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On renewal, connection, and growth

Dear Friends,

At the beginning of this year, I asked Quad Prep staff and faculty to share a few words that embody the start of the school year. Among them were renewal, connection, and growth. Reflecting on the 2024-2025 school year, I feel immensely grateful for our community and our commitment to embodying these ideals.

Across both campuses, curiosity, innovation, and creativity continue to thrive. This year, students embarked on adventures that infused



their learning with real-life experiences and connected them to New York City. Staff worked tirelessly to implement a streamlined executive functioning program to help our students' many talents grow.

As you explore this magazine, you will see these stories and many others come to life. In the Upper School, Model UN delegates participated in rich perspective-taking exercises and honed their research, writing, and debate skills, while Occupational Therapists pioneered a new immersive sensory technology. In the Lower School, students fostered community through storytelling workshops and a hands-on, inquiry-based science curriculum.

None of these breakthroughs would have been possible without you. Thank you for walking alongside our students. Thank you for supporting our staff.

Thank you for believing in the transformative power of twice-exceptional education.

I hope you enjoy this glimpse into the 2024-2025 school year!



Kim Busi, M.D. Founder and Head of School



The Power of Perspective: Lessons From Model UN

At 1:30pm on Thursdays, classroom 513 transforms into the United Nations Council Chamber. The walls are not filled with majestic windows and sweeping murals, but there is a quiet murmur of conversations about debt repayment methods and intellectual property.

The Model UN program at Quad Prep offers students the chance to step into someone else's shoes. Deeply immersing themselves in the viewpoints of other nations, students develop the invaluable skills of empathy, critical thinking, and problem-solving. What started as an opportunity for history-loving students to further their studies has evolved into a deeper exploration of perspective-taking.

Model UN advisors Rachel Behr, Upper School Speech-Language Pathologist, and Will Weber, Upper School History Teacher, co-lead

At the Model UN Conference, Quad Prep students had the opportunity to sit in the United Nations General Assembly Hall in Manhattan.

students through the world of diplomacy. Working toward an intense three-day conference in April, students diligently research, write, and prepare throughout the semester.

"I think the biggest thing is how high interest it is. There is not one student who didn't want to participate. It's a very rigorous club with high expectations. They're willing to put in the work to be successful," says Rachel.

Quinn (Class of '27) is one of those highly-motivated students who wants to be—and has been—extremely successful in this program.

Quinn started Model UN in Middle School and is now a mentor within the group. "When I started, I was in less of a centerline role. Now, I'm pretty much in the opposite shoes. It is really inspiring. I have a lot of confidence in the people here right now," he says.

"For me, a lot of the work in Model UN is based around the central pillar of effectively developing better means to interact with ideas. It gives you a really good opportunity to engage in debate with viewpoints from other countries that you normally wouldn't even consider," Quinn says.

90% of the work of Model UN is researching those viewpoints. The International Model UN organization assigns schools both the countries they'll represent and the topics they'll debate at the conference. This year, the Quad Prep team represented Sweden and Botswana. Four committees form within each country: International Monetary Fund, World Intellectual Property Organization, United Nations Office of Counterterrorism, and World Bank.

Each committee is assigned to research and write a paper on a real-world topic in preparation



Congratulations to the Upper School Model UN team, who represented Sweden and Botswana in the 2025 Model UN Conference in Manhattan in April!

for the debate. Topics range from alternative debt repayment and international trade to intellectual property rights in the age of biotechnology, and AI, national security, and cyber warfare to central bank digital currencies and policies.

Working in pairs, students ask big questions, like "Are there any precedents we need to keep in mind based on cultural expectations?" or "What kind of action have they taken in the past?" Many topics extend beyond the students' history curricula—which is why the research and writing phase is lengthy and essential.

"[Writing the papers] helps me develop personally. I find enjoyment in the writing," says Quinn, the multi-time award-winning writer of position papers. "It helps me debate formally with other delegates that you need to reconcile and reach an effective conclusion with." Although Quinn recognizes that he may not go into a history-related field (he tentatively hopes to be in aerospace engineering), Model UN fosters many transferable skills.

"To an extent, Model UN also strengthens the peer editing relationships," Will says. "Instead of saying, 'Don't say this. This is poorly written,' they would say, 'I don't think this is how Sweden would phrase it.' It's a depersonalized process."

When the conference weekend arrives, no advisors are allowed in the chamber. It's up to the students to rely on their preparation—and each other. "You're going to need to be able to be independent in the conference, but it's not like you're going to be alone," Quinn says. "You will have a lot more experienced delegates to assist you."

(continued on the next page)

Nelson Mandela, South African icon of democracy and social justice—topics our Model UN students feel passionately about—is commemorated in the General Assembly Building of the United Nations Headquarters in Manhattan.



Delegates from schools across the world mingle. Debates ensue. Strategies develop. Eventually, voting blocs form and students must convince their fellow delegates to pass effective resolutions.

After three intense days of collaborating and debating, most of the team's resolutions passed: a feat they proudly attribute to their coherent arguments, realistic action steps, and deep research.

"As a history teacher, it's been cool for me to see the students apply their natural aptitude for the discipline in a more practical setting," Will says. "How often do we hear, 'when am I going to use this?' Every topic in Model UN is something that's relevant today and for the future."

"Perspective-taking is such an important skill to develop for everybody," Will adds. "On one hand, you might see that your perspective isn't that divergent from someone else's, and simultaneously, where in the divergences can you see room for growth and opportunities to better your own perspective?"

Through programs like Model UN, future generations might be better poised to adopt healthy perspective-taking skills.

"I've had to take the perspective of at least two Middle Eastern countries: Yemen and Kuwait. They have extraordinarily different perspectives from someone living here in New York," says Quinn.

For instance, when Quinn represented Kuwait on the topic of preventing environmental overexploitation, he had to consider that Kuwait depends heavily on natural resource extraction to fuel its economy. His seemingly impossible task was to forge a path toward global resolution. "It requires a lot of problem solving between different nations. You eventually have to allow these two separate ideals to converge into one," says Quinn.

It doesn't take majestic windows and sweeping murals to help these ten eager future citizens understand the value of perspective-taking—and since they are our future, we can all look forward with anticipation of where they will lead us.



other students from across the globe.

"On one hand, you might see that your perspective isn't that divergent from someone else's, and simultaneously, where in the divergences can you see room for growth and opportunities to better your own perspective?"

-Will Weber



Most of the team's proposed resolutions passed: a feat they proudly attribute to their coherent arguments, action steps, deep research...and well-coordinated wardrobe!

Q&A: Sam Semlitz

Join us for an interview with Sam Semlitz, MAT, our Director of Learning Support, K-12. Sam started at Quad Prep in 2017 as a reading specialist and has played a pivotal role in creating and shaping the Learning Support program at Quad Prep today.

Q: What drew you to Quad Prep?

A: Part of it is that I'm 2e and openly dyslexic. I have my own strengths and areas of growth, so I can be empathetic toward the students. I realized I wanted to do something with psychology, but I was good at teaching, so I decided to go into special education.

Q: What is learning support?

A: Learning support is flexible and difficult to define because it is tailored to the unique needs of each student. At its core, it helps students who are behind grade level, struggle with the core curriculum, or have learning disabilities that are majorly impacting their access to the curriculum. In Lower School, the focus is pri-

Sam Semlitz, Director of Learning Support, K-12, uses low tech—assistive technologies that do not use computers—during a student session. This slant board helps position the hand correctly for handwriting.

marily reading and math, whereas in the Upper School it is writing and reading comprehension. The key is understanding when and why a student needs support.

Thanks to our teachers' training and ability to adapt instruction, many struggles can be addressed within the classroom, though some students still require additional support. For example, reading fluency issues alone may not qualify a student for learning support, but difficulties with understanding concepts or processing information often signal a need for more targeted intervention. Learning support focuses on identifying gaps and providing specific strategies to bridge them. This may include specialized instruction for students with learning disabilities, like dyslexia, or the use of assistive technology and more focused classroom environments for others.

Q: How has the learning support program at Quad Prep evolved?

A: We started this program in my third year here. In a traditional classroom, you can have a single class of 30 students all with different goals. So we had to think, how does it work for Quad Prep's model? Most of our kids struggle in writing, but if everyone struggles with writing, this isn't a learning support issue. We do less writing intervention now because we switched our curriculum and made writing and reading more accessible across the school. In Lower School, we primarily do decoding and encoding, which is reading and spelling. We also do multi-sensory math and have started paralleling our systems between campuses.

Q: Integration is essential to Quad Prep's model. How does learning support integrate with other programs, services, and supports?

A: We're an academic department, but we work closely with clinicians. One student needed help with articulation, so the speech-language pathologists (SLPs) taught me how to discriminate between sounds so I could integrate that into my sessions to help with spelling. The SLPs also saw how I coached writing, so when they push into ELA classes, they use similar prompts. Not only was it beneficial for the student, but it benefited both staff members. There's always someone at Quad Prep who can help in a specific area of expertise, which is great.

Q: Could you tell us about learning support-informed classrooms and why they're so impactful?

A: Last year, we had two classrooms who partnered with the learning support team to implement strategies that the whole class could benefit from. The growth that students in those rooms made was tremendous. Kids were willing to take more risks and use tools and strategies they weren't willing to use before because they felt less self-conscious. The frequency of learning support sessions also decreased.

Q: How have you seen learning support transform the learning experiences of our students?

A: I used a timed puzzle with one of the students I work with, and he kept beating me! So I said, "You're really good at that!" I don't think he'd ever heard that he was really good at something or that there were career options for him based on his strengths. Students may not realize that their neurodivergence is a strength now, but those strengths really translate later on. We help students understand their strengths, especially when academics are hard for them.



Q: What kinds of assistive technology does the learning support team use?

A: There's low and high tech. Low tech doesn't use computers. We use a slant board which helps position the hand correctly. High tech uses computers and speech-to-text, text-to-speech, multi-sensory typing programs, and more.

We're looking at how AI can be used in a way that's not doing your work for you but instead supporting your work. Many students who struggle in writing lower the complexity or shorten the length of their writing assignments because it's tedious or they don't know how to spell something. Text prediction gives them the support they need to expand on topics, confront the challenges of spelling, and find success at a high academic level.

Q: Why is learning support important to you and to twice-exceptional students?

A: Before coming to Quad Prep, many students have been in different settings in which they haven't felt supported or successful. [It's amazing] having students grow so quickly and feel supported. I struggled to learn at school and learning specialists were very influential to me, so I want to have that impact on other students.

Learning Beyond the Classroom: Field Trips Bring Lessons to Life

At Quad Prep, providing a hands-on, accessible educational experience for all students is an integral part of our mission. This year, students embarked on engaging field trips that brought projects and themes from their classrooms into the world around them. From museums to monuments to cultural institutions, our students took full advantage of all The Big Apple has to offer.

1. A year of firsts: kindergarten students took their first field trip to the New Amsterdam Library! Pegasus students listened to a read-aloud and explored

the multitude of books in our public libraries.

2





2. Even the rain couldn't stop us! Lower School students visited Liberty Island and Ellis Island as part of their Migration and Movement studies. They

examined primary sources relating

to immigration and immigrant experiences—right in our own neighborhood!







3. At the National Museum of Mathematics, kindergarteners participated in hands-on exhibitions that brought math concepts to life. They solved puzzles, uncovered patterns, played with shapes, and saw how math connects to the world outside the classroom!

4. At the National Museum of the American Indian, Lower School students embarked on a multi-sensory journey. They investigated

various artifacts and creations from Indigenous Americans while learning about their impact throughout history.











5. As part of their astrology and geology unit, Middle School Earth Science students traveled to the American Museum of Natural History; they explored planets, natural formations, minerals, and more.









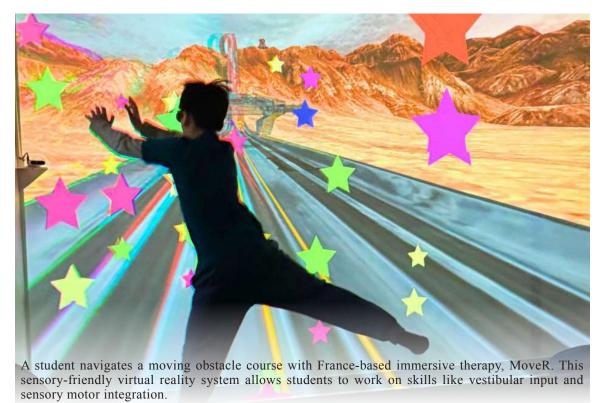


6. Studio Art and Advanced Studio Art High School classes discovered art from across the world at The Met this year in exhibits such as, "Mandalas: Mapping the Buddhist Art of Tibet," and "Lineages: Korean Art at the Met."

7. Students dove into the revolutionary world of surrealism with artists like Andy Warhol and Kate Millett at the MoMA.

Making Strides Through Movement

MoveR Brings Immersive Technology to Upper School



In a world where technology is constantly transforming how we live, learn, and connect, virtual reality is no longer just a thing of the future—it's becoming a powerful educational tool. As virtual reality enters classrooms, it can provide immersive learning experiences for students to embark on tangible adventures. That's where MoveR comes in.

This year, Quad Prep partnered with MoveR, a France-based immersive therapeutic technology designed specifically for neurodiverse individuals. The headset-free, sensory-friendly virtual reality system includes virtual obstacle courses, sports games, word association programs, and more—making it an optimal tool for occupational therapy sessions with 2e students.

"We are trying to find very thoughtful ways to harness where technology is going in terms of school-based interventions, not mak-

ing replacements, but just enhancing what we're doing. We're harnessing the technology that's becoming available, both for the benefit of our students and for their engagement levels," says Emily Vizza, Chief Learning Outcomes Officer and Director of Staff Development.

After undergoing four years of research and development, MoveR is used in over one hundred therapy offices throughout France. In pursuit of expanding into school environments, Quad Prep was selected as their first—and only—school partner in the United States.

"We were looking for a specific location where it would benefit as many children as possible. Quad Prep was the perfect fit, as it offers premium, personalized support along with therapeutic care, which justifies the transition from our tool designed for therapists to one adapted for schools," MoveR Co-Founder and CEO Marie Brugulat says. "We mostly

are looking for metrics to adapt MoveR as a tool for schools on a broader scale. That way, we will be able to provide further evidence of MoveR's positive impact on the learning and mental health of neurodivergent children."

"It's definitely something that is new to our school, new to our therapists, and new to our kids," says Gabby Manfredi, Senior Occupational Therapist at the Upper School. "The way that we can modify the programs to personalize to each student using it is very unique. There are lots of things you can change in the moment to challenge the student or to take a step back."

She's standing in the back of the class-room, watching a virtual obstacle course projected on the wall as a student navigates the changing landscape.

"It's targeting skills like vestibular input and sensory motor integration. A lot of it is very movement based and awareness of your body in space, but there are also modules that tie into academic skills," Emily says. "It can even generate interest in moving for students who aren't as active, or maybe are active, but not as interested in the organized movement experience, like sports or even movement class at school."

To help the MoveR team measure the effectiveness of their technology in schools, several middle school students engaged in a pilot program to track and report their progress using this technology.

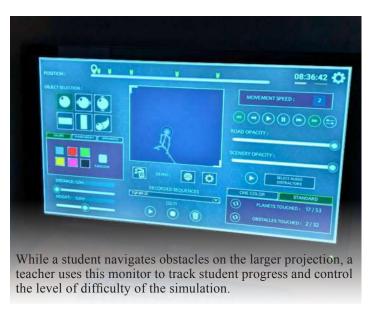
"We thought this was a good population to start with," Emily says. "As middle school students are growing into their own and becoming more self-aware, they still need intervention, but they're also working toward self advocacy."

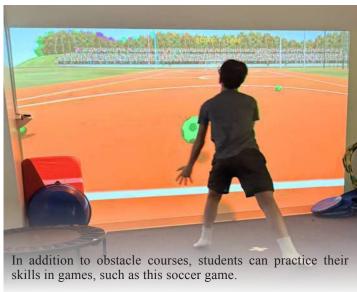
The Occupational Therapy team assessed participating students' visual motor and visual perceptual skills before and after using the program for ten weeks.

"Most students enjoy the program. The more they play, the better they are with each level," says Mikayla Spaulding, an Occupational Therapist at the Upper School.

Students who did not participate in the specific data-gathering program were still able to take advantage of all that MoveR has to offer in their sessions.

"In a way, it is experimental, so that's kind of interesting," Emily says. "We talk a lot about how Quad Prep is an innovative model, and I feel like this really is an example of that."





Unlocking Superpowers: Developing Executive Functioning Skills from K to 12



The "Working Clock," a visual Executive Functioning tool, helps students understand the passage of time in order to make better estimates about the time they need to complete a task and monitor their progress throughout a specific time period.

"I need my binder, planner...What else?" Ellie, a third grader, looks at a visual checklist taped to the inside of her locker. "Oh, my homework folder!" Grabbing her materials, she heads to class.

At her desk, she grabs her planner and writes down the homework for the coming week. After placing her planner back in her binder, she looks at the clock. With three minutes until morning meeting, Ellie heads to her designated spot on the carpet.

How was Ellie's morning routine so successful?

"At the Lower School, the ideal day of a student is being surrounded by lots of different [executive functioning] tools and supports. Ultimately, [that puts them] in charge of their own learning," says Athena Stagias, MS, CCC-SLP, Chief Executive Functioning Specialist & Admissions Liaison K-12. "What I'd love to see

by 12th grade, is that they say, 'I know this tool works for me. I'm going to pull that tool out."

Executive functioning (EF) support is an integral part of the Quad Prep model. By strengthening the cognitive processes that help plan, organize, and complete tasks, manage time, and regulate emotions, neurodivergent students can better achieve their goals.

"All of our kids struggle with EF in some form, depending on their particular profile. It will impact them in the classroom, out of the classroom, when they leave school and graduate. It is paramount that we teach EF alongside their curriculum," says Olivia Ordin, a Learning Specialist and EF Coordinator at the Upper School.

"Prior to this year, staff recognized that executive functioning impacted all of our students, but what was missing was something much more comprehensive and clearly stated as a plan for K through 12 throughout the school

year," Athena says. "Our students have a lot of potential, and I think oftentimes their executive functioning holds them back from being able to show that. I'm so excited to be a part of programming that helps them showcase their gifts."

Throughout the year, Athena built on existing visual supports, including those developed by Sarah Ward, M.S. CCC-SLP, such as the "Get Ready, Do, Done" method and working clocks. In addition to developing and streamlining a new set of scopes and sequences, the program includes robust professional development.

"The fact that all of the staff members are members of the EF team, and all of them are thinking about executive functioning and incorporating EF supports and principles into their work, is what's going to make our program really successful and really special," Athena says.

At the Upper School, students took EF classes during the first semester called Bright Beginnings/ACE. At the Lower School, students participate in EF lessons during lunch.

Whether it's packing up more efficiently or finding a place for all their papers in a folder rather than strewn throughout a backpack, students have steadily improved their EF skills and ability to advocate for themselves throughout the year.

After one EF class, a 10th grade student approached Athena and said, "I think we need a

"[Quad Prep is] truly a model school for how executive function can be embedded with purpose, precision, and heart. What sets them apart is their relentless pursuit of the latest research and most effective practices, always with students' growth at the center."

- Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC/SLP



lesson on procrastination," so the two of them sat together and created a lesson.

"It was so cool to be able to have this conversation with a student and build something that was actually meaningful to him. He recognized what his strengths were, what his challenges were, and he could talk about it so openly," Athena says. "That's the goal. I want kids to advocate for themselves."

Aside from a specified EF period, what makes Quad Prep's EF program stand out is continuous EF integration throughout the day.

"It's not that we're just offering an EF class in isolation and then students are going about their day and forgetting about EF," Athena says. "They're going to math, they're going to movement, they're going to ELA, and EF is infused in each of those classes."

For Sarah Ward, this is exactly what makes Quad Prep so special.

"Working with Quad Prep this year has been deeply inspiring. Their commitment to executive function isn't just a program, it's a philosophy embedded into every corner of the school day. From classrooms to downtime, advisory, and treatment sessions, EF strategies are thoughtfully integrated in ways that feel both natural and intentional," Sarah says. "We often say executive function support is beneficial to all and essential to some. Quad Prep exemplifies what it means to make it essential for all."

Building Neuroinclusive Futures:

Quad Prep and Morgan Stanley Lead the Way

At Quad Prep, partnerships are more than collaborative ventures—they are opportunities to broaden horizons, deepen learning, and build bridges between our community and the world beyond our walls. Our ongoing collaboration with Morgan Stanley exemplifies the powerful potential of true partnership in action.

From classroom lessons to panel discussions, the relationship between Morgan Stanley and Quad Prep is rooted in shared values and a bold commitment to neuroinclusivity.

Financial Literacy for Real Life

In September, Lower School students had the opportunity to participate in hands-on financial literacy classes led by Morgan Stanley's Emma Cunningham, Assistant Vice President and Keith Maxey, Senior Financial Executive.

Students explored concepts like budgeting, saving, and distinguishing needs from wants. They thought critically about income sources—allowance, earnings, and gifts—and weighed them against both fixed and variable expenses.

Emma and Keith connected their lessons to our school's positive behavior interventions and support program, Quad Quest Points. By framing budgeting concepts around something familiar and engaging—like saving and spending Quad Quest Points—they made financial literacy feel relevant, practical, and immediately applicable to students' everyday decisions.

Sharing Neurodiverse Perspectives

In November, Quad Prep Founder and Head of School Kim Busi spoke on a caregiver panel hosted by Morgan Stanley. The panel explored pressing questions about how caregivers and educators can work together to support neurodiverse children, the signs and strengths of twice-exceptionality, and how to navigate educational and societal systems as a parent of neurodiverse children. It was a moment of mutual learning and an example of the way that Morgan Stanley is not just showing up—they're listening, reflecting, and amplifying the experiences of neurodiverse individuals.

Creating Inclusive Futures with AI

The momentum continued in March when Morgan Stanley's Dina Eidman (D&I Center of Excellence Lead for Employee Engagement and Inclusive Initiatives) organized a forward-thinking panel—Neurodiversity and AI: Empowering the Workplace—for Quad Prep's annual Breakthroughs in Twice-Exceptional Futures Conference. The powerhouse Morgan Stanley panel was hosted by Sam Lalanne, Managing Director and Chief Diversity Officer and included Jeff McMillan, Managing Director, Head of Firmwide Artificial Intelligence; Eric Hahn, Executive Director, Lead of AI Scalability; and Ernst & Young's Jamell Mitchell, Global Neurodiversity Ecosystem Leader.

Panelists examined the ways neurodivergent perspectives can shape the future of AI itself, and how we, as a society, can ensure this technology evolves in ways that promote inclusion rather than entrench barriers. The conversation was timely, honest, and full of promise. It highlighted what we believe deeply at Quad Prep: that neurodivergent individuals don't just benefit from innovation—they drive it.

At Quad Prep, we often say that our students are uniquely equipped to meet the future, and with partners like Morgan Stanley, we're working together to shape that future.



Morgan Stanley's Keith Maxey and Emma Cunningham visited the Lower School in the fall and led classes on financial literacy. They explored budgeting, saving, fixed and variable expenses, and more!









Think Like a Scientist: 7 Experiments from the STEAM Exhibition

Have you ever had a chance encounter with a neighbor while on vacation halfway across the globe and thought, "what a small world"? Maybe you got the same airline deal or shared a dream of traveling to that destination. However it happened, in that moment, Planet Earth seemed intimate and connected.

Throughout the year, Brielle Lipstein and Talia Roth, our Lower School Science Teachers, have been building on this concept of interconnectedness.

"We start off each lesson being taxonomists, scientists who classify different topics. We say, 'in this class, we talk specifically about science. We're talking about a natural science: biology. In biology, we're going into fungi.' And so on and so forth. It's like we're telling a story," says Brielle.

This sequential storytelling is part of the "Thinking Like a Scientist" framework Brielle and

Talia developed to help students through the steps of the scientific method: observation, questioning, hypothesis, experimentation, data analysis, and conclusion.

"I start

with a class on observation, then a class on questioning. And so on. They build up those skills slowly so they can really scaffold in all skills without adding too much at a time," says Talia.

Through the annual STEAM Exhibition, Brielle and Talia further explore these connections from a five-subject interdisciplinary approach: science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.

The "Thinking Like a Scientist" framework came in handy when it

was time to select STEAM Exhi-

bition projects. In partnership with the speech-language pathology, technology, math, and art teams, as well as parents, each student participated in a research project of their choosing. K-3 students worked on group projects and 4-5 stu-

dents selected their own questions to explore.

"[When a student has an idea,] we don't say no.

We make [suggestions and] compromises, and that allows the students to feel ownership. I



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have seen such an increase in flexibility and individual problem solving skills because of that. It's my favorite thing to do with them, and they get so excited," says Brielle.

"Experiments are cooler than they used to be. They're hands down just really great experiments. We've got a lot of really scientific thinking happening," says Talia.

Let's take a look at some of this year's STEAM Exhibition successes!

1. The Pegasus Planetarium

In kindergarten, Earth's rotation, weather, and temperature are a big part of the curriculum—and it just so happens that this high-performing group of kindergartners has a strong interest in planets! By making planets out of styrofoam, they created the immersive Pegasus Planetarium for their guests to enjoy.

2. The Delphinus Airport

In 1st and 2nd grade, students learn about matter, gravity, and biomes. "The younger kids really grasp the material when they're role-playing, especially when there's an integration with speech and humanities. That's the best way that they learn," says Brielle. At the Delphinus Airport, students packed suitcases for different biomes, requiring a keen sense of mass and matter (to remain within airline regulations) as well as each biome's climate. The flight attendants





First and second grade students created an interdisciplinary exhibit of biomes, featuring this underwater masterpiece!

explained the destination (biome) highlights, while the pilot shared about gravity to bring the experience full circle.

3. Museum of Biomes

The second 1st and 2nd grade cohort created an immersive museum exhibit of biomes, fusing science, ELA, and art. The students created physical models of the biomes and Dev Ganapathy, Lower School ELA Head Teacher, helped the students frame the facts they've been learning about the biomes as riddles to challenge their viewers.

4. Why Science Matters

The 3rd-grade curriculum focuses on fungi, bacteria, the water cycle, and Brownian motion, so (continued on the next page)





creating an advocacy project about the BP oil spill was the perfect fit. The students had learned about suspensions and how oil and water don't separate because of the size of the molecules and density. Their inquiry: why is the infiltration of oil into our bodies of water harmful to animals, microorganisms, and the overall health of our planet?

conducted experiments and presented the evidence for their

conclusion: oil spills are harmful to our planet.

5. Do Plants Enjoy Vivaldi?

Your love of music + your mom's love of plants = a project on how different genres of music affect a plant's health! This idea came from Hudson, a 4th grade student. For several weeks, Hudson played music for a fern from 3:00pm until 8:00am, selecting a different genre each week: dubstep, classical, or house. He concluded that music can, in fact, impact a plant's growth; the plant grew for dubstep, stayed the same for classical, and wilted in house!



Students also interacted with the many pets that call our science classrooms home, including Ginger the snake.



Ever wondered if your plants enjoy listening to music? This student did! Hudson played music for his fern for several weeks and learned that the plant grew the most when listening to dubstep music.

6. Puzzles Under Pressure

Annabel, a 5th grade student, chose to base her research on the question "what is the effect of time pressure on the ability to do puzzles?" She created a puzzle and did nine timed trials with her counselors and teachers as test subjects. Completion times ranged from 3:25-8:26, with an average of 5:09. Stress levels ranged from 4-10, with an average of 7.4. The conclusion? Timed tests are stressful!

7. Unexpected Role Modeling

For students who struggle with idea generation, getting started on a STEAM project can be difficult. For Isaac, the idea for his project on the acidity of fruit came quicker than it typically might—and Brielle credits this to Isaac's unexpected role of teaching assistant for the kindergarten science class. Isaac started caring for the animals during the kindergarten science classes and quickly became a sought-after part of their community. He is now a proud role model. "It has been the most unbelievable thing. Now, he is fully teaching lessons, because he knows [their topics] so well. I get emotional every time he does it because we have students that say, 'I want to be like Isaac when I grow up," says Brielle. "I have seen such an improvement in his academic performance and stamina. I am so proud of him."





The STEAM exhibition had a few special guests—our Quad Prep chicks! Students learned how to care for these little pets and families got to visit with our furry friends.

MAX FRIEDMAN

Class of 2025









As his seven years at Quad Prep come to a close, Max Friedman has a lot to reflect on. From discovering passions and hobbies to growing personally and academically, Max's story illustrates the power of community and the impact of embracing every opportunity.

Memorable Experiences: Yearbook and Track

When Quad Prep initiated its first-ever sports program, track and field, Max threw himself into the experience. He competed in events like sprinting, long jump, shot put, and the relay. "Relay can be tough, but when it works, it's so rewarding. Being part of a team was heartwarming and gave me a real sense of pride," says Max.

Another defining passion Max discovered at Quad Prep is photography, a pursuit that started almost by accident through his involvement with the school yearbook. "I wasn't a photography student before. I never thought of myself as someone who would be into it," he admitted. "But working on the yearbook, taking photos, editing, organizing, it became incredibly fulfilling. It opened my eyes to something new that I now continue to pursue."

Social and Academic Confidence

Max's time at Quad Prep wasn't only about extracurriculars—it was also a journey of personal growth. He credits the school's supportive environment for helping him develop socially and academically. "When I first came, I was definitely on the shy side, struggling a bit socially," he said. "But through the years here, I became comfortable with myself and confident in making friends. I feel ready for college, ready for the workplace, and just more comfortable in who I am."

On the academic side, Max points to Quad Prep's smaller class sizes, individualized support, and engaging curriculum as major influences on his progress. "At my old school, classes were in the double digits. There were no one-on-ones," he explained. "At Quad Prep, I had a one-on-one every day. It was more intimate, more focused, and the work was genuinely more

thought-provoking. That gave me the confidence to keep up and not doubt myself."

College and Career

Looking ahead, Max is excited to begin his next chapter at the University of Buffalo. Although he's going in undeclared, he's leaning toward communications, with an eye on sports media or education with a focus on teaching English and history. "I've thought about sports communications, media, public relations, even teaching," he said. "Communications is broad, so it opens a lot of doors."

His interest in teaching is also grounded in experience—Max has worked as a summer camp counselor at Trinity Day School for several years. "It's fun. Five- and six-year-olds are full of energy. It's chaotic but reminds me of when I was that age," he said.

Advice for Students

"Take advantage of everything Quad Prep offers—your free periods, your work periods, your one-on-ones," he urged. "Build relationships with your teachers. Try new clubs and activities. It all adds up to something that helps you grow—not just as a student, but as a person."

Max exemplifies his own advice, now leaving Quad Prep with long-lasting friendships dating back to sixth grade (his first year here!) and newer friendships solidified in high school. "It was really nice having two friend groups that eventually became one," he said. "At my old school, it felt more divided. But at Quad Prep, everyone was open to talking. It felt like a breath of fresh air."

As graduation approaches, Max reflects with gratitude. "Without Quad Prep, my path would've been completely different, and a lot harder," he said. "I've grown here. It's been a fun time. I'll always remember it."



In her six years at Quad Prep, Hodaya Tzvi has learned a lot—about herself, her passions, and the world around her. Whether she is working on an art project, writing her own anime story, or learning to play a new instrument, Hodaya's creativity always shines through.

Growing at Quad Prep

Hodaya joined Quad Prep in seventh grade. "When I was at my old school, my grades were not good at all. But the moment I came here, my grades just skyrocketed!" Hodaya said. She credits this shift to the inclusive, warm, and individualized environment at Quad Prep and the teachers and clinicians that make this environment possible. "Teachers take my needs into account and consider how to teach me if I don't understand. I feel like I can ask questions, and they'll restate whatever they said however many times I need them to," Hodaya explained. "I got the highest scores in any math class I'd ever had in my entire life!"

In addition to her academic growth, Hodaya says she has grown personally. "Being here has made me at least a bit more confident in my abilities," Hodaya said. "I have a lot more friends here than I had in my old school."

Finding Her Passion

Outside of her academic courses, Hodaya loves all things art! From performing arts to studio art to creative writing to learning a new musical instrument, she does it all. In her favorite class, Independent Writing IDEALab, Hodaya lets her creativity run wild. "I can just bounce ideas off the other person in the class and the teacher and have them read what I've written. I can just be free and creative," she said.

Hodaya's main interest is anime, a topic that allows her to combine her incredible drawing and writing skills. "I like making my own characters and storylines, and I like to know what those characters look like while I'm writing. I like drawing because I want to design the characters and see what they actually look like so I can picture them in my head," she said. In

the art show this year, Hodaya showcased a few of her favorite anime portraits. "I was very proud of the stuff I had done."

Looking Ahead

Hodaya is also interested in the Japanese language, and was teaching herself the language until a couple years ago. Now studying under a tutor, she has made learning about Japanese language and culture a top priority. This fall, Hodaya will begin her first year at Sarah Lawrence College. "My main draw to [Sarah Lawrence] was that they have a Japanese class and a study abroad program," Hodaya said. "I really want to go to Japan one day."

Looking beyond college, Hodaya dreams of becoming a voice actor, and she has already begun working toward this goal. "I had a bunch of roles starting last summer, and I'm in a couple of indie projects this summer," she said. She also hopes to take a voice acting class at Sarah Lawrence in the fall.

Advice for Younger Students

"Speaking up is one of the best things you can do for yourself. Don't be afraid to let the teacher know your needs, because if you don't speak up, the teacher isn't going to be able to help you. Even if the teacher has to repeat [the answer] a couple times, chances are they won't mind. They'll be happy to help you because that's their job!" Hodaya said. "At Quad, Prep I've asked and gotten answers."

In reflecting on her time at Quad Prep, Hodaya hopes younger students take advantage of the personalized instruction she found so vital to her success.

"I really, really enjoy being here. I'm a little sad to leave!"

Paving the Way for What's Possib The 2025 Breakthroughs in Twice-Exceptional Futures Conference

The stairs creaked as the speakers left the stage following their sound checks before silence filled the cavernous hall. The swish of the revolving door one floor below began to echo. Then, suddenly, the hall's anticipatory silence crescendoed into eager chatter as the 2025 Breakthroughs in Twice-Exceptional Futures Conference began.

This annual conference is one of Quad Prep's longest-standing traditions, gathering influential speakers and neurodiversity advocates from across the country to highlight and celebrate the importance of neuroinclusivity in education and beyond. Held at International House in New York City, this year's conference was a meeting of the minds for educators, parents, and practitioners alike as they swapped ideas, shared best practices, and established new connections.

The conference had a star-studded lineup, opening with morning keynote speaker Peter Shankman. A six-time bestselling author and Co-Founder of Mental Capital Consulting, a global firm dedicated to helping companies attract, hire, and retain neurodiverse talent while creating inclusive, customer-centric workplaces, Peter inspired and energized our audience with insights into his own journey with ADHD.

The crowd erupted when Peter concluded his presentation, and the day continued with a roster of sessions that, according to several attendees, was so incredible, it was difficult to choose which exciting session to attend next.

This year's Nancy Tarshis Legacy Fellowship was presented to Kelly Mahler, award-winning occupational therapist, author, and self-proclaimed interoception groupie.







"You know it is a great conference when you envision kids that are in your class/ school while you are there, and you jot down ways to make changes immediately."

- Breakthroughs 2025 Attendee

Kelly captivated the audience with a keynote presentation on interoception and its importance in the emotional development of neurodiverse students. "This session was not just extremely enjoyable, but also pivotal to working with this population [of twice-exceptional students]," said one attendee.

Other sessions included a presentation on Harvard University's The Open Canopy from Project Zero's Co-Director, Liz Dawes Duraisingh; a session on neurodiversity in girls from Jennifer L. Hartstein, PsyD; sessions on Williams' Creative Thinking Strategies and parenting in a digital world from gifted education guru, Lisa Van Gemert, M.Ed.T; a session on psychopharmacology from Paul B. Yellin, MD; a panel on AI and neurodiversity in the workplace hosted by Morgan Stanley; a session on executive functioning and social cognition from Quad Prep's very own Athena Stagias, MS, CCC-SLP; and a presentation on transitioning to college for students with disabilities from Susan Yellin, Esq.

The Breakthroughs Conference is always a poignant opportunity for professionals in every field to learn and grow, and for the Quad Prep faculty and clinicians, it is a built-in opportunity to learn about cutting-edge practices and research relevant to their daily work with twice-exceptional students. One Lower School staff member wrote in reflec-

tion to the conference, "I want to thank you for organizing the best Breakthroughs yet. Each speaker I [heard from] was so empowering and resourceful and inspired me with more ideas for [my] department."

For over ten years now, the Breakthroughs Conference has been a major convergence of conversations around twice-exceptional education, creating a space to envision new possibilities and pathways for a more neuroinclusive future. As one conference attendee noted, "You know it is a great conference when you envision kids that are in your class/ school while you are there, and you jot down ways to make changes immediately."

We look forward to seeing what the future of Breakthroughs holds!



Past, Present, Future: Connected Through Stories

From the time we are born, we consume stories. Whether it's children's books, to shows, or anecdotes overheard from a family member or friend, humans are constantly interacting with stories. What really matters is what we do with those stories.

In many cultures, storytelling takes on a pivotal role. In Native American culture, for example, storytelling is an integral part of passing down cultural history and sharing history within and outside of the Native American community. This November—Native American Cultural Month in our DEIB curriculum—4th and 5th grade students participated in a Native American storytelling workshop.

Spearheaded by Lower School Head Teacher Marissa Smoller, the workshop aimed to have students learn about the past in order to better inform their actions in the future, as well as expand their worldview through a different cultural lens.

"It's so valuable to our students when they can see that the people and experiences we're learning about actually exist and are part of our wider global community," Marissa says.

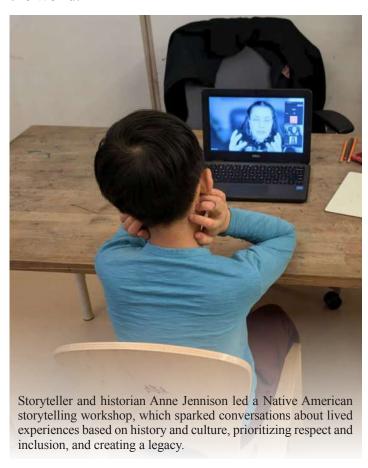
New Hampshire-based storyteller and historian Anne Jennison led the workshop. With more than 30 years of experience sharing Indigenous stories, Anne's pride for her European and Abenaki heritage shone brightly from the moment the Zoom workshop started.

After embarking on a journey of traditional Abenaki stories, history, and culture, Anne sparked a conversation about Thanksgiving, which was just around the corner. She challenged students to consider how different people experience the holiday based on their

history and culture, urging students to keep respect and inclusion in mind when moving through the world.

"It's so important to create experiences for our students that are meaningful, that connect to the curriculum, but are also giving voice and space to communities that they might not hear in their day-to-day life or outside of school," Marissa says.

Students were inspired by the stories and experiences they heard from Anne and created their own stories based on each of their life experiences. They also created a Native American wall of visibility display to elevate Native American voices and the positive impact they've had on the world.





In the weeks following Anne's workshop, the students elevated Native American experiences through their Notable Native People Wall of Visibility.

In the days following the workshop, students continued to reflect on the past, present, and future and the role of storytelling and compassion in their own lives.

"A lot of students shared what they were still grappling with in the story, what made sense to them, and then what made a little less sense but they were still able to take something away from it. Students were able to have really great conversations with each other, kind of on their own, unprompted. They were checking in with each other about the experience," Marissa says.

Students began to see themselves in history and asked questions like "The past is important. What's taking place is important. How are we going to do different things as our own generation? What will our impact be? How are we going to learn about other peoples' cultures and what they have to share?"

"The way they continued to get into deeper discussions with each other was really incredible to see. They want to talk about what's going on in the world so they can develop a viewpoint of their own. They want to be active participants

in their present history," Marissa says.

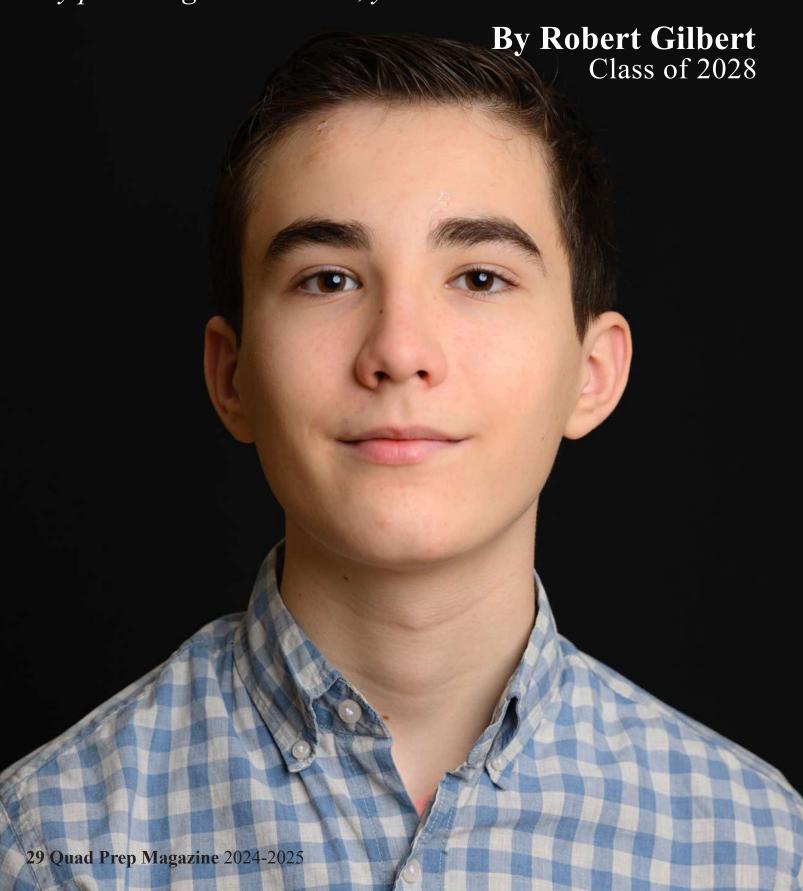
After the workshop, Anne sent one of her books to the library, so students could continue to engage with her stories and further relate their classroom experiences to real-world people, cultures, and history.

Looking ahead to the future, equipping students with the rich knowledge of the past and present is essential in stewarding young minds to be globally-minded, compassionate, respectful, and influential citizens of the world.

"It is so important to continue giving them these experiences so they can understand the connection between the past and the present," says Marissa. "They're at that really amazing point where they're a lot more self-aware and can start to have these conversations about what's going on in the world. They want to talk about it and have a viewpoint that they develop on their own. To continue to allow that to flourish and hear them out so they can create their own mindset of what their adult contribution is going to look like in this country, and maybe even elsewhere in the world, is really powerful."

STUDENT VOICE:

Excerpt from "My generation knows less about civics than my parents' generation did, yet we need it more than ever"



In the days leading up to the 2024 presidential election, the news was filled with partisan language and misinformation about the basic ways our country functions and how elections work.

Many adults, as well as the vast majority of my high school-age peers, don't seem to understand how government works and as a result don't trust it.

That's why I'm convinced that we as a nation have to prioritize civics education in schools to encourage civic engagement, empathy and critical thinking to sustain our constitutional democracy.

Public trust has been steadily declining in tandem with civic literacy. The Pew Research Center has been tracking public trust in government sine 1958 and the decline in trust is very real. Through most of the 1960s, over 70 percent of the American people trusted the government. During the last years of the unpopular Vietnam war, over 50 percent maintained trust in the government. In 1974, after the Watergate scandal resulted in President Richard Nixon's resignation, over 35 percent of citizens trusted their government.

Compare those rates to 2024, when polls

show that only 22 percent of Americans currently trust their government.

Most people on all sides of the political spectrum agree that there needs to be a more rigorous civics education program for students, one that helps them understand what the government does and how it works.

What they can't agree on is how it should be done. They disagree on whether it should include an emphasis on patriotism and even if schools are the right place to learn it.

This, along with political controversy, is stalling any attempt to reform and restore civics education.

We as a nation need to overcome these issues and reach across the aisle to find a compromise on how to provide civics education — for the sake of current and future generations.

Allowing partisanship to prevent us from educating youth will only encourage disengagement, deepen mistrust in government and allow misinformation to flourish for the foreseeable future.

This op-ed was originally published in The Hechinger Report.

— ABOUT THE AUTHOR —

Robert Gilbert is in ninth grade at Quad Prep. Robert is a Life Scout working on his Eagle Award. He is in the running to lead his scout troop as "Senior Patrol Leader" next year. In the years to come, he will focus on teaching civics and helping younger scouts earn Citizenship Merit Badges. Robert has participated in a variety of civics organizations and courses, including as a member of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Student Advisory Council, an Ambassador in Civics & Debate Club at the Sandra Day O'Connor Institute for American Democracy, and the Youth Civic Challenge at the American Museum of Torte Law.

Robert's favorite subjects include Astronomy, Economics, Civics, and History. In his free time, he enjoys playing strategy games, camping, and hiking.

A New Chapter: The Carr Family Library Opens at the Upper School





during a break in their schedule, listening to a presentation, or working on a class project.







The Upper School community is buzzing with excitement as it celebrates the unveiling of its new hub for research, study, reading, and gathering: The Carr Family Library. The library opened on December 4th and was made possible through the generosity of Beth Wadler and Alan Carr (parents of Zac, Class of '23). This beautiful space promises to transform the learning experience for students and faculty alike.

A Space Designed for Everyone

The Carr Family Library is a multifunctional space designed with inclusivity and versatility at its core. With over 1,000 new books adorning its shelves, the library caters to a wide range of interests and academic needs. Planned with the expertise of our Librarian Abbey Mather and our Upper School Occupational Therapists, the space features sensory-friendly elements such as sound panels, flexible shelving, and cozy seating options to accommodate both collaborative and independent work or reading. As a community space, the library will be used for reading and group work, class-wide meetings, professional development sessions, and special events.

The library also provides access to an extensive eBook library with over 10,000 titles, including audiobooks. Additionally, students and staff can utilize educational research tools and databases through a partnership with the New York Public Library (NYPL).

Behind the Scenes

The creation of The Carr Family Library was a community effort that extended beyond the physical space. Parents, staff, and alumni families helped pack and unpack boxes of

books and furniture, and the facilities team and occupational therapists worked tirelessly to ensure the space met the diverse needs of its users.

A Celebration to Remember

On December 4th, members of the Board of Directors, Upper School staff, families, alumni, and the Carr Family gathered for the library's grand opening. Head of School, Kim Busi, kicked off the evening. "For years, I have dreamed of having a bona fide library in the Upper School—a space that would serve as a hub for research, exploration, and academic rigor. I am grateful to Alan Carr and Beth Wadler for making this new chapter in Quad Prep history possible," Busi said.

Alan Carr, current board member, and father of Zac ('23), also shared his personal connection to the school and hope for the library's impact. "Quad Prep really changed the trajectory of our son's life. It saved him," he said. "Our hope is that this new library will impact students for years to come and inspire others to support the critical work of Quad Prep."

Zac also spoke, paying homage to his alma mater. "This was the culmination of a lot of people. To my teachers, as an alum, I want you to know that the students know how much you mean to the school. I love that my family has been able to provide opportunities for future students now that I've graduated," Zac said. "I'll always be around to give suggestions for more books!"

We are grateful to the Carr Family for this incredible gift that will create learning and community-building opportunities for students and staff for many years to come!

Internship Program Fuels Student Passions and Develops Skills for Life after Quad Prep

For many high school students, thinking about life after graduation can be both exciting and daunting. Post Secondary Planning (PSP)—a staple course for Quad Prephigh schoolers—aims to prepare students for the next steps in their academic, professional, and personal journeys.

"A lot of the work in high school focuses on getting [students ready to be independent], whether that's through cooking groups, learning about finances, learning about what it takes to rent an apartment, what it takes to be an independent human in the workforce, a little bit of everything," Senior Occupational Therapist Gabby Manfredi says.

This year, Gabby and Senior Speech-Language Pathologist Jessie Sherry took PSP in a new direction—a robust, internal internship program. Designed exclusively for ninth-graders, these internships help students gain essential, real-world skills in preparation for life after Quad Prep, such as time management, team collaboration, professionalism, and adaptability.

At the beginning of the year, students completed interest surveys and personality tests to learn about their potential strengths and interests. This data helped inform their internship selection, and the process concluded with a written application and an interview.

"In ninth grade, some of the students are ready to think about their future and what they might want to do, and others are really not yet," Jessie says. "This is a way to make it a little more structured for them to figure out



what they might be interested in the future."

made him the perfect candidate for this internship.

honed his writing skills! His interest in a career in marketing

Internships span a wide range of topics and departments, from Maker Space Intern to Student Librarian and Technology Assistant to Marketing Liaison. Students also had the opportunity to think outside the box and pitch their own internships, such as the Student Representative.

"[The Student Representative] idea was created by a student because he felt like there wasn't an outlet for students to advocate for the things they wanted," Jessie says. "He is now pitching those ideas to the administration!"

Due to the diversity of student interests, the program relies heavily on interdisciplinary collaboration and coordination.

"It's great that we have the opportunity to work with staff who are willing to collaborate with us because it makes the internship more purposeful if students are actively reporting to a person who does that job," Gabby says.

As part of the program, students complete check-ins and receive feedback throughout the year, much like they would in an external internship or job.

"We want them to become self aware

about how they're doing, and we can give honest feedback on that and problem solve together so they continue to keep those goals in mind and work on them," Gabby says.

While this is a pilot year for the internships, Gabby and Jessie hope to expand this program throughout high school moving forward.

"I've noticed our students growing, even just with self-reflection," Gabby says. "A lot of times they've had these experiences where they put [a lot of work in] and don't necessarily see [the final product] out there, so for them to see us following up on it is really rewarding."

Curious what students are saying? Charlie, this year's Marketing Liaison, has the scoop!

"During my internship at Quad Prep, I have learned several important skills and lessons while working with the marketing team, as well as gained essential hands-on experience for if I wish to pursue a career in the field. It's a unique opportunity that this school has provided me with, and I've already worked on multiple pieces of marketing material to further my knowledge. One of these was a photo post for the school's Instagram, which was shared with thousands of people online, pushing me to improve it to its very best version. Overall, my internship has taught me many new skills, has built on skills I already have, and has been an invaluable experience for improving my writing capabilities."







The Quad Preparatory School

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