



# YELLOWSTONE SCHOOLS

Newsletter

Winter 2021 Vol. 1 | No. 1

YOU BROUGHT  
**SUCCESS** TO A  
NEW YELLOWSTONE  
MOM & ADOPTED  
DAUGHTER!

**REMOTE-  
LEARNING  
FRIENDSHIP**  
BECOMES THE  
REAL DEAL

YOUR GIFTS BRING  
**COVID RELIEF**  
TO YELLOWSTONE

**CHRISTMAS  
CHEER** FOR  
12 FAMILIES AT  
YELLOWSTONE



Dear Friend,

Are you as excited as I am to begin a new year? At Yellowstone Schools, we are so grateful for your faithfulness through all that 2020 brought us.

From ensuring our students had access to internet service and their own Chromebooks to providing extra special love and care for our teachers—you have been with us through your prayers, kind words, and generous support. Thank you.

As we begin this new year, our students are more behind than they have ever been, thanks to COVID-19. Thank you for your donations, volunteerism, and prayers which will help us undo this damage and provide a world-class Christian education for our students, and we are so blessed because of it. With your continued partnership, students will receive the academic interventions they need for success and a spiritual curriculum that will last them a lifetime.

I hope you will find joy in the pages of this newsletter and in the lives at Yellowstone that you've impacted. There is a story of friendship springing up in unexpected places on page 5—a friendship made possible only through your loving support. You'll also read about how a new mom and her adopted daughter found belonging and healing at Yellowstone.

I hope you have your tickets to join us on April 8 at our Party in the Park. With a COVID-19 vaccine being distributed, we are so looking forward to being together with you again! More details about the party are found at [www.yellowstoneschools.org/party](http://www.yellowstoneschools.org/party).

Looking ahead, I can't help but wonder what challenges and beautiful moments 2021 will bring. Because you continue to give, our students can look forward to brighter days ahead.

Thank you. Thank you for your prayers, your words of affirmation, and your continued giving. You are a blessing to our students. You are a blessing to their families. And you are a blessing to our staff and me. Wishing you and yours a blessed 2021!

Gratefully,



Ryan Dolibois  
Executive Director and Superintendent



## THE YELLOWSTONE PRIDE

### WINTER 2021 VOL. 1 | NO. 1

The Yellowstone Schools Newsletter is printed twice yearly for donors, volunteers, students, parents, alumni, and friends. Questions or comments? Contact [advancement@yellowstoneschools.org](mailto:advancement@yellowstoneschools.org).  
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**ON THE COVER** | First Grader, Cymiyah, sporting her new daily accessory in her school uniform.

Yellowstone Schools educates nearly 500 majority Black children in Houston's historic Third Ward. Yellowstone is committed to partnering with students and families, regardless of financial means, to provide an excellent education, to develop faith and character, and to prepare scholars for life beyond high school. At Yellowstone, we inspire, empower, and invest in students to achieve their highest potential and fulfill their intended purpose.

The schools are comprised of Yellowstone Academy and Yellowstone College Prep. The Academy is a private, Christian school serving students in Pre-K through 4th grade and providing significant financial assistance to families. Yellowstone College Prep is a tuition-free charter school growing to serve students from 5th through 12th grade.

# You brought success to a new Yellowstone mom & adopted daughter!

BY DENISE BRAY HENSLEY

When Lisa Garces saw her daughter, Sky, receive the Future Traveler Award at Yellowstone Schools, she knew she had picked the right school for her newly adopted daughter.

"They knew Sky. Really knew her. It wasn't just an award where someone filled in the blank. It was an award from people who knew my daughter and knew her interests and talents," Lisa said. "I was so proud and so glad."

"Sky loves everything about space," she said, adding that she and her daughter have a family membership at Space Center Houston and visit NASA frequently.

The path to Sky's award that year was marked by many successes, and Lisa gives all the credit to Yellowstone and her decision to enroll her new child, age 6 at the time, in the Academy. "I knew I wanted to adopt as a single mom, and I also wanted to offer a home to a child who likely would not be adopted otherwise."

She did not know when a child would become available to her, so she had to be well prepared and ready for anything. She said her first step was to find the right school to help her new child be successful and for Lisa herself to be a good parent. That school turned out to be Yellowstone, and Damon Gunn, director of campus services, became her guide through the maze of new parents, new students, and complicated requirements and paperwork.

"They were so supportive. They helped with afterschool childcare, and the complications of school enrollment. They even helped me order uniforms," she said. "It was wild but so nice to have Damon help me through the system."

Sky entered Yellowstone in first grade on Valentine's Day and all the students already had valentines prepared for their new classmate, thanks to teacher LaVerne Gilliam. Neither mom nor daughter expected such a wonderful welcome on a first day, especially for Sky, who had not felt like she fit in at other schools and places.

"Ms. Gilliam was always there for us with help and advice. She even supported Sky by attending many of Sky's activities outside of school. I'd look up and she'd be in the audience," Lisa said.

Lisa grew up with strong parents who worked hard, and Yellowstone reinforced those expectations for Sky. Hard work and homework became the norm. Sky also learned to treat others with respect and to expect the same from others.

"It's at Yellowstone where Sky learned how to make friends. I saw her confidence grow and grow," said Lisa, who has spent the most recent three years of her career at Depelchin Children's Center, a foster care and adoption agency.

Lisa says it is at Yellowstone that she learned about services available to help Sky flourish and meet milestones. Sky is now a third-grader and a straight-A student.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA GARCES



# YELLOWSTONE'S SCHOLARS SOCIETY

Members of the Scholars Society stand with our students and help repair our nation's education system by providing high-quality, faith-based academics, regardless of economic status. Their gifts create a safe and supportive learning environment, promotes academic excellence, and encourages students' spiritual growth.

Thank you to all of our Scholars Society members.

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As of January 25, 2021

You are important to us, and we strive for 100% accuracy. If you see any problems with this list, we want to know!  
Email us at [advancement@yellowstoneschools.org](mailto:advancement@yellowstoneschools.org).



## Spread the love by donating each month!

Making a monthly gift to Yellowstone Schools is a way to ensure you're making an impact throughout the year. Consider transitioning your daily coffee shop stops into a gift that transforms a life! A simple gift of \$100/month adds up to a \$1,000+ impact!



L-R: CONNELL, CARTER

# REMOTE-LEARNING FRIENDSHIP BECOMES THE REAL DEAL

BY DENISE BRAY HENSLEY

Just when we need a pandemic story with a happy ending, Yellowstone students bring us a great one! Two third-grade boys met during their online classes at the beginning of the school year, when most campuses were closed. They became virtual friends first and now are best friends in person. These 8-year-olds forged a friendship in a new way in the uncertain times of COVID-19 and quarantine.

Connell is a new student at Yellowstone, but his friend Carter has been at the school since Pre-K. During remote learning, they were placed in the same class.

"We try to encourage a classroom feeling even though the students aren't physically in the same room. They had academic classes together, but also classes like Bible study and music," said Candice Lapid, principal of Yellowstone Academy for our Pre-K through 4th Grade students. "They connected well in all of their classes."

"I wasn't sure how remote school was going for new kids in our school, like Connell," Ms. Lapid said. "Apparently, it was going really well."

Upon returning to campus for in-person learning, the boys

learned they would be in different classrooms. One day, Ms. Lapid encountered Connell in the hallway looking a little sad.

"We started chit-chatting in the hall, and I asked him if he was able to make friends in his class. He said he did have friends but really missed his best friend, Carter," Ms. Lapid said.

"I know I would feel so calm if I could see Carter. He makes me laugh," said Connell.

The principal happened to know that Carter sat in the front of his class, near the door, so she and Connell decided to walk by, look in, and give Carter a wave.

"They were so sweet," Ms. Lapid said. "When we walked back to

Connell's room, he was in a different mood. A great mood." That is when the principal decided to photograph the two boys together for Connell to keep with him and look at when he is feeling uncertain or anxious.

"They were so happy together. Friends help us feel happy and safe," Ms. Lapid said.

*See a photo of Connell's desk with the picture on page 4.*

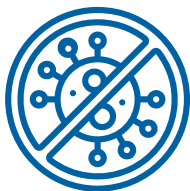
## Conscious Discipline

Ms. Lapid noted that she used "Conscious Discipline" as a way to help Connell adjust. Yellowstone Schools use this framework to help students solve problems for themselves, stay on task, pay attention, and finish work.

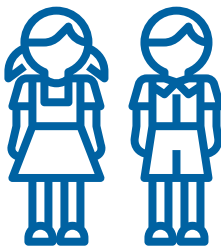
Conscious Discipline teaches students to self-regulate and deal with their feelings – first by identifying what feeling they are having, and then by giving students tools to help manage those feelings.

To learn more about Conscious Discipline, please visit our blog at [yellowstoneschools.org/blog](https://yellowstoneschools.org/blog). To receive a weekly "round up" email of heartwarming Yellowstone stories and photos like this, please email [advancement@yellowstoneschools.org](mailto:advancement@yellowstoneschools.org).

# YOUR GIFTS BRING COVID RELIEF TO YELLOWSTONE



**0** KNOWN CASES  
OF COVID-19  
TRANSMITTED ON  
CAMPUS



**72%+** ACADEMY  
STUDENTS ON  
CAMPUS

**50%+** COLLEGE  
PREP STUDENTS  
ON CAMPUS

**160,000+**  
MEALS  
PROVIDED  
SINCE MARCH



**10,000+**  
MASKS



**126,000**  
ANTI-  
BACTERIAL  
WIPES



**200+**  
GALLONS  
OF HAND SANITIZER



**300+** FACE  
SHIELDS

As of January 6, 2021.

Friends, you donated more than **\$1,000,000** specifically for Yellowstone's COVID-related needs since March 2020. Look at just a fraction of what you provided!

Please continue to give generously to Yellowstone, as we know the fight is not over. While the need for face masks and desk shields will diminish, more costly expenses such as increased funding for reading and math specialists, will be needed to combat the academic impact of the pandemic. [www.yellowstoneschools.org/give](http://www.yellowstoneschools.org/give)

## CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR 12 FAMILIES AT YELLOWSTONE

BY THOMAS PARKER

For twelve Yellowstone families, this Christmas season was a source of dread instead of the usual holiday cheer. With many finding it hard to secure stable employment due to COVID-19's impact on the economy, these families were hard-pressed to pay their bills and still have enough left to celebrate the season. Some had lost loved ones in the months leading up to December. Others had been forced to relocate as they downsized to meet their new economic realities.

Each family's situation was unique, but they were all pointed towards the same outcome: a bleak Christmas with no special meals, no gifts, and no time spent with beloved family members. It would take a Christmas miracle to make their holiday dreams come true.

That Christmas miracle came in the form of a group of Yellowstone supporters who banded together. Through their incredible generosity, Yellowstone was able to help each of these families make this Christmas season special.





3000 Trulley St | Houston, TX | 77004

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## Your Impact is Growing!

Your donations of time, talent, and treasure directly support our students by giving them access to academic programs and opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have. Your investment in their education and spiritual life develops faith and character and prepares scholars for life beyond high school.

We are so proud of the Yellowstone alumni listed here for continuing to succeed in college! Thank you for helping to launch them forward!

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Houston Community College

TIMERA ADAMS  
University of Houston

MARVIN ANARIBA  
Houston Community College

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University of Houston

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JOHNATHAN GOODEN  
University of Houston

INDYA GORDON  
Houston Community College

BREA GROCE  
Sam Houston University ('20)

ARIEL JOHNSON  
Prairie View A&M University

IO'SHA JOHNSON  
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KERRI JOHNSON  
Air Force Academy

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IMANI THOMAS  
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JUSTON THOMPSON  
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DESHAWN WILLIAMS  
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