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Spring Semester 2020

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Special thanks to Keith Neu for his sports photography.

THE SEVEN HILLS SCHOOL

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By Karla Dejean

On March 16, 2020, Ohio educators faced an unfamiliar dilemma. Gov. Mike DeWine shuttered school buildings as a response to the spread of COVID-19. Within days, private and public schools were ending face-to-face programs and quickly rolling out a number of teaching models for hundreds of thousands of students in the state.

#### At Seven Hills,

teachers, administrators, and our technology team researched modalities, consulted each other, and collaborated to build a new, online, daily program that engaged students ages 2 through 18.

From faculty members' laptops and home classrooms to your students'

screens, the finished product—
powerful learning at a distance—
first encompassed academic
wisdom married with novel
concepts, thoughtful planning,
and careful revisions. Within a
few short weeks just before and
during spring break 2020, Seven
Hills faculty hashed through a

fresh, robust curriculum that would become exhibitions of energy, rigor, and intentionality.

Seven Hills' remote learning program became an innovative and replicable model for the role and use of technology in teaching students at a distance.

Join us in taking a look ...



Middle School Teachers Create Curricular Serendipity Out of Necessity

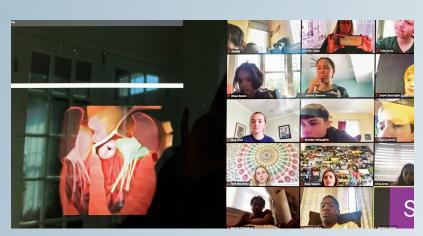
While remote learning distanced all components of The Seven Hills School—students from friends, teachers from students, students from their classrooms—the situation brought in closer view other aspects of interpersonal relations associated with a new kind of learning experience.

In Middle School, sixth-graders logged on daily to attend all their classes, including their science classes taught by Karen Glum and Jen Licata. In many ways, class was the same; students were expected to process rigorous and relevant concepts, engage in discussion about those concepts, and apply their knowledge in practical situations. But this time, their portal to knowledge was vastly different and, strangely, at times more personal.

"With remote learning, the ability to see my students and interact live with them brought a level of personal connection we would not have been able to have without live meetings," said Licata. "I feel like as disconnected as we were physically, doing live classes each day allowed us to get to know each other on a personal basis, in our homes. And that made it even more special."

Licata said her mastiff mix, Bruiser, made his way into Licata's virtual classroom each class. And just as the students cozied up to the screen to see Bruiser and collaborate via breakout rooms, Licata said she became more familiar with her students' favorite breakfast foods, sibling interactions, pets, and their overall home rhythms.

In preparation for their remote learning curriculum, Licata said she and Glum considered the concepts they would have taught in a face-to-face program and worked through ways to teach the same content to Middle School students at a distance. While the human body was one focus



"We came together and said, 'We have to do this'."

Seven Hills' Technology Department Laid Groundwork for Remote Learning Success Early On

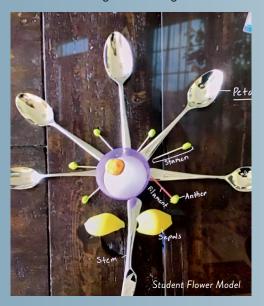
At the time when Ohio schools closed in mid-March, Seven Hills was about to go on a two-week spring break. The break was beneficial in giving teachers and administrators an opportunity to rework learning programs and operations without disrupting the school year schedule. But the two weeks flew by and teachers were well aware that class would be in session remotely, on March 31.

Before spring break, Head of School Chris Garten attended remote learning conferences and Director of Technology Scott Cagle was already tapping into the technology networking across the country. Cagle took advantage of resources and the advice of industry connections in California schools, where teachers and administrators were already reacting to running schools in quarantine. Before school started back in remote fashion, Cagle and his team, which includes Aaron McIntosh and Dan Dinger, were already running dozens of scenarios with teachers and students, troubleshooting several video conferencing platforms, and building a technological framework and scaffolding that would hold up under the pressures of fluctuating, unforeseen

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for their spring curriculum, Licata and Glum knew they couldn't go the usual route, which would have included a heart relay race that transformed students into deoxygenated and oxygenated blood cells and sent them running through physical spaces in the Middle School Commons set up to be the chambers of the heart.

"We started seeing the social media trend of the #Pass the Ball challenge videos on various social media platforms that appeared to connect each person to an action with one another," said Licata. "We thought we could capitalize on something the kids were seeing and learning and used that



concept to teach students about the blood's circulatory path through the body."

The virtual interactive project yielded a striking visual image-videos of students individually moving their iPads displaying large blue and red circles from left to right, or right

to left, in order to represent the oxygenated and deoxygenated blood cells moving through the cardiovascular system. Their movements appeared to link up with the next student's movement. Another serendipitous virtual learning experience came from Licata and Glum's plant reproductive lesson, in which students were traditionally assigned the task of building a flower model using what they could find in the classroom. In quarantine, however, the outcome of the project was richer.

"Our students' work on that project was more creative, interesting, and sustainable," said Licata. "Instead of using paper and markers they found in our classrooms, students were using unique materials they found in their homes. Students were so creative in their final product, we may just have them do the projects at home even after we are back at school next year."

Licata said the surprise gifts that arose from a tough moment in history were made possible because students and faculty allowed themselves time and space to accept that some things would be lost and others gained. "For me, the word that comes to mind is balance," said Licata. "I tried to find a balance between giving the students work that was productive and meaningful but not adding stress. Through that balance, I was able to connect with them. This was about academics and teaching but also trying to maintain the sense of connection that we value so much in



our community. Also, a lesson for us all was about balancing life and helping our students maintain some of the structure of school without losing some of the benefits of quarantine, like more time with family to enjoy the outdoors and have family dinners." Licata and Glum's classes offered just a snapshot of the close-knit dynamic of curriculum shifts and innovations throughout the Middle School.

On the other side of the screen, their curriculum delivery was so strong that almost 90% of parents surveyed in the Middle School responded with glowing feedback about Seven Hills' remote learning program.

That same dynamic innovation played out across all divisions because, years before COVID-19, Seven Hills teachers were prepared. Here's how preparation, planning, and creativity translated into meaningful remote learning experiences in our Lower schools and Upper School as well.















#### DIARY OF A CATERPILLAR:

#### Engaging the Youngest Minds in Moments of Discovery at Doherty

Earth Day took place during quarantine, and as part of a late-April focus on the environment, kindergarteners on the Doherty Campus began a scientific exploration of metamorphosis that brought their remote learning experiences to life.



Kindergarten teachers Lindsay
Pietroski and Cyndi Kenyon said they
decided to teach their life science
unit by designing interactive lessons
that incorporated weekly check-ins
with students and ongoing, daily
pre-recorded lessons delivered on the
SeeSaw platform.

Using small terrariums housing several caterpillars, Pietroski and Kenyon guided their students through an in-depth, six-week unit that followed every aspect of the metamorphosis. During each online class with their students, the teachers showcased the progression of the caterpillars and encouraged students to engage in scientific discussion.

"Throughout our discovery, our kindergarteners documented metamorphosis by journaling, illustrating, and reporting," said Pietroski. "With this intensive study of the butterflies and other science topics, it was actually nice to be able to share screens with our students and pause videos and freeze frames in certain areas and slow down experiences when we knew it would be helpful to repeat certain concepts."

The teachers' butterfly releases captured a special moment in time as students watched with rapt attention.

Kenyon said she missed face-toface contact with her students, but appreciated the opportunity to connect in new ways.

"Even though we were not with our students, I am so grateful for the technology that brought us together," said Kenyon.



#### Tech Department Cont.

"It was all about being prepared and creative," said Cagle. "The entire week before spring break, our Middle and Upper schools were using one or two blocks per day to get students used to learning remotely. We also met with fourth- and fifth-grade faculty to go over the social learning platform, Schoology, for about two to three hours a day, for several days."

Cagle said the success of Seven Hills' remote learning program is also due to students' comfort levels with technology. At Seven Hills, kindergarteners through fifth-graders are each assigned iPads for learning purposes. Students in grades six through 12 are expected to take their iPads home and use them daily. On the Doherty Campus, teachers were already using the SeeSaw platform on a daily basis. Their ease with using SeeSaw became very helpful when they decided to use it as their primary delivery system for daily curriculum for students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade.

Cagle said he and his team were inspired by the work of teachers who pivoted to innovate their programs and deliver entirely new course material.

"Middle School French teacher Jacky Kalubi was using Zoom and cooking with her students during lessons," said Cagle. "That was amazing. It was curriculum-based but also hugely creative. She was able to work with her students while at the screen and also have them interact with each other. That lesson really struck me."

Cagle also pointed out Upper School Dean of Students and math teacher David Brott's geometry classes, which incorporated a book discussion. "David Brott is a geometry teacher, but he also had his class read the

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#### THE POWER OF CONSTANCY:

Seven Hills Teachers Tapped into Comfort and Routine to Connect with Younger Students at Lotspeich

When the world of Lower School education at Lotspeich turned upside down with remote learning, some Seven Hills Lower School teachers made a conscious effort to weave normalcy into their learning programs. When early childhood students and their parents logged onto Lotspeich librarian Lori Suffield's Zoom link for class, it felt familiar. Just as they did with face-to-face learning, Suffield started off with a song they knew and followed up with her routine of reading picture books.

"Our pre-kindergarteners needed consistency and routine," said Suffield. "I decided to keep much of my program the same. I think it was

Lori Suffield Wales

Katya Ramos

Michelle Wales

Asia Nayron

Fionna Mack

Abbry Johnson

Cassisseay

Henry Wenzel orange belt

Nancy Boissonnet

comforting for some of my students to do what I have always done."

Suffield said she reinvented her program to coordinate with online learning but she continued to incorporate a theme for each class and selected books on that theme. Her students were able to grasp

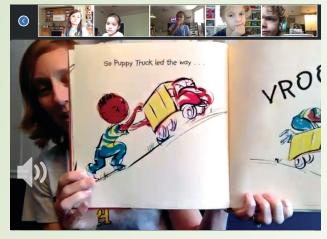
concepts and advance in their learning because they were working from a foundation of comfort and familiarity. "I made certain to support my students' love of reading, the theme of the day, diverse authors, and movement into my early childhood classes," said Suffield. "All of these things are pieces of what a good pre-kindergarten library class would look like live, and, with planning and preparation, I was able to deliver it via Zoom."

Suffield also worked alongside fourthgrade teacher Sarah Snyder and project math teacher Laura OGrady

to deliver seamless technology support to Lotspeich teachers. In addition to teaching classes, they worked collaboratively with colleagues and their students' parents to deliver lessons and activities that engaged students and accommodated different learning styles.

Suffield built several ageappropriate virtual libraries for her students—something parents have shared they would

use throughout the summer. For her older Lower School students, she also recorded herself reading three chapter books in order to provide a resource for her virtual book clubs. "I knew some of my students didn't have the books we were reading and libraries were closed at the time due



to COVID-19," said Suffield. "I read the books for them so everyone could participate if they wanted to without searching for the book."

# OID YOU KNOD

Synchronous Learning
Was a Hit for Middle and Upper
School at Seven Hills!

One of the components that teachers believe made Seven Hills' remote learning program successful was the choice for Middle and Upper School programs to continue with synchronous learning, which means students and teachers were online together in real time, doing class together every day. Under an asynchronous learning program, students would learn at different times and not necessarily in the same place. "Most parents I've heard from were very thankful we were synchronous," said Middle School science teacher Jen Licata. "Some of our parents were hearing that others outside of Seven Hills were basically relegated to homeschooling because many students who were attending schools elsewhere were on asynchronous schedules where they had little direction and interaction from teachers on a daily basis. Our students had the opposite experience. Parents found that our Middle School students being at home didn't make their lives any more difficult as a parent, in terms of school. When students were in class, we had them in class. The parents didn't have to be involved."

#### MAKING THE CUT:

#### Upper School History Teacher Chose Depth Over Breadth to Deliver Powerful Lessons

Upper School history and economics teacher Eric O'Connor said his success in remote learning came from his ability to be largely selective with his material.

"Focusing more on less allowed students to sustain over longer periods of time," he said, adding that he also incorporated worksheets, podcasts, movies, and written discussions.

O'Connor also set up blog-style lessons, in which students were assigned to make comments on each others' posts. The variety of lesson plans allowed O'Connor to continue to deliver rigor with full engagement from afar. One of his students' favorite learning activities in quarantine was a time capsule project.

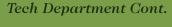
"I asked my sophomores to come up with items they would put in a time capsule for future historians to help them understand the world during COVID-19," said O'Connor. "Many students took pictures of their home school set up—their bedrooms and couches and things their lives revolve around now." O'Connor said the exercise also helped students to process current events throughout the course of the project.

"I turned our economics class into an economic catastrophe class and the students started looking at real-world indicators, such as unemployment rates and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation, and deflation," said O'Connor. "We looked at the strategies for what the government could do in these times and we discussed everything from stimulus checks to the federal budget."

O'Connor said he joined his students with enthusiasm and focus every

day in the world of video conferencing to make each class worthwhile in the face of uncertain experiences.

"That remote learning in the Upper School was such a success was a testament to our students," said O'Connor. "As a school, we didn't move to a pass-fail model and that mattered. We continued to provide a rigorous program. Grades were fair and worthwhile and our students continued to work hard to achieve their grades." \*



book, "Flatland" by Edwin A. Abbott, that added to the curriculum but wasn't straight geometry," said Cagle.

Cagle, a Seven Hills parent, said he also noticed that Upper School art teacher Jason Knarr was still engaging students on a daily basis in his drawing class. "Teachers adapted immediately," said Cagle. "They expected it, and the students delivered. They just took pictures of their work, submitted their work on Schoology, and Knarr shared their work on Zoom."

Cagle said Seven Hills faculty and administration continued to collaborate on a daily basis, holding each other accountable and supporting each other. That fortification manifested in a number of ways, including Middle and Upper's ability to maintain a daily schedule.

"We continued to function on a 10-day rotation and A-B schedule as we always had before," said Cagle. We adjusted the running time of the classes but overall, teachers maintained the same engagement every day for several weeks."

"We knew it would be hard work to reconfigure the program across four divisions, but we also knew, early on, that we needed to make Seven Hills' remote learning program a new kind of school as best we could, and we delivered," said Cagle. "Seven Hills set the bar high and it all came together because we have really talented teachers from prekindergarten through 12th grade who are hard-working and resourceful. We all made it work because we all said, 'We have to do this. We have to continue to deliver a strong, engaging, and relevant program for our students.'"







### \*\*\*\* SEVEN HILLS STUDENTS WHO LEAD

By Karla Dejean

THEY USED THEIR EMOTIONS TO JUMPSTART A WORLDWIDE NETWORK THAT PROVIDES SHOES FOR CHILDREN, DOMESTIC AND ABROAD. ANOTHER STUDENT DECIDED TO DESIGN AN ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE SERVICE FOR HER PEERS. A 17-YEAR-OLD NATURALIST TRAVELED TO COSTA RICA TO TEACH PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD ABOUT INDIGENOUS BIRD SPECIES. AND ONE SEVEN HILLS JUNIOR MADE READING POSSIBLE FOR A LAW STUDENT WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN INDIA. AS PART OF THE UPPER SCHOOL'S FOCUS ON STUDENT-CENTERED, TEACHER-GUIDED CURRICULUM, SEVEN HILLS IS FEATURING FOUR STUDENTS WHO OFFER A SNAPSHOT OF HOW THEY AND THEIR PEERS ARE THRIVING IN THEIR SCHOOL COMMUNITY. READ ON TO LEARN HOW THEIR EXPERIENCES ARE THE PRODUCT OF PROGRESSIVE CURRICULUM, TEACHER-SUPPORTED IDEAS, AND BELIEVING IN THEMSELVES AND THE WORK THEY SET OUT TO DO.

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#### JUNIOR SHRIYA KILARU-CLASS OF 2021

When junior Shriya Kilaru was a Seven Hills eighth-grader, she walked into a recording studio in Hyderabad, India, and paused to look at the 400-page academic book she would be reading—cover to cover.

The sense of pride she felt in the work she was about to do in 2016 continues to inform her sense of purpose today. There, at LV Prasad Eye Institute, Kilaru read for three to four hours a day, where her reading became a summer routine. Her work wasn't methodical, nor was it perfectly executed. But it was thorough and clear. She stumbled over some words and some she didn't even know how to pronounce. But she read them. And even when the words were too unwieldy, she sounded them out.

A month later, Kilaru had recorded the tome in English. The product of her work was a book recorded in its entirety for law student Avinash Sekhar, who has visual impairment.

"I did not understand at all what I was reading but I knew what I was saying was going to help him, so I just focused on that," said Kilaru. "It was interesting for me to know how much he needed the book and how he would hear this book rather than read it and that I was his way of studying for something very important to his education."

Since seventh grade, Kilaru has visited the eye institute directed by her grandfather, Gullapalli N. Rao, almost every year. She started out recording shorter books and poetry for patients who are blind, as well as teaching English.

More recently, Kilaru's grandfather asked her to ask the patients how their lives were affected by their impairment. Over the span of several years, Kilaru has now experienced working with people who are visually impaired from a number of approaches, including medical, technological, and social.

"I was more interested in the interaction with the patients, rather than the technical aspect of it. I liked the interaction part better," said Kilaru. "I liked being able to communicate with people and I got a better understanding of what their lives were like. I loved talking to them."

Head of Upper School Matt Bolton said Kilaru's service speaks to her sustained dedication

and inherent leadership. He said Seven Hills' Upper School program, which incorporates experiential learning, May Term, and Personal Challenge projects supports students like Kilaru in a environment that allows them to take on leadership roles over the course of their four years in the Upper School.

"I think leadership is so closely tied to service, and being a leader is ultimately a way of serving others or of serving a worthy cause," said Bolton. "I hope that our students learn, over the course of their time in Upper School, that they have a responsibility to be this kind of leader. I hope they will see themselves as agents of change and as people who are in a position to make the world a better place."

Halfway across the world, Kilaru's deep learning of ocular studies resulted in her work with a tech team at Prasad. Throughout the summer of 2019, she shadowed a team of app developers who were working on ways to help

"I hope that our students will see themselves as agents of change and as people who are in a position to make the world a better place."

 $\hbox{-} \textit{Head of Upper School Matt Bolton}$ 

Hyderabad citizens detect retinitis pigmentosa (RP), a genetic disorder of the eyes that causes loss of vision. The smartphone app would help scores of families because many do not have the wherewithal to pay for transportation to the city to participate in the screenings in person.

Along with Kilaru's exposure to the mechanics and technology around the medical aspects of eye health, she developed a keen sense of a straightforward, highly teachable tool that could not be buffered by technology-so much that she decided to build it into her Personal Challenge project.

Through the stories she has gleaned through interviews with more than 50 eye institute



patients over the years, Kilaru has learned the importance of maintaining a working knowledge of braille. Although people with visual impairment often use technology, such as digital books for reading, Kilaru learned early on that braille is still important because it is foundational.

For months, she has been building on her knowledge of braille by using a computer application that trains the eyes to see a configuration of dots that resemble braille on her computer screen. Kilaru uses the electronic braille program to type out letters in braille using her QWERTY keyboard, which features keys embossed with dots. For example, she types the letter K by tapping the S and F keys. Kilaru is now able to write several words in braille, using the computer program, which helps her to recognize the braille in real-life situations, such as on an elevator panel, on ATM keypads, or on business cards.

Kilaru also reads TV listings on Wednesday mornings on her phone on a system called Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI). TV viewers who are visually impaired access her readings throughout the week to hear TV listings. Through her intensive studies and horizontal exposure to the needs of those with visual impairment, Kilaru has also learned she enjoys connecting with people and she is invested in continuously learning more about their daily experiences.

"The feeling I get when I am helping someone is just really enlightening and it's interesting what people go through," said Kilaru. "Being able to understand it as much as I can is something I am really passionate about."

#### THE PROVIDERS DDDD

#### CURTIS HARRISON AND SPENCER BOYD-CLASS OF 2020

In a car ride to a fundraiser in 2015, a life-changing idea was brewing. Seven Hills seniors Curtis Harrison and Spencer Boyd, as well as St. Xavier student Kellen Newman, were listening to Boyd's mother talk about the lack of shoes available to some children in Jamaica.

"We were talking about the latest Jordans, Lebrons, and Adidas shoes and how they

"The exposure to community service at a young age and to so many inspirational guest speakers and entrepreneurs have helped shape my view of nonprofit efforts that change lives."

- Senior Spencer Boyd

cost about \$200, and my mom told us a story about when she was in Jamaica, she saw kids wearing cardboard boxes for shoes," said Boyd. "We heard this and wanted to do something. So, we decided to start sending the shoes we outgrew to Jamaica. That turned into a decision to start collecting other shoes, as well." Boyd, Harrison, and Newman worked collaboratively to organize their mission and design an outreach program that would become Sole Bros, a nonprofit organization that provides shoes for children in need here, near, and far.

Both Boyd and Harrison said the Middle

and Upper School's variety and quality of visiting speakers and seminars have inspired and encouraged them to continue their work.

"The exposure to community service at a young age and to so many inspirational guest speakers and entrepreneurs has helped shape my view of nonprofit efforts that change lives," said Boyd. "The support from the community has helped me in so many ways as well!"

Harrison said his daily academic experience at Seven Hills has also prepared him for the many opportunities he has had to tell the Sole Bros story publicly, both locally and nationally. "Over the years, Seven Hills has taught me public speaking, not to take things for granted, and to seize the day," said Harrison.

The Sole Bros have their sights on the future, and it involves continued work in social entrepreneurism.

"I'm looking forward to both of us taking Sole Bros to each of our campuses in college and seeing what the colleges will be able to do for us," said Boyd. "It will be a great experience to be able to run Sole Bros and expand it more."

Since their initial launch, Boyd, Harrison, and Newman have collected hundreds of new and gently used shoes for children locally and across the country, as well as in Jamaica, Ghana, and Haiti. Boyd said the work of Sole Bros is multi-fold. The young men are learning all of the ins and outs that come together to maintain a successful nonprofit organization. They have been the subject of local and national



news stories, written their own book, and they make regular appearances throughout the Cincinnati area to raise awareness for their cause.

But one point of their purpose is poignant and simple.

"We want to give each kid that sense of self-worth and self-pride that we get when we get a new pair of shoes," said Boyd. "I want to bring more joy into kids' lives through something I take for granted but also appreciate so much."

"Over the years, Seven Hills has taught me public speaking, not to take things for granted, and to seize the day,"

- Senior Curtis Harrison

#### THE GUIDE

#### SENIOR ETHAN RISING-CLASS OF 2020

There hasn't been a time that Ethan Rising hasn't focused on nature, and he can easily pinpoint how it all began 11 years ago with a Lotspeich teacher.

"I was hooked on bald eagles and raptors in preschool," said Rising. "Mrs. (Margaret) Vitz's son, Andrew Vitz '92, was a bird bander in Pennsylvania, and she said, 'You have to visit him.' So I visited him in first grade and I got to hold a bird in my hand. For me to be such a young kid and see a bird up close, that was it for me." Soon after his bird-banding experience, Rising joined the Ohio Young Birders' Club while he was in early elementary school. Coincidentally, Seven Hills alumnus Andrew Vitz is now Massachusetts' state ornithologist.

Rising has built upon his childhood interest in raptors to become a birder and later, a naturalist—someone who intently studies the impacts of different species on each other and the environments in which they live.

He said his intense focus on birds in Lower and Middle School was also the springboard for his interests in the environment, which were further supported when he took a new environmental studies course co-taught by Upper School history teacher Brian Wabler and science teacher Bryce Carlson.

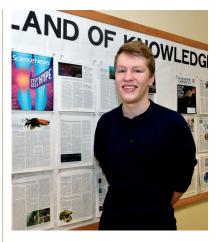
"Environmental studies class is one of my favorite Upper School classes. It was about environmental policy, history, and the impacts they have on the world," said Rising, who also built upon that class by taking a full semester course in Wisconsin during the second semester of his junior year, which included an AP environmental studies class.

Rising's interests, combined with his exposure to Seven Hills environmental studies class and further pursuit of a semester course, illustrate how Seven Hills allows for a great deal of student choice and agency, said Head of Upper School Matt Bolton. "We want students to build on the experiences that they've found most compelling or rewarding, and, in so doing, to develop a sense of purpose and direction," said Bolton. "In the classroom, our teachers pose questions, present challenges, and call on students to find answers and solutions. I think this is a critical factor in helping our students to see themselves as active solvers of problems, rather than passive receivers of information."

"Environmental studies class is one of my favorite Upper School classes. It was about environmental policy, history, and the impacts they have on the world."

- Senior Ethan Rising

To date, Rising has led ecotours in Turrialba, Costa Rica. He has participated in several birding and naturalist conferences, symposia, and tours all over the world, including in the states of Arizona, Colorado, Maine, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin; the countries of Costa Rica, Ecuador,



Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico; and the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, to name a few.

In 2018, Rising worked with a National Geographic photographer. He has also emceed and spoken several times at Ohio Young Birders Club conferences and events. He was the keynote speaker at the Indiana Young Birders Club in 2016, and he currently organizes statewide trips for the Ohio Young Birders Club. He also had planned to serve as a guide at The Biggest Week in American Birding Festival during the summer of 2020.

But with all of his travels, Rising encourages others to take just a step outside to see scenes worthy of a naturalist's attention.

"People underestimate how many species are nearby," said Rising. "You would be amazed what you can find in your backyard. I think it is important for people to open their eyes a little, walk around the backyard and kind of look a little closer at the world."

# SEVEN F

#### THE NETWORKER DDDDD

#### ANIKA PARAMESWARAN-CLASS OF 2020

# Seven Hills senior Anika Parameswaran saw a need.

She saw a number of students who weren't receiving formal tutoring but still wanted help with their schoolwork. And she knew students who wanted to help them.

"For upperclassmen to take on the role of a tutor, it helps them to develop leadership skills. If they have a passion for teaching, it will allow that skill and interest to blossom as well."

- Senior Anika Parameswaran

Parameswaran met with students to find out more about their needs. She met with teachers to learn more about teaching techniques, as well as with Upper School administrators to gain a sense of how to build a peer tutoring schedule into the school day. She also brainstormed with Director of College Counseling Susan Marrs.

After participating as a teaching fellow in the nonprofit organization Breakthrough Cincinnati during the summer of 2019, Parameswaran's plan began to take shape. While spending her summer with Breakthrough, a six-week international academic program that prepares students in the middle and upper schools for high school and college, Parameswaran saw, firsthand, how effective peer learning was for her young students.

"When I was in Breakthrough, a lot of the lessons focused on students pairing up and helping each other," said Parameswaran. "I thought about the fact that at Seven Hills there is a group of students who don't have tutors or they need a little help or they want to ask someone who has more knowledge about the subject."

Parameswaran built her program model by meeting with a faculty committee, including Head of School Matt Bolton and teachers Caleb Paull, Tricia Hoar, Ann Griep, Cassie Levesque, and Meredith Brown.

"It was interesting to see, from an administrative side, how much work goes into starting a program like this," she said.

Parameswaran said she learned early on the importance of having realistic goals. She decided to pare down her program's offerings to tutoring in two subjects only—math and world language. The program provides services for 35 minutes twice a week at the end of the school day. She said she hopes to design a sustainable system that will allow Seven Hills to benefit from



her project after she graduates, as well as grow the program to increase tutoring for all academic subjects.

Parameswaran, who manages a total rotating roster of about 20 student tutors and about 20 tutees each week, said she is pleased her program is providing a service that brings students together.

"It's just another opportunity for students who might not have access to professional tutors but still need that extra bit of help," said Parameswaran. "For upperclassmen to take on that role, it helps them to develop leadership skills. If they have a passion for teaching, it will allow that skill and interest to blossom as well."