



YELLOWSTONE SCHOOLS

Magazine | Summer 2023

**FAMILY VALUES
ARE AT THE HEART
OF YELLOWSTONE**

**THE TALENTED
STUDENTS OF
TRULLY STREET**

**CAMPUS DESIGNED
AS A BRIDGE TO THE
COMMUNITY**

**READING
PROGRAM
POST-COVID MAKING
A DIFFERENCE**





We have much to celebrate as we prepare to serve the most students in our history. Recovering from the educational hardships of COVID-19, we created and began implementing a **strategic plan to address academic achievement** in new and meaningful ways. Read more on page 9 for just one example.

We initiated a **\$30 million campaign** in 2020, and because of your generosity, we have a beautiful, **newly-remodeled campus** to welcome our **new 9th-graders this fall**. When they graduate in 2026-27, this class will bring us full circle, marking **the 100th anniversary of our Douglass Elementary School**

building, our first graduating class of high-school seniors, and Yellowstone's 25th year of educating youth.

We have achieved much because we have a shared vision. Your faithfulness in our belief that every student is made in God's image and is born with purpose is paying off. Because of your stewardship, nearly **7 out of 10 alums have earned or are on track to earn a post-secondary degree or certification**. That's important because in our greater Third Ward community, just 1 in 10 students will earn any post-secondary degree. We are changing the educational landscape in our community and filling a huge gap in unmet needs. **Well done, Yellowstone family!**

As I look out on our new playscapes and experience first-hand the many activities on campus, I am reminded of what a gift it is to serve our students and their families. Our academic instruction fuels curious minds and prepares them for a bright future. Did you know **our students receive two to three times more math and reading instruction** than their peers in traditional programs?

I am confident that our leadership's **vision and faithfulness have set the stage** for the next Yellowstone chapter. We must continue creatively finding solutions to challenges and investing in the best educators, technology, and support systems available. And we must never lose focus on what sets us apart: integrating the word of Christ in all we do, building meaningful relationships in small classes, providing social and health services to the best of our ability, offering extracurricular activities, and partnering with the community.

As we move forward, our vision is the same as those who built Douglass Elementary nearly 100 years ago. Together, we are preparing **the next generation of students to become leaders**. Your time, talent, and resources are critical in navigating this journey. We are so glad you are alongside us and can never thank you enough.

In gratitude,

Ryan Dolibois,
Executive Director and Superintendent, Yellowstone Schools

THE YELLOWSTONE MAGAZINE SUMMER 2023

The Yellowstone Schools magazine is printed twice yearly for donors, volunteers, students, parents, alumni, and friends. Questions or comments? Contact advancement@yellowstoneschools.org. Copyright © 2023

EDITOR | Amy Tanner

WRITERS | Helen Caudle

PHOTOGRAPHY | Ashley McLaughlin

DESIGN | Thomas Parker

YELLOWSTONE ACADEMY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Dominy - *Board Chair*,
Venus Anderson, Cedric Burgher II,
Brad Childers, Karey Dye,
Bryan Fisher, David Humphreys,
George Kaleh, Duane King,
David Lumpkins, Kristi Lumpkins,
Mark McCollum, Devin McCord,
Trey McDonald, Phil Pace,
Jonathan Tauber, Clark Thompson,
Frank Tsuru, Elizabeth Wareing,
James Zucker

YELLOWSTONE COLLEGE PREP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ken Cowan - *Board Chair*,
Janice Character, Les Csorba,
Lionel Jellins, David Lumpkins,
Tori Moore-Cofield, John Peavy,
Valerie Williams

YELLOWSTONE SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ryan Dolibois, MEd
Executive Director / Superintendent

Melanie Brooks, CPA
Chief Financial Officer

Jasmen Denton, PHR
Director of Human Resources

Damon Gunn
Director of Campus Services

Candice Lapid, MEd
Principal, PK-5th Grade

James Mosley, EdD
Chief of Schools

Amy Tanner, MBA
Chief Advancement Officer

ON THE COVER | Yellowstone student Malaysia Wright, age 4, cuts the ribbon along with board chairs Lionel Jellins and David Dominy at our ribbon-cutting ceremony in Christ Commons on March 1, 2023.

Rooted in the Christian faith, Yellowstone Schools serve more than 500 majority Black students and alumni in PK3 through 9th grade and beyond. Located in Houston's historic Third Ward, Yellowstone is committed to partnering with students and families, regardless of financial means, to provide life-changing experiences that prepare scholars for life beyond high school.

Yellowstone Schools is comprised of Yellowstone Academy—a private, Christian school serving PK3 through 5th grade—and Yellowstone College Prep, a tuition-free charter school growing to serve 6th through 12th grade. As a public entity, College Prep complies with all federal and state laws.

FAMILY VALUES ARE AT THE HEART OF YELLOWSTONE

As educators and parents of three students at Yellowstone, Jasmin and Chris Rutledge are inspired by the Christian values they find here. They appreciate the school's academic excellence. And what makes Yellowstone truly special for the couple is the family environment of the campus.

"Yellowstone is family," says Chris, a 4th-grade educator. "This is a small-town community, with everyone welcomed daily with hugs and smiles. Leadership and teachers know all the kids by name, and that just doesn't happen at most schools."

Jasmin agrees, "Teaching isn't the only thing happening at Yellowstone." The 2nd-grade educator is awed by the generosity she sees around her. "I have volunteers who show up with hands-on activities and provide gifts from the heart whenever needed. Our volunteers, teachers, and community members know we offer these children a life-changing experience."

The Rutledges, who met while in college pursuing degrees, see their children Savannah (3rd grade), Addison (2nd grade), and Johnathan (Kindergarten) thriving at Yellowstone.

"We are creating access to a private school experience in a community where before it wasn't a possibility. When you layer in the social services component like chapel and mentoring programs to the focus on educational excellence, we knew that this is where we wanted our children to go to school."

The Rutledges believe that Yellowstone is changing education in the Third Ward. "Yellowstone lets your children understand that their world is so much bigger than what they see around them. They can meet and connect with people and are allowed to dream big," Jasmin says.



SAVANNAH, ADDISON, AND JOHNATHAN HAVE THE LAST WORD

SAVANNAH, AGE 9

Favorite Color: Black because it's sleek and dark.

Wants to Be: A horse rider

Favorite Thing about School: Recess

ADDISON, AGE 7

Favorite Colors: Pink and gold because pink is like cotton candy, and gold is the color of coins.

Wants to be: A baker

Favorite Thing about School: Math and lunch

JOHNATHAN, AGE 5

Favorite Color: Blue because it's in the rainbow.

Wants to be: A truck driver

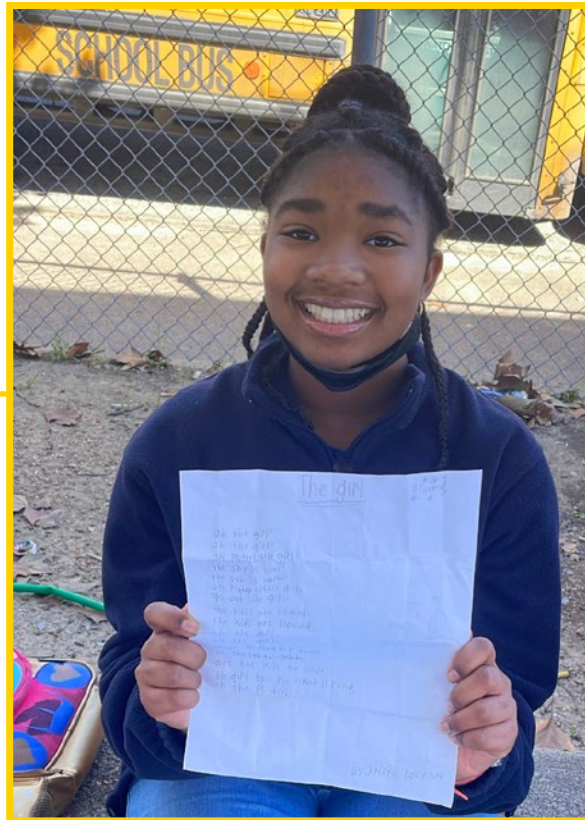
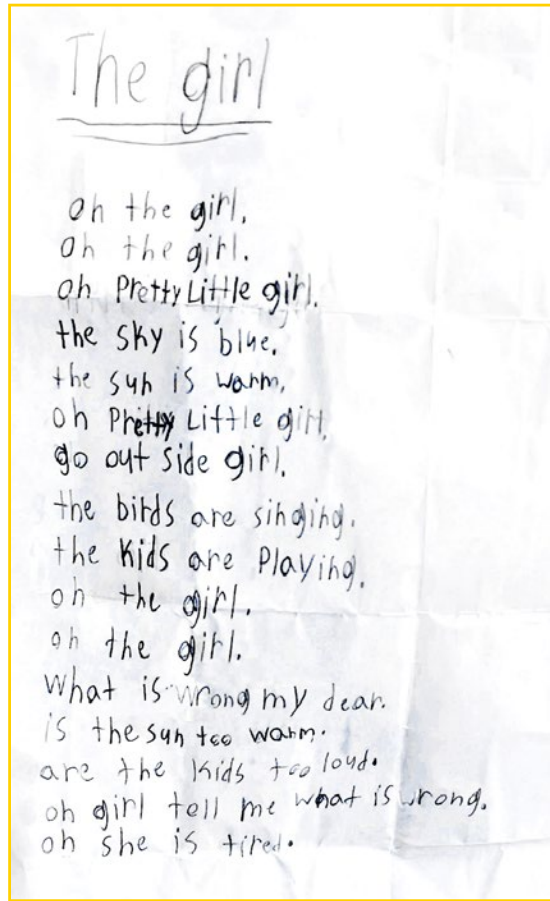
Favorite Thing at School: Math



3rd-grader Savannah is also quite the artist. She is pictured here with the artwork she created for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's annual school art program!

THE TALENTED STUDENTS OF TRULLEY STREET

Yellowstone teachers are inspired by all of our students and their God-given talents. We are blessed to help guide our remarkable young people and are honored to showcase just a few of our students.



KRISTIE D., 5TH GRADE
 After learning about figurative language, Kristie wrote a poem using language to draw in the reader and help visualize a moment in time.

CALEB C., 8TH GRADE
 Caleb wrote an essay on technology dependency for his language arts class showing critical thinking, research skills, and an ability to convey an important message.



Technology Dependency

It's astonishing how much technology has made its way into our everyday lives. You can travel hundreds of miles per hour just by mindlessly scrolling on your cell phone. These things have significant impacts on our lives today. Scrolling on your phone is so addictive that it can lead to something known as "lost days"—the loss of time from scrolling on your phone for hours with nothing else accomplished. Technology dramatically impacts our lives but also has side effects on our everyday lives.

Today, we overuse our phone screens. Let's think about drugs. Drugs can be very addictive, and our brains process the use of our phones in a similar "pleasure/reward cycle." ([Premier Health, Dr. Lorenz](#)) According to the article "[Why Can't We Put Our Phones Down?](#)" by [Sudeshna Roy](#), scrolling isn't addictive or hypnotic but an act of compulsion. "...Indulgence doesn't give us immediate pleasure (as opposed to addiction) but only provides temporary relief from restless anxiety." According to this study, the behavior of mindless scrolling shows that, yes, we're addicted to scrolling, but the reason is that it gives us a reprieve from worry and anxiety.

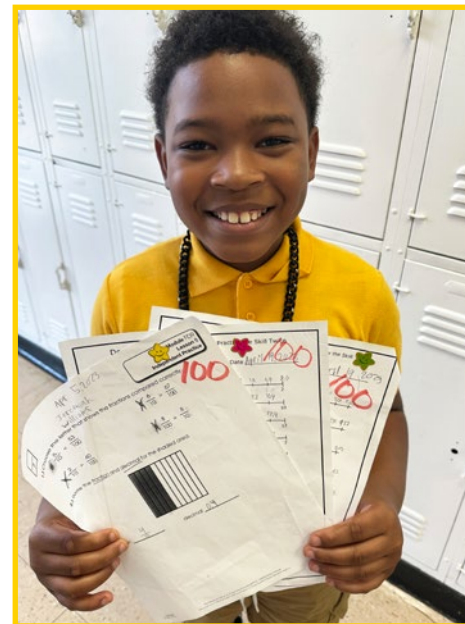
Some might say technology's influence is small in our lives and our world; however, this would be false. Technology is everywhere, and exposure to it at a young age can start an early



VICKI A., 8TH GRADE
 Vicki faced off in the 100m dash against Texas's fastest middle school girls. Her current time has her ranked in the top 5 in Texas.



NEVAEH R., KINDERGARTEN
 Nevaeh is reading on a 1st-grade level and can answer comprehension questions independently.



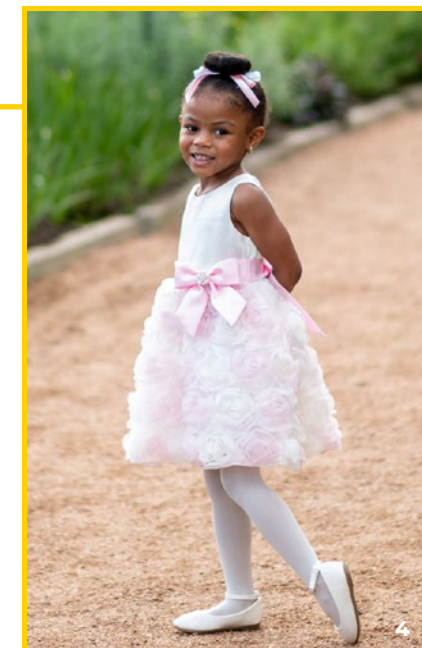
JEREMIAH W., 4TH GRADE
 Jeremiah is a top math student. His academic performance exemplifies Yellowstone's academic excellence.

RAMONA R., 8TH GRADE
 Ramona joined concert band this year and learned to play a new instrument, the flute. She also plays the piano and has studied the clarinet.



JOURNEI H., PRE-K
 Journei has exceptional public speaking skills, especially for a four-year-old! She had a leading role in our recent Black History Program and gave the invocation prayer at our April 13th Party in the Park event.

ADDISON W., 2ND GRADE
 Addison met her goals for 2nd-grade reading and has moved on to 4th-grade material. She also has the highest reading level on her MAP scores.





YELLOWSTONE OPENS GAME-CHANGING, RENOVATED CAMPUS

On March 1, Yellowstone Schools hosted a ribbon-cutting in our new Christ Commons to a packed house of students, parents, volunteers, donors, and civic leaders. Chief of Schools Dr. James Mosley and 3rd-grader Ari Walthall welcomed everyone, then Founder David Lumpkins and *Yellowstone. Forever.* campaign co-chairs Brad Childers and Les Csorba addressed the crowd. 7th-grader Evan Edwards gave a moving performance of "Amazing Grace." Lastly, a "living" timeline of individuals important to the school officially opened the new building. Refreshments and self-guided tours of the four-acre campus were enjoyed by all.

Yellowstone's 3rd-grade students were proud to serve as greeters during the ribbon-cutting event!

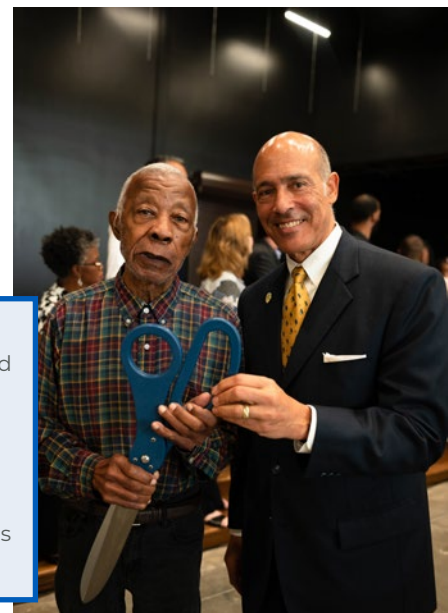
3rd-grader Ari Walthall welcomes the crowd. Also pictured: Rev. Dr. D.Z. Cofield of Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church and Dr. James Mosley, Chief of Schools.



Participants in the "living" timeline represented historical moments in Yellowstone's history—from founders Kristi and David Lumpkins to a six-month-old future Yellowstone student.



ABOVE: Yellowstone Schools co-founders David and Kristi Lumpkins and recent Board Chair Clark Thompson bow their heads during the invocation.



RIGHT: Our 6-9th grade board chair, Lionel Jellins, poses for a photo with his father-in-law, Robert Daniels, who attended Douglass Elementary more than a half-century ago!

MAYOR TURNER OPENS NEW BASKETBALL COURT AND HAILS A PARTNERSHIP

Mayor Sylvester Turner visited our campus on April 3 to officially "cut the nets" on the school's new blacktop hoops, coinciding with the NCAA Finals taking place a few miles away. He praised a partnership with Yellowstone enabling the City to use campus facilities for selected community meetings, recreational programs, and in times of great community need or emergency disaster.



Above: A group of 3rd-grade students led by teacher Marlena Smith start the event with a time of prayer and thanksgiving.

Below: Mayor Turner poses with several of our middle school honor-roll students.



Dr. James Mosley, Chief of Schools, welcomes a crowd of students and supporters ahead of Mayor Turner's remarks.



CAMPUS DESIGNED AS BRIDGE TO THE COMMUNITY

While the remodeled Yellowstone campus is both beautiful and functional, it is, as importantly, a powerful bridge to the Third Ward community, according to Nicola Springer, the principal architect on the project.

Springer brought a unique approach in giving the building new life while respecting the school's history and its significant role in the neighborhood. From early in the process, she and her colleagues incorporated what Springer calls Play Theory, a collaborative way of gathering information before designing the new building.

The architects wanted to have some design fun with the project and create a sense of discovery throughout the halls. If you check out the ceilings inside Christ Commons, you'll find the bright Yellowstone "Y" incorporated into the overhead lighting and soundproofing. Or, as you walk through Steadfast Hall, notice the creative use of windows and light to change the feeling of the space around you.

A resident of Houston since graduate school at Rice University, Springer has gained a broad insight into the fabric of Houston through her professional and volunteer work. As she told the Houston Defender, "The new Yellowstone building gains inspiration from the original architecture of Third Ward," Springer said. "So, whether it's the row houses, the brick building, red tile roofs, or the art of famous artists like John Biggers, the building constantly reinforces the culture and quality of the community."

She adds that the architectural team wanted to honor the legacy of the original Frederick Douglass building by integrating copper tones in the new building expansion to complement the original red brick structure and bring richness into the new space. "We tried to recognize the community's history and culture," Springer says. "This is an important step in memorializing a neighborhood. This new campus is a reinvestment into the Third Ward and a beacon for its future."



A Source of Light: Of all its architectural features, the building's many large windows are both visually striking and play an important role in student success. Natural daylight is a hugely important factor in a student's education. Studies show that natural light boosts focus & concentration, regulates the body's circadian rhythm, and supports the immune system.



Nicola Springer, AIA, LEED AP and Executive Vice President and the Director of PreK-12 Projects at Kirksey Architecture.



Memorializing the Neighborhood's Architectural Language: The silhouettes of pitched roofs depict six "houses" and mark a visual connection to the Third Ward's shotgun-style row houses. In classrooms with the pitched roofs, high ceilings and tall windows provide unique learning spaces.



Beacon to the Community: At the center of Yellowstone's campus is Christ Commons, a place of community that unites the two school buildings and extends views across the grand courtyard and out into the neighborhood.



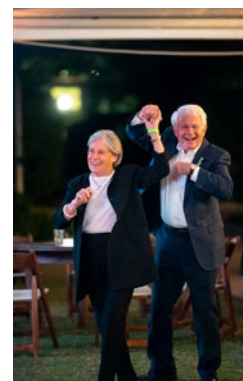
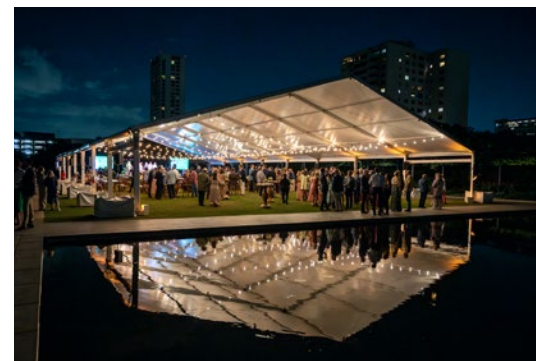
Geometric References to Cultural Art: One of the Third Ward's most well-known artists, Dr. John Biggers, created paintings that explore the human condition of Black lives through repeating geometry. References to Biggers' geometric symbolism can be found throughout the building in the form of vibrant colors, angled ceilings, pitched roofs, and textured façades.



With perfect spring weather, hundreds of guests gathered at the beautiful McGovern Centennial Gardens on Thursday, April 13, to celebrate Yellowstone Schools' 20th Anniversary during its annual Party in the Park fundraiser. The atmosphere was filled with laughter, music, and friendship as the event raised over \$992,000, including dollars from a matching gift.

Thanks to co-chairs Sara and David Lewis and Kristin and Jonathan Tauber, program participants, and our generous donors for such a successful event.

Photos by Lindsey Lamberth | Chris Bailey Photography



THANK YOU FOR YOUR MONTHLY GIFT!

- Anonymous (3)
- Regan and Chris Bailey
- Martha Baum
- Brena Baumann-Gonzalez and Carlos Gonzalez
- Jan and Robert Benjamin
- Lorrie and Bill Blackstone
- Katy and Logan Boatman
- Melanie and Duane Brooks
- Kathryn and Ced Burgher
- Barbara Carter
- Christ the King Presbyterian Church
- Anne and Matt Clinger
- Carranda Comeaux
- Mary Cook
- Linda and Gene Cover
- Dawn Creighton
- Susan and Bob Dolibois
- Kim and Ryan Dolibois
- Patrice and Richard Domercq
- LaTicia Douglas
- James Dudley
- Cynthia and Richard Fine
- Christopher Foster
- Laverne Gilliam
- Jennifer and Richard Gould
- Pam and Larry Hall
- Sharon and Jim Hartman
- Jamie and Bobby Hillin
- Laurie Horner
- Shawna and David Jackson
- Amanda Karvelsson
- Dionne Kubin
- Candice Lapid
- Steven Leggett
- Rachel and Jared Levine
- Julian Lewis
- Sheena McCarthy
- Suzanne and Tim McKenzie
- Weldon Meeks
- Michael Norton
- Tommy Parker
- Caroline and Jason Peters
- Jane and Keith Poe
- Brooke and Jordan Pollock
- Shannon and Robert Shary
- Zach Springer
- Amy Tanner
- Mary and Stacey Thomas
- Sabrina Tour
- Alyssa Turner
- Brenda Ward-Burns
- Alexis Wendt
- Betsy and Jim Winn
- Jessica and Rudy Wrabel

Monthly donors as of June 1, 2023. If you feel your name should be on this list, please contact us.

Add your name to this list by making a monthly gift online at yellowstoneschools.org/give-now, or text/call our advancement team to set up your gift at 713.741.8000.

IN HONOR

The following persons were honored by a gift to Yellowstone Schools between July 1, 2022 and June 1, 2023.

Emma S. Anselmi
Douglas Y. Bech
Matthew Brazil
Nona and David Carmichael
Lenora Cross
Les Csorba
Catey and Steve Cumley
Claudia and Brad Freels
Laverne M. Gilliam
Johnathan Gooden
Audrey Gow
Kimberly Hansen
Elizabeth Hildebrand
Lionel Jellins
Sara and David Lewis
Evelyn Lewis
Kristi and David Lumpkins
Javeah McMillion
Anna Minmier
Giovanni Nearing
Leslie and Randy Newcomer
Eloise Novotny
Mary and Robert Pickering
Ann M. Smith
Harry Smith
Elizabeth and Peter Wareing
Darren C. Wolfman

Making a gift in honor or memory of someone is a thoughtful way to celebrate a special person or occasion while contributing to our mission to inspire, empower, and invest in students. If you would like to make an honorarium or memorial gift to someone special in your life, please contact our advancement office at advancement@yellowstoneschools.org, call us at 713.741.8000, or visit www.yellostoneschools.org/give.

AERO, A NEW READING TUTORING PROGRAM, IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A new partnership between Yellowstone and The Children's Learning Institute (CLI) at UT Health is helping our students get back on track with their reading skills after the educational disruptions of COVID-19. Elementary Principal, Candice Lapid, says that largely because of the pandemic, some students were more than a year behind in reading levels.

The AERO, or Academic Enrichment and Outreach program, is based on years of research. The curriculum is accessed online by educators and tutors and then delivered to students face-to-face using electronic tablets. The online platform helps train educators while students' reading skills progression is identified and monitored for progress.

CLI staff have trained former Pre-K teacher and new librarian, Desirae Thomas, to use AERO. Thomas and six other AERO specialists are tutoring about 72 students in grades 2 through 5 for a total of 3,386 sessions. This equals an average of 1,060 minutes of reading intervention per student.

"We are seeing incredible progress through the AERO program in collaboration with The Children's Learning Institute. I am thrilled to witness our students making huge strides in their reading skills. Together, we are empowering them to embrace a brighter future," said Principal Lapid.

In the coming year, the goal is to transition leadership and training to Yellowstone staff. Moving forward, the hope is that by 2025 Yellowstone will have fewer students who need tutoring based on the program's success.

2022-23: IT'S A WRAP!

As the school year wound down, Yellowstone scholars enjoyed a day under the sun participating in our annual Field Day events. Elementary students enjoyed face painting, snow cones, water slides, and court relay races. Middle school students participated in water balloons, laser tag, video game trucks, gym relays, and a digital photo booth. There were smiling faces all around.

All classes had awards programs to celebrate advancing to the next grade level. Ceremonies featured tributes to parents, class performances, and solos—making for a unique family experience. Finally, scholars in both our upper and lower schools received a yearbook as a final keepsake of the 2022-23 school year.

All of these incredible moments and memories are what make a Yellowstone education a life-changing experience, and none of it would be possible without your generous support. Thank you for all the ways you show love and support for our Yellowstone scholars!



IN MEMORY

Your gift enables Yellowstone to inspire, empower, and invest in students. Please take comfort in knowing that your loved one's memory will be celebrated by bringing children the joy of learning so that they may be empowered to have a better tomorrow.

We remember the following persons who were memorialized by a gift to Yellowstone between July 1, 2022 and June 1, 2023. May their legacy take root in the lives and futures of our students.

Henrietta Bonner
Nancy R. Chickering
Judy Curran
Caroline DeLuca
Janie Evans
Kate M. Gery
Jeanette Hamilton
Miriam H. Jellins
Nala I. Johnson
Beverly C. Leggett
Mary Lou A. Leyh
Verna Mair
Elmo Patrick
Jeffrey S. Phelps
Austen M. Reade
Betty Stone
Corey Tackett
Steve Tackett

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

— Psalm 91:1-2 (NIV)



3000 Trulley St | Houston, TX | 77004
713.741.8000 | yellowstoneschools.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Formal Salutation
Company Name
Address Line 1, Address Line 2
City, State Zip

ALUM KERRI JOHNSON FLIES HIGH AT AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Kerri Johnson credits her time at Yellowstone Schools for her success in life. As a legal studies major at the U.S. Air Force Academy, she is on track to become a special investigations officer after graduating in 2024. Kerri emphasizes the impact of small class sizes and personal attention, which boosted her confidence and made her feel part of a family at Yellowstone.

She recently visited Mrs. Smith's 3rd-grade class to express her gratitude and encourage students to embrace guidance from wiser individuals.

Kerri excelled in math, science, and athletics during her student years. After graduating from Yellowstone in the 8th grade, she attended Second Baptist High School, where she participated in track and basketball. Despite scholarship offers from various Texas universities, Kerri had her sights set on the Air Force Academy and was accepted into their 5-year program. Her leadership skills were recognized, and she now serves as a Squadron Commander, helping shape newer cadets.

Kerri's journey is a testament to the mission and vision of Yellowstone that inspired her to become a leader dedicated to serving her country and others.

“Yellowstone is more than a building. It’s a family, and I can still feel the love.”

