



ITINER A

TRINITY SCHOOL AT RIVER RIDGE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

A Day in the Life of Trinity's Newest Grade

By Ellie Peters, Faculty Member

8:30 A.M. The day begins like any other typical day at Trinity School. Twenty-one students, clad in the standard blue plaid skirts and gray twill pants, stand behind their seats and pray the Lord's prayer before beginning the work of the hour. From here, though, the order of the morning takes a shape that differs notably from a typical Trinity day.

The 6th grade program, inaugurated in the last academic year (2016-2017), is a blend of both the old and the new. While the 6th grade experience contains the central elements of a Trinity education (such as a focus on sense of wonder and an emphasis on exploration of the real world) the curriculum and pedagogy have been tailored to fit the strengths and needs of the now-youngest students in the school.

A 6th grade day starts with Homeroom, a course designed to help the students prepare for 7th grade by building critical academic skills. The day-to-day routine varies: on one day, the students may be treated to a lesson on how to keep their locker organized, while on another, they spend time practicing their typing skills. Regardless of the activity of the day, the last 15 minutes of Homeroom are always the same: the students head to the gym to burn off some energy and reset for the rest of their morning classes. For two years running, this has proved to be an invaluable feature of 6th grade for both the teachers and the students.

The bell rings, and the students flock to their lockers before returning to the same classroom. This is another unique feature of the 6th grade year: rather than moving from class to class, they are given one single classroom as theirs. This allows them to enjoy the stability and ownership that comes with an elementary school classroom, while also being stretched to follow a middle school schedule of rotating teachers and courses.

The remainder of the day brings a wide variety of activities. The students ponder the characters of "The Wind and the Willows" in Literature & Composition, practice dividing fractions and completing logic puzzles in Math, and draw detailed maps of Asia from memory in World Geography. Other classes add among other things: a story from Norse Mythology, a hands-on Simple Machines project, and a sketch of a still life.

While the variety of subjects and content that the students encounter in a day is wide, there are some critical commonalities that all of the 6th grade classes share. The most important of these is perhaps the emphasis on exploratory learning. The goal of the 6th grade year is first and foremost for the students to fall in love with learning. To that end, the pedagogy of each class places a priority on imaginative projects, observation-based lessons, and activities that require the students to engage

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Calendar

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Winter Classic Recap





SAVE *the* DATE

MAY

Fine Arts Festival

Monday, May 7th - 25th, 2018

Alumni Reception at the Fine Arts Festival

Thursday, May 17th, 2018

12:00pm - 3:00pm

Senior Drama: *The Twelfth Night*

May 18th-19th, 2018

7:30pm

JUNE

Commencement

Saturday, June 9th, 2018

1pm - 3pm

Summer Enrichment: Acting Workshop*

June 18th - June 22nd, 2018

Summer Enrichment: Adventure Camp*

June 25th - 29th, 2018

JULY

Summer Enrichment: Adventure Camp*

July 9th - 13th, 2018

Summer Enrichment: Boys Soccer Camp*

July 9th - July 13th, 2018

Summer Enrichment: Japanese Cinema*

July 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

Summer Enrichment: Girls Soccer Camp*

July 16th - 20th, 2018

Summer Enrichment: Boys Wrestling Camp*

July 16th - 18th

AUGUST

First Day of School

Thursday, August 23rd, 2018

SEPTEMBER

Homecoming Weekend

September 21st & 22nd

OCTOBER

Junior Drama

Tuesday, October 16th, 2018 at 7:30 pm

Wednesday, October 17th, 2018 at 1:00 pm

NOVEMBER

Alumni Fall Visit Day

Wednesday, November 21st, 2018

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

DECEMBER

Junior Drama

Wednesday, December 19th, 2018 at 7:30 pm

Thursday, December 20th, 2018 at 1:00 pm

Alumni Basketball Games

Wednesday, December 26th, 2018

*Questions? Contact: **Mr. Jonathan Peasley** or register online: **Enrichment Registration**

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first-hand with stories, pieces of art, and parts of the natural world. Worksheets are a rarity and formal tests are avoided. While the students are coached in specific skills and are evaluated on their work just as they are in grades 7 through 12, they do not receive any letter grades on their work during the 6th grade year.

So far, the direct result of these classroom methods has been transformative for many students. The 6th graders are often visibly moved towards wonder and curiosity as they explore various topics, and many have reported a drop in grade-related stress as well as an increased enthusiasm towards learning for its own sake. In the words of one 6th grade parent, “[My son] never used to talk about school. Now, he can’t stop talking about what he’s learning every day.”

6th period is drawing to a close, and I wrap up my Minnesota History lesson. The students gather their things, chattering

excitedly about the connections that they noticed between the historic events of the Dakota War and places in the state that they themselves have visited.

Snippets of their conversations drift to my ears. “I never realized that Minnesota was so interesting,” says one student as she picks up her folder and leaves the classroom.

As I walk back to the faculty office, those words keep echoing in my head: “I never realized that this was so interesting.” That just might be a statement to sum up the experience of the 6th grade year.

The Trinity 6th Grade Program was inaugurated in the fall of 2016. It was developed largely in response to the Trinity community’s need for a 6th grade year as surrounding public and private school systems moved to a 6-8th grade middle school model. In addition to Homeroom, Mathematics, and

Literature & Composition, 6th graders at Trinity also take classes in World Mythology, World Geography, Science, Bible, Studio Art, and Minnesota History.



Who's That Class?

It's you, class of 2002! Well, more than half of you at least! The class of 2002 went out to support Laura Ficker (Laura Salmon now) at senior night for Volleyball. She was the only senior on the team that year.

As the classes get larger, it's hard to find full class pictures that are decipherable. I apologize that not everyone will be present in all of these photos!



Dr. David Sean O'Hanley

March 21, 1958 - February 16, 2018

I can pinpoint the moment science became more than just a class for me; it was project week of my senior year when Dr. O'Hanley tasked us with determining the acceleration due to gravity to two-decimal-point accuracy. My group and I designed an experiment with Dr. O'Hanley's guidance, collected our data, and got a value. The value was not the one from the text books, but after much discussion with Dr. O'Hanley he explained to us, with a twinkle in his eye, that there were other forces at play within our experimental set up: some that were known but that we had not yet learned and others that were unknown and that scientists were still trying to figure out. I remember Dr. O'Hanley being so excited by the fact that we had not been able to get the correct value even though we had a good experimental set up. He was happy that we had uncovered the "true" value in scientific experimentation: the data was the data and our task as scientists was to figure out what we had not accounted for. He taught us that it could be a good thing that we did not get the answer we expected because then we had the chance to learn something new and uncover some new truth (at least new to us!). Thank you, Dr. O'Hanley, for that lesson. There are so many other things I could say about how he motivated me throughout the years, but that lesson, that week, that passion for scientific research will always hold a special place in my heart.

- Michelle (Casper) Tayler '00



- Born Friday, March 21, 1958 in Quincy, Massachusetts
- B.S. Geology from Bridgewater State College in 1980
- Ph.D. Geology from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
- Postdoctoral Fellow, The Royal Ontario Museum. 1986 - 1990
- Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Saskatchewan, 1990 - 1994
- Faculty at University of Toronto, 1988-89
- Faculty at University of Saskatchewan, 1990-93
- Faculty at Trinity School at River Ridge, 1994-2018
- Published "[Serpentinites: Recorders of Tectonic and Petrological History](#)," 1996

Dr. O'Hanley's legacy as an educator, a man of God, and a lover of learning means that the good he has done in the world will continue to shine. In the world we live in now, he serves as an inspiration to his former students; they see the world in a fundamentally different way for having known him, for he taught us to look beyond the numbers, to see science everywhere in the world around us. We once spent a portion of class skipping rocks at one of the ponds near the old school, with surface tension and gravity waves as the nominal topic, but also just as a reminder of the science that can be found in the simplest of life's pleasures. I sincerely hope that as I continue to grow, I can become an educator like Dr. O'Hanley, in terms of not only the kind of teacher he was, but as an inspiration to the next generation of scientists to see the world with awe, intelligence, and insight.

- Michael W. Coughlin '08



Dave was one of the most influential teachers and people in my life. Starting with chemistry, physics, and then outside of school as a friend, Dave's infectious love of life and natural sense of wonder inspired me as well as many others. He always made time to talk, shared his curiosity, and encouraged me to do something special and meaningful. I will never forget how excited he got about analyzing particulates when we mixed solution, or how he derived theorems on the chalkboard covering it with formulas and cranking through the algebra. Dave is one of a kind, a pure soul, and I miss him so much.

- Eric Ostby '98



Dr. O'Hanley was the most caring man I have ever met. I was never a subordinate as a student or as a robotics member, always a colleague. He wanted to explore everything and knew that we all needed each other to do just that. He was the one that made Trinity a home for me and showed me the power of community. We would discuss the politics of education, robotics strategy, philosophy or just our favorite desserts. I went to him with any question or funny story, and it is painful to not have him anymore. He showed me how to be a person of kindness and openness in this world, and for that I am eternally grateful. I miss him more and more everyday, but he is with God, soaking up all the knowledge that God can give him.

- Margaret Maruggi '16



In pursuit of degrees and while working in science education, I have met many science teachers, and Dr. O'Hanley continues to stand out as the most earnest and enthusiastic educator I have encountered. His curiosity about the behavior of water and air, among other things, was startlingly genuine. When I became Facebook friends with him a few years ago, I wasn't surprised to see him posting videos about ice crystals, wind and weather. Even during his battle with cancer, he remained fascinated about the world around and within him, never missing an opportunity to learn and share. Dr. O'Hanley knew that students learn more when the formulas become real. It was not uncommon for us to learn by doing. A few lessons that come to mind: the constant motion of cars on the near-frictionless track, equal and opposite forces demonstrated by people pushing each other away in trash cans on wheels, tracking the behavior of forces on moving objects using Mr. Lee's old gray manual-transmission pick-up truck to shoot a Nerf gun while going approximately 30 miles per hour, spending all of project week getting 'g' to two (or was it three?) significant figures. I am sure that all of us who were lucky enough to learn from him have more than a few lessons that we remember because Dr. O'Hanley made us see that science, especially physics, was more than just variables on the chalkboard.

- Sharolyn Kawakami-Schulz '02



TRINITY SCHOOL *at River Ridge*
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TRINITY
SCHOOL
AT RIVER RIDGE

- Adventure Camp
- Acting Workshop
- Adventures in Ancient Greece
- Japanese Film Seminar
- Athletic Camps



2018
Summer
Enrichment

REGISTER
TODAY @

TSRR.org/enrichment

Thank you, Alumni, for joining us at the 2018 Winter Classic!

Trinity celebrated 30 years this January at the annual Winter Classic. New this year, every dollar that alumni spent at the Winter Classic went towards the Alumni Scholarship Fund. We raised over \$5000 for the scholarship! Thank you, Alumni, for supporting your school and the students who will benefit from it.

[Watch the video celebrating our 30 years here!](#)

PICTURES NEEDED!

Do you have any pictures from your time at Trinity? We are looking for pictures, especially from the years 1987—2004. If you have any you'd be willing to share, please email them to rwind@trinityschools.org or copy & mail them to

Trinity School at River Ridge
Attn: Rachelle Wind
601 River Ridge Parkway
Eagan, MN 55121

2018 Class Reunions

Class of 2013—**5 years**, celebrating on September 2nd, 2018!

Class of 2008—**10 years**

Class of 2003—**15 years**

Class of 1998—**20 years**, celebrating on June, 2018.

Class of 1993—**25 years**

Celebrate your time at Trinity by planning your class's milestone reunion! If you are interested in volunteering contact Rachelle Wind at rwind@trinityschools.org. TSRR is happy to help you promote your event!

STAY CONNECTED

Moved recently? Changed your email address? Have a class note to share?

Keep us updated by filling out this [Google Form](#) or sending us an **email**.



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