

# PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS, THINKERS, AND DOERS

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CHARLOTTE  
COUNTRY DAY  
SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

## LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Country Day community,

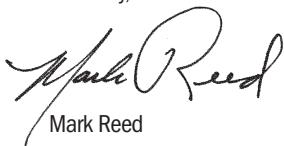
Educating students today is considerably different than it was at the time of our school's founding in 1941. While a commitment to developing student potential has always been at our core, research and experience have led us to hone best practices and deliver better and better results for our students over the decades. A continuous spirit of collaboration, innovation, and community have allowed us to increase our effectiveness in preparing students for a fast-changing future. The ways in which we deliver education have evolved, yet the human-to-human elements of individualized attention and a nurturing environment remain firmly in place at Country Day.

As a school community, Country Day has always been committed to continuous improvement and leading the way in education. The formal process of strategic planning helps us to define our shared goals, determine actions to achieve those goals, mobilize resources to successfully implement them, and holds us accountable to assessing our progress. This living document serves as our north star as the Board of Trustees, the administrative team, the faculty, and the staff fulfill their important roles for our students—whether that's creating this week's lesson plan or developing a 30-year master facilities plan.

In the fall of 2011, we began the process of creating the Strategic Plan shared visions that continue to guide us today. This brochure serves to educate our community on how the school is advancing our goals by providing some examples into the types of academic, leadership, and extracurricular programming occurring each and every day for every student in grades JK-12. You will find a more complete outline of student experiences on the Web: [charlottecountryday.org/LeadThinkDo](http://charlottecountryday.org/LeadThinkDo).

For 75 years, Country Day has been dedicated to excellence in education. Today, that tradition continues as we live out our shared strategic visions to prepare the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and doers.

Sincerely,



Mark Reed  
Head of School



Mark Reed and Board of Trustees members in attendance at the November 2016 meeting.

# BOARD LED. COMMUNITY INVOLVED. STUDENT FOCUSED.

In the fall of 2011, the Board of Trustees launched the current Strategic Plan by asking the Country Day community about our most valued qualities and traditions, our priorities for the future, and how a fast-changing world affects those priorities. The community's collective insight and imagination helped to create four shared visions that we began implementing in 2014.



700+  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
OFFERED THEIR IDEAS

- Parents
- Faculty
- Staff
- Students
- Alumni
- Parents of alumni
- Grandparents
- Current/former trustees



600+  
ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS OFFERED FEEDBACK  
FROM ONLINE SURVEY

>10,000  
RESPONSES GENERATED

- Academic rigor
- Community partnerships
- Culture of excellence
- Diverse student body
- Durable traditions
- Engaged citizenship
- Exceptional faculty
- Fiscal responsibility
- Global mindedness
- Health and well-being
- Innovation
- Seamless technology
- Sustainable buildings



4 SHARED  
VISIONS

The Strategic Planning Committee,  
Administrative Council, and Board  
of Trustees formulated four student-  
centered goals, which became our  
Shared Visions.

Prepare  
students to lead  
and thrive in a  
changing world

Instill  
personal integrity  
and well-being

Inspire a  
love of learning  
through exceptional  
faculty and  
staff

Create a  
distinctive and  
sustainable  
learning  
environment

# FOUR SHARED VISIONS

## Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders, Thinkers, and Doers



Just as we have for 75 years as Charlotte's educational leader, Country Day will continue to look to the future while honoring the traditions that make us strong. These four shared visions, developed with broad community input, guide us daily in our mission to give students the skills they need to successfully prepare for college and confidently navigate a fast-changing world. Embedded within the curriculum and core academic programming our students are learning necessary skills like critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, resiliency, initiative, strong written and oral communication, and the ability to access and analyze information. Through programs and technology, we expand the classroom beyond campus, and we are committed to fully supporting innovative and creative academic programming through the enhancement of campus facilities.

As a community, we remain committed—from one generation to the next—to make our graduates Country Day Ready to lead, think, and do.

### Preparing Students to Lead and Thrive in a Changing World



- Maintain the highest standards of **academic rigor** through teachers who are well-prepared and well-equipped to support students and challenge them to achieve their very best.
- Inspire the development of **critical thinking, resiliency**, and **problem-solving** skills through academics, the arts, and athletics.
- Use technology, experiential learning, and collaboration to **foster innovation** and creativity both within and beyond classroom walls.
- Attract and enroll a student body that is **multicultural in scope** and innovative in spirit.
- Create experiences and opportunities that lead to cultural awareness and encourage **relationships across cultural lines**.
- Facilitate opportunities for students and faculty to engage in and **comprehend the wider world**.
- Support a **culture of excellence** through regular evaluation of all school programs.



## Instilling Personal Integrity and Well-Being



- Cultivate a community that is shaped by **genuine respect for individual differences** and that values inclusivity, equity, and compassion.
- Promote the fundamental importance of health and well-being in a **balanced, fulfilling life**.
- Foster a climate where all members of the community can **safely learn and grow**.
- Instill a lifelong desire in each student to **contribute to the greater good**, both locally and globally.
- Encourage service and **leadership by example**.



## Inspiring a Love of Learning Through Exceptional Faculty and Staff



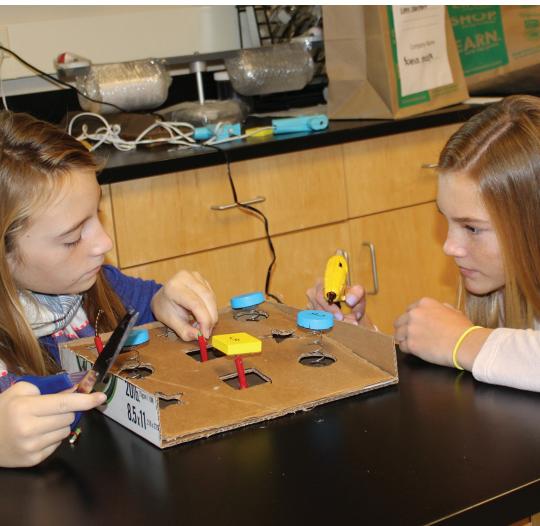
- Recruit, retain, develop, and support a **diverse faculty** and staff who are passionately committed to creating **meaningful learning experiences** for each student.
- Provide faculty and staff opportunities and resources to fully support their **professional development** and education.
- Maintain a **competitive compensation** package for faculty and staff.

## Creating a Distinctive and Sustainable Learning Environment



- Ensure financial sustainability through **prudent fiscal management**.
- Inspire **charitable** giving that supports competitive faculty salaries and minimal tuition increases.
- **Strengthen community** and programs through investment in thoughtfully designed, environmentally responsible facilities.

# HOW WE ARE ADVANCING STRATEGIC VISIONS, EVERY DAY.



## Collaborating to Engineer Cerebral Palsy Games

Seventh-grade students recently took part in a month-long project to design a game that a rehabilitation therapist could use for children with cerebral palsy. Over the course of the project, the students followed the same steps a professional design engineer would. After researching the needs of cerebral palsy patients, they began with a decision matrix to filter their ideas and make a group decision on the best approach. They then designed a thumbnail sketch, built a prototype, tested their game, made modifications, and presented their findings.

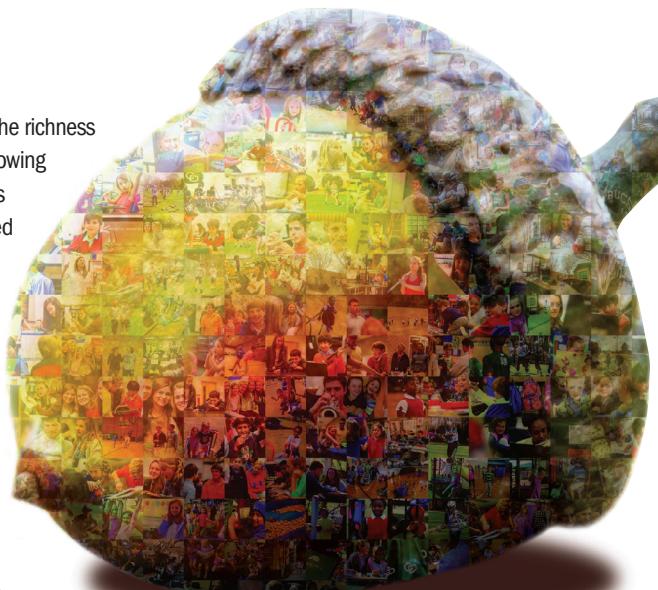
"As much as this project was about solving a real-world problem, it was also about learning how to work together—to collaborate, to solve problems, to identify strengths, to multi-task, to manage their collective time, and so forth," says science teacher Janice Palmer. "Through the process of developing team norms, students must collaborate at adult-like levels, just as adults do in their workplaces. They are learning how to complete self-assigned work."



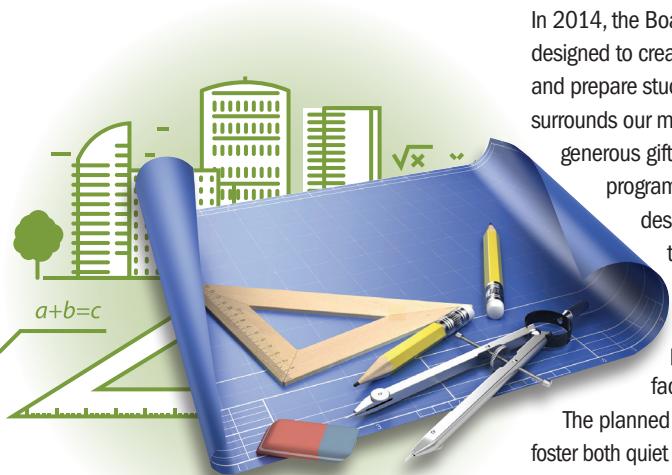
## Cultivating Open-Minded Leaders

Our Affirmation of Community states that we "recognize and affirm the richness brought by difference and discovered through commonality," but knowing how to talk about differences isn't easy. In order to help all students develop the communication skills necessary to become open-minded leaders, the Upper School Diversity Awareness Forum (DAF) hosts small-group gatherings to create conversations about empathy and inclusion for all people, ideas, and cultures. These regular sessions, which occur as part of Freshman Seminar and that sophomores and juniors attend three times a year, include games and activities that reinforce community norms (such as being fully present and leaning into discomfort), along with open, noncritical conversation about relevant community, national, and world events. By equipping students with the ability to both give and receive thoughts, ideas, and opinions from varying viewpoints in a constructive manner, they will be ready to successfully navigate, participate, and lead in diverse local and global communities.

DAF is the umbrella community for multiple Upper School clubs and organizations that promote general respect for people's differences.



## Creating New Opportunities in a Distinctive Learning Environment



In 2014, the Board of Trustees approved a long-range master facilities plan designed to create an innovative learning environment, strengthen community, and prepare students for a fast-changing global society. Tremendous energy surrounds our most immediate strategic priorities and we are grateful for the generous gifts that will allow us to build on already strong academic programming. The Purdy Center for Science and Mathematics, designed to drive innovative instruction and research, will provide the latest technology in lab, classroom, and collaborative learning spaces. The Dowd Student Center will be a flexible, community space that will support nutritional programming through age-appropriate cafeterias, as well as faculty and student collaboration and programming.

The planned facility improvements also include new learning centers to foster both quiet and individualized study and student and teacher collaboration for Lower and Upper Schools. Continued strength of the Annual Fund, along with a growing endowment, further ensures funding for the innovative programming, financial aid, and professional development of exceptional faculty that are critical in preparing students for a successful future.



## Leading Through Athletics

In our school's history, our teams have won 125 state championships and counting. Yet win or lose, all of our student-athletes benefit from the life skills acquired through sports. In the fall of 2016, the Robert C. Witman Leadership Academy was established in honor of retired longtime football coach Bob Witman. That allowed Country Day to become one of just three high schools nationwide to partner with the Janssen Sports Leadership Center, widely recognized as a trailblazer in student-athlete leadership programming at the collegiate level.

The program launched with 38 students, who meet regularly during lunch periods. In the first year of the two-year curriculum, called "Emerging Leaders," students focus on how to be a leader by example. Core concepts include developing commitment, confidence, composure, and character. In the second year, these veteran leaders focus on how to be a vocal leader—both as an "encourager" and as an "enforcer"—and how to build effective partnerships with coaches.

Abe Wehmiller, director of athletics and program facilitator, says, "It's been a great start to the program, and our coaches have been invested in supporting the students' development as leaders. I'm excited about the impact this work will have on our athletics program and about the potential for the Academy to grow in future years."



# HOW WE ARE ADVANCING STRATEGIC VISIONS, EVERY DAY.



## Science Symposium Continues to Grow

The Upper School Science Symposium started just four years ago with four students who presented their summer science research to interested parents, peers, and teachers. This year the program included 16 students, who shared their research on topics like “Improving the Radial Velocity Method Precision through Optical Fiber Characterization” and “Synthesis and Reactivity of New N-Heterocyclic Thione and Selone Ligands.” Several students also have been invited to present at regional and national science conferences.

Science Outreach Coordinator Donna Campbell-Patrick assists students in finding and securing summer internships in university settings. “The opportunity to work in a university lab on real-world research is simply invaluable to our students’ preparation for and continued success in college-level coursework in the sciences,” she says. “Students are eager for more hands-on opportunities and they are ready to be challenged with this kind of meaningful work.”

She adds that the connections the school is making with university researchers will also be helpful as she and her teaching peers envision the possibilities that could be made available to students with the construction of the planned Purdy Center for Science and Mathematics.

## Coding and the Computer Science Curriculum

As part of our Computer Science curriculum, Country Day students in K-8th grades join millions of other students around the world to take part in Hour of Code Week every December. From learning the basics of sequencing and directionality in kindergarten to building simple computer games in older grades, students learn the basics of computer programming in a fun, engaging, high-interest way.

“Just as we know it’s important for students to learn some chemistry, even if they won’t become chemists, and to be familiar with history, even if they won’t become historians, it’s important that they have some knowledge of coding because technology is so integrated into their daily lives,” explains Joe Hernick, director of educational technology.

Computer Science is a field that is growing and in need of talent, and “coding is the language of the future,” in the words of one fourth grader. Hour of Code is one way for students to learn about the field and about the ways that coding can make the world a better place.





## Improving Fluency in Modern Languages

There are myriad reasons to study another language, from improved analytical and problem-solving skills and a greater appreciation for other cultures to the very practical fact that fluency in a second language provides a competitive edge in career choices. For today's students, digital applications are helping them perfect their oral skills in new and creative ways.

For instance, while using storytelling to practice fluency in a second language is not new, iPad apps allow students to hone their speaking skills in a way that a paper booklet never could. Students in Diane Farrug's seventh-grade French classes recently used Toontastic to retell and rewrite their own versions of a story Mrs. Farrug told in class. "The ability to be creative and have fun makes the learning that much more enjoyable, but the recording aspect of these programs is the real benefit," she says. "Students are able to listen to themselves, self-assess, reflect, and re-record to get the pronunciations right. They take real pride in their finished product and want it to be polished."



## Planting a Seed for Others

Fresh air and sunshine are always just a step away for Lower School children on our beautiful campus. And a favorite gathering spot, even during recess, is the Otey Organic Garden. It began as a 25 x 35 foot plot with several raised beds and now includes rain barrels, compost bins, and a four-season greenhouse. With the guidance of their science teachers, children plant, weed, and harvest a variety of organic vegetables, including radishes, lettuce, tomatoes, spinach, squash, melons, peppers, kale, and garlic. The garden helps children to see the full cycle of food production from seed to sprout to harvest to compost, all while gaining an appreciation for the rewards of patience and physical work.

Even better is the fact that the food they grow—upwards of 100 pounds per year—is donated to our longtime partners at Friendship Trays, an organization that provides food to those in the community unable to prepare their own meals. Every second grader visits Friendship Trays to receive real-world lessons on healthy cooking, social entrepreneurship, and urban farming, as well as deliver a meal to an elderly person.



# HOW WE ARE ADVANCING STRATEGIC VISIONS, EVERY DAY.

## Digital Citizenship Certified

As educators and parents know, digital media and technology are evolving at a dizzying pace, both unlocking extraordinary opportunities and posing real risks for young people. Country Day is committed to taking a whole-community approach to preparing our students to use the immense power of digital media to explore, create, connect, and learn, while limiting the perils that exist in the online realm, such as plagiarism, loss of privacy, and cyberbullying.

In January 2016, we became the first area school to be named a Common Sense Digital Citizenship Certified School. Criteria for receiving Digital Citizenship Certification includes, among other things, ensuring that teachers receive professional development training, dedicating instructional hours to digital citizenship at several grade levels, and providing parent education and outreach, like the Parent Speaker Series. Many teachers and librarians have also been recognized as Common Sense Digital Citizenship Certified Educators, with the goal of all teachers becoming certified.



## Problem Solving for the Greater Good



It's a win-win when your World Geography class not only gives you first-hand knowledge of another country by conducting interviews with cultural liaisons, but also inspires you to do something about the global problems you see. Long after completing their Global Village project on the country of Cameroon in seventh grade, Cameron Grainger and Sophie Spada felt a continued calling to help tackle the problem of illiteracy in this African country. They just couldn't shake the memories of lunch meetings with their adult liaison, Abong Fankam, who raised their awareness about the inequalities in education that are facing the children of Cameroon, many of whom walk several miles to school with no way to carry their supplies.

So in eighth grade, they dreamed up, championed, and organized No Backpack Day to help create empathy and support for children in Cameroon. With the support of Student Council, the girls collected 150 backpacks filled with school supplies, which were donated to A Place of Hope for children in Cameroon.



## STEAM in the Kindergarten Classroom

When kindergarten students pair off to build simple machines together, it may look like play time. In fact, this type of activity is setting the foundation for the kinds of skills students will continue to develop as they tackle ever more complex learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM). By integrating age-appropriate aspects of design thinking and engineering into the play-based learning curriculum, teachers expose children to both abstract and concrete problem solving.

For instance, after hearing a funny story about the rewards of perseverance and creativity, children are given toothpicks and mini marshmallows. Working in groups of two or three, they tackle an open-ended design challenge—plan, design, and construct your own building. Through collaboration, trial and error, willingness to revise, and persistence, the groups create unique structures. In the end, the finished product is not nearly as important as the process to get there.



## The Art of Authenticity

At a time when arts education can be viewed as supplemental, we know that the visual and performing arts help develop the critical-thinking, risk-taking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills necessary for our students to lead and thrive in the 21st century. The Middle School Artist in Residence program gives seventh and eighth graders an authentic experience to further deepen their understanding and hone their talents under the mentorship of real-world artists. For instance, in the past few years, visiting artists have guided students in the process of designing a mosaic glass sculpture; writing, directing, and producing a video; painting a mural for Bissell Campus; composing original music for the spring concert; learning how to “fly” in a performance of *Peter Pan*; and developing their voices as an a capella group. By working with professional artists over many months, students experience the process of creation in a realistic way and learn from the challenges, risks, failures, and successes along the way.



CHARLOTTE  
COUNTRY DAY  
SCHOOL

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Charlotte, NC 28226-5096

[charlottecountryday.org/LeadThinkDo](http://charlottecountryday.org/LeadThinkDo)

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## OUR MISSION

Through excellence in education, Charlotte Country Day School develops the potential of each student by fostering intellectual curiosity, principled character, ethical leadership, and a responsibility to serve.

## OUR KEY VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

### **Educational Excellence**

We develop a love for learning by discovering and celebrating each student's abilities and talents through engagement with exceptional teachers in distinctive academic, artistic, athletic, and extracurricular experiences.

### **Character**

We instill and expect integrity, honesty, moral courage, personal accountability, and compassion for others.

### **Community**

We respect each individual, embrace diversity, and value the relationships uniting us as a school and connecting us with our local and global communities.

### **Service**

We empower our students to address social, environmental, and global issues and to realize the obligation and value in giving of themselves for the public good.

## AFFIRMATION OF COMMUNITY

Charlotte Country Day School is committed to living as an authentic, inclusive community. Our pursuit of this commitment to community recognizes and affirms the richness brought by difference and discovered through commonality.