

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 31, 2015



## Children's Gazette 2015

"Walk Alone" in Acrylic  
Paint by Sydney Nixon,  
West Potomac High School.



**Alexandria \$814,500**

Great home with 4 bedrooms and 2.55 baths. Main level living option. Finished lower level & a spacious updated kitchen! Improved bathrooms, fresh paint, new carpets, lots of storage, walking distance to local schools and close to Old Town and DC. 1026cross.mceneaney.com

**Sue Goodhart**

703.362.3221  
www.TheGoodhartGroup.com



**Alexandria \$699,000**

Oversized windows in the sunny family room perfectly frame the backyard view of Monticello Park. The kitchen is updated with lots of original charm in the floors, fireplace and tile-work. 4 generous bedrooms and 2 baths, perfect for busy mornings. Easy to Metro, Del Ray, and Pentagon.

**Elizabeth Lucchesi**

703.868.5676  
www.LizLuke.com



**Beverly Hills \$1,375,000**

Complete renovation in sought-after George Mason school district. 6-bedrooms, 4-baths. Sunlight flooded expansive kitchen & family room are the heart of the home. Two fireplaces and a main-level bedroom & bath. Spacious master suite. Fully finished lower level. 216 Woodland Terrace

**Jen Walker**

703.675.1566  
www.JenWalker.com



**Old Town Alexandria \$824,500**

Charming 18th century beauty in the heart of Old Town offering perfect mix of historic & contemporary features, 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, exposed brick wall, renovated kitchen and baths, off-street parking, private garden, Lyles Crouch for school and chart topping walk score!

**Meiling Yang**

703.944.8403  
www.MyTopAgent.com



**Alexandria \$929,000**

Fantastic center-hall colonial has three levels, 5 bedrooms, and 4.5 baths. The basement is sure to impress with custom built-ins, in-home theater, surround sound, game space, and bedroom suite. Mud-room off the garage, fully fenced back-yard, and so much more. Stratford Elementary.

**Sandy McMaster**

571.259.2673  
www.FischerMcMasterHomes.com



**Woodbridge \$595,000**

Serenity & sophistication! One-of-a-kind Victorian on 2.68 private acres. This custom-built home has the charm of a classic but with modern amenities. Spacious in-law suite above the 2-car garage boasts a full kitchen and bath. 3 fireplaces. Wrap-around porches.

**Michael Sheridan**

571.318.9353  
www.YouOnlyNeedMichael.com



**Old Town Alexandria \$3,200,000**

The celebrated Roberdeau house offers exquisite details that include original floors, staircase with shadow rail, a beautiful keystone arch in the front hall and eight impressive fireplaces. The living room is grand as is the dining room with 12 over 12 original windows. 6 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, and parking for two cars.

**Babs Beckwith**

703.627.5421  
www.BabsBeckwith.com



**Old Town Alexandria \$1,275,000**

Light and space create an engaging five-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bath, end townhouse. Polished bamboo floors grace three levels while two fireplaces, rooftop terrace, garden and carpeted lower level guest quarters with kitchenette enchant. Off-street parking. 714 Wythe Street.

**Lauren Bishop**

202.361.5079  
www.LaurenBishopHomes.com



**Old Town Alexandria \$924,900**

Bright 19th Century end townhome with 2-story addition plus lower level apartment with spacious bedroom and street entrance. Off-street parking for 4 cars. Zoned residential/commercial. Formal living room/dining room with fireplace, master suite, large family room, renovated kit. Hardwood floors. Private deck and fenced yard.

**Susan Bruce Anthony**

703.795.9536  
www.SusanBruceAnthony.com

# CHILDREN'S GAZETTE

## FORT HUNT ELEMENTARY

### Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, The Gazette turns over its pages to the youth and students.

We asked principals and teachers from area schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children's Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art. Because of the response, we will continue to publish more artwork and writings throughout January.

We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2016 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Gazette. Please keep us in mind as your children continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

The children's issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, The Gazette welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com), but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9415 with any questions.

— EDITOR STEVEN MAUREN

### The Mount Vernon Children's Gazette

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**Yahia Mobarak, grade 3 — Sense of the Season**



**Dominick Adams-Erique, grade 3 — Set the Table**



**"A Portrait of my Sister, Ellie" by Annabelle Goodno, 6**



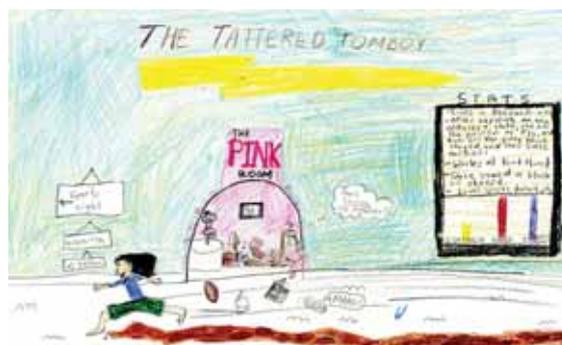
**Katherine Vargas-Totola, grade 2 — My American Celebration**



**Bryce Petronello, grade 2 — Local Landscape**



**Kiara Irizarry Sobel, grade 4 — What's the BIG Idea? Time!**



**Isabella Gattuso, grade 6 — Super You**



**Alice Ackerson, grade 6 — Micrography Self Portrait**



**"Friends" by Ellie Goodno, 7**



**Liliana Gamiz, grade 5 — Seeds of Change**



**Isla Monteith, grade 1 — Seasonal Landscape**

# GROVETON ELEMENTARY



Rhianna Amaya, grade 3



Jaslyn Sikder, grade 2



Jaycee Quebral, Delores Harkless and Dwell Quandehor, grade 1

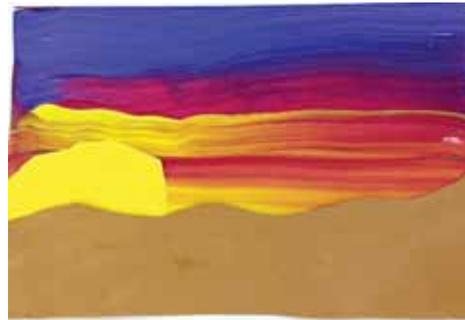


Angie Cruz and Laura Amaya, grade 6

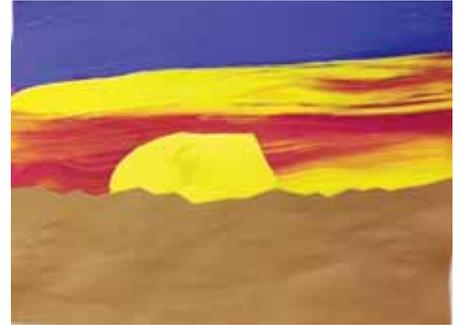


Kindergarten and Grade 5 Community Collaboration

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"Sunset" by Clara Dibella



"Sunset" by Isaac Wrieden

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Don't miss the area's largest, safest, family-friendly, budget-friendly New Year's Eve celebration!

Children 12 and under, and active military are **FREE**

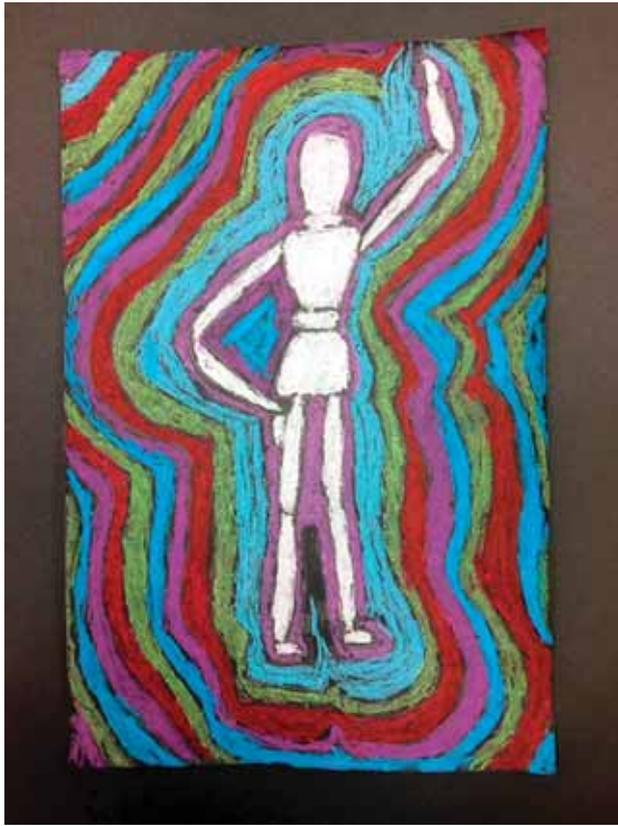
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# BELLE VIEW ELEMENTARY



Juan Cruz Cruz,  
grade 4 —  
Oil pastel and glue



Joy Cuero, grade 4 — Oil pastel and glue



Jocelyn Joy,  
grade 4 —  
Oil pastel and glue



Molly Weisel, grade 4 — Oil pastel and glue



Danny Perine, grade 4 — Oil pastel and glue

# ANGELUS ACADEMY



Grace Hanna, 11, grade 6



Alexis Borbidge, 11, grade 6

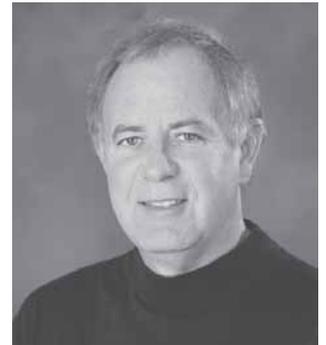
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Mt. Vernon is Rex's hometown. He moved here in 1960 when his father, an Air Force pilot, was stationed at the Pentagon. Rex also became a pilot, graduating from the Air Force Academy and flying for 20 years with the Air Force and Eastern Airlines.

Rex returned to his roots in Mt. Vernon where he and his wife, Doris, raised their four children, and where Rex embarked on a second career in Real Estate.

**[www.RexReiley.com](http://www.RexReiley.com)**

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# BUCKNELL ELEMENTARY



**Alonzo Flores-Guillen, grade 4**



**Ariana Amaya-Santos, grade 2**



**Danielle Stephens, kindergarten**



**Diego Fuentes, grade 1**



**Anthony Romero Hernandez, kindergar**



**Enrique Amaya Aleman, grade 1**



**Gabriel Castellon-Cespedes**



**Sean de Maye, grade 3**



**Jayden Ward, grade 6**



**Raegan Winebrenner, kindergarten**



**Oscar Hernandez Vasquez, grade 6**



**Mason Denson, kindergarten**



**Naomi Kebede, grade 1**



**Leo Barley, grade 1**



**Henry Gomez-Lucero, grade 2**



**Enzo Flores-Guillen, grade 5**



**Genesis Martinez, grade 5**



**Omar Henriquez-Hidalgo, grade 3**



**Eunice Frimpong, grade 4**

## Should We Have School Uniforms?

Should we, or should we not, have school uniforms? Well, let's answer that question the old fashioned way: let's answer a question with another question. Where do we live? We live in a country widely known for its freedom. Immigrants have traveled hundreds, perhaps thousands of miles to the promised land, a land said to be free, just to realize that now they're faced with the fact that they might be forced to wear uniforms. I hate uniforms. Years ago, before I entered elementary school, I went to a school where I was forced to wear a uniform. And I hated it. I heard tales of my cousins going to a school in the area, where they had the freedom of choosing what they could wear. It was a gift from the heavens. How could there be a school so close to mine that allowed students to wear anything they wanted? The thought of it seemed almost too good to be true. Since then, I've always opposed the thought of school uniforms. It's disgusting, really, to be forced to wear something against your own will. You were born on this Earth, to be free, all humans, all creatures, all things, were made equal. Wearing a school uniform is as if you've given up the battle. It's as if you accept the fact that you've lost your freedom. It's as if you accept the fact that you were never truly free, and you will never BE truly free, unless you join the fight for freedom.

So what are school uniforms, what is a uniform? A uniform is nothing more than a chain, a chain that will never let you free unless you make a sacrifice yourself. You must take action and join the fight, the fight for a righteous cause. The cause for freedom, true freedom. Let's make things easier to understand. Let's say you've just journeyed thousands and thousands of miles to a place that you thought was free, to a place where you thought you could finally lived the happy life you've always dreamt of, and now, just as soon as you finally step foot into the promised land, you're arrested instantly, and thrown into jail. I can already imagine the burning hatred that lies deep within your soul. And with proper motivation, I can almost guarantee you that within a moment's notice, you'll rip down those walls and fight for your freedom. This is exactly what children, all over the United States in schools with an enforced uniform system are facing. They are being chained down, and can do little to nothing to escape from the horrors that taunt them everyday. This is just a violation of the human right to freedom, but also the human right, to be told the truth. We were all told as kids, that this country is free, and that we should all be proud to be living in such a great country. But how great is a country that hinders freedom and lies to its people? It's time you all step up, and fight ... for equality for not just you, but for everyone ...

— TONY BUI, GRADE 6

## Blue

It feels like blueberries, It sounds like the wind, It tastes like blueberries, It looks like the sky,

It smells like blueberries.

— GABRIELA NATIVI-MORENO, GRADE 2

## White

White is a marshmallow, Crunchy crunch crunch, Like a white board slapping up and down, Also like a desk buddy up and down, Smells like white chocolate that's Creamy and creamy and crunchy, White is a soft cloud in the sky when you blow it away and come down And it looks rubbery.

White.

— ANTHONY JACKSON, GRADE 2

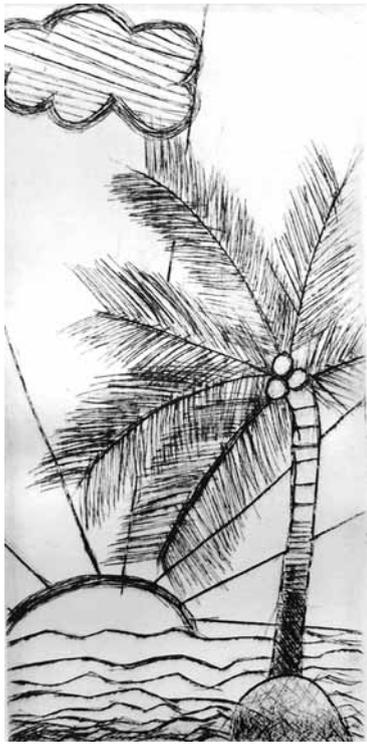
## Green

Green is the color of smooth grass, It tastes like sour lemon, It smells like an apple smelly marker, And a fresh green pepper,

I hear the sound of worms slithering in the grass. Green

— KAITLYN MARSHALL, GRADE 2

# BRYANT ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL



**Black & White Sunset, Dry Point Etching by Caterine.**



**Color Beach, Watercolor, Dry Point Etching and Chine Collé by Jennifer.**



**Quince, Interactive project, Ceramics, mixed media and conductive materials by Anna.**



**Fused Glass Dish by Salamatu.**



**Lion, Dry Point Etching by Anna.**



**Personal Hell, Mixed Media by A.K.**

## SPLIT-LEVEL REMODELED HOME TOUR

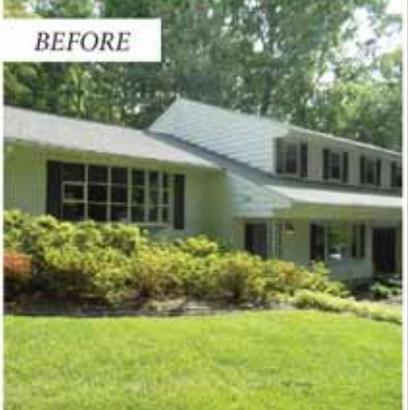
**Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 12pm-4pm**  
*(Snow Date: January 16th - please call to confirm!)*  
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Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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**Mount Vernon Gazette**

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## Aquinas and Old Town Montessori Schools

Upcoming events in January:

**Aquinas Montessori School**

**OPEN HOUSE**

**Tuesday, January 12, 7 – 8 PM**

8334 Mount Vernon Hwy, Alexandria, VA 22309, (703) 780-8484

**Old Town Montessori School**

**OPEN HOUSE**

**Friday, January 15, 9:30 AM – 11 AM**

112 South Columbus Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, (703) 684-7323



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January 20th

9:30-11:30

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www.graceschoolalex.org  
3601 Russell Rd., Alexandria, VA

## COMMUNITIES OF WORSHIP

### Good Shepherd Catholic Church Mass Schedule

**Saturday:**  
5:00 pm Vigil Mass  
6:30 pm Vigil Mass (en Español)

**Sunday:**  
7:30 am; 9:00 am (with Sign  
Language Interpreter and  
Children's Liturgy of the Word);  
10:30 am; 12:00 Noon;  
2:00 pm (en Español); 6:30 pm

**Monday-Saturday:**  
9:00 am Mass  
**En Español:** Monday, 6:30 pm;  
Thursday, 7:30 pm;

First Friday,  
7:30 pm  
**Eucharistic  
Adoration:**  
Wednesday: 6:00 pm;  
Thursday: 7:00 pm; First Friday:  
following 9:00 am Mass & 7:00 pm

**Confession:**  
Wednesday, 6:00 pm;  
Saturday, 8:00 am, 4:00 pm  
**En Español:**  
Sunday, 1:10 pm;  
Saturday, 6:00 pm

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## MOUNT VERNON HIGH SCHOOL

### Mr. R

He waited; perched on the branch of an aged flowering dogwood tree, its virgin buds glowing against the night. He was completely shrouded, almost invisible, in the cloak of pink blossoms that radiated with purity. Yes, he waited oh so patiently upon the branch like an owl waiting for a mouse to scurry out of the undergrowth. He watched as the last light of the Victorian home died out before making his move. He lowered himself on to the well-manicured lawn, careful not to rustle the tree. He made his way quickly across the yard, practically gliding through the night like a predator, oh so effortlessly. The strange man scaled up the trellises to the second floor. He kneeled on the roof, moonlight illuminating the back of his white trench coat. He pulled the collar up as a slight breeze came by revealing a golden embroider of a name, his name. Spelt in all caps was "MR. R", a name of power in the underground. The devil's merchant, the cross road dealer, Mr. R was none to fool with for he keeps all deals whole. He pulled out an ivory hilted switch blade and stuck it into the window frame, popping it open.

Mr. R stayed low as he climbed through the window. He kept his blade ready in hand as he took in his surroundings. The suburban night was quiet, only the faded murmurs of a television could be heard. He stood, sliding the blade back into his sleeve. He silently stepped to the single crib in the freshly decorated room. He looked down at the most precious newborn he had ever seen, bringing his hand gently to the baby girl's face, caressing her cheek with a gloved finger. Mr. R picked her up gently from the crib, swaying as he made his way out of the room. He left the house without a trace except for a single receipt left on the crib's pillow.

Mr. R drove through the night with a satisfied smirk on his face. It took him a little under an hour to drive back to New York, back to his kingdom. He weaved in and out of traffic in a custom built, black minivan with a reinforced frame, bullet-proof windows, and military grade tires; a top grade chariot for the most precious treasures. He pulled into a hidden parking garage in central Manhattan that connected to one of the oldest buildings in the city. Its stone frame was still intact, including ancient gargoyles that scared away any prying eyes that stared for too long. Its insides completely obscured by stain glassed windows that portrayed the gothic beauty of spring with images of crimson tulips, midnight lilies, and a saffron sun the glowed with a subtle darkness. Mr. R swayed with the baby as he made his way up to the lobby of the building. He stepped into the newly renovated interior covered in cream marble with gold veins. He modeled it after a long forgotten empire with towering columns wrapped in golden ivy, walls painted softly with the most gentle of colors, and a Persian rug lined with pure silver threads.

"Good evening Mr. R," an aged security guard said from behind a reception desk. His silver hair was neatly combed back and tied into a ponytail. He stood tall, towering over Mr. R at 6'1". He was well kept, everything on his desk organized by size and name, his name tag leveled perfectly on his squared chest.

"Good evening Charles." Mr. R said calmly as he walked toward the elevator.

"Oh, what's that you got there, sir?" Charles stretched his neck out, trying to peer over Mr. R's shoulder.

"Nothing of your concern, Charles. Why don't you go home early tonight?" Mr. R's voice stayed calm even though it was laced with agitation.

"But sir, I can't leave yet; I still have to file those papers you left and redirect the —"

"Go home Charles. Now." Charles shivered with feared as Mr. R glared at him. Mr. R's onyx shaded face hollowed and tightened around his skull; it was as if Charles was looking into the malevolent eyes of Death.

"Ok, I'll go. Good night Mr. Rump —" A hollow growl cut him off.

"What did I say about saying that name Charles?" Charles quickly ran out, afraid to speak any more. Mr. R looked down at the gurgling baby, letting her play with his fingers. "It's so hard to find good help. I miss the old days where I could cut out my servant's tongue, but now there are unions and rights for those petty people." He let out a cold sigh as they entered the elevator.

Mr. R's loft was extravagant at the least. Painted a whimsical shade of emerald the walls burned with magic. The emerald darkened as you stepped deeper into the enchanted realm. The magical flame in the walls became a low flicker as he walked out of the corridor and into his living room. Light flew overhead, shining oh so beautifully. He smiled at the baby girl as she stretched her hands out to capture the fluttering gems of ruby, emerald, and sapphire stars. He hummed a primordial tune, lulling the child to sleep.

"You're a fighter, aren't ya?" He carried her into a back room, hidden behind a mural of a delicate fairy floating above sleeping children. The room was filled with the gentle scent of sweet milk and the images of elves dancing on the walls. Dead in the center was an ivory crib with silk sheets lining a thin mattress. He set her down slowly as she struggled to stay in his arms. Mr. R hushed her while she whimpered, reaching for his hand. "Just like your ma, huh? Always fighting 'til the end." He chuckled lowly, pulling an aged rocking chair

out from the shadows. "How about I tell you a story? How does that sound?" She gurgled in response.

"Ok. Once upon a time there was a young maiden who wanted nothing but a life of her own. She worked hard in her father's café in a distant village known as the Bronx, and saved every dime she made to move out of the shabby apartment they shared. But what she didn't know was that her father wanted so much more for her, so he struck a deal with a merchant. He gave him his wedding band and the ring of his widowed wife for her to move to upper Manhattan and start a new life. The generous merchant accepted and worked some of his magic and got her a quant loft. She was happy there, she married a man and was with child, but soon she craved more. She called her father one day hoping to get a loan to help move her family out of the city. He had nothing to give but the merchant's card, a card worth more than gold in this town." He rocked the crib back and forth as he spoke softly to the exhausted child. "He advised her not to make the call, not to strike a deal with the merchant, but she was desperate to give her unborn child the world outside of the one she had. He met with her to draft a contract. She offered him many shiny things like a jade necklace and a diamond bracelet, but the merchant simply asked for her truest treasure. She was so quick to get out of the city, that the young maiden didn't read the fine print." He caressed the baby's cheek while she yawned sweetly. "When the merchant came to the hospital to collect she begged him to give her one night with her newborn. So he left and returned that morning, but she had left the hospital and the city all together." He laughed ironically to himself. "To think, a girl her age could outwit a man as clever as the infamous merchant. He chuckled softly to himself out the hospital and began his search for the maiden's treasure. She ran and hid, but he found her and the treasure." He stood peering over the crib and saw a silent, sleeping cherub. He kissed her lightly on the forehead and stepped out of the room. "Poor girl shouldn't have ran before I told her the rest of the deal." Mr. R leaned against the door smiling in victory. "She would've known I'm a fair man, that I would have returned you if she could simply guess my name." He laughed hollowly, pushing himself off the door and headed to the kitchen for a victory drink.

Morning came late the next day. The sun weighed heavily in the sky as it reflected off the young women's glasses as she stood in front of the gothic kingdom. She dressed simply in a white sundress laced with gold threads, scarlet hair pulled out of her freckled face, gold Gucci glasses used to hide the red in her normally mint green eyes. She stood on the curb, arms crossed in front of her, foot tapping impatiently. Her chest swelled with anxiety as she stood on the silent street. This was new for her; the city's silence made her apprehensive, but the silver-haired man told her this was the place to be. Adrenaline pumped through her, changing the natural glow of her skin, as the screams of sirens rush down the street. Officers of the NYPD swarmed the building, surrounding it with masked soldiers. A middle aged man took the young woman's arm pulling her behind other officers as they made way into the lobby.

Charles stood still at his desk with a phone to his ear as the officer and women made their way to him.

The officer spoke sternly. "I need the residents of this building to clear their homes now. We have a warrant to search the premises for a missing baby girl." Charles stuck a finger in the officer's face as he whispered into the phone.

"I'm on the phone with the resident right now and he says he's on his way down. Also, he wanted me to ask you all to try not to dirty up the place." He smiled as he hung the phone up with one last 'yes sir'.

Mr. R came out the elevator within seconds dressed in a velvet gold robe with black trim. He split the crowd of armed officers as he strolled to the desk. He could hear the men behind him rush to the elevator and stairwell, making their way up to his private loft.

"May I ask why New York's finest has privileged me with such a surprise." His voice was calm and humorous, well trained.

"We got a tip that a missing infant was seen in this building. And we are here to search for her." He held up the warrant, hand slightly shaking in Mr. R's presence.

"Very well than, but I'm sure you'll find no child up there or anywhere in my home, really. But can I ask one thing of officer, who gave you this outrageous accusation?"

"Sorry sir, but that is confidential." Mr. R eyed the man down, smiling suggestively.

"Please officer, I understand, but can't you indulge me. After all, I would like to know who sent me such lovely company."

"Sorry sir, but I —"

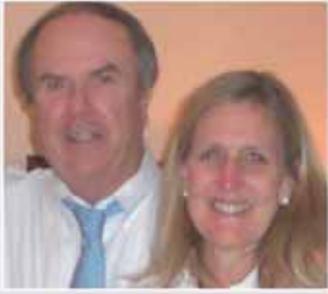
"It was me." the young women said, interrupting the two. "Can you please go help your men find my baby, Officer Walts? I'll be fine."

"Are you sure?" She nodded her head in response. Officer Walts said nothing as he walked to the elevator leaving the young women, Mr. R, Charles, and three officers out of earshot in the lobby.

"I must say, I'm greatly impressed by this little girl. It was

SEE MOUNT VERNON HS. PAGE 17

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**3163 Woodland Lane \$950,000**  
**Prime Waterfront—Acre Lot!**

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**3719 Riverwood Rd \$709,000**  
**Fabulous Opportunity—Prestigious Riverwood!**

Exceptionally attractive price for updated Colonial in premier riverfront community. Recent work including custom interior paint and beautifully refinished hardwood floors provide true "move-in" opportunity! Other features include main level family room w/fireplace & custom built-ins, bright white kitchen, 4 spacious bedrooms, thermal windows, 2 car garage. Gorgeous setting on large fenced lot.



**9408 Brambly Lane \$1,095,000**  
**Spectacular New Price!**

Spacious Colonial by Wakefield Homes—the area's leading custom builder! Home has striking open floor plan accentuated by high

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**9119 Buckner Rd \$598,922**  
**Character Abounds—Backs to Parkland!**

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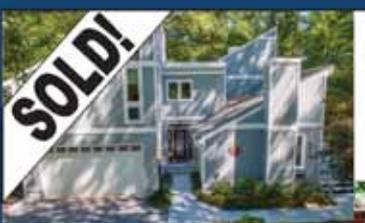
natural beauty of half acre grounds. Numerous features include 3 full baths with potential first floor master suite, hardwood floors, spacious family room overlooking grounds. Oversize carport. Expansive exterior decks overlook magnificent grounds. Uniquely beautiful, private setting backing to acres of parkland at Grist Mill Park.



**8931 Fort Hunt Rd \$755,000**  
**Prime Location—Updated Throughout!**

Best value in prestigious Plymouth Haven! Fabulous updated 5BR home on magnificent half acre lot. Prime location

just across from Ft Hunt Park. Spacious home is loaded with upgrades and custom features. Stunning beautiful grounds with custom in-ground pool. Wayneswood School. Adjoining property just sold for \$1.6. Other recent neighborhood sales \$1.5 - \$1.7. Super value.



**9429 Forest Haven Dr \$699,000**  
**Spectacular Contemporary!**

**4831 Stillwell Ave \$549,500**  
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**8824 Stratford Lane \$949,000**  
**Best New Home Value in Stratford**

**3232 Woodland Lane \$659,000**  
**Gorgeous Designer Kitchen!**



**4005 Mavis Ct \$698,900**  
**Stunning Open Floor Plan!**

Spacious & open—truly spectacular property with stunning family room addition. Expansive glass walls, soaring cathedral ceilings & open floor plan bring light to every corner of the home. Other features include custom, gourmet kitchen with huge 17x6 pantry. Updated baths and oversize 2 car garage. Huge deck capitalizes on private back yard. Prime location on quiet cul-de-sac in heart of Mt Vernon!



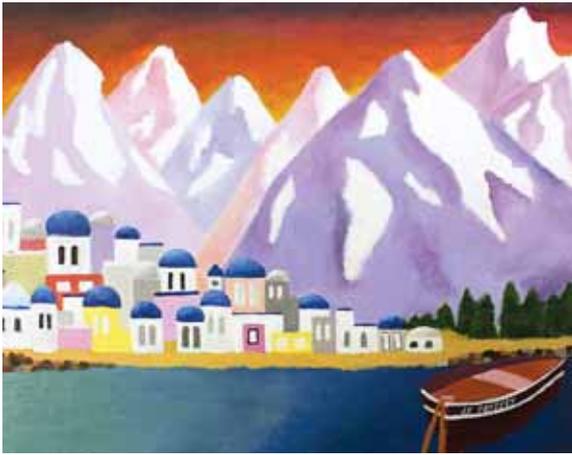
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# WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL



Untitled by Abbie Weissman — Acrylic Paint



“Holiday Lights” by Rebecca Schlosser — Photography



“Beets” by Parker Fulhum — Watercolor



“If your dreams don't scare you they're not big enough” by Sarah Jesup — Ink and Gouche



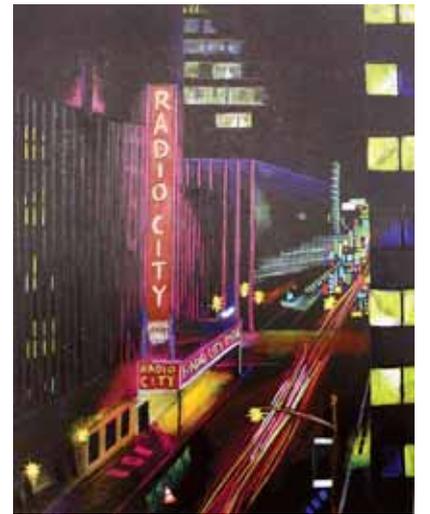
“Nouvelle Vie” by Sonya Richard — Mixed Media



“There's so much beauty in a storm” by Kylie McNulty — Watercolor



“If you work really hard and you're kind amazing things will happen” by Ain Qureshi — Watercolor and Ink



“Radio City” by Sarah Jesup — Color Pencil



Untitled by Ab Weissmen — Mar

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**acds ALEXANDRIA COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL**

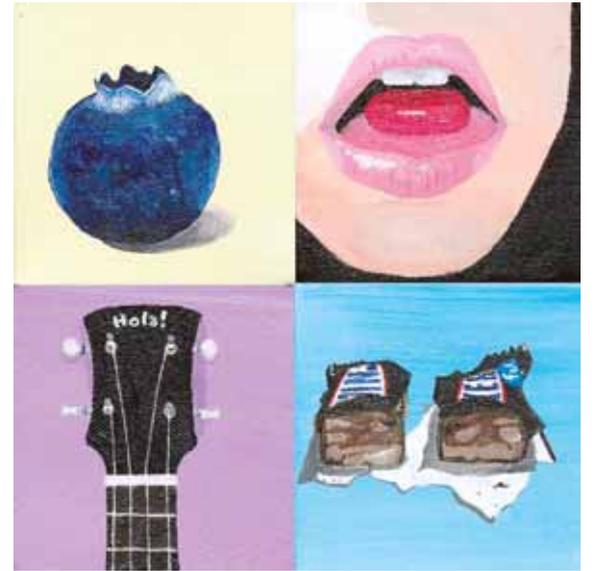
# WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL



**“Windy Trees” by Rowan Berman — Acrylic Paint**



**“The Roundabout” by Katelyn McNamara — Photography**



**“Home Life” by Lydia Perez — Acrylic Paint**



**“Shoreside Town” by Natalie Jurkowski — Acrylic Paint**



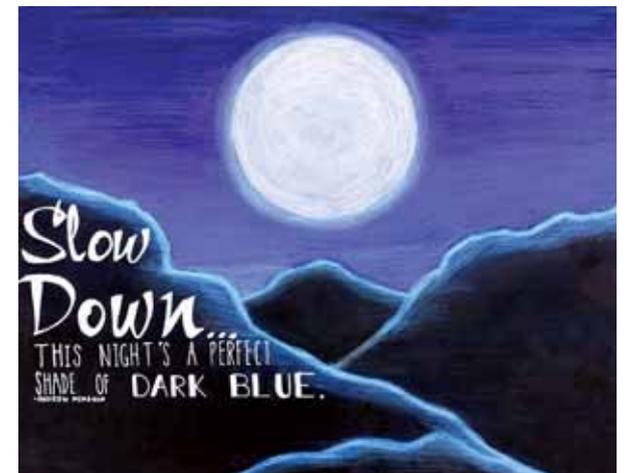
**“Wherever you are you are going to find yourself somewhere somehow” by Kaylie Kopicki — mixed media**



**“Romeo and Juliet” by Katelyn McNamara — Photography**



**“Hot, Hot, Hot” by Emma Calogero — Photography**



**“Slow down... the nights a perfect shade of dark blue” by Rebecca Schloesser — Color Pencil**



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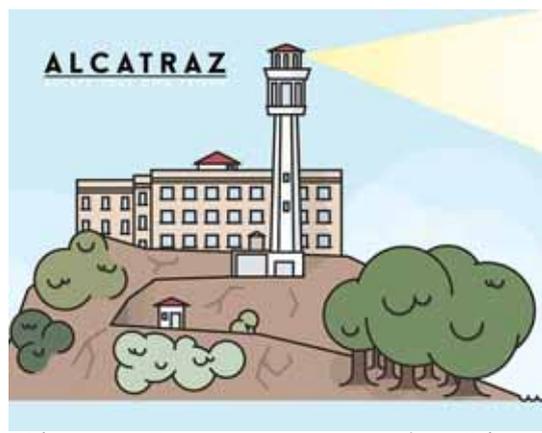
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# WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL



“Untitled” by Claire Woods — Acrylic Paint



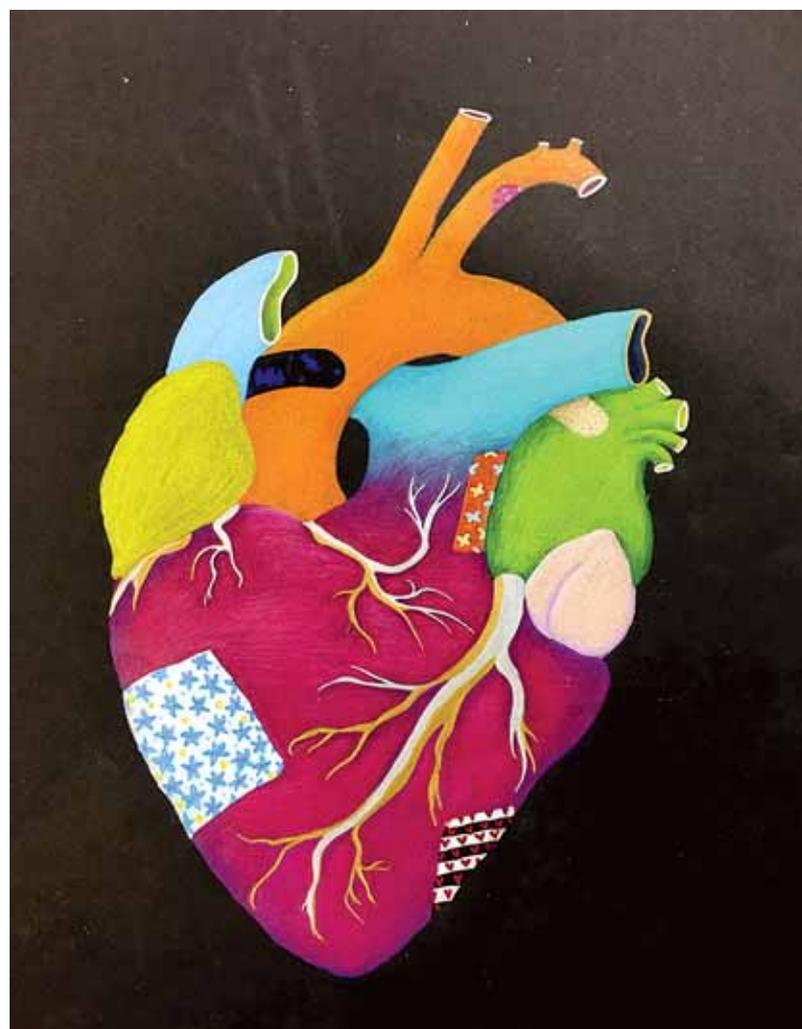
“Alcatraz- Escape your own prison” by Sam Janssen — Digital



“Underwater Jewels” by Vernon Walker — Acrylic Paint



“Copenhagen” by Sam Janssen — Digital



“Patched” by Audrey Boling — Color Pencil



“Galaxy” by Qurratulain Qureshi — Acrylic Painting



“Bloom” by Saman Fatima — Watercolor

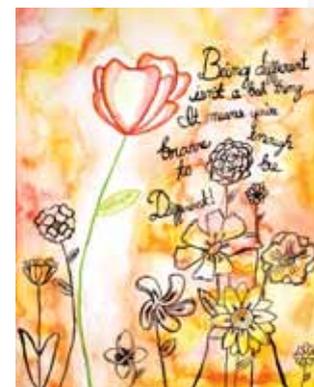


“Snow” by Rebecca Schloesser — Photography



“Life does not have to be perfect to be wonderful” by Gina Jackson — Watercolor and Ink

“Live the Search” by Brooke Allen — Watercolor



“Being different isn't a bad thing. It means you're brave enough to be different” by Emily Gahart — Watercolor and Ink



“Mountain View” by Peter Skudlarek — Photography



“Landscape” by Audrey Boling — Acrylic Paint



“Light in the Dark” by Sydney Nixon — Acrylic Paint

# BURGUNDY FARM COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL



Aidyn Jafarov, kindergarten



Greta Lee Dobie, kindergarten



James Roche, kindergarten



David Ferrer, kindergarten



Taiga by Elaina Hill, grade 4



Sammy Cohen, kindergarten



Demi Tinsley, kindergarten

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# ALEXANDRIA COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL



**Aiden Stinebower, grade 5**



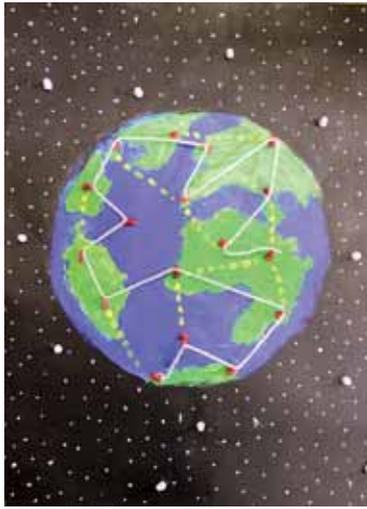
**Cara Katz, grade 7**



**Rheese Stinebower, grade 2**



**Alex Eskew, grade 6**



**Ana Bach, grade 7**



**Doug Altree, grade 5**



**Elijah Therway, grade 2**



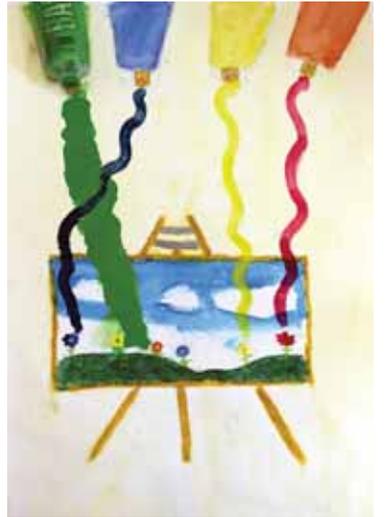
**Jake Clark, grade 3**



**George Woodford, grade 1**



**Baden Reynolds, grade 6**



**Gabby Ros, grade 6**



**Paige Mattson, grade 1**



**Thomas Carpenter, grade 1**



**Madeleine Campbell, grade 1**



**Sarah Friedrichs, grade 5**



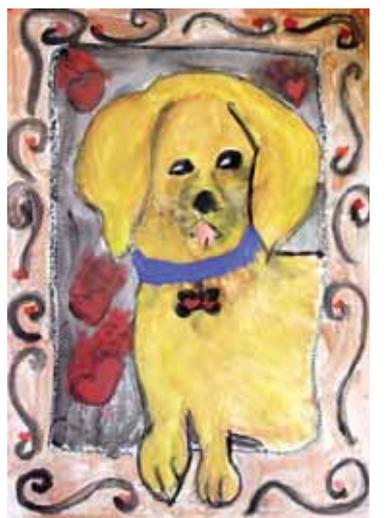
**Evelyn Tucker, grade 5**



**Mia Katsos, grade 2**



**Max Daleiden-Guilen, grade 2**



**Virginia Campbell, grade 6**

## Purple

Purple is my favorite color.  
 Purple is me drinking a cold glass of grape juice  
 Purple is a pretty, lacy dress.  
 Purple is my backpack perfect and striped.  
 Purple tastes like a perfect grape just picked off its vine.  
 Purple smells like lavender- very fresh.  
 Purple sounds like a pretty bird flying in the wind.  
 Purple feels like you're anxious and something big is about to happen.  
 Purple looks like a bright, colorful butterfly.  
 Purple makes me feel wonderful.  
 Purple is the best color to me.  
 PURPLE

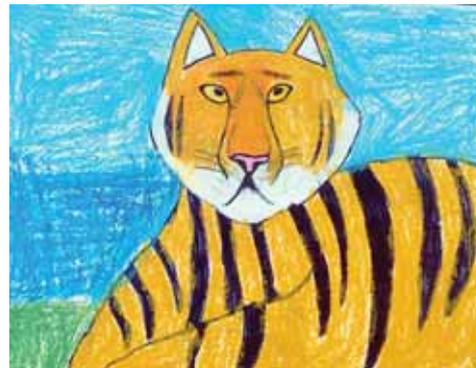
- REEVES VERSAGGI, 9, GRADE 4

# STRATFORD LANDING ELEMENTARY

3D canvass work by Gunner Dutzman, grade 5. The megalodon tooth was hand-sculpted and painted.



Super-hero — colored pencil drawing by Russell Dale, grade 6.



Tiger — colored pencil drawing by Graham Dale, grade 4.

# AQUINAS MONTESSORI SCHOOL

The children at Aquinas Montessori School have been writing letters to the mayors of Alexandria and Washington, D.C. Many of the 6-, 7- and 8-year-olds expressed a lot of worry about homelessness in the region. They have seen human beings sleeping in the cold and know instinctively something could and should be done.

❖ My name is Camila Reyes. Diaz Munoz and I are 7-and-a-half years old. Can you help end the homelessness and can you help the people that are living out there in the cold?

❖ Hi. My name is Deven. I'm 8 years old. Please can you stop homelessness and pick up the trash please.

❖ My name is Elise. I am 7 years old. I have a request. For the people experiencing homelessness, I want the to have homes.

❖ My name is Logan Oswalt. I am 8 years old. Can you spend money on homes for the people

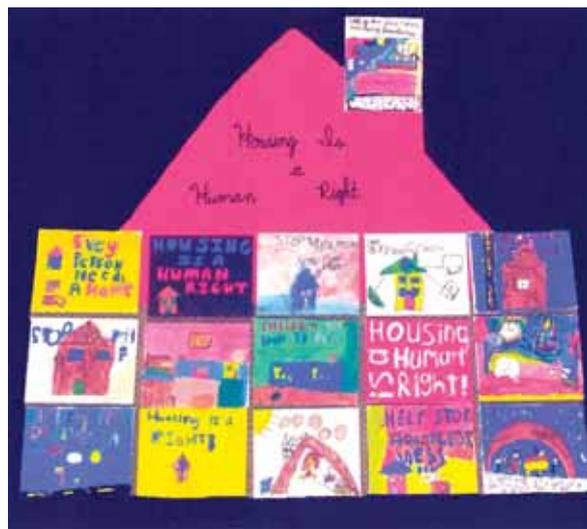
who are experiencing homelessness?

❖ My name is Jonathan and I am 7 years old. Can you please give homes to people who don't have them?

❖ My name is Sam and I am 6 and 7/12. Please help people with no homes. Please give a couple of dollars to give it to people with no home. Thank you.

❖ My name is Ronan. I am 8 years old. Thank you for taking the time to read this, if you are. Thank you for your service. What are you doing to help people experiencing homelessness? I have some recommendations like \$4 admission community Bingo every Saturday night from 7-7:30 and food drives for UCM. If you are already doing this, please tell us. Please consider buying houses for those who don't have any.

❖ My name is Olivia and I am 6 years old. Can you give houses to the people that don't have homes? Thank you.



Collage, Miss Walker's Class, Aquinas Montessori School

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— Helena Scott

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# BROWNE ACADEMY



Abigail Taylor, grade 2



Amaral Victory, grade 3



Anna Larson, grade 4



Benjamin Traylor, grade 4



Chloe Lambert, grade 2



Cooper Wesley, grade 3



Cynclair Wilson, grade 2



Hayden Morris, grade 2



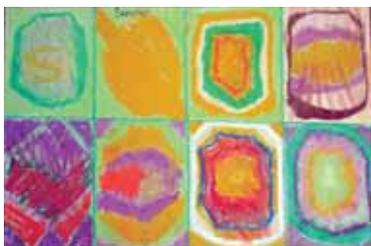
Isabella Bloom, grade 4



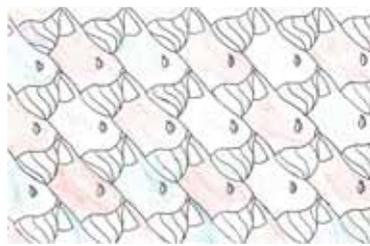
Kendall Swain, grade 4



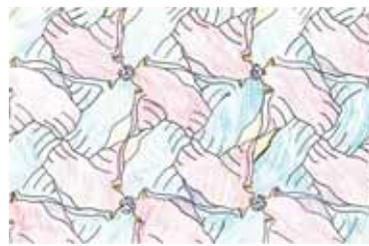
Logan Morris, grade 4



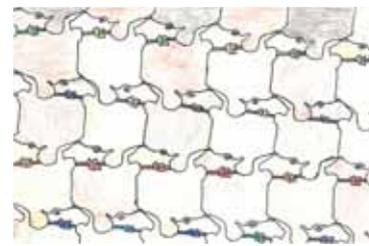
Summer Bickley, grade 2



Sophie Atkisson, 10, grade 5



Daniella Vita, 9, grade 5



Melinda Daniels-Tineo, 10, grade 5

## The Pumpkin Patch

During the fall, my favorite place to be is the pumpkin patch. I love the unique feel of the pumpkins. I love how each pumpkin feels different depending on the size and different shapes and textures. Some have odd lumps while others are smooth some even have little dents in them or extra stems growing out the sides. The cold wind against my skin carries memories of the past years. The wind always reminds me of the fall and the approach of Halloween. As the dried leaves crunch under my feet with every step I take, the crisp breeze whispers in my ear words of the coming winter. It carries an aroma of apple cider and caramel, both scents that remind me of the fall. I see roaming chickens all around, and a sleeping piglet down by the barn. I taste the warm caramel of my caramel apple contrasting with the cold October air. I love the pumpkin patch. It is my favorite place during the fall, and it is my favorite place all year. I love the pumpkin patch.

— OLIVIA BARSA, 11, GRADE 6

## I Conquered My Fear

At Mountain Campus in September, my group and I did an activity to climb a tree and go ziplining. That day I conquered my fear. I have always been afraid of heights, but I wasn't going to let that stop me from a great experience. I was ready on the outside, but on the inside I was scared. I stared up at the tall tree, my stomach was a mosh pit of butterflies. Then, I started up the tree. I realized I was getting pretty high up in the tree, and I wanted to look down so badly but a voice in my head was saying, "You cannot give up now! You are almost there! Don't you dare look down!" As I continued up the tree, my heart was beating so fast I thought it was going to burst out of my chest. When I reached the tightrope, I was terrified; my stomach hurt, and the wet rope I clutched made me even more nervous. I yelled down below, "Talk to me please!" People started making me laugh and keeping me distracted, and then I reached the platform. I got latched onto a rope and the instructor said, "Whenever you are ready, slide off the edge." This was the most challenging moment. I thought in my mind that I would fall, but I knew that was all in my head. Taking a deep breath, I squeezed the rope and slid off the side of the platform. People cheered as I soared through the air. My hair was flowing in the wind behind me; I was flying! I knew I had conquered my fear.

— HANNAH SHIBLAQ, 12, GRADE 6

## The Creek

In Maryland, behind my grandmother's house, beyond the brown trees, there is a creek I love to visit. As I walk through the forest, the leaves crunch under my feet. The blue sky is hidden underneath a worn out brown blanket of leaves. The birds sing songs of happiness as I approach my creek. In front of me is the place overflowing with memories — the creek my mother and her friends explored when she was my age. The water is crystal clear as it trips and fails over rocks, whispering softly as it flows, I climb the large rocks which seem made

to sit on, my legs dangle over the side close to the whispering water. The rock is rough and seems ancient. Some fuzzy, soft, bright green moss brushes my fingers. In the creek a frog kicks his legs, struggling against the current, completely free. I inhale the fresh air which smells of upturned dirt and wet grass. I love the creek; I feel at one with nature.

— HANNAH SHIBLAQ, 12, GRADE 6

## A Special Place for Me

A special place for me to have fun is my basement. When I run down the stairs, I see the 40 trophies on a shelf across the room. They remind me of what I have accomplished and make me feel proud. Across from there, the walls are lined with books from my childhood. Green Eggs and Ham, Corduroy, McElligot's Pool and The Lorax are waiting for me like old friends. I sit on my gaming chair in front of the television. This isn't just an ordinary chair; it rocks and it takes me to another world. I hear the sound of smashing thumbs on my video game controllers. I feel bumps and smooth raised circles on my device. My body gets tingles all over when I touch the controller. I see the images of NBA 2k15 on my high definition television, and I can smell the freshly delivered pizza. It's almost like I can taste it. The juicy and flavorful pineapple on top of my pizza makes me feel satisfied when I eat it. I love my basement because it is a place where I can be free!

— ERIC JACKSON, 11, GRADE 6

## On a Soccer Field

When I am on a soccer field for a game, I feel focused, concentrated, and exhausted from running across the field. When I take a deep breath on the field, I taste the salty sweat in my mouth as it drips down my exhausted face into my dry, thirsty mouth awaiting cold, refreshing water. When I am on a soccer field, I hear lovely, powerful, accurate kicks of the ball being shot at goals. I hear coaches yelling at the girls to get into their perfect positions for the game, awaiting the ball to be played at the midfield line, and I also hear girls from the prior practice, cheering their team on loudly for the game that they will play on Sunday. When I'm on a soccer field, I see tired, exhausted, girls sprinting down the field waiting to snatch the ball from the girls in front of them and then sprint back down the other half of the soccer field to cross, pass, or make a shot on goal. When I'm on a soccer field, I smell the wet, sprinkled turf that was frosted with cold rain that morning. I smell the grass on the edges of the field and laying underneath it, is the cold, damp dirt that brings out the true smell of nature in a city environment.

— SOPHIA SOUTHALL, 11, GRADE 6

## My Favorite Place

My favorite place is the softball field. Whenever I go to play softball, I can hear the whack smack whack of the ball as it comes to me and the birds chirping a familiar song. I can see the ball coming my way, a bright yellow ball with red laces

SEE BROWNE ACADEMY, PAGE 17



Saron Dawit, 13, grade 8



Quentin Southall, 13, grade 8



Ben Hinshaw, 13, grade 8



Max Bloom, 13, grade 8



Sydney Bonner, grade 3

# MOUNT VERNON HIGH SCHOOL

FROM PAGE 8

one thing to outwit me, but to lead an assault against me in my own home is quite the feat. I have to know, how did you find me?"

"All I had to do was tell them your real name, Rumpelstiltskin." She smirked with triumph as the grin on Mr. R's face died.

"And who told you my name young one? Was it fairies?" he asked mockingly.

"I told her, Mr. Stiltskin. I had to stop you from harming that baby. Now save us the trouble and tell the officers where she is."

Mr. R could feel his blood run cold as he turned to Charles. His body felt weak as realization struck him, and the air grew heavy with anger and pain. Charles made his way next to the young women as Mr. R kneeled on the ground, clutching his chest. Charles reached down to lift him up, but Mr. R swatted his hand away with a frigid laugh.

"You thought I wouldn't see this coming, Charles?" He smiled, speaking oh so coldly and sharply. "I have to admit, this betrayal really hurts. It feels like I was torn in half, but it's a much easier than how you'll feel, Charles."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, I've been in business for a long time and I can see the signs of a conscious forming. So I had to clean up, get rid of the evidence." He turned to the shaking young women as she clutched Charles forearm. "You should have come alone. You should have scheduled a meeting or read the fine print in the receipt, then maybe you would still have her." Rumpelstiltskin stood high, rolling his shoulder back in success. A smile stretched across his face, revealing pink tinted teeth. The young women fell to her knees wailing, tears staining the golden floor.

Mr. R sat quietly in the JFK terminal. He grinned impishly, rereading the *New York Times* newest article. Bolded on the cover read, "Baby Killer Found Dead In The Street," words like music to Mr. R's ears as he mumbled it to himself.

"It's a shame, you know? That poor couple losing their baby girl like that." Mr. R looked up to see a young lady speaking to him. Her skin glowed, fresh from a tropical vacation, as she bounced a bubbling baby boy on her knee. His youthful face was scrunched up on the edge of tears. "I mean,

what type of monster would do that to such a lovely couple."

"It really is a tragedy. I just don't understand why he would do this." Mr. R responded with false sincerity.

"I heard that he mailed a piece of the baby to the parents, with an apology letter. That's just sick." Mr. R shook his head in agreement. *Actually, it was quite brilliant.* Mr. R thought to himself, watching the young woman struggle to calm her child down.

"It's truly horrid."

"Yup. I think his name was Charles something. I just feel so bad for that couple because they'll be able to get closure for their lost." She clutched her chest, as if she was imagining losing her own child.

"Guilt can make people do crazy things." Mr. R said out of reflex, trying to defend Charles' name. "Still, it's just horrible. I'm Joan by the way." She said as she extend her arm out.

"I'm Richard." He said warmly, shaking her hand, his finger lightly lingering on the dim tan line around her ring finger.

Jacob began to thrash around wildly, face scrunching up again. His breathing became violent hicks as his face reddened. "Shhh, hush Jacob, baby, it's going to be ok." Joan cooed, bouncing the child on her knee gently.

"Is he alright?" Mr. R asked.

"Yeah, he just throws these fits whenever his daddy leaves him with me." She stated solemnly, smiling at Jacob.

Mr. R smirked a little, arms open to help the newly wedded mother. "Here, let me help you. I'm great with kids."

Joan hesitated a bit while the baby squirmed in her lamp. She bit her lower lip, and slowly gave Jacob over to Mr. R. He hushed the child, setting him down on his bouncing knee. She mouthed a thank you as the child began to calm down in Mr. R's lap.

"Shhhh. How about I tell you a story, okay?" Jacob looked up at Mr. R, shoving his thumb in his mouth. "I'll take that as a yes. There once was a baby girl, the most innocent and lovely girl born. She was something priceless, until her mother met a man by the name of Rumpelstiltskin."

- CHASE SCHOFIELD, GRADE 12

## BROWNE ACADEMY

FROM PAGE 16

that is screaming my name. I can smell the fresh cut grass as I follow the ball. I can taste the dirt in my mouth. At last I can feel the ball in my hand. It feels like a dart as I throw it to second base to make the out. Once I make the out, my team and I tumble into the dugout. We have won the game!

- ALAMA YODER, 11, GRADE 6

## Grandmother's House

I love my grandmother's house! Her cute little townhouse in Strasburg, Virginia is very warm and cozy. We always do special things at her house like make chocolate chip cookies. Even when we're not baking, you can always smell a faint smell of the cookies in her house, and the smell of the cookies embraces your nose with happiness. We watch the same tv shows all the time, like *Midsomer Murders*, while we eat the chocolate chip cookies we made. As we watch the program, we always linger on the verge of finding out who the killer was in the story, and we take guesses as to whom we think it is, I love going to my grandmother's house because she is a great person to hang out with and there is always so much joy and love when I am around her. The love comes from her and from the traditions we make together.

- BRYANNA BONNER, 12, GRADE 6

## Gaga Ball

It was a dark night at Mountain Campus, and everything around us was barely visible. My friends and I stood in the gaga ball pit with determination on our faces. The counselor was holding a flashlight over the pit. She throws the balls in and said "Ga.... Ga.... BALL!" which is what you say to start the game. We all ran at the ball as if it were the last piece of food on earth. We slapped the ball with all our might to get people out. People dropped out slowly, more and more, until just Alex, Sam and I were left. We all clenched our jaws with grit on our



Grace Strottman, 11, grade 6

faces and we all wanted to win. Sam hit the first ball, but Alex jumped just at that time I hit a ball as hard as I could hit and it hit Alex on his kneecap. He complained but was overruled by the anxious crowd. At that point it was just me and Sam. Sam slapped and hit the ball, but I dodged them all. Finally Samhita ball so hard it probably could have gotten across the country, and it sailed out of the pit right over the walls. Panting and overwhelmed, I looked at the teacher. She nodded her head. I was the winner!

- GRACE STROTMAN, 11, GRADE 6

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**21 Announcements**    **21 Announcements**

**OBITUARY**



**Nell Elizabeth Hammond** of Fries, Virginia went home to be with her Lord on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 at the age of 87. Nell was born on September 25, 1928 at home in Fries to Ernest and Nancy Shupe.

She attended Fries High School, Class of 1946. She then attended National Business College in Roanoke. While there she met and married Joseph M. Hammond of Troutville, VA. Eventually they moved to the Northern Virginia area where they lived for about 40 years. While there they raised a family, two daughters: Sheila and Joan. Nell was a homemaker, worked for Fairfax County School Food Services and Montgomery Wards. In 1987, Nell and Joe moved back to Fries. "Mama always said Fries was heaven and she would not want to live anywhere else."

Nell was crafty, enjoyed working outside, motivated working with others. She loved and supported her family. Her faith in the Lord was instilled in her at an early age by her parents and it stayed with her all her life. The ole hymns brought her pleasure and comfort. The Lord's foundation was her rock and now she is in His trusting hands.

Nell is survived by her brother Curtis Shupe of Fries, VA. Two daughters Sheila Jones and husband Dan of Springfield, VA and Joan Hammond of Fries, VA. Also surviving are grandchildren Angela and Joseph Campanella of Fries, VA; and Jeremiah and Nathanael Jones of Springfield, VA; great grandchildren: Nicole Campanella and Matthew Bourne of Fries, VA. Also many more family and friends.

The funeral service will be held Sunday, December 20, 2015 at 3:00 in the Liberty Hill United Methodist Church, Fries, VA with Rev. Donald White officiating. Burial will follow in the Liberty Hill Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 1:00 PM until service time at the church.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to "Stand Up Dub" c/o Hillcrest Baptist Church, 1218 S. Main Street, Galax, VA 24333. This is a fund for E. W. Shupe to buy a track wheelchair which will allow him to stand.

A guestbook is available online at [www.vaughanguynn.com](http://www.vaughanguynn.com)

**21 Announcements**    **21 Announcements**

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**21 Announcements**

**LEGAL NOTICE**

Pursuant to the provision of section 4-1-16 of the code of the City of Alexandria, the Alexandria Police Department located at 3600 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 is now in possession of unclaimed bicycles, mopeds, lawn equipment, money, scooters, and other items. All persons having valid claim to the property should file a claim to the property with reasonable proof of ownership or the items will be sold, destroyed, converted or donated. For a complete listing go to <http://alexandriava.gov/police/> and contact the Police Property Section at (703) 746-6709.

**21 Announcements**    **21 Announcements**    **21 Announcements**



Sealed proposals for the City of Alexandria per specifications will be received in the office of the Purchasing Division until the date and time designated as follows:

**Title: Request for Proposals No. 00000576, Cooperative Procurement, Capital Bikeshare Operating and Maintenance Services**

Closing Date and Time: February 4, 2016, 4:00 p.m., prevailing local time.

The City will hold a Non-Mandatory pre-proposal conference: January 7, 2016, 10:00 AM prevailing local time, 100 N. Pitt Street, Suite 301, Purchasing Conference Room, Alexandria, VA 22314

For general inquiries contact Shawn K. Brooks, Contract Specialist III at 703.746.4289.

The City of Alexandria reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, cancel this solicitation, and to waive any informalities or irregularities in procedure. **THE CITY REQUIRES ITS CONTRACTORS TO BE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYERS.**

**An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.**

**-Werner Heisenberg**

**21 Announcements**    **21 Announcements**    **21 Announcements**

The Alexandria City School Board dba Alexandria City Public Schools is seeking proposals for Architectural and Engineering Design Services for Parker-Gray Stadium Improvements.

Sealed Proposals with the notation "Parker Gary Stadium Design Improvements", **RFP# 15-07-05**, will be received in the Central Procurement Office, 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 620, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, on or before 3:00 pm, **January 21, 2016**. The time of receipt shall be determined by the time clock stamp in the Procurement office. Proposals appropriately received will be opened and the names of the firms responding will be read aloud. RFP documents may be obtained at the above Procurement Office or by calling 703-619-8343, or by downloading the RFP from the ACPS website at [www.acps.k12.va.us](http://www.acps.k12.va.us), Administration, Financial Services, Procurement and General Services – Current Bids and Request for Proposals. All questions should be submitted before 4:30 p.m., January 14, 2016. If necessary, an addendum will be issued and posted to the ACPS web site.

There is a non-mandatory pre-proposal conference for this RFP on January 7, 2016, at 10:00 AM, at the Alexandria City Public Schools Central Office, located at 1340 Braddock Place, in the sixth (6th) floor conference room 620, in Alexandria, VA 22314. All Offerors interested in providing the services in the RFP are encouraged to attend. No RFP may be withdrawn for a period of ninety (90) days after the opening of proposals except as may be set forth in the RFP. ACPS reserves the right to cancel this RFP and/or reject any or all proposals and to waive any informalities in any proposal.

Sharon T. Lewis M.P.S., CPM, CPPB, VCO  
Director of Procurement & General Services

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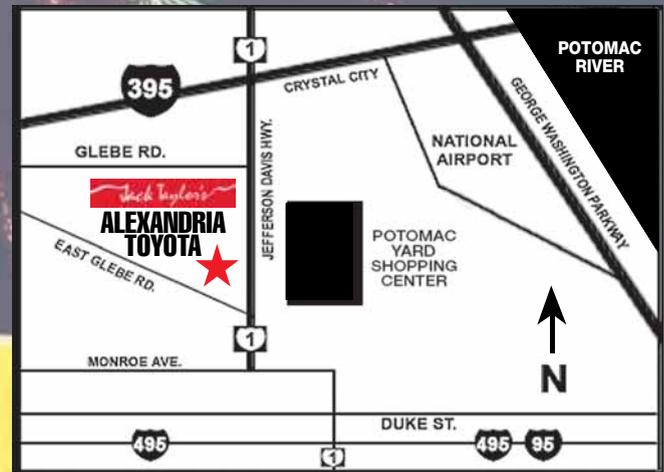
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