school play, we travel to other countries and learn new languages, all because we think those activities are good for us. More importantly, we do these things because we want to because even if they challenge us, they also give us pleasure.

continued on page 11

SPORTS

Commitment to Excellence

Spartans Playing Sports in College

- **Baseball**
Charles Matthews
Georgia Southern
- **Competitive Cheerleading**
Hailey Evans
University of Virginia
- **Crew**
Riva Denny
Boston University
- **Cross Country & Track**
Josh Deaton
Rhodes College
Dorothy Todd
Washington and Lee
- **Football**
Tyler Brantley, Andy Jarrett, Evans Wellborn
University of the South (Sewanee)
Derek Chuboff
Centre College
Chris Rogers
Georgia Southern
Thad Padgett
Shorter College
Brett Satterfield
Air Force
- **Golf**
Kent Crymes
Presbyterian College
Ryan Peters
Mercer University
- **Soccer**
Maggie Robinson
Harvard University
- **Swimming**
Karin Mullendore
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
- **Tennis**
Adrienne Elsberry
University of Georgia
- **Track**
Josh Deaton
Rhodes College
- **Volleyball**
Sammie Maddox
University of the South (Sewanee)

What Can You Do?

A lot of athletes, frustrated by losing or not meeting their expectations in some other way, end up asking the same question: “But what can I do?” So, here is a brief answer that applies to just about all athletes from Dick DeVenzi, former college basketball player and director of the Point Guard Basketball College:

- **During games** you can sprint more, you can be more active, you can be more alert, constantly asking yourself what is likely to happen next and constantly expecting the ball to be in your hands. Also, you can encourage your teammates, bolster their confidence and remind them of what needs to happen.
- **In practice** you can arrive earlier, work harder, care more about maximizing time, really try to use the time to improve--and then work to get your teammates to take the same approach as you.
- **Off the court/field** you can talk to your coach and talk to your teammates, keep your goals and your visions fresh in everyone’s mind and keep reminding your teammates of what it takes to reach those goals. It is not enough to have goals, it is important that you have a plan for achieving those goals and that you keep everyone focused on doing the extra things that are necessary for success.
- **In the off-season** you have the best chance to have a huge impact on your future success. That’s when you guarantee your improvement by working on your sport, by lifting weights (no player is too strong) and by improving your skills with systematic practice and repetition. Once you commit to all that, then get your teammates to do it, too. (All of our high school sport programs are team games.) You can’t afford to mind your own business and hope for excellence. Go by their houses, call them up, pick them up. Talk to them, work with them and share your dreams with them. There is so much you can do – and every day counts!

Mark Your Calendar

Spring Sports Parents Night

Wednesday, January 21

7:00 p.m. in the Presentation Hall

Middle School Area Basketball Tournament

Saturday, January 31 at George Walton Academy

Thursday, February 5 at Prince Avenue

Region Basketball Tournament

February 16-21

Lakeview Academy and Social Circle

Winter Sports Senior Night

Friday, January 30

Between varsity basketball games

Spartan Center

NOTES *From the Headmaster*



Athens Academy Offers a Unique Environment

As an independent school, Athens Academy has the freedom to determine our mission, chart our course, and select the program of study and our teachers. This independence enables us to maintain a focus on what we do best, striving for excellence in the education and personal experience of each individual student. We focus on the capacity of the individual to make a difference and the importance of his or her self-worth and self-esteem in the learning process. Our faculty teaches individual students, finding each student where he is and leading him to a new place.

I often hear from current and former Athens Academy parents and students about what a difference the environment at our school has made in their lives. A mother of a Middle Schooler recently expressed how pleased she was that her son's long-time interest in sports is now accompanied by his involvement in orchestra. She is grateful to the teachers at Athens Academy who have encouraged his interest in music, "nurturing the mind and body AND soul." I often tell the story of a tenth grader who said to me, "Mr. Chambers, I am doing things at Athens Academy that I never imagined I could do." In this environment, students are encouraged to explore and express new ideas, feeling safe to try new things and discover new realms of interest. We nurture them, but we also challenge and support them, as with the alumnus who told me, "I did not graduate with honors from Athens Academy, but I did from Georgia Tech!" He was prepared.

The quality of education at Athens Academy is exceptional. This quality is influenced by intellectual rigor, an available and dedicated faculty, character in the classrooms and on the playing fields, the zestful expression of our athletic and artistic capabilities, and an awareness of the need to serve humankind by our involvement in our community and the world at large. Athens Academy is definitely a special place, and I am proud to be a part of this unique environment.

Robert Chambers, Jr.

"In this environment, students are encouraged to explore and express new ideas, feeling safe to try new things and discover new realms of interest."



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PERIODICALS
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