

THE GAVEN STREET

SPRING 2019

GAZETTE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL



The San Francisco School

cultivates and celebrates the intellectual, imaginative, and humanitarian promise of each student in a community that practices mutual respect, embraces diversity, and inspires a passion for learning.





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The Gaven Street Gazette is published two times annually by the Office of Advancement of The San Francisco School. We always welcome feedback and story ideas through this email address: advancement@sfschool.org.

Accreditation and Membership

The San Francisco School is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

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ON THE COVER: Kaia, Maggie, Emmy, Class of 2027

INSIDE COVER: 3rd Grade Winter Play



LETTER FROM STEVE

remember it like it was yesterday.

Walking my tiny three-year-old, Rowan, through the Preschool gate a little further down Gaven Street than I usually entered, I suddenly saw SFS through new eyes — a nervous first-day-of-preschool parent, aching with hope that my child's school experience would fill him with

confidence, happiness, and a deep love of learning. I hadn't anticipated all of those authentic nerves — for him, for me, for my wife Beth — or how quickly they would be resolved, as I saw his teachers Vahlee and Dolores get down on his level to welcome him. Rowan gave a familiar smile. Beth and I exhaled — and we let go.

Parenthood is a lot about knowing when to hold on, and when to let go, isn't it? Some of that is having faith that the "letting go" is less of a freefall and more of a shift: letting your child find their own place, their own friends, their own connections and influences outside of their family. This June, Rowan will graduate from The San Francisco School.

Some of you might have just gasped when you read this news, as many of you may remember when he was born!

Now, as we prepare for Rowan to graduate, it's so meaningful to look back on the extraordinary experience that has shaped him into the young man he is today. I have learned what it means to be a San Francisco School parent. We say that school and home exist in partnership, and having my children join this community has shown it to be undeniably true. I knew that Rowan would learn the Peace Process in preschool, but had no idea that he and his friends would utilize portions of it to navigate complex Middle School relationships, or that he'd recently insist on making Hurry Up Cake. I knew he'd eagerly dig for dinosaur bones in First Grade, but I didn't know that Beth and I would quadruple (at least!) our knowledge of the archaeopteryx dinosaur — and love every moment of it!

As Rowan grew, I grew as a parent and as a Head of School while I learned more about SFS through his eyes. For the first time, I understood how much of parents' own school experiences are at the table during conferences, and how much vulnerability is involved in sending our children to school. I understood how much of a role families play in homework, and in projects; how we become evening spell-checkers, algebra assistants, futsal coaches, instrument-practice reminders, winter play hair stylists. Through Rowan, I learned what is really important to kids by seeing the SFS traditions he looked forward to each year: the gong ceremonies to mark the beginning and end of the year, the Halloween *Intery Mintery* ritual, cultural/affinity celebrations, and *St. George and the Dragon*, to name a few. I learned the irresistible pull of mud pies, and the unbridled joy of getting your first recorder.

As Beth and I prepare to send Rowan out the gates of 300 Gaven Street to enter a new community, I find myself getting nervous again — but not in the same way. This time, we know Rowan is bolstered by 11 years of The San Francisco School: 11 years of love and adventure and compassion and challenge, of critical thinking and passion for social justice, of positive relationships with adults who weren't his parents, of self-knowledge and caring for others and the earth — in short, 11 years of what has made so many of you, our alumni and alumni families, who you grew up to be.

11 years later, he is ready. We are ready. This June, once again, we'll exhale — and let go.

STRATEGIC PLAN: INITIATIVES IN ACTION

PROGRAM: EMPATHY IN THE AGE OF ACCELERATION

Reflections on Implementing a New Math Curriculum

The San Francisco School has taken a deeper dive into mathematics over the past two years, researching and adopting two new math curricula. The goal was to expand the programmatic offerings while remaining true to the School's research-based principles of critical thinking, project-based learning, and contextual understanding. As Stanford's Jo Boaler says in her acclaimed book *Mathematical Mindsets*, "Numerous research studies have shown that when students are given opportunities to pose mathematics problems, to consider a situation and think of a mathematics question to ask of it — which is the essence of real mathematics — they become more deeply engaged and perform at higher levels."

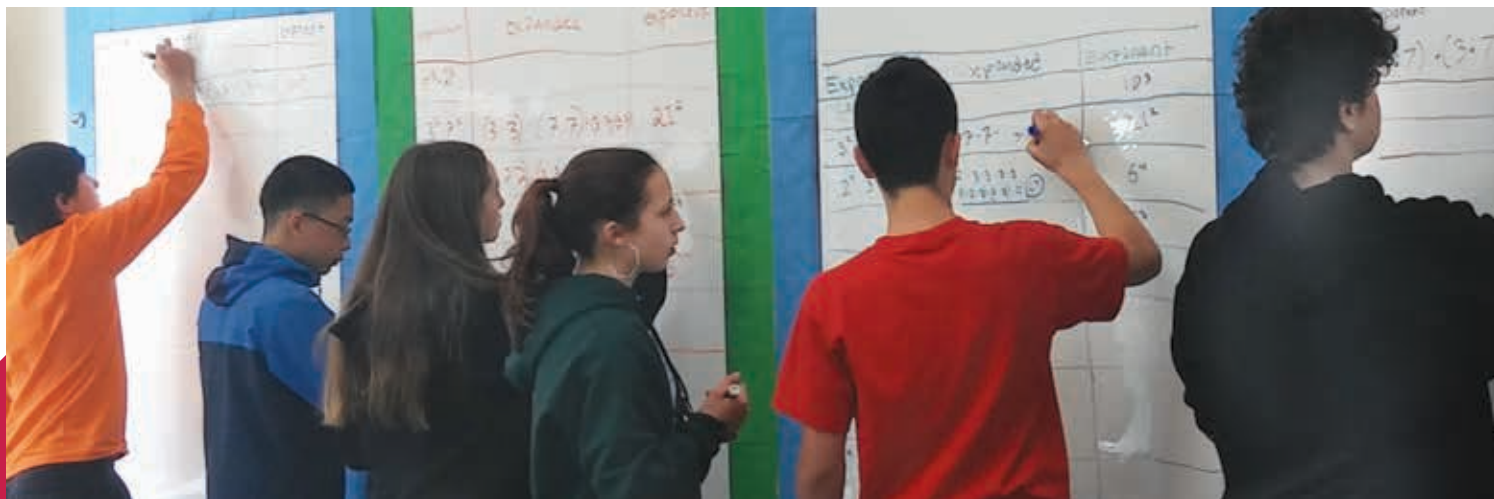
As part of the implementation of the two new math programs, SFS teachers Maggie Day and Jiazhen Zhang took on the roles of Lower and Middle School Math Coordinators, respectively, this year, providing guidance and support to their colleagues in the process. Day and Zhang see increased engagement and understanding happening throughout the school. "Our new curricula (*Contexts for Learning Mathematics* in K-5 and *Illustrative Mathematics* in 6-8) have brought a lot of cohesion across the division and grade levels," says Zhang. "Both programs are very much focused on deeper critical thinking and expression of mathematical ideas, not just memorizing an algorithm. There is a lot more meta-thinking involved: understanding how mathematical operations actually work, how numbers are composed and deconstructed. Even doing mental math efficiently involves a deep understanding of numbers."

Both programs are also rich with real-world applications of mathematical principles, what Jo Boaler calls "the math of the world," which are crucial to long-lasting, meaningful learning. For example, Third Graders learn to work with fractions through a project around blueprints for building benches; students learn to deal with fractional remainders for measurements while scaling items to size. In Fourth Grade, students learn to rotate perspectives and create aerial versions of maps as a means of exploring angles in geometry. Day comments, "The projects are really strong in the idea of proof, i.e., how do you explain your thinking and prove your answer is correct, which is really an algebraic concept that can be discussed from the youngest grades."

While both curricula are newer programs to the School, their approach is aligned with how math has historically been taught at SFS: project based, using manipulatives to represent numbers and functions, and moving from the very concrete to the conceptual as students get older. "These programs work the same way, and having the built-in projects really lets us explore each concept more deeply." Zhang adds, "Students begin to understand how math is connected to every other subject, and is connected to creativity as well."

"What's exciting about this is that we're introducing these high-level mathematical models early on, and then those models follow kids through the grades and become part of higher math thinking."

—MAGGIE DAY, Lower School Math Coordinator



STRATEGIC PLAN: INITIATIVES IN ACTION (CONTINUED)

Hiring for STEAM-Powered Learning

For many decades, at The San Francisco School, design skills and makery have taken place in art rooms with kilns and clay, and in science classrooms while disassembling bicycles and vacuum cleaners. Alumnus Gabe Lucas '87, now a principal with Ed Tech Recruiting, has vivid memories of layering repeated "loops" of sound with xylophones in Doug Goodkin's music classes. "The loops are literally the building blocks of programming," observes Lucas, who recently partnered with the School on a national candidate search for a new position at SFS for Fall 2019: Director of Design, Engineering, and Technology. "SFS has been on an authentic innovation journey around design and engineering, just with a little less reliance on traditional digital technology than some....Everywhere you look at SFS, from the stackable milk crates and wood planks to the outdoor gardens and science lab, students have opportunities to experiment, iterate, and collaborate."

Lucas felt this backstory was crucial for candidates to understand. "This role didn't come around overnight; it's the culmination of many years of work and strategic steps," he explains. "We needed to find someone who could think big, across all the grades, who was both excited about building curriculum and learning experiences, and about working at a strategic level to help support and grow the plan around STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) at SFS."

While acknowledging that the position of Director of Design, Engineering, and Technology was a new one, Lucas also notes that the idea of a STEAM program is well-aligned with the historical foundations of the School. "This isn't in competition with Music and Art and Humanities; the right person for this role needed to understand that SFS has always had a maker-oriented and design-thinking mindset without using a lot of screens. The values of experiential learning, empathy in design, inclusion, are already hallmarks of SFS. I can speak from firsthand experience that this role not only fits in now, it would have fit in 20-30 years ago."

In the end, one candidate rose to the top: Carly Reiter of Seattle, WA, who most recently taught at the Seattle Girls School, where her roles included Director of Academic Technology and Dean of Academic Innovation, as well as creating and managing their integrated STEAM program. This past year, Carly stepped away from the school world and spent the first six months of the year fully immersed in the world of Software Engineering. She participated in the Ada Developers Academy where she studied full-stack web development, and is currently consulting with the

global educational technology firm Makeblock to develop standards-based robotics and computer science curriculum for elementary and middle school classrooms across the United States.

"During this process, Carly's authentic passion for STEAM came across, and that resonated for faculty, parents, and students," Lucas explains. "Her background is very compelling, both in terms of working in schools and in studying coding and computational thinking at an industry level, so she has both real-world and educational experience to apply." He adds, "I would be very excited to be a student at SFS at this moment in time. The other great programs that are already in motion, along with her addition, are going to make the school an even more vibrant place."

"Everywhere you look at SFS, students have opportunities to experiment, iterate, and collaborate."

—GABE LUCAS '87, Principal at Ed Tech Recruiting



FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Building Community, One Step at a Time

In Fall of 2017, the first official Family Association (FA) at The San Francisco School was formed, with the goal of building community and providing structure for family participation, including volunteerism and fundraising. Building on the success of last year's reinvigorated Room Parenting, regular Community Cafes, movie night, and SPEAK partnership (Speakers for Parents, Educators, and Knowledge), the Family Association helped reimagine the Walkathon from a fundraising event into a fun-filled Field Day; hosted an exciting and engaging science night as well as a math festival for SFS and Portola neighborhood families; and co-hosted the first SFS Weekend of Service with the Public Purpose Committee, with community service opportunities for every age. The FA also provided new SFS-specific parent/guardian education events, such as the "Technology Use" talk with author and SFS parent Matt Richtel and the early childhood "Body Positivity and Gender Equality" talk with author Bonnie Rough. Lastly, the FA helped the students and adults in our community to voice their political concerns through community activism.

At the Family Science Night, volunteers from SFS teamed up with the Lawrence Hall of Science in Berkeley to offer ten applied engineering activities for families from Preschool through 8th Grade. Adults and children collaborated on wobble bots (an introductory robotics project), stomp rockets, Da Vinci bridges, Kapla blocks, Magnatiles, and more.

The FA helped to support the Math Department as they hosted the Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival, named

after renowned computability theory mathematician Julia Robinson. Families did everything from hop through a math maze, learn algebraic concepts with a frog-jumping game, stack discs to make the Tower of Hanoi, and throw tokens in a probability game. The festival, which was made possible by a generous grant, brought kids and adults together to collaborate and think creatively and critically about math, all while having a great time!

Parents Rachel Benson and Nina Rosenberg were critical to getting the FA off the ground in its inaugural year. Through their hard work and enthusiasm, they recruited a leadership team that has grown to include eight super volunteers who have made these community events possible. The school community is grateful for the hard work and vision of the FA leadership team as they pass the torch onto the next generation with Sapna Gupta taking on the role of FA Chair in the 2019-20 school year.

"The Family Association has set its sights on helping to foster a true sense of inclusion and belonging both in the events that we are creating and hosting and in the volunteer opportunities we provide and hope to offer in the future."

Rachel Benson, Family Association Chair



MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

Each spring, we honor our faculty and staff who are celebrating milestone anniversaries at the school. We appreciate their commitment and the wealth of experience, history, and wisdom that they bring to The San Francisco School. Congratulations!

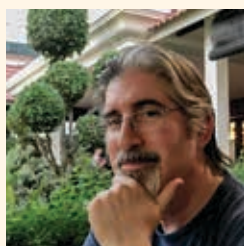


Left-Right: 30 - Maggie Weis, Head of Lower School | 15 - Steve Morris, Head of School | 10 - Vivian Walz, Front Office Coordinator | 10 - Toni Russell, Lower School Physical Education Teacher and Admissions Coordinator



Left-Right: 5 - Jeanette Moore, Director of Finance & Operations | 5 - Diana Tirado, North Class Preschool & Kindergarten Teacher Assistant | 5 - Alberta Nielson, Middle School Learning Services | 5 - Paige Sandoz, Fourth Grade Teacher | 5 - Sarah Wood, Special Programs Director and Admissions Associate

RETIREMENTS



After 19 years at The San Francisco School, our beloved Director of Technology **Steve Rubin** has decided to retire.

As he looks back, he can't help but marvel at how things have changed. When he first arrived at SFS, the Internet was new,

and personal technology was just becoming more widely used in the workplace. "It was a really exciting time, and I also realized that there was a healthy skepticism about technology at SFS — and I didn't completely disagree with that," he said, "I think that I've always tried to work with people to find the best, most appropriate use of technology in a school environment, so we could maximize the benefits of it and minimize the inherent problems."

He will be missed on so many levels. As one parent noted, Rubin is the kind of person who flies "under the radar, quietly making everything work without ever demanding recognition." Often in the background at school events, capturing beautiful, vibrant photos and videos, while also zooming around campus setting up and fixing every

system the school uses, his dedication, talent, and kindness haven't gone unnoticed — far from it. Former SFS Director of Institutional Advancement Charlie Meade commented, "Beyond being a dedicated Director of Technology, Steve is a truly good human being and great friend." Technology Intern Mitchell Rusitzky '16 added, "It was great to get to work alongside Steve for the last few summers....I really appreciate that he recognized my tech skills."

When asked to share their memories of Rubin, many people spoke to his endless patience and ability to problem-solve and gently instruct students — and adults. Head of School Steve Morris described Rubin's "...non-anxious patience when working with community members. People can often be vulnerable regarding their own technical prowess, but Steve has a way of never making anybody feel bad about their abilities. He can break down complicated issues into easy to understand steps."

Afandie Winter, Technology Assistant, who works closely with Rubin, speaks for many at SFS when he said, "Working with Steve has been an absolute privilege. He is always calm, pleasant, thoughtful, and open to ideas. I've learned a lot from him, and I will definitely miss the teamwork that we have."

COMMUNITY NEWS

Alumni

Paris Hing '18 and **Marcella Bustamante '18**, freshmen at Lick-Wilmerding, helped their Girls Varsity Basketball team to reach the state tournament for the first time in 15 years. **Bianca Coad '17** is currently playing on USF's Division 1 women's soccer team and coaching SFS's girls futsal team. **Emma Berryessa-Lathe '16** is a junior at Ruth Asawa School of the Arts, and is performing in the spring musical, *Legally Blonde*. **Zara Jamey '14** is a freshman at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, is part of their Musician's Collective, and is enjoying learning about the famous Montreal jazz community. **Sonia Odom '07** is a 6th Grade teacher at the Chicago Jesuit Academy, and her

sister **Pilar Odom '05** recently graduated from USF and works for a political opposition research firm in Oakland.

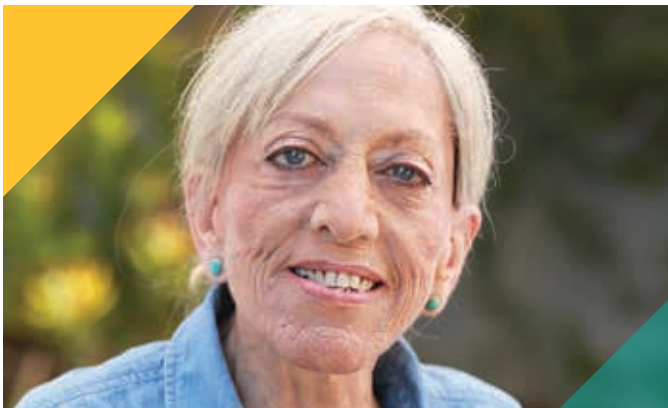
Andrés Fuentes-Afflick '05 is earning his MBA at the Ross Business School at the University of Michigan.

Ben Lind '00 was selected as the Coast Guard's 2018 Elite Male Athlete of the Year. Lind distinguished himself through exceptional performances during several national and international Judo and JiuJitsu competitions and contributing to the fitness and overall well being of other members of his station. **Molly Rogers '97** is a professor in the Dance department at Dominican University, where she teaches courses in dance history, theory, and performance studies.

Former SFS Staff

Former Spanish Teacher **Annalise Porras** has spent the past five years living in New York City, working in museum education programs at the Guggenheim Museum and Museum of Modern Art. She is also the Lower School Spanish Program Coordinator at the Nightingale-Bamford School in Manhattan. She writes, "A bit of SFS flavor can be found in Nightingale's Spanish program, including a singing time 'en Español,' inspired by my collaborations with Sofia Lopez-Ibor and the SFS music teachers!" Former Development Director **Marie Bergstedt**, and parent of

Laralyn '88, has returned to practice as a full time artist since 2006. During a recent solo exhibit in San Francisco she enjoyed seeing a number of SFS alumni staff, parents, and friends. Ebbie Drew Cotton-Herman was born to **Paloma Cotton-Herman**, former SFS Admissions Director, and her wife Jen in August 2018. Paloma writes: "We are surviving our first winter with this happy baby, and can't wait to bring Ebbie to Gaven Street one day for her to go down the slide, chase some animals, and generally experience the magic of SFS!"



Remembrances

We are truly saddened to share that retired SFS Preschool/Kindergarten teacher and alumni parent **Shannon Schneble** passed away in March. She is survived by her son Sotweed Schneble '84 and daughter-in-law Phoebe Doering (former SFS staff member). A beloved educator and leader of SFS's vacation and summer camps for more than forty years, Shannon had, as Music Teacher Doug Goodkin put it, "a clear and caring vision for a world that could be much better."

Do you have news to share?

We are always interested in hearing from our SFS alumni. Let us know what's new these days!
Visit www.sfschool.org/alumni/update

ALUMNI PROFILES

JACKSON VANFLEET BROWN '07



Now a Junior National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Corps Officer on the ship NOAA Fairweather, Jackson Vanfleet Brown may have, indirectly, found his career path through a report in Laura Burges's Third Grade classroom. "My mom graduated from Cal Maritime Academy and had sailed at sea on oil tankers and tugs; in Third Grade, I was assigned a project where I had to interview her. That's where I first discovered more about her path, and it sparked a lifelong interest in sailing and the sea."

All these years later, Vanfleet Brown spends his time primarily in Alaska and the Arctic, navigating and driving the ship, mapping the sea floor using multi-beam sonar, updating nautical charts, and even organizing outreach and tours when the ship is docked. Working in the sciences, he credits SFS for fostering in him "an awareness of diversity and the recognition that it's important — it's one of my primary values, and something that I recognize as lacking in the sciences in general."

He also recognizes the School's impact on his learning, especially critical thinking and a love of intellectual rigor. "It was beautiful because I didn't have to have one primary interest; I think I had an equal interest in all the academic areas. We were always challenged as students there, in math and science as well as in humanities and the arts; I was thoroughly prepared for high school, and it helped me develop into an intelligent adult in so many ways. I'm lucky to have had such a nurturing education for so long; not all schools are like that."

What's up next for Vanfleet Brown? American Samoa and Antarctica! He was recently selected to be the station chief of two atmospheric baseline observatories which collect measurements of aerosols, solar radiation, CO₂, CFCs, ozone, and other gasses. He'll spend a year living at each site — which means winter at the South Pole!

GINGER JACKSON-GLEICH '99



"I could not imagine having a job that I love more or find more fulfilling," reflects Ginger Jackson-Gleich '99, describing the passion for public defense that she now brings to the Alameda County Public Defender's Office. After a range of post-collegiate jobs that included political speech writing, teaching high school economics at San Francisco University High School, and outdoor education, she pursued a long-time interest in criminal justice reform by heading to Harvard Law School. Interning at the Department of Justice in Washington, DC, the ACLU in New York, as well as the Oakland Public Defender's office confirmed that she was on the right path.

Thinking back on her years at SFS, Jackson-Gleich notes that while she didn't specifically plan on a legal career, "The San Francisco School did play a major role in pointing me toward a career focused on serving the public interest. The school undoubtedly planted a seed that what is important in life is making the world a better, more just and equitable place, and that is at the core of my job at the Public Defender's Office."

Jackson-Gleich sees SFS as a major influence in her ability to seek the best in others and value their contributions, both crucial skills in her current line of work. "I know I've said this before, but the San Francisco School taught me to seek and find excellence in everyone that I meet. It was where I first learned to look for what makes each individual special and where I was taught to treasure the things that each person brings to the community. A huge part of challenging the existing criminal justice system is seeing not just humanity, but also goodness and promise in every person. When I think back on where I learned to do that, I'm confident that it was at The San Francisco School."



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SAVE THE DATES!

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR:



Steve Rubin's Retirement Party

Friday, May 31, 2019, 4:00 pm

Class of 2015 Alumni Picnic

Monday, June 10, 2019, 12:00 pm

Ways to stay connected!

-  facebook.com/thesanfranciscoschool
-  instagram.com/sfschool
-  The San Francisco School Alumni Group

