

THE MAGAZINE OF PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL • WINTER 2016

PDS SPIRIT



A Place to Thrive: The PDS Band Program

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IN THIS ISSUE OF *PDS SPIRIT*



For years, experts have known that success in music and math have a strong correlation. I have seen the connection in my own life as I have taught both music and math classes over the course of my career. At PDS, we are continuing to find ways to help our students thrive in these disciplines.

I am thrilled that we have begun a band at PDS. Just under 50 boys (and their parents) are also thrilled. Our boys are learning to work on a different type of team. They are learning the value of hard-work, dedication, and striving towards a common goal. Their instruments become a source of self-expression and their ears are opened to a world of music around them.

Our dedicated teachers are always looking for creative ways to engage our boys. *Grizz Math* is one example of a brilliant teacher looking for ways to build on the natural enthusiasm of her students. I have had the opportunity to be a part of the classroom on *Grizz Math* days. To say the room is electric would be an understatement.

These are two programs featured in this edition of the *PDS Spirit*. Everywhere you turn at PDS there are exciting things happening. If you have not been on campus recently, I invite you to come visit at any time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Hancock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Hancock, *Headmaster*





PDS SPIRIT

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Pictured this page: PDS fifth graders having some fun between classes.

On the cover: The brand-new PDS band practices for their first performance. Learn more about the band starting on page 14.

Duncan Williams Speaks at the 5th Annual Mentor Breakfast

The Mentor Breakfast was held on Friday, November 13, 2015. Over 200 alumni, parents, and friends of PDS attend the annual breakfast hosted by the PDS Alumni Association. This breakfast is a great opportunity to honor one's mentor by asking him or her to attend the breakfast and hear an inspirational speaker.

Duncan Williams, President of Duncan-Williams Inc., delivered a heartfelt message about the importance of mentors and the life changing difference that being a mentor can make in someone's life. He encouraged everyone to be a mentor.

During the school year, PDS 6th graders participate in a mentor program, and they

attended the breakfast in their mentor groups. The boys of PDS learn at an early age the importance of seeking counsel from mentors.

This breakfast, during the time of Thanksgiving, provides a perfect opportunity to say thank you to a mentor. ●

-
- 1 Don Batchelor '66, Duncan Williams, and Paul Dang
 - 2 Dade Hunt '71 and Andy Malmo
 - 3 Will Carter '03 and Blake Elliott
 - 4 Harrison Hunt '01, Harold Ware, and William Ware '01
 - 5 Bruce Campbell, Jr. and Carter Campbell '85
 - 6 Brad Martin and Headmaster Steve Hancock
 - 7 Will Carter '03 and Johnny Dillon '03
 - 8 Steve Bowie and Stephen Bowie '01
 - 9 Duncan Williams
 - 10 Bo Allen '80 and Bubba Ezzell
 - 11 Hunter Adams '00, and Taylor Maury '00
 - 12 Hudson Atkins '02, Hugh Francis '00, Jay Edwards '01, and Jimmy Edwards





GRIZZ MATH

Boys, Basketball, and Learning: More than a Game

Presbyterian Day School believes in boy-friendly education. We believe in providing authentic opportunities for our boys to demonstrate understanding of curricular concepts. We believe that when our students are engaged in learning, they will be interested in their work, ready to accept challenges, and excited about their accomplishments.

What do PDS boys believe in? They believe in Grizzlies' basketball!



It was during the playoff season a few years ago when fourth-grade teacher Susan Love sensed a new source of energy surrounding the boys. Every morning they were interested in discussing one thing — the Grizzlies’ performance from the previous game. Not one to hide her enthusiasm, Mrs. Love revealed that she, too, was a fan — an out-of-control, screaming, flag-waving, headband-wearing fan. This common interest was not just an opportunity to talk “smack” with the boys but a chance to design an authentic learning experience to complement the fourth-grade math curriculum.

“I believe that if my students ever have the means and can benefit others, they will, and maybe a little piece of that started in the fourth grade with a crazy teacher and a beloved team.”

By the end of the year, the fourth graders are expected to add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. The true test, however, is not only solving the math problems in isolation but also applying the skills in a new way. With this in mind, Mrs. Love created Grizz Math and hired her students to become Grizzlies statisticians. The boys were eager to write fractions that correlated to the players’ made/attempted shots

in a game. They quickly realized that these fractions could be divided, and the resulting decimals were easier to compare. No longer did the boys’ conversations speculate about which player had the better game; now, the boys could prove their claims.

With the Grizzlies in mind, the boys quickly recognized the purpose in learning fourth-grade math. It didn’t take long, however, for Mrs. Love to realize that for the boys to be true statisticians, they would need to push themselves beyond the regular curriculum and gain an understanding of percentages. The boys were eager to accept the challenge. Each student chose a Grizz player to track and completed a chart consisting of statistics such as shooting, rebounding, and turnover percentages. She hung the charts in the hallway, and the whole school watched as the boys began to average stats for the entire playoff series. Playoff fever is certainly contagious! With player stats covering the hallway walls, boys in other grade levels were seen studying the players’ statistics.

Every year, fourth graders are eager for Grizz Math to begin. Occasionally, Mrs. Love’s classroom sounds like the FedExForum during a Grizzlies’ game. The cheers erupt not from being off task, but when she announces: “Clear your desk for a GRIZZ QUIZ!” The fourth-grade boys are clearly excited to demonstrate their understanding of real-life statistics.

A recent study by Kristy Collins, a Harvard graduate and award-winning researcher at



Michigan State University, revealed that students are seven times more likely to be engaged in instruction when teachers help students “see the curriculum as critical to their current lives, their future, and their culture.” The Grizz Math learning possibilities are practically endless, but Mrs. Love was surprised when the boys’ understanding of the needs within the city of Memphis grew as a result of the curriculum. Students started finding and discussing ways that the players were lifting the spirits and actively helping the citizens within our city. These discussions, dubbed “Bigger than the Game,” are a time for students to talk about what it means to be able to change lives or give hope to someone who has little.

“I believe that if my students ever have the means and can benefit others, they will,” Mrs. Love said. “And maybe a little piece of that started in the fourth grade with a crazy teacher and a beloved team.”

In April and May, a time of the year when some students are beginning to dream of summer, the boys in fourth grade will be watching every Grizz highlight, reading every sports column, and working every statistic. As long as the Grizzlies are playing, PDS fourth graders have work to do! At PDS, we believe the Grizzlies are more than a basketball team, they are valuable contributors to our curriculum and our city. 🍀



Harrison "Harry" Ford '95 stars on
the hit CBS TV show *Code Black*

*I'm not a doctor,
but I play one
on TV!*

Q&A

Harrison “Harry” Ford '95 got his first taste of acting in school plays at PDS, and with them discovered his lifelong passion. He followed his passion at Memphis University School, then received his Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Arts from the Southern Methodist University’s Meadows School of the Arts. Harry also received a Master’s Degree in Fine Arts from the New York University’s Tisch Graduate Acting Program.

Ford founded an acting studio, The Sandbox, and spent summers at the Williamstown (Mass.) Theatre Festival, a Tony award-winning program. His love for theater has given him such off-Broadway stage credits as Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Macbeth in *Macbeth*. Recently, Harry Ford began his film debut as first-year resident Angus Leighton on the well-received medical drama, *Code Black*.



How did your experiences at PDS shape your career?

PDS shaped everything about me, really. Career, sure. They taught hard work, thorough preparation, and intellectual and spiritual curiosity to name a few. But more importantly, those saintly women who reared me (and they know who they are) taught me unconditional love, taking care of your neighbor, to pursue curiosity outside of that proverbial box, speaking up for what's right, and following your heart—especially when it came to the arts.

PDS, without question, is the foundation upon which anything that is worthy of praise, congratulations, or admiration has surely been built. Ha, and yes, I was in my first and second plays at PDS—*Down by the Creekbank* and the unforgettable red-bowed Christmas Pageant with the genius Jean Nabers. I also met my first “arts angels” at PDS—Mrs. Gilliland (Music), Mrs. Wallis (Art), Mrs. Nabers (who encouraged me to grab every single

one of my dreams), and the inimitable music guru, Sharon Hutchison. These ladies, and truly every teacher I ever had there, had the foresight and the courage to encourage this young man to dive into my passions and to shine my light. I love them dearly.

Is there a particular actor who helped to inspire you?

Wow. That's a tough one. The first that come to mind are my *Code Black* cast. I've learned so much from their generosity and their genius talents. I have to admit that anyone who has the courage to say “I'm an actor!” inspires me. The struggle to find one's seat at the table can be absolutely demoralizing and debilitating, but I believe that being an actor is a sacred responsibility. We are, in essence, the guardians of the human condition. I find that reality to be endlessly scary and equally thrilling.

What is your favorite Memphis memory?

The Orpheum. Hands down! I saw my first professional production at the Orpheum with Honey and my Mom. Honey is what we call George Falls who has been my dad since second grade. My other two dads, Jere Ford and Jack Brown, also took me to see shows there, though I never told them Honey had already taken me to see the same production. Ha. A modern family for sure. Honey would take me to six to eight productions a year; we'd sit in the fourth row, and it is still a highlight of my life. His insistence on being a patron of the theater instilled its inherent value early on. If Honey thought it was worthy, it must be. I remember watching every single show thinking, "I'd give anything to be able to do that."

What's something special you think you bring to the acting community?

I hope I bring a kindness and a sincerity. I feel like so much in our business is about the art of business and not the business of art. It's quite easy to fall into a cynicism or into a feeling of monetized worth that can lend itself to being so dang clever and guarded now-a-days. I hope my participation in any ensemble encourages my colleagues and our audiences to live radically kind and courageously loving lives.

Where do you see yourself five years from now, both professionally and personally?

Hopefully still saving lives at Angels Memorial on *Code Black*. All of the cast members joke about our dream of building families and raising our children together. That would be the best five years imaginable.

What was the training like for *Code Black*?

We had rigorous boot camps and daily rehearsals to get us comfortable with the art of the medicine. We aim to be as accurate and as authentic as we can, and one of the leads, Marcia Gay Harden

"PDS shaped everything about me... Those saintly women who reared me (and they know who they are) taught me unconditional love, taking care of your neighbor, to pursue curiosity outside of that proverbial box, speaking up for what's right, and following your heart—especially when it came to the arts."

always reminds us that "we're members of the Screen Actors Guild, not the American Medical Association" as we get stuck in gloves, put tubes in backwards, and hook up the wrong cords to the wrong machines. We have real doctors and nurses on staff who are there to help us sort out the medical aspects and to make us look as competent as one could hope. We make mistakes, but hopefully people remember our main goal is to tell stories from our hearts to yours and to provide an hour of entertainment after a long day. 🍷

Watch Harry Ford in Code Black, Wednesdays at 9pm CST on CBS.

A Place to Thrive

THE PDS BAND PROGRAM

What do *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*, *Ode to Joy*, and *Good King Wenceslas* have in common? All of these classics were part of *Our First Concert*, a historic event for Presbyterian Day School.





Our First Concert was a special performance to highlight the hard work and dedication of students in the inaugural PDS Band. This 49-boy ensemble, under the direction of volunteer band director Stephanie Hancock, filled the Second Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall with a joyful noise — complete with an oboe, flutes, clarinets, saxophones, french horns, trumpets, trombones, euphonium, percussion, and even a tuba.

Over the years, medical journals and educational publications have favored music as a crucial part of a well-rounded education. From helping to develop the spatial-temporal reasoning of the brain, to teaching the art of discipline, the benefits of music in education are numerous. Band Director Stephanie Hancock brings to light another great benefit that having a band brings to the PDS student body.

.....

“It’s great to see students that were struggling with their instrument taking time at home, practicing. Then, suddenly, it clicks for them. It is fun to see them have the realization that hard work really pays off.”

.....

“This band provides a niche for students, a place to thrive.”

PDS has many great athletic programs, clubs, and extracurricular activities, but this is another way for students to excel and grow.

While some see music as a tool that provides benefits down the line, Mrs. Hancock has already seen an impact in a lot of the students.

“It’s great to see students that were struggling with their instrument taking time at home, practicing. Then, suddenly, it clicks for them. It is fun to see them have the realization that hard work really pays off.”

While this isn’t the only realization or benefit they will receive from being in the band, it will be one that will help them in all aspects of education and life as they finish their time at PDS.

The Importance of Music at PDS

Music has always been a part of the school’s curriculum; however, the addition of a band program is a facet of music education that PDS has wanted to afford its students for a while, and now — building on the music programs already available at the school — PDS has accomplished this goal.

The Process of Building a Band

Every boy in fifth and sixth grade met with Mrs. Hancock to listen to and try each instrument, whether they had any interest in joining the band or not. This provided all the students the opportunity to hear, see, touch, and play the instruments.

The process of deciding who would play which instrument is complex. The success of each boy is considered when making the decision. "It is important to find what they're interested in and find what comes easy to them. People are suited to certain instruments, and it is my job to ensure the boys play an instrument they are comfortable with and can excel on."

Overall, the process of building a band was a lot less stressful than Mrs. Hancock imagined. She has been very vocal about how "the teachers, administration, and coaches have been supportive and flexible in providing the students what they need to participate in band." With their help, and her 20 years in teaching band, the boys have transformed from callithump to a finely tuned band.

From Beginner Band to Advanced Band

Roughly one-third of the fifth- and sixth-grade student body is in the band. Next year, this number will grow as PDS adds a more advanced level for those who have been in band before. The eventual goal is to have a jazz band, too.

In the program's first year, PDS is proud to announce that it has one student in the West Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association Junior Band. The program will help future students compete against students from other schools to take part in the All-West Junior Band.

May 5th: Keep Your Calendars Clear

On May 5th, at 7 PM, PDS will have its second concert. This is an event open to the families and friends of the students in the band. Everyone is welcome, and we encourage those who love music, or have a son interested in music, to come check out our concert. ●

About Stephanie Hancock



Stephanie Hancock, wife of PDS Headmaster Steve Hancock, is an accomplished musician, with 20 years of experience. Stephanie has taught instrumental music at all grade levels in public and independent school settings, including Indian Prairie School District 204 in Illinois, The Westminster Schools in Atlanta, and Princeton Day School in Princeton, NJ. In addition to her school teaching, Mrs. Hancock has worked leading church music and worship ministries in Naperville, IL and Atlanta and is currently an active volunteer musician in the music ministry at Second Presbyterian Church. Stephanie holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Music Education from the University of Illinois.



Dwight Creasman

Director of Alumni Relations

Dwight Creasman is the new Director of Alumni Relations at PDS. He joined PDS in 1990 as a physical education teacher and coach. He was instrumental in bringing competitive football to PDS and served as head coach for twenty years. Over the last four years he has taught Fit for Life classes to third through sixth grades at PDS.

How did you get into teaching?

I have always had a desire

to help kids through mentoring and teaching Christian values through my classes.

What is the best thing about working at PDS?

Without a doubt, the best thing about working at PDS is working with a great staff and administration and roughly 600 of the best boys Memphis has to offer.

What does the position of Director of Alumni Relations entail?

As Alumni Director, it is my job to build a bridge to our alumni by keeping them informed about PDS. Serving as goodwill ambassador for our school and alumni, I help to offer programs and special events for alums to attend. It means maintaining good lines of communication with them as well.

What are you most excited about as the new Director of Alumni Relations?

One of the most exciting things about being PDS

Alumni Director is reconnecting with the young men that I had the privilege to teach and coach at PDS.

What are the biggest issues facing your office today?

Tracking down and locating all our graduates can be a daunting task. We are always in the process of finding all our alumni — where they live, work, etc. We also strive to have our alums show the same interest and loyalty to their elementary school as they do to their high school and college.

What are your long-term goals for Alumni Relations?

The long term goals would include establishing special class reunions, building a stronger alumni base, and organizing new alumni events and programs.

What is something people do not know about you?

Something people did not know about me — I love 70's music, and my favorite band is Chicago. 🎸

Have some excellent news about a PDS graduate? Send it to alumni@pdsmemphis.org.



PDS Tailgate

On Saturday, November 7th PDS hosted its first tailgate party for the University of Memphis football game against Navy. The party was set up on Tiger Lane with a tent, TV, cornhole games, inflatables, and snacks. Everyone had a great time socializing before the game, and we look forward to hosting another tailgate party next fall!



National Merit Semi-Finalists

Ten PDS graduates from the class of 2010 have qualified as National Merit Scholar Semifinalists: **Sam Bartz '10, Chandler Clayton '10, Forest Colerick '10, Gil Humphreys '10, Saatvik Mohan '10, Murray Morrison '10, Patton Orr '10, Jackson Pacheco '10, Daniel Tancredi '10, and Colin Threlkeld '10.** The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955.



Happy 50th Birthday

Dan Schneider '76 is the writer/producer behind many of

Nickelodeon's most popular kids shows including *iCarly*, *Drake and Josh*, and *Zoey 101*. Schneider currently has two shows in production on Nickelodeon, *Henry Danger* and *Game Shakers*. He turned 50 on January 14, 2016.



Patton Orr Brings TED to Memphis

PDS alum **Patton Orr '10**, a senior at MUS, is an outstanding student who holds a 5.41 grade point average. He scored a perfect 36 on the ACT and a 2360 on the SAT and he has been named a National Merit Semifinalist. Orr started a TED club at MUS, where students watch TED talks and discuss the subject matter. An acronym for technology, entertainment, design, TED is a nonprofit organization started in 1984, dedicated to spreading ideas, usually in the form of its talks, recorded in more than 100 languages. "For some reason, TED had never caught on in Memphis as it had in other cities," Orr says. "I recognized a huge opportunity for our city to host an event."



Top 10 ways for graduates to stay in touch

1. **SUBSCRIBE** for all the up-to-date info

Visit pdsmemphis.org and subscribe to the events calendar and e-newsletters.

2. **FACEBOOK** your alma mater

Your former teachers are always looking forward to catching up.



3. **FOLLOW** us on Twitter

Follow @pdsmemphis for 140 characters of news bits and fun info from the school that helped mold you into what you are today.

4. **ATTEND** PDS Alumni Events

Distinguished Alumnus Luncheon, Mentor Breakfast, PDS Open, and more...

5. **VOLUNTEER** to serve

PDS is always needing help to put on the various alumni programs every year. We can find a place for you if you volunteer.

6. **NETWORK** with classmates

Are you LinkedIn? LinkedIn is a great place to network with other PDS alums.



7. **CONTACT** your friends at PDS

Give us a call in the alumni office at 901-842-4600 anytime.

8. **SUBMIT** updates

What's going on in your life? New baby? New job? Win an award? Let us know about it at alumni@pdsmemphis.org.

9. **VISIT** your alma mater

Changes are occurring on a daily basis at your old stomping grounds. Drop by and see what's new.



10. **READ** the PDS Spirit

Every issue of the *PDS Spirit* is available online. Read them all front to back, or back to front—the choice is yours.



Golf Honors

PDS Alum **Goodman Rudolph '11**

was named a 2015 Rolex Junior All-American Honorable Mention. His recent tournament highlights include being selected and playing in the Ping Invitational at Karsten Creek and the Junior Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass. He recently played in the Polo Invitational at PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens. This is a tournament that was won in the past by notable players such as fellow alum **Casey Wittenberg '98**, Tiger Woods, Hunter Mahan, Stewart Cink, and Trevor Immelman. Goodman also won last year's *Commercial Appeal's* Best of Preps Golf Award.



PDS Alums Victorious on MUS Golf Team

Congratulations to the following PDS grads on the MUS golf team: **Wyatt Berry '12**, **Jack Crosby '11**, **Walker Crosby '13**, **Bob E. Mallory '10**, **Goodman Rudolph '11**, **Mason Rudolph '11**, **Trent Scull '11**, **Parker Sexton '10**, and **Phillip Wunderlich '13**. The team's current overall record is 13-5-1. In their latest match they defeated CBHS 144 to 133. Goodman Rudolph was Medalist with a 9-hole score of 28 followed by Mason Rudolph's score of 32, Parker Sexton's 35, and both Jack Crosby and Trent Scull scored a 38.

Alumni Excellence

Have some excellent news about a PDS graduate? Send it to alumni@pdsmemphis.org.



PDS Alums on the College Gridiron

This past fall, a number of PDS graduates played college football: **Toby Baker '06** (Arkansas), **Ben Benton '06** (Arkansas State), **Britt Colcolough '06** (Princeton), **Daniel Cunningham '06** (Cornell), **Nicholas Vergos '06** (Richmond), **James Prather '08** (Northwestern), **Gary Wunderlich '08** (Ole Miss), **Eltonio Becton '08** (Harding), and **Peyton Jones '09** (Memphis). We are very proud of them!



PDS Alums Receive 7th Grade Honors

Several PDS alumni claimed honors through special elections at MUS. **Christopher Parks '15** was elected to be one of two Honor Council Representatives for the 7th grade. Also, a total of six PDS alums were voted to be on the 7th grade Student Council: **Judson Fair '15**, **Elijah Graham '15**, **Warren Johnston '15**, **Akbar Latif '15**, **Everett Miller '15**, and **Edwin Shy '15**.



National Championships

PDS alum **Nicholas Vergos '06** played in the semi-finals of the Division 2, FCS National Championships against North Dakota State this past December. Nick plays offensive line for the Richmond Spiders.



2008 PDS Graduate Harrison Williams Sets Record

Harrison Williams '08 broke the American junior decathlon record last fall scoring a meet record 8037 points to win the gold medal at the Pan American junior track and field championships. Harrison is a sophomore at Stanford University. 🏆



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