



HISTORY MAKERS

HONORING TRAILBLAZERS & TELLING NEW STORIES



Mural by Hamilton Glass
& Austin Miles
Richmond, VA

“THE FUTURE OF BLACK HISTORY”



February brought us exciting opportunities to celebrate Black History Month with our students, staff, and community partners. It was a month to honor the rich legacy and tremendous contributions of African Americans throughout our nation's history, commemorating brilliant innovation and triumphs over oppression. At the same time, we considered the work that still lies ahead to create an equitable future—particularly for the youth of Richmond's East End.

At Church Hill Academy, students participated in special events and creative activities to honor prominent historical figures as well as community members who are

impacting our city through their work and advocacy. The Student Government Association and social studies teacher Dr. Ted Maris-Wolf hosted a roundtable discussion, “The Future of Black History,” with local leaders Alan Delbridge (The Community Foundation), Mary Lauderdale (Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia), and Maurice Hopkins (retired; community advocate). Seniors Corey Williams and Patricia Powell moderated the discussion that covered topics including Richmond history, political engagement, and the value of intergenerational conversations.

It's inspiring to witness our students embracing their agency and thinking

“Seeing how our ancestors made a change makes me believe I can make a change also.”

MARIA, CLASS OF 2020

critically about what it means to view their lives through a lens of faith as they show up to lead in our community. The way we see it, they're continuing to make and shape history every day of the year.



JONATHAN CHAN

NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It was thrilling for me to see the many ways our students learned and celebrated throughout Black History Month. But it's even more exciting to see how each student is growing into a history maker who can be a part of bringing God's renewal and flourishing to the East End of Richmond and beyond.

As they transition into adulthood, our seniors are grappling with complex and challenging issues that face our society. And our After School Program students are making the connection between the heroes of the past and the creativity that God has given them to use in the present. Thank you for the time, prayer, advocacy, and financial resources you invest in these students as they not only study history, but get ready to make it.

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

For the students in Tamika Jarvis' English 12 class at Church Hill Academy, senior thesis projects were just as much about their personal growth as their academic development.

Ms. Jarvis wanted to create a learning opportunity that would help students establish their independence and give them a competitive edge for their continuing education. She designed a quarter-long research and writing project to foster their curiosity for digging deeply into a subject and equip them with technical skills to increase their college readiness.

Students selected topics from a wide range of themes, including science, law, philosophy, gaming, technology, incarceration, sports, and leadership. They tackled the work in incremental steps: brainstorming, topic and purpose, annotated bibliography, outline, first draft, final draft (8–10 pages), and final presentation. Along the way, they provided peer feedback and also had the chance to explore their topics during field trips to VCU and Fairfield Library.

Ms. Jarvis acknowledges it was challenging to strike a balance between an academically rigorous assignment and her high expectations of students. "I think the world of them. I believe they can do anything," she relates. "But they all struggled with a lack of confidence in their own ability. So we had to work together to get to the root: *Why don't you think you can do it?*



Let's address that. It was inspiring to watch students stretch themselves to do what they didn't initially believe they could."

Students thrived on the level of care Ms. Jarvis invested in their success and the camaraderie their classmates fostered. "It was so rewarding at the end of their final presentations to hear Ahmad announce, 'We did it, y'all!'" Ms. Jarvis says. "It wasn't about individual achievement, but really their collective accomplishment."

This project represents a new level of academic performance at the Academy. The Class of 2020 is paving the way for classes to follow, raising the level of excellence and demonstrating how to thoughtfully navigate an increasingly complex

"I knew they needed to be challenged and recognize that they can do hard things. This project was absolutely about growing them academically, but it quickly became more of a metaphor for their resilience."

**TAMIKA JARVIS,
ENGLISH TEACHER**

world. Students are learning to integrate their faith with their studies and becoming engaged citizens who care about their communities.

"I saw them push through. I saw them persevere. I saw them show up," says Ms. Jarvis. "They came away with a sense of achievement and confidence in themselves for what they can accomplish in the future."



TELLING STORIES THROUGH ART

The After School Program hosted local artist Breanna Neville for a special presentation and art project for Black History Month. Ms. Neville shared with the students how members of the Underground Railroad used quilt square patterns to help guide fugitives on their journey. After her talk, students decorated paper squares and created a beautiful freedom quilt celebrating creativity and courage.

We're grateful for partnerships with local community leaders that provide opportunities like this to our students. They're learning to honor the stories of those who came before us and express their God-instilled originality—evident even as they created unique interpretations of the same patterns. That's something we're always ready to celebrate.

LEGACY FARM PLANT SALE

Let our urban farming team help you get your garden ready for spring—and support our Workforce Development program in the process!

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 FROM 9AM–12PM
3015 N STREET, RICHMOND

ABOUT THE COVER

Our cover image shows a portion of a mural located at 1st and Broad streets in Richmond. The artwork was inspired by students from local nonprofit Girls For a Change, which aims to empower Black girls and other girls of color to be change makers in their communities.

