

SYCAMORE

FALL 2025



VOLUME 18.3

HEAD OF SCHOOL
John Huber**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
Dr. Greg Merrell
President**HEAD OF EARLY
CHILDHOOD**
Jennifer Williams**HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL**
Tiffany Stahl**HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL**
Katie Baker**DIRECTOR OF
ENROLLMENT
MANAGEMENT**
Duane Emery**DIRECTOR OF
ADVANCEMENT**
Jim Wood**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**
Patrick Juday**SYCAMORE SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION**
Erin Moore ('98)
President**CONTENT/STORIES****6** SYCAMORE RECEIVES LILLY
ENDOWMENT INC. GRANTS**8** NEW ATHLETIC HALLWAY**10** SYCAMORE THEATER GETS
LIGHTING IMPROVEMENTS**14** A LOOK AT LOWER SCHOOL**18** TRAFFIC SAFETY
IMPROVEMENTS**ALUMNI STORIES****24** ALUMNI INTERVIEWS**30** DUO RECOGNIZED IN
BIOMEDICAL INDUSTRY
*Kelly Fulk and Maxwell Gootee***36** WHEN THEY COME BACK**ON THE COVER**

The Siwiec students:
Rowan (8th Grade),
Amelia (6th), and Lacey
(4th) in front of the
Eagles graphic in
Sycamore's revamped
Athletic Hallway.



- 9** FOLLOW SYCAMORE ON SOCIAL MEDIA
- 13** TIME CAPSULE UNVEILED
- 20** GRADUATION SPEECHES
- 32** ALUMNI NEWS AND NOTES

- 33** ALUMNI BIRTHS
- 34** SYCAMORE NEWS AND NOTES
- 38** INDIANA DUNES FIELD TRIP

Find Out More



sycamoreschool.org

To our Greater Sycamore Community,

One of the wonderful traditions begun by my predecessor Diane Borgmann was to sit down with each newly enrolled family for an hour before the start of the school year. That meeting allows me to learn more about them and their child, provide an orientation regarding all things Sycamore, and make a personal connection. I've continued this tradition, and while the time in total is considerable, I believe that it is time well spent.

FALL
2025

In these new family meetings, I'll learn a lot about what's on our parents' minds as they share hopes for their child. One of the continuing themes I've heard over the years is the issue of safety. Certainly we are all attuned to frightening instances of school violence in this country, and the weight of this is borne heavily by our parents as well as our faculty and staff. It is just as important, if not moreso, to stay attuned to the everyday risks that may escape our notice because they are so commonplace. For example, when I think of school safety, I often think about recess. The frequency of recess and the opportunity for injury are both high. Of course, we'll never cancel recess, so the key is to mitigate the risks and maximize the rewards of unstructured (but supervised) free play.

By that same token, I also think a great deal about the risks associated with traveling by car, probably the greatest danger most families face each day. In just the first few months of school, I've been aware of roughly a half-dozen car crashes affecting members of the Sycamore community. They are an important

reminder that our cars pose a risk by their mere existence. Like recess, we're not getting rid of cars any time soon — but what can we do on our end to keep our children safe?

While we can't control Indianapolis roads and drivers, we can do our best to keep things safe on the Sycamore campus. In this magazine, you'll read an article I've penned about a student-led effort to improve traffic and driving safety in our carlines and parking lot. I took their recommendations to heart, and we've made some upgrades that are helping keep all of our students, employees, and visitors safer. It's another example of our academically gifted students working to solve problems for the betterment of their broader community.

Be well,



John Huber
HEAD OF SCHOOL



“ ”

One of the wonderful traditions begun by my predecessor Diane Borgmann was to sit down with each newly enrolled family for an hour before the start of the school year... I believe that it is time well spent.

JOHN HUBER
Head of Sycamore School

SYCAMORE RECEIVES LILLY ENDOWMENT INC. GRANTS

In the summer of 2024, Lilly Endowment Inc. announced the Marion County K-12 Private Schools Initiative, a plan to help private schools in Marion County, Indiana strengthen the academic achievement of students and improve their prospects for success after high school. The Endowment is making similar grants to public schools through a separate, complementary initiative.

The Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment is a private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly, Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K., Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. It has grown into one of the largest private foundations in the United States both in terms of assets and grants given annually. The Endowment focuses its support in three areas: community development, education, and religion.

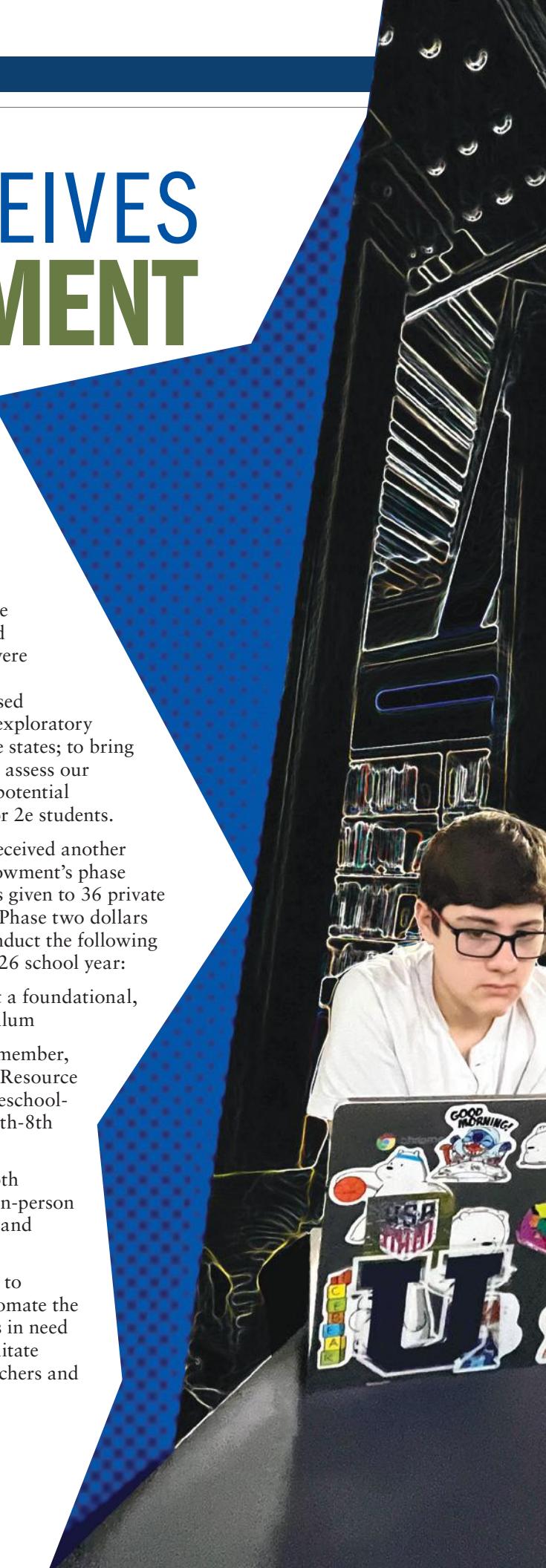
During the 2024-25 school year, Sycamore actively pursued grants from each of three phases of the initiative. Sycamore has requested funding to improve our overall programming for social-emotional learning (SEL) and to address the needs of twice-exceptional (2e) students - those who are gifted and also experience learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders,

ADHD, or other exceptionalities.

In October 2024, Sycamore received a phase one award of \$50,000. These funds were provided for research and development. They were used specifically to underwrite exploratory visits to schools in multiple states; to bring in an outside consultant to assess our programs; and to explore potential new services in SEL and for 2e students.

In April 2025, Sycamore received another \$200,000, one of the Endowment's phase two implementation grants given to 36 private schools across the county. Phase two dollars will allow Sycamore to conduct the following activities during the 2025-26 school year:

- Purchase and implement a foundational, school-wide SEL curriculum
- Add an additional staff member, increasing the Learning Resource Team to two (one for Preschool-3rd Grade and one for 4th-8th Grades)
- Provide teachers with both online and customized, in-person training in 2e education and executive function skills
- Adopt a digital platform to help centralize data, automate the identification of students in need of intervention, and facilitate collaboration among teachers and support staff





"As we celebrate Sycamore's 40th anniversary, I am delighted to see our efforts reinforced by these generous grants from Lilly Endowment Inc.," John Huber, Head of Sycamore School, says. "These grants will have a meaningful impact on the lives of all of our gifted students."

Finally, in August 2025, Sycamore submitted a final, phase three application for \$6 million, the maximum request allowed. Grant awards for this last, competitive phase will be announced in December 2025. If Sycamore receives this grant, we will be required to add an additional \$1.5 million from other sources to the total.

Sycamore would use these funds to construct additional educational space including a learning resource wing featuring a gross motor room, collaborative workrooms, and office space. Adding a dynamic new outdoor space would foster nature-based, multi-sensory learning.

Phase three funding would also enable Sycamore to grow both SEL programming and specialized services for 2e students. Plans call for hiring a School Counselor, adding another Learning Resource Specialist, and systematizing professional development in SEL and 2e education for staff. •



“
As we celebrate Sycamore's 40th anniversary, I am delighted to see our efforts reinforced by these generous grants from Lilly Endowment Inc. These contributions will have a meaningful impact on the lives of all of our gifted students.

JOHN HUBER
 Head of Sycamore School

Sycamore Re-Imagines Athletic Hallway



Sycamore re-imagined its athletic hallway and gym entrance over the summer. Melissa Branigan (Director of Extended Programs) and LeRoy Richins (Facilities Manager) teamed to create a more vibrant and spirited space for our fans and visitors. Now, when you step inside, you are greeted by bold decals splashed across the walls, newly framed uniforms that honor our athletes, and big-screen TVs that shine a spotlight on the many exciting events happening at Sycamore.

One of the biggest changes and highlights is the Sycamore Athletics History corner, where trophies and memorabilia from the past celebrate our rich tradition of competition and community. If you ask Melissa what her favorite part of the newly renovated hallway is, she says, “It is difficult to pick just one thing because the entirety of the hallway showcases the pride in the school and the energy that makes Sycamore Athletics exciting and unforgettable.” •

FOLLOW SYCAMORE on Social Media

A school's social media presence can extend beyond polished announcements or carefully staged photos—it can serve as a living, breathing glimpse into the daily life of the organization. By sharing behind-the-scenes videos and moments from a school day, Sycamore hopes to foster an authentic connection not just with current families but also with alumni and the wider community.

During the 2025-26 school year, our goal is to offer glimpses into classrooms, rehearsals, science experiments, or even the joyful chaos of recess. We want to demonstrate that learning is alive and thriving in every corner of Sycamore. Graduates and past parents will recognize these meaningful instances, but we also want current parents and prospective families to gain a deeper sense of Sycamore's culture and energy. Traditional newsletters and brochures cannot fully capture the moments when students are the unfiltered versions of themselves. A spontaneous laugh during art class, a group working together on a project, or a student proudly showing their work are each snapshots of why families are drawn to Sycamore.

In an era where connection can happen via the screen of a computer or phone, these shared stories bring those outside the building closer to the true heart of our school. The everyday moments captured alongside the teaching of the curriculum are a reminder that Sycamore is not only a place of learning but a vibrant, supportive community.

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook to watch our videos and see the pics.



Instagram @sycamoreschool



Facebook @sycamoreschool_indy

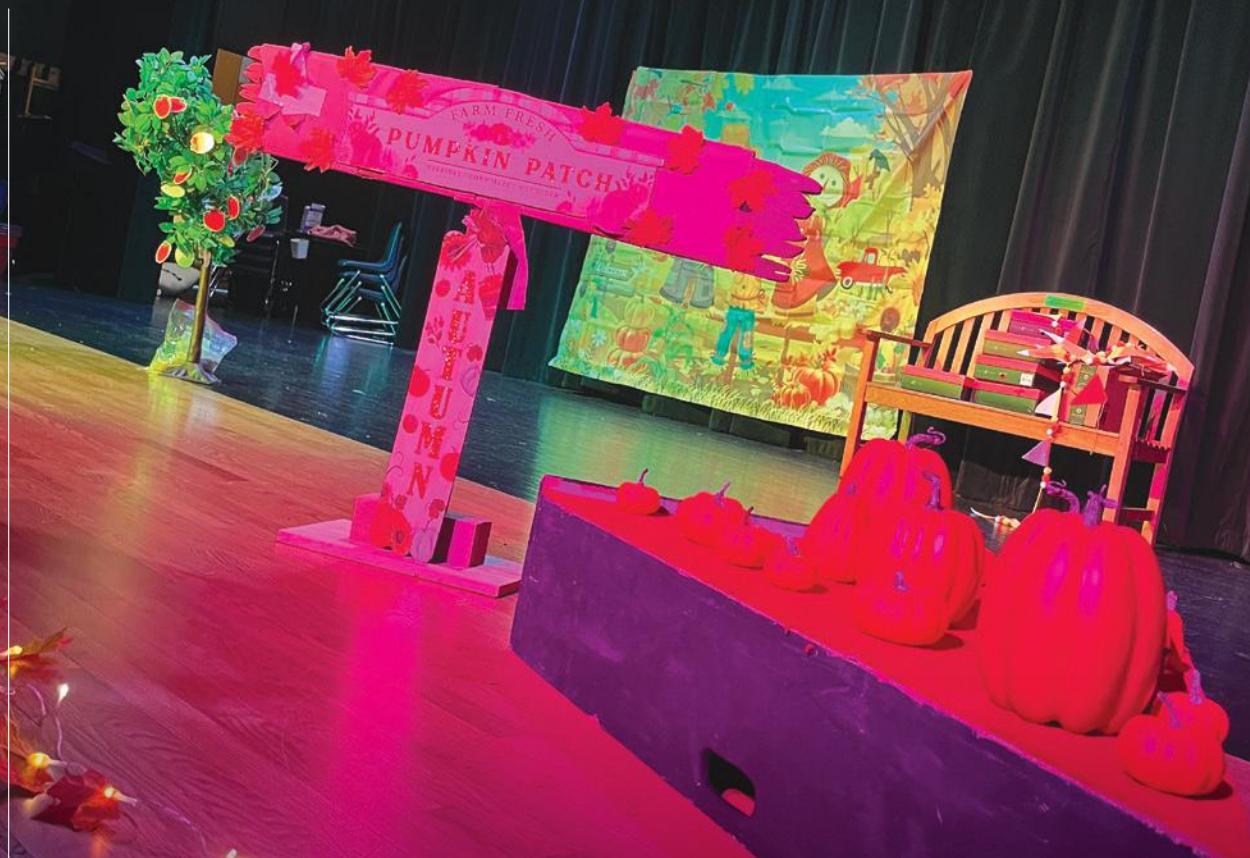


**SCAN TO
REVIEW A LIST
OF 2024-25
SYCAMORE
DONORS**



**SCAN TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT
THE HEAD OF
SCHOOL CIRCLE
GIVING SOCIETY**

Lights, Camera, AUCTION!



SYCAMORE
COMMUNITY
RAISES FUNDS FOR
NEW THEATER LIGHTS

In the early stages of preparation for the 2025 Sycamore Auction, the event planning committee met with school leaders to identify a project or program that would rally community support at the school's largest annual fundraising event. New theater lighting was quickly identified as a significant need.

The theater had old halogen spotlights. Some of the levers on the lighting mechanisms had rusted, making it impossible to shift the lights or to focus them. Electrical issues were common. Parts were so outdated that replacements could not be found. Changing a bulb required a precarious 14-foot climb on a ladder, and gloves were mandatory because oils from a hand could cause bulbs to pop.

Halogen bulbs give off approximately 10% of their energy in light and the remaining 90% in heat. As a result, bulbs were very hot during use and remained hot afterward. The heat generated made it difficult for students to be on stage for extended periods of time.

Most obvious of all - the lights were simply not very bright. The theater was even described by some as "cave-like" due to its dimness. The poor lighting was detrimental to important events such as band and choir performances. "Lighting can enhance or it can distract," says Choir Director and Assistant Band Director Noah Buchholz. At concerts, the house lights had to be on to ensure the stage was bright enough, distracting both performers and audience members.

At another beloved Sycamore event, the Third Grade Poetry Recitation and Tea, the poor lighting was apparent both to the students on stage and to family members in the audience.

"The kids work so hard," says Third Grade teacher Cara Hermacinski. "[They] are doing amazing things up there, but it's dark."

Sycamore's Technology Department worked with vendors to estimate the cost of installing modern LED lighting. During the fund-a-need portion of the auction, 64 donors raised their paddles in support. By the end of the night, the school community had raised \$47,250, enough to purchase a new lighting system.

New LED lighting was installed in the summer. The old, giant switchboard in the back of the theater was replaced with sleek computer controls. Colors on stage can be changed at the push of a button and can be programmed ahead of time. There are no bulbs to replace, and the parts are expected to last for years. The house lights are warmer and brighter, and finally, there is much less heat on performers.

Up-to-date lighting technology also creates an educational opportunity for our students. They can learn the system and transfer that knowledge into theater lighting work at the college and professional levels. "If you went into a Broadway theater, it would be running this same system," says Mike Raunick, a Sycamore parent, Managing Director at Summer Stock Stage, and key supporter of the new lighting system. Lighting systems in larger theaters may have more switches and gadgets than Sycamore's, but it is foundationally the same technology.

"Lighting is the thing that has changed the theater world in the last twenty years," says Raunick. He described the heat that came with the old halogen lights. "If you're in a theater where there are hundreds of [light] fixtures, the actors are dripping because it's so hot." Since modern LED lighting does not give off this heat, it has transformed costuming options, allowing actors to comfortably wear heavier clothing, masks, or headpieces if the performance demands it.

The new lighting has created many possibilities for our Sycamore performers and for the many meaningful events that occur in the Sycamore theater each year. Thanks to the generosity of our community, brighter days have arrived on the Sycamore stage. ●

The new lighting has created many possibilities for our Sycamore performers and for the many meaningful events that occur in the Sycamore Theater.



Former Long-time Head of School Returns to Sycamore



DR. NYLE KARDATZKE

We welcomed back Dr. Nyle Kardatzke to Sycamore in September. He was the long-time Head of Sycamore (1993–2006), instrumental in providing leadership to enable Sycamore to continue its growth into one of the nation's leading independent schools for gifted students. Nyle toured the building with our current Head of School, John Huber, along with a number of friends and former co-workers. Dr. Kardatzke retains his humor, quiet intelligence, and love of Sycamore. We were honored to have him back at school.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: Sycamore's Time Capsule Unveiled After 20 Years

For two decades, a mysterious capsule sat hidden in plain sight, tucked behind a wall near Sycamore's front entrance and marked by a gold plaque with the message: "The contents will be revealed in 2025." Placed there at the conclusion of 2005 renovations funded by the For Minds and Bodies Capital Campaign, this time capsule had sparked curiosity and imagination for countless Sycamore students.

That mystery finally came to an end in September.

During the high-energy all school assembly at the conclusion of our Spirit Week, Mr. Huber opened the long-awaited capsule in front of the crowd. Before the big moment, however, students were transported to 2005 with a fun video featuring the top car, movie, and music of the year.

Then faculty and staff who were part of the Sycamore community back in 2005 gathered with Mr. Huber as the capsule was finally opened.

The treasures inside told a story of Sycamore's history—how much has changed and how much remains the same. There were keepsakes from beloved Sycamore traditions still going strong today: a Kindergarten field trip zoo workbook, a program from the Third Grade Poetry Recitation and Tea, and a photo from the iconic Fourth Grade trip to Camp



Tecumseh. Other items reminded us just how much the world has evolved: an annual campaign pledge card with a carbon copy, a VHS tape, DVDs, and even a Mini DV camcorder cassette.

There was student artwork, a science project, a Middle School TOPS report, and school promotional materials that showcased Sycamore's spirit in 2005. Students watched a clip from one of the DVDs found in the capsule featuring Mrs. Pat Gabig—a beloved Second Grade teacher and parent, and now a proud Sycamore grandparent. In the video, she spoke all those years ago about assembling the time capsule. Even more special, Mrs. Gabig was able to join the assembly, in person, to witness the capsule opening. ●

Auden Rich and John Huber look at the time capsule.

LOWER SCHOOL: INSIDE THE CLASSROOM WITH SYCAMORE TEACHERS

Sycamore School's Lower School curriculum is designed to meet the needs of academically gifted students through differentiation, including acceleration and enrichment. That curriculum is created by Sycamore teachers.

Relationships between students and teachers from 1st through 4th Grade have been shown to influence not only academic achievement but also executive function, social behavior and overall development.

An important piece of what Sycamore teachers do every day is developing student skills like compassion, risk-taking, curiosity, organization, communication, and imagination. Instruction at each grade level of Lower School promotes higher-level thinking, self-motivation, responsibility, and independence.

Teachers are the heart of Sycamore. Their passion for teaching students, empathy for all, and skillful understanding of how to teach their grade level is inspiring. Being in the school on a regular day, one can sense the feeling simply while walking the halls.

We asked Lower School teachers and Tiffany Stahl, the Head of Lower School, to tell us about Sycamore and what makes it unique – in their words.



Sycamore's Lower School includes students in 1st through 4th Grades. The head of the division, Tiffany Stahl, has been at Sycamore for nearly 20 years. Tiffany served as a teacher before becoming the Head of Lower School in 2021. We asked her about the long-term teaching process, the daily routines with students that her teachers incorporate each day, and students' transitions from Early Childhood and to Middle School.

TIFFANY STAHL HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL

Sycamore teachers always think outside the box and are willing to try new projects each year. They instill a love of learning in our students that you won't find anywhere else. Our teachers are very knowledgeable in their subject areas and are able to apply this knowledge to their daily lesson plans. They know how to ask open-ended, higher level thinking questions that really get our gifted learners thinking beyond the basic level.

After 19 years, I love Sycamore School as much, if not more, than the day I started. I could fill a notebook with all the ingredients that make Sycamore wonderful. If I were to list a few, I would say: peer groups for all students; differentiated instruction so that every student is

challenged at their individual readiness level; the supportive parent community; teachers who truly understand gifted learners; educational facilities that have changed to support the needs of gifted students so much over the years; special area classes like Spanish, Technology, Library, Art, PE, and Music; and hands-on activities that promote a love of learning.

There are three skills/attributes that teachers in Lower School make a priority:

- **Executive function skills:** Students need to grow in executive function skills to complete the complex tasks that are put before them. Task initiation, time management/planning, and emotional regulation are all developed. It is amazing to watch the growth in students from year to year, and this happens with gentle guidance from the incredible teachers in Lower School.
- **Accepting mistakes as a way of learning:** Students must understand that making mistakes is an essential part of how they grow and learn. I told a student once that if he always got perfect scores I would be upset with his teachers because it meant he wasn't being challenged enough. Years later, he came back and thanked me for sharing that thought. It was a sweet moment, and it reminded me that even small conversations throughout the day can have a big impact on the future.
- **Instilling a love of learning:** Teachers in Lower School do a phenomenal job of making learning fun. When you watch students learning through hands-on activities and educational games, you can automatically sense their enjoyment.

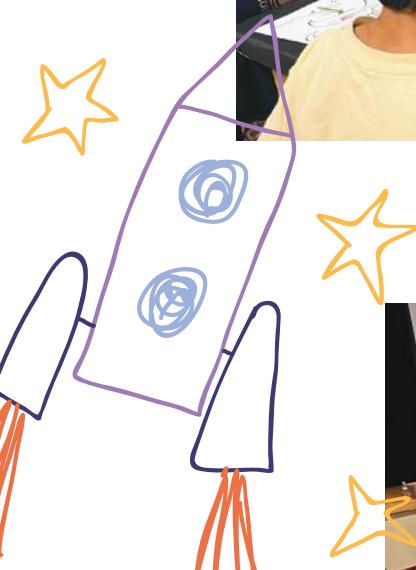
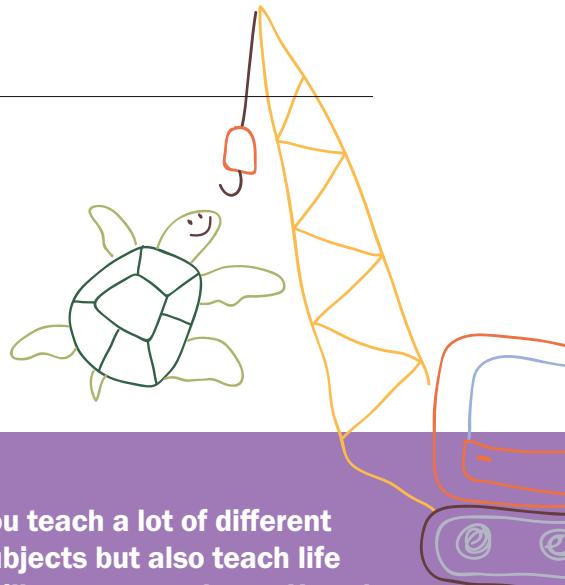


Continued on next page.

Continued from previous page

two quick questions

WITH ANSWERS FROM SYCAMORE LOWER SCHOOL TEACHERS



1

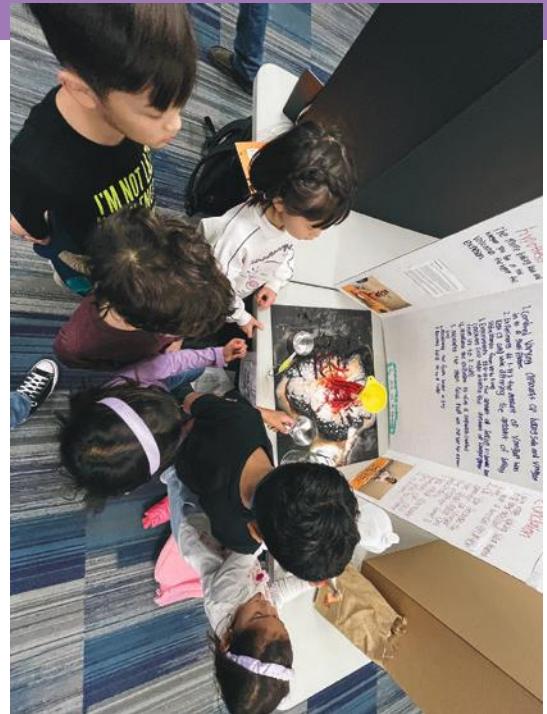
You teach a lot of different subjects but also teach life skills to your students. How do you balance those two things?

What's most important to me is teaching children to be kind while also fostering a love of learning. I see First Grade as a stepping stone to all future grades. If students don't develop a love of learning here, it can be much harder for them as they move forward. To me, these priorities aren't separate, but go hand-in-hand. A child cannot fully engage with the curriculum if they aren't regulated, and so it's essential to first teach those social-emotional skills before diving into academics.

JESSICA MIXELL – 1st Grade teacher

I try to teach life skills through academic content, particularly focusing on social-emotional learning through peer interaction. I feel that the development of these skills is best promoted in a real-life context and equips students to use their knowledge beyond school.

CLARE VOIGT – 2nd Grade teacher



It's important to teach life skills in addition to academics because those skills help children grow into responsible, confident, and independent individuals. Reading, writing, and math build a strong academic foundation, but life skills like problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and self-management prepare students to navigate the real world. Teaching and enforcing life skills early also promotes social-emotional development and resilience, giving students the tools they need to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. Ultimately, it helps them become better human beings.

JEAN WRIGHT – 4th Grade teacher

Teaching SEL (Social Emotional Learning) matters so much because it's really about helping students grow into kind, caring humans. No matter what they decide to do in life, I want them to leave Sycamore knowing how to build strong relationships, treat others with respect, and take responsibility for themselves—that's what truly matters.

In Math class, it's so much more important to me that students learn to persevere through challenges and to take risks. No matter what I am teaching, those soft skills are at the core. The math will come eventually, but everyone must learn to fail gracefully and get back up and try again.

MILEA FARLEY – 3rd Grade teacher



2 What do you think is the best part about teaching in Lower School at Sycamore – and why?

I truly love everything about Lower School and Sycamore in general. The environment is warm and welcoming, and it's clear that everyone looks out for one another. I appreciate that students have opportunities to grow and develop and that staff do as well through professional development and shared learning. It's refreshing to be trusted as professionals and given the autonomy to make decisions we know are best for our students.

JESSICA MIXELL – 1st Grade teacher

My favorite part of Lower School is our community. Teaching is a challenging profession, but coming to work and being surrounded by such amazing people is really special.

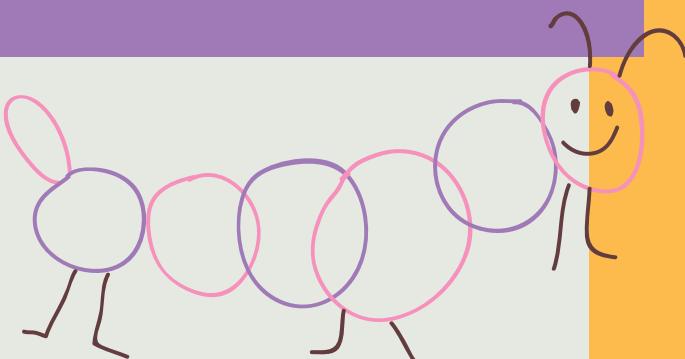
MILEA FARLEY – 3rd Grade teacher

I appreciate the trust given to teachers and the freedom to be creative in delivering the curriculum. We are allowed to adapt the material to best suit the students' needs and interests.

CLARE VOIGT – 2nd Grade teacher

The best part about teaching in the Lower School at Sycamore is the people. The students bring curiosity and energy that make learning an exciting experience. It is so rewarding to see their pride when they accomplish something new and challenging. I also value my colleagues, who are creative, supportive, and dedicated, and make each day inspiring.

JEAN WRIGHT – 4th Grade teacher •



4TH GRADERS INITIATE Traffic Safety Improvements AT SYCAMORE

by John Huber



It was winter of 2025, and I had a request from Dr. Samantha Outcalt, Sycamore's Clinical Psychologist, to schedule a meeting with her and the Fourth Grade Leadership Team. While I'm accustomed to meeting with our students for a variety of reasons, the seriousness and formality of the proposed meeting caught me by surprise. What could our fourth graders want to discuss? On the appointed day, Dr. Outcalt and the students joined me in my office to share their concerns. They were direct — our carlines and parking lot weren't safe. They shared stories of bad driving they had witnessed including speeding cars, parents driving the wrong way, near collisions, distracted driving, and more.

"Kids were scared because parents had been driving recklessly, flying over speed bumps, and going around corners really fast. Just go slow. They should ask their child how they've been driving. Pause and think about what you're doing. Is it safe or is it not safe?"

— STELLA HAGERMAN | current 5th Grader

Mind you, the purpose of the meeting wasn't just to communicate issues for me to fix. This being Sycamore, and these being gifted students, they already had thoughts and plans on how to improve traffic safety. To be honest, I was all ears. Some of the stories they shared matched the concerns our school administrators and staff had already brought to my attention. And while I'd sent the occasional admonishing letter to our parents, I also knew that such letters only go so far to change behaviors.

Some people slow down. Others are fast. It can feel dangerous.

— JAYDEN XU | current 5th Grader

Over the course of our meeting, the 4th Graders shared various ideas to help improve traffic safety. These included increased signage, creation of dedicated crosswalks, more substantive speed bumps, and additional traffic cones. We even discussed the possibility of adding crosswalk lights and automatic gates. I pledged to take these concepts and ideas to our Buildings and Grounds Committee. The students also created a wonderful traffic safety video that was blunt and to the point, one we shared with our parents so that they could better understand the

seriousness of the situation. After all, their children are watching!

Drivers should be safe and slow down. I see parents on their phones, not focused or paying attention, and not in the lane that they're supposed to be in.

— ANAYA RANA

As we made plans during the spring, Sycamore was most fortunate to receive a restricted gift in support of traffic safety. We reviewed ways to maximize safety using these additional funds. The result was a focus on three areas:

- 1. Heightened crosswalks.** These brightly painted raised pathways help make pedestrians more visible as they cross from the parking lot to the main building. The elevated crosswalks also serve as larger speed bumps to slow vehicles.
- 2. Entrance speed table.** This speed table, constructed at the main entrance from 64th Street, prevents cars from entering campus at a high rate of speed.
- 3. Cone barriers.** We have added cones to the Grandview Drive school entrance to ensure drivers don't play "chicken" and enter using the exit lane as a shortcut. Additionally, cones placed during arrival require Lower and Middle School families to enter on 64th Street, thus avoiding possible merge accidents.



SCAN HERE TO WATCH A VIDEO CREATED BY THE 4TH GRADE SAFETY TEAM.

All three initiatives were completed before the start of the school year. Early feedback from teachers and administrators is that carline and traffic safety are improved. The speed table at the main entrance may be the most meaningful speed-reducing measure. Just last week, an unnamed parent was running late to drop their child off for an overnight class trip. In their rush they did not take into account the size of the new speed table. After personally meeting this addition to our campus, their driving has been more measured. Our improvements are having a positive effect.

I am grateful to last year's Fourth Grade Leadership Team and to Dr. Outcalt for ideas, enthusiasm, and a desire to make Sycamore a safer place. I look forward to the next student group who brings forth ideas for improvement! ●

It is so gratifying that Sycamore is a place where students are empowered to voice their concerns and solutions.

"This particular bunch had the clearest vision I've seen from a leadership group in years. They developed their proposal for Mr. Huber quickly, coherently, and enthusiastically. They were bubbling with so much excitement that we had to discuss how to contain energy levels for a professional meeting before entering his office.

One message the leadership students wanted to send to the community was that parents are role models to their own kids and to the other students at school.

One student suggested, "Ask your child how you're driving — let them be the judge. Everyone thinks they are a good driver, but it can't be everyone, because we are having these issues" Another 4th Grader pointed out, "It creates a domino effect of unsafe driving because other drivers have to react to their unsafe choices."

— DR. SAMANTHA OUTCALT

Graduation Speeches

The conclusion of the 8th Grade year at Sycamore has many traditions, such as the class T-shirt, the D.C. trip, and the choice of a special celebration for the class, which this year was a trip to Kings Island on “8th Grade Skip Day.” The most significant, however, is graduation. One of the most coveted opportunities awarded to two graduates is the privilege of delivering a speech during the ceremony. At the Thirty-seventh Commencement Exercises in May, Matthew Roth, currently a freshman at Cathedral High School, and Prudy Peng, currently a freshman at Carmel High School, had the honor of addressing their classmates.

THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTS CAPTURE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF EACH SPEECH:

“ ”

We have the greatest camaraderie, and even though we are all different, from athletes to mathletes, from those who talk far too much to those who may need to be told to share their thoughts. In spite of these differences, we all know each other.

This is what sets Sycamore apart from all other schools.

ROTH

GRADUATION SPEECH

MATTHEW ROTH

In 2023, I arrived at Sycamore. I had switched from a public school midway along the journey of our year, and I was scared. Would I be able to make friends? Would I do well with the increased workload? Would the teachers be friendly? Quickly, I learned the answers to these questions. A big, old, yes.

The moment that has stuck with me most, happened back in October. I was in a terrible car accident with my brother and grandmother. We were hit right on the passenger side where I was sitting. Somehow, by the grace of God and German engineering, I survived. I stayed with my brother in the hospital, as he was a bit more injured, but somehow, my brother, my grandmother, and I, despite some bruises, were all fine after some recovery. In fact, my best Middle School memory comes from this incident. The



ROTH

GRADUATION SPEECH

PRUDY PENG

In 5th Grade, Mrs. Simpson taught us about the Hero's Journey, a universal storyline that can be seen in all types of literature. So universal, in fact, that it mirrors many of our journeys.

It starts with the Ordinary World, a place that can be called home. It is here where characters are introduced along with their personalities, hobbies, motivations, and problems. My Ordinary World was my previous elementary school. Everyone was friends with each other, and life was good, but for me, like some of you who began their journeys in different schools, something seemed to be missing. I was

Graduation

Continued on next page

Matthew Roth continued

entire grade came together, and I received a nice get well gift. The absolute best part was the hand-made card. This is a testament to Sycamore, and its values. It brought me and my family comfort in those trying times. We have the greatest camaraderie, even though we are all different, from athletes to mathletes, from those who talk far too much to those who may need to be told to share their thoughts. In spite of these differences, we all know each other. This is what sets Sycamore apart from all other schools. Everybody knows everybody. This creates a closely knit school community, and is easily the number one reason I recommend, and love, going to Sycamore.

I am excited to move on to high school, but I am worried, and feeling the same feelings as when I joined Sycamore. I am joyous for the future but sad to leave this time to the past. My time here has been incredible and shall remain with me forever. Thank you, Sycamore, for making these two and a half years the best of my life.



PENG

“
Our class has done wonderful things for each other, like calls late at night to help each other understand our homework. Our teachers are also our allies.

PENG

Prudy Peng continued

always the first to finish all of my classwork and homework, the person everyone went to for group projects, and the best typist in the school.

This is where I, and many students my age, received our Call to Adventure: An event that requires the hero to make a decision to help. This Call to Adventure wasn't a villain ruining the world or a princess being kidnapped - it was COVID. Just like many of us, all I knew was that I could only talk to all of my school friends and learn via Zoom. After several months of learning things I already knew, my family and I realized this wasn't working. I started actually learning through new online schools, but that presented a problem of not being able to see my friends in person. I loved the challenge of solving problems I never thought of, but my Call to Adventure helped me realize how important friendships are to me.

My mom suggested that I should go to this school in Indianapolis called Sycamore. She told me that it was a school for gifted kids, but I was a little bit scared. This was my Refusal of the Call. The Refusal of the Call explains itself: The hero doesn't believe in his or her capabilities. I knew I was smart enough, but was I enough to keep up with other gifted kids?

This was where my mentors really helped me start my journey. Although they aren't supernatural, my parents have always had my back, happy to support me in whatever I decide to do. They have taught me so many valuable lessons about the world and how to believe in myself. With the help of my parents, I was able to build up the confidence needed to explore Sycamore.

The fifth stage is Crossing the Threshold. This Threshold is a gateway between the Ordinary World and the hero's adventure, a challenge that tests the hero's self-confidence. Testing was sometimes stressful and meeting new teachers was intimidating, but Sycamore was welcoming. That's something amazing about Sycamore, how much the people here feel like family. We may have disagreements, but we always find a way to compromise.

The same was true for the sixth part: Tests, Allies, and Enemies. This is where the hero faces challenges and identifies who is friend and who is foe. In so many stories, school is seen as this realm of bullying and anxiety. Sycamore is the exact opposite. Our class has done wonderful things for each other, like calls late at night to help each other understand our homework. Our teachers are also our allies.

One of the last parts of the Hero's Journey is The Ordeal. The Ordeal is the big battle: The life-or-death situation that the hero has been preparing for this entire time. The hero often “gets a taste of death before they succeed”. Many students let themselves be defined by their grades, but that is simply not the truth. One of my mentors, my mother, has always told me never to let a score determine my future, but rather learn from it, and keep growing. I have seen many of my fellow classmates learn this lesson. I hope we never lose that.

And now we are at The Reward: This is where the Call to Adventure is resolved. The two main reasons I went on my adventure, seeking academic challenge and finding my people, are the rewards we all share today. Our familiar relationships will always be with us, no matter where we choose to go in the future. To all Sycamore graduates: Be proud of what you've done. I'm standing here talking to you all about my Sycamore journey, but it's not done. There's still a whole other stage: The Return. Our Return will be going to high schools, where we will be able to thrive even more and carry the lessons we've learned at Sycamore with us. When we come back to Sycamore as alumni, we will still be Sycamore students at heart. You get to choose where you go in life. We all have our own hero's journeys.

A more recent tradition, instituted in 2024, is a graduation speaker representing the Sycamore alumni body. Kelly Fulk, Sycamore Class of 2021, a 2025 Carmel High School graduate and a current freshman at Purdue University, addressed the Sycamore Class of 2025.

THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTS CAPTURE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HER SPEECH:

KELLY FULK

Going into my freshman year, I thought I had to follow a script of what it meant to be a Sycamore kid. A script that was made up by people who do not know our names, and who demean us as “smart” because they don’t understand “gifted.”

Smart means you love a book about polio, but “gifted” means you check out the same book about polio over and over again until the Sycamore librarian finally just gives it to you.

Smart is reading Edgar Allan Poe in 7th Grade, but gifted is trying to write your own Edgar Allan Poe.

Smart is knowing why a triangle is a triangle, but gifted is figuring out how many ways you can prove it.

I became a keen observer of the college-obsessed students, and they became keen observers of me. There was a clear divide in our conversations as they discussed exhaustion from studying and summer internships in subjects they could not explain, but I was more enthralled by topics like fiscal redistribution and the history of Indiana glass. The most creative and intelligent people in my life are not the ones who told me I just had to take AP everything to inflate my GPA, but the ones who got up at 5:00 am everyday for marching band practice, the ones who read the books about obscure presidential history, and the ones who let me talk about calculus for as long as I wanted. I urge you to be that person for somebody else. Sycamore inspired you, and now you have the tools to inspire others.

However, being ruthlessly passionate takes courage. You will have more questions than answers, for a long time there’s no reward,

and you will always be wrong to somebody. I could have listened when three engineering teachers told me I was “unqualified” to be in the class, but then I would’ve never filed for a patent on my award-winning biomedical design, created a totally epic six foot tall roller coaster model, and then been told by those teachers I was the best in class.

At Sycamore, we have never equated ability with passion. Plutarch wrote in his biography of Alexander the Great, “And so he wept, for there were no more worlds to conquer.” In 2025 language, don’t peak in high school. Your life is not a parabola. It’s not the St. Louis Arch, and it’s certainly not measured in how many awards you win at any point in your life. It’s easy to confuse accomplishments with character, but character is about what you get wrong. Don’t let your passions change because someone else has a trophy. How you lose says more about your character than how you win.

Remember that the world doesn’t need more bullet points on resumes. Triumph is temporary, and failure isn’t final, but who you truly are, persistent, humble, and creative will always make you a Sycamore kid.



Graduation



In Their WORDS

ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

LINDSAY HEARN ('02)

High School Theater Teacher
St. Stephens High School
Austin, Texas

Q. Did you always want to be a teacher?

I initially thought I wanted to be a professional actor. After Sycamore, I went to North Central High School. I did a lot of arts while I was there, and then I went on to pursue theater at Northwestern University. As I took more and more classes, I realized I had a passion both for directing theater and for children. Despite learning from theater teachers my whole life, I had never really connected directing, kids, and my love of theater.

I double majored in theater and psychology at Northwestern, and I have a BA in both. I had a couple of really special mentors in college who helped me identify theater education as a career path. After earning my degrees I moved to the DC area. A children's theater in Bethesda, Maryland called Imagination Stage has a thriving theater for young audiences program. I was there for a year, apprenticing in their education



department, but I left college knowing that I would need to go to grad school to study more. That's what led me to the University of Texas where I earned my MFA in drama and theater for youth and communities, which is its own specialized field.

“
I think the thing that I have carried with me from Sycamore that I hope our 8th Grade will take away is just that you’re enough, right? That’s all you have to be, is just you.

HEARN

Q. Did you get a teaching license?

Yes, because as part of my graduate work at the University of Texas I taught in public schools. After graduation, I worked at a charter school for a year, and then moved to St. Stephens School in 2015. I've been a theater teacher and a dorm parent there ever since.

Q. How did you find St. Stephens?

I worked with a charter school in Austin for a year and loved the kids, but every school is at a different point in its journey. That one just couldn't support a theater program to the extent that I had hoped it could. St. Stephens had a program in place including a special theater academy, and they were looking for a new theater teacher.

Q. What grade levels do you teach?

St. Stephens is for 6th-12th Grade students, but I teach students in 9th through 12th. I've had a chance to teach high school theater and work with kids who are super excited to pursue theater. That's been special and really fun.

Q. What was the last performance you directed for the stage?

We just staged "Amelie" as this year's musical. Last year I directed "Mean Girls."



Q. Were there lessons from Sycamore that helped you through all the transitions?

Lessons learned in children's theater and at Sycamore have resonated later in life. I learned about collaborating with different kinds of people and being open to other people's ideas. We are constantly asked to do challenging things, but no one is good at everything. We all have to get better at receiving feedback and trying again.

I think about Student Council activities or solo projects that we did in class and the ways that groups worked together. We learned to divvy out responsibilities for groups, and that developed a sense of personal responsibility for how you show up individually, but also how you show up for a group of people.

For me, that is the core lesson of leadership – in my world as a theater teacher, how do I show up for my students and how do they show up for each other?

Lindsay with her dad, Jeff Hearn, past Board of Trustees President

“ ”

One thing I learned at Sycamore was being willing to try again when you mess up. As a recovering perfectionist, I'm not always great at that.

HEARN



JEFF KARPICKE ('94)

Cognitive Scientist
Purdue University

Q. How did you end up at Purdue?

I attended IU for my undergraduate degree in psychology. While there, I was able to join a lab, and that's what really influenced the direction of my career. That experience motivated me to pursue graduate school which turned into me getting a masters and then Ph.D. in cognitive psychology from Washington University in St. Louis.

Q. What do you love about your work at Purdue?

My job is to help launch new academic programs at the University and in turn provide new opportunities for students. I love working with students. That is what's most fun for me.

Q. What classes do you teach?

My role involves teaching classes on cognitive science, learning, and memory. I also run a lab where students participate in our studies, and I work with student teams doing research projects.

Q. How did Sycamore help prepare you to study cognitive science?

Sycamore allows students to dive into topics in a way that a lot of schools don't. I learned skills at Sycamore that I still use today when I'm studying a new topic or doing research in my laboratory. The understanding of how to be a scholar, how to dig in and learn as much as you can, and how to become an expert on a topic is a through line from Sycamore to what I do now.

Q. Did your Sycamore experience enable you to pursue leadership opportunities while in high school and college?

Yes. If you're doing something for the first time in high school or college, you won't be comfortable taking a leadership role. Sycamore gives students a chance to work with peers who share their passions. Others will understand the academic topics or intellectual topics that really interest you.

I remember how much I would worry about grades and the anxiety that produced. It's really easy to say this now, but I wish I hadn't been so anxious and worried about my

“ ”

As a middle schooler at Sycamore, I would have never predicted psychology or research as my career choices.

KARPICKE

scores. I certainly encourage everyone to do well in school and to achieve great things, and Sycamore students are absolutely going to do that. But, it's important to know that those grades aren't going to stick with you in the long term.

What does stick are relationships with the people around you. That includes classmates, for sure, but teachers in particular. Over many years – because it's been a while since I graduated from Sycamore – I have enjoyed returning to school, talking with teachers, and updating them on my status.

Jeff with his parents John and Susan Karpicke. / Susan is former Sycamore Admissions Director



Q & A



ELIZABETH EMHARDT ('04)

Anesthesiologist
IU Health

“ ”

Sycamore allows you to not waste energy on being self-conscious. You can focus on what you actually want to be doing.

EMHARDT

Q: Was there something that you learned at Sycamore that helped carry you through your many years of school?

My job is to help launch new academic programs at the University and in turn provide new opportunities for students. I love working with students. That is what's most fun for me.

Q: Did you feel that your Sycamore experience created leadership opportunities for you?

Sycamore puts you a step ahead when it comes to educational preparedness. That preparedness then allows you to focus on other things, to delve deeper into subjects. I attended Denison University. Being better prepared for college allowed me to get involved in student government and to join the tennis team. I had time for additional activities because I was starting a step ahead in the academic realm. I was used to doing work outside of school, and I was accustomed to juggling schedules in order to balance my extracurriculars and my school work.

Q: How did you find your career? Or did it find you?

I don't remember growing up thinking I was going to be a physician, and I think a lot of doctors start out that way. Math and English were my favorite subjects. When I went to college, I was a political science major, and I thought about attending law school, but then I ended up really enjoying my biology classes. When I was in medical school, I had no idea what type of specialized medicine I might practice. I changed my mind with every rotation I completed. When you're with a group of people for a month who are passionate about their specialty, it can be very influential. I considered neurology and psychiatry, but when I did an elective in anesthesia, it just felt like it was made for me and my personality.



Q. Did you ever have a “this is my career” moment?

I was on an ICU rotation as an anesthesia resident, just doing my normal work. One day after rounds, my boss said, “Elizabeth, I need to talk to you.” My immediate concern was, “Oh, no. Something went wrong. I put it in the wrong order, or I presented the patient incorrectly.” Instead, he told me, “I think that you really are good at this, and it seems like you like it.”

“Well, I like everything” is what I told him because it was true. But he said, “No, no, no. Other people don’t like the ICU. You seem to really be yourself here and to be comfortable and to get it quicker than other people are getting it.”

Q. Did you feel that way before he shared his observation?

I just assumed that everyone felt the same way I did. I’m confident about certain things, but it’s important to have mentors along the way to point things out. He helped me understand that my experience wasn’t necessarily the same as everyone else’s.

Q. What’s your message to an 8th Grader moving forward into high school? What would you tell them?

Follow your energy because life is going to be hard. It’s going to be stressful. If you end up in a field where you actually gain energy from your work versus being drained by it, you’re going to be more successful, you’re going to be happier, and you’re going to thrive. Always come back to ‘did this give me energy or take energy away?’ ●

Elizabeth with her family

“ ”

I think anesthesia is a wonderful career, but we don’t always have the same experience with patient relationships that other physicians do. In the ICU, I do have longevity with patients that I really enjoy.

EMHARDT

Alumna Makes Strides in the Biomedical Industry



Above, Kelly Fulk (left) and former Sycamore student Maxwell Gootee at the Innovate WithIN competition

During their time together in Biomedical Innovations class, a four-year high school curriculum by Project Lead The Way, Kelly Fulk, Class of 2021, and her Carmel High School senior classmate Maxwell Gootee, who attended Sycamore in Lower School, developed an improvement to an existing medical device, which was entered in Innovate WithIN.

Innovate WithIN is a competition for Indiana high school students run by the STARTedUP Foundation. Teams pitch their business to judges over three rounds of the

competition. The STARTedUP president calls it “the most elite high school pitch competition in the country” because “students see problems as opportunities.” Six regional winners and four wildcard teams are selected to attend the state finals where they pitch on stage and compete for cash prizes. Students also participate in an in-person bootcamp where they are mentored by business professionals in their area to determine their next steps. After state, finalists travel to Washington DC and meet with Congressmen, tech company executives, and marketing counselors to learn how business is deeply intertwined

with government. Kelly and Max pitched to US Senator Todd Young, US Representatives Erin Houchin and Jefferson Shreve, and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of State, defense technology company Anduril, the Krach Institute for Tech Diplomacy, and others.

Kelly and Max have been working on a medical device called SpheriLine which was selected as a People's Choice Award winner at the WithIN state finals. SpheriLine is a redesign of the internal jugular central line (IJCL). IJCLs are catheters inserted into the jugular vein in the neck to provide access to the central venous system. They are used to administer multiple medications quickly to intensive care patients. Traditional central lines can lead to infections, patient discomfort, and increased risk for nurses. SpheriLine redesigns the connection of the central line at the neck to address these issues. Currently, the tubes that deliver medicine (called lumens), run straight into a patient's hairline. The lumens are prone to falling off, and this can lead to infection. In fact, nearly 250,000 annual cases and approximately twenty-eight thousand patient deaths each year result from these infections known as Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infections (CLABSI). This malady can kill a patient within 72 hours, and it imposes a four billion dollar annual burden on patients and their families with just one case averaging a cost of \$46,000.

"Max and I changed these systems to move the lumens out of the way by redesigning a piece, called the hub, that connects the lumens to the bloodstream. This way the lumens go down the shoulder instead of into the hairline. This boosts patient comfort and mobility, saves nurses' time, and decreases the risk of infection. Ninety-two percent of respondents in a survey of nurses across three states supported our redesign. The other eight percent stated that the idea deserves more research. Our design is patent-pending, and we are currently getting feedback from an advisory board including Ascension-St. Vincent representatives and engineering and venture

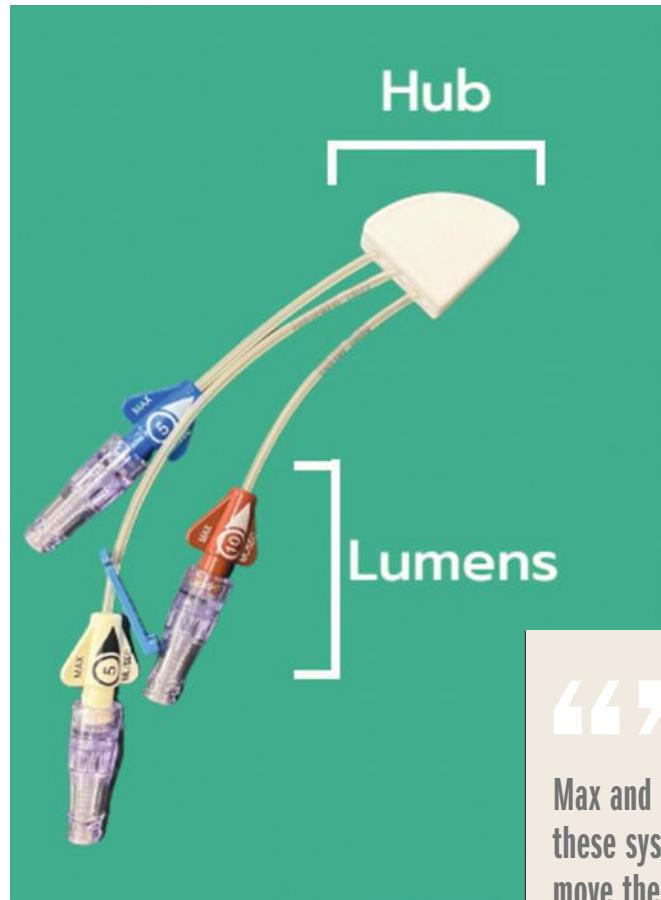


Illustration of Fulk and Gootee's SpheriLine biomedical device concept

capital professionals. We are also raising funding and connecting with biomedical device companies to streamline the process of creating a medical grade prototype ready for FDA approval," Kelly explained.

Kelly concluded, "Personally, this experience has been unbelievably valuable. I went into it not knowing much about business and being scared to call myself an entrepreneur. Now I feel like I am on the road not just to success in my product, but to success in my career. I now understand what I could be doing with the rest of my life. The coolest part about the D.C. trip was that we were taken seriously. I wasn't treated like just a high schooler, but rather like a business owner, and that gave me a lot of confidence."

Kelly Fulk is currently a freshman biomedical engineering major in the John Martinson Honors College at Purdue University in West Lafayette. ●

“ ”

Max and I changed these systems to move the lumens out of the way by redesigning a piece, called the hub, that connects the lumens to the bloodstream. This way the lumens go down the shoulder instead of into the hairline. This boosts patient comfort and mobility, saves nurses' time, and decreases the risk of infection.

FULK

Alumni News and Notes

Kelsey Rehmel, Class of 2022, had a fantastic junior track season at North Central High School. She set school records in four individual events: the Indoor 2 mile and 3200 meters and the outdoor mile and 2 mile. She was also part of the record-setting indoor Distance Medley relay and outdoor 4x800 meter relay. She was 4th in the State in the 3200 at the Hoosier State Relays (Indoor Championships) and competed at New Balance Nationals Indoor Championships in Boston and Outdoor Championships in Philadelphia. This fall Kelsey has been named Marion County Champion, MIC Conference Champion, and has set the North Central record for 5k cross country. Congratulations, Kelsey!

Benjamin Murray, Class of 2023, won a silver medal in tennis at the 2025 JCC Maccabi Games in Tucson, Arizona July 27–August 1. More than 1,000 Jewish teens from all over the world, including North America, Europe, and Israel, gathered to compete in an Olympic style format and complete community service projects. In addition to the silver medal, Benjamin was also awarded a sportsmanship medal in tennis.



Congratulations to Annamaria Ebersole, Class of 2022, a senior at Park Tudor, for earning the Congressional Award, which is the highest honor Congress offers to young people recognizing community service, personal development, and physical fitness.

Abby Leivant and Parker Outcalt, both members of the Class of 2024, had their artwork featured at the Carmel International Arts Festival in September. Abby's charcoal and watercolor pieces and Parker's digital photography were on display in the High School Student Art Exhibit in the Indiana Artisans' Shop.

Savannah Murray, Sycamore Class of 2025, who dances competitively with Indy Dance Academy, won the National Grand Championship in Line/Production Dance at the 2025 Inferno Dance Nationals at the Wisconsin Dells in June.

Class of 2017 Alumnus Wins on Jeopardy

Shaan Mishra, Class of 2017, appeared on Jeopardy on Friday, October 24. It was an exciting end to the final round as he beat the defending three-time champion. He then returned on Monday, October 27, as the champion. Despite answering the Final Jeopardy question correctly, he did not win, ending his stay on the show.

Pictured is Shaan (back right) with Sycamore's 7th & 8th Grade Academic Quiz Bowl team when he was a student.



RECENT BIRTHS

You never know where you will connect with former Sycamore teammates again

Madalyn Sailors, Class of 2016, and **Emma Jean Hermacinski**, Class of 2018, recently saw each other at Princeton University, where Madalyn is starting a three year Masters in Divinity, and Emma Jean is a senior majoring in Politics (with minors in Latin American Studies, East Asian Studies, and Japanese). The two ran cross country together at Sycamore (both pictured here in a photo from 2014).



Sarah Wenzel Batson, Class of 2004, and her husband, Cliff, had their first child, a son, Oliver, in December 2024 in Kent, Washington.

Dr. David Yang and Dr. Nikki Sullivan, both members of the Class of 2003, welcomed their first child, a son, James, in January 2025 in Mankato, Minnesota.

Matt Giffin, Class of 2002, and his wife, Emily, had their first child, a son, Luke, in February in Indianapolis.

Kara Findley Gladish, Class of 2002, and her husband, Jason, had their first child, a son, Lachlan (pictured below), in May, 2025 in Indianapolis.



Alex Brethauer, Class of 2002, and his wife, Megan, welcomed their first child, Arthur, in June in Indianapolis.

Celia Ristow and Julian Toumey, both members of the Class of 2006, had their second child, Clara, in August 2025 in Indianapolis.

2026 Trivia Night

This year, instead of the traditional auction gala, Sycamore's spring fundraising event will be a more relaxed Trivia Night. On Saturday, February 28, 2021, friends can gather at the school for great food and drinks, exciting silent auction items, and a trivia contest hosted by Hambone's Trivia — all while raising funds for Sycamore. Register for the event at: sycamoreschool.org/trivianight

Thompson Named Bradley Scholarship Winner

Congratulations to 8th Grader Dyer Thompson who has been named a Caroline D. Bradley Scholar. He is one of only two Bradley Scholars in the state of Indiana and one of 28 nationwide. Scholars receive a four-year, merit-based, need-blind scholarship to any high school or academic program in the country. Dyer is the seventh Sycamore student since 2018 to receive this prestigious honor.

Represent Sycamore In Style

Readers are encouraged to update their school gear by visiting the online Sycamore Spiritwear Store. Sweatshirts, quarter zip pullovers, t-shirts, hats, coats, and more are available through the Squad Locker website, and there are no minimums required to order. Find popular items from the past and new swag at: <https://teamlocker.squadlocker.com/#/lockers/sycamore-school-spiritwear>

Food Drive Exceeds Goal

The Sycamore Community staged a food drive in support of the nearby Crooked Creek Food Pantry during September's Spirit Week. The goal — to collect at least 5,000 non-perishable items — was surpassed with Friday's final total reaching 5,836.

Kathy Hahn Keiner, the food pantry's Executive Director, spoke to students at Sycamore's pep rally and shared how these critical donations impact local families in need. Students realized an added benefit when they were awarded an extra recess for reaching goal. You can view a "highlight" reel on our Instagram page.

Sycamore Kicks off Quiz Bowl Season

Sycamore kicked off its Quiz Bowl Season at Purdue University on October 11. The team competed in the High School Varsity Division against high school teams from across the state, and finished 4-4 on the day. Two Sycamore students, Aarnav Silodia and Allison Jeray were among the top twenty individual scorers in the tournament. Several Sycamore Alumni also competed at the tournament, competing for seven different high school teams. The top four overall scorers are Sycamore Alumni, and nine of the top twenty individual scorers are Sycamore students or alumni.

Science Bowl Team Announced

In September, 23 students from grades six through eight pitted their knowledge to earn a spot on this year's Science Bowl Team. Ten students were ultimately selected to represent Sycamore during the current school year.

Gavin Ceppa (7)
Albert Jiang (7)
Emma Lu (7)
Alan Shen (7)
Kacie Yan (7)
Allison Jeray (8)
Jonathan Lin (8)
Aarnav Silodia (8)
Dyer Thompson (8)
Joseph Zhu (8)

Coffee Discussions Continue In 2026

These drop-in events allow parents and guardians to meet casually with Sycamore's Head, John Huber, and a grade level division head. Coffees are held on Wednesdays or Thursdays, and no RSVP is required. All events run from 2:00pm – 3:00pm unless noted.

Wed. Feb. 4

PreSchool & Pre-Kindergarten Parents

Wed. Feb. 11

Kindergarten & 1st Grade Parents

Thurs. Feb. 19 (2:15 pm – 3:15 pm)

8th Grade Parents

Wed. Mar. 4

2nd & 3rd Grade Parents

Thurs. Mar. 19

4th & 5th Grade Parents

Thurs. Mar. 26 (2:15 pm – 3:15 pm)

6th & 7th Grade Parents

Merrell Named Editor of Medical Journal

Sycamore Board President Dr. Greg Merrell, a surgeon at the Indiana Hand to Shoulder Center, an Ortholindy practice, has been named the next editor-in-chief of The Journal of Hand Surgery — one of the most respected publications in the field.

"It is quite an honor for me because it's fundamentally the most impactful position in the world of hand surgery," Dr. Merrell says. "It's a privilege to help guide the future of our specialty and support research that ultimately benefits patient care."

Dr. Merrell received his medical degree and completed his orthopedic residency at Yale University. He went on to complete fellowship training in upper extremity and microvascular surgery at Brown University.

An award-winning researcher, Dr. Merrell has published extensively on bone healing and minimally invasive surgical techniques for treating tennis elbow, scaphoid fractures, and other conditions of the hand and wrist.

When They Come Back/ Get Together



1. Class of 2025 alumnae Ellie Eaton, Jane Ai, Laura Cai, Layla Emmert, and Izzy Abraham returned for a yearbook signing session this fall.
2. Bea Hyatt, Class of 2024, and her brother Oscar, Class of 2022, meet regularly for Sunday dinner where they attend boarding school at Choate Rosemary Hall Academy.
3. Alexandra Lange Miller, Class of 2009, and Brad Lohmeier, Class of 2001, and his wife, Rachel, got their picture taken with their children Grayson (Miller), Eddie (Lohmeier) and the Pre-K teaching assistant, Courtney Brody, Class of 2013.
4. Rachel Louis, Class of 2025, returned to be with her siblings for the All-School Social in August.
5. The Class of 2021 came back for the Senior Send-Off in May.
6. Sycamore Alumni Panelists pose for a group photo before the annual Alumni Panel in October.
7. Audrey Sims, Reni Osuntoken, and Alex Pirkle, all from the Class of 2014, got together in Los Angeles, California, this fall for the Colts vs. Chargers game.
8. Sycamore alumni, who had younger siblings graduate, returned for the 2025 Commencement ceremony.

4



5



6



8



Indiana Dunes Field Trip

Sycamore 5th Grade students spent three days and two nights at Indiana Dunes State Park in September. This popular annual trip not only allows students to create lasting memories with their classmates, but it is also an important educational experience which develops team-building and research skills. During the trip, students are divided into groups. Each group crafts a research question which guides their data gathering on an all-day hike. During the 4.5 mile trek students traverse wetlands, an Eastern deciduous forest, one of the few remaining Oak savannas, and forested dunes.







1750 West 64th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46260

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No.984
Indianapolis, IN

SYCAMORE

Outdoor Lab Admin Fall Cleanup Crew

