

GEORGE WASHINGTON ACADEMY

Equipping Minds,
Building Character

News from our community, for our community

ECHO

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GWA Celebrates its 20th Anniversary Year

This issue of The Echo launches GWA's community-wide celebration of 20 years since opening its doors. In 1998, GWA started accepting applications in April and opened its doors with 50 students (ending the year with 90) and fewer than 20 faculty and staff in a downtown Casablanca villa. For two decades, GWA has followed its vision to inspire students to become multilingual lifelong learners who pursue excellence, model integrity, and honor cultural diversity.

Through the years, GWA has seen three campuses, moving to the current campus. Class by class, GWA has produced more than 350 alumni who reside around the world. Beginning this year, GWA alumni have begun to enroll their own children at GWA as "Legacy Students" that share the tradition of GWA education from one generation to the next. Hundreds of faculty and staff from Morocco and around the world have invested portions of their lives - from a few months for newcomers to decades for GWA's most senior staff - to educate students and fulfill GWA's Vision Statement.

Adopting the theme "Celebrate!" for this year, festivities began in August with a 20th Anniversary celebration by staff to kick off the all-school faculty/staff orientation before students returned and classes started.



"I just cannot believe it has been 20 years since we started," said ubiquitous Paula Davey, who has held the distinction of being GWA's Employee #1 since hired two decades ago to help open the school, and continues to greet people every day when they enter the new administration building. "The best part about being at GWA has always

been the people, and especially the students. We feel strongly the responsibility and privilege that parents give us to grow and shape their children to be Morocco's future leaders. The relationships here matter, no matter whether with someone like Maria Nail who is just one year behind me, or with new faculty and staff who have been here only a few months. I enjoy them all. But best is the students, because they give us purpose," she said.

To mark the occasion of GWA's 20th Anniversary, new Head of School Audrey Ménard asked staff to fill a time capsule with items that would share GWA as it currently exists with the GWA community of the future. "We collected everything from our MSA Accreditation certificate to photographs to personal messages written to the future...even a GWA stamp," said Dr. Ménard. The time capsule will be buried sometime this year, after staff finish stuffing it with 2017 memorabilia, with its site marked so it can be dug up and reopened decades from now.

As the most high profile 20th Anniversary event so far this year, GWA hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Library-Media-Technology Center in September. "Moving into the LMTC this summer and opening it for business as the long-awaited anchor building of our campus has been incredibly exciting," said Dr. Menard. "After a decade of waiting since moving to our permanent home on this campus, GWA finally has a building that serves as its face and that binds together the Upper School and Lower School divisions," she said. Dozens of high-profile guests gathered in the LMTC for a reception and comments from GWA Board President Frédéric Louat and Head of School Audrey Ménard before GWA cofounder Ali El Hadi Belhaj Bouabdallah cut a 20th Anniversary cake to share with the honored guests in attendance.

More 20th Anniversary endeavors will follow through the year, especially as GWA continues to roll out its new Alumni Relations activity. Throughout the year, the spirit of "Celebrate!" will continue with GWA's undertakings while the campus prepares for the next 20 years.



FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

Dr. Audrey Ménard Fortifies GWA's American Pedagogy and 21st Century Education as New Head of School

GWA's 20th Anniversary year began in August with Dr. Audrey Ménard taking the reins of the Mustangs as the new Head of School.

Having spent over 25 years as a teacher, administrator, and Head of School in public and private schools in America, and last year as GWA's Upper School Principal, Dr. Ménard takes over for departing Head David Welling, who returned to America this summer after six years leading GWA through an important period of institutional fortification.



"I could not be more pleased that Dr. Ménard has followed me as GWA's Head of School," said Mr. Welling upon Dr. Ménard's transition into her new position. He continued, "As a curricular leader with solid credentials in integrating technology, backward design, and other initiatives critical for offering 21st Century American pedagogy, she is a community builder able to inspire students, faculty, parents, and others to take GWA to new heights as a premier school in Morocco, in Africa, and in the world."

The GWA Board selected Dr. Ménard at the completion a four-month search process that considered over 60 applications from qualified candidates around the world. Searching for a leader who could capitalize on the momentum started last year by the new team of administrators that Mr. Welling had recruited, Dr. Ménard offered an ideal blend of familiarity with GWA's history and an understanding how 21st Century American pedagogy should manifest at GWA at the school moves forward in realizing its Vision Statement.

Prior to coming to Casablanca and GWA, Dr. Ménard served as a Head of School in Arizona and Louisiana, and as Principal and in other administrative positions in Ohio, North Carolina, and Virginia. She enjoyed her first experience with international education decades ago during six months as a student teacher in Germany. Then, after beginning her education career teaching middle school Mathematics back in the U.S., she exercised her entrepreneurial spirit when she founded the award-winning supplemental education company Champion Tutoring in her hometown of Charlottesville, Virginia. "Her entrepreneurial skills give her a knack for finding ways to make things happen, whether by conventional or unconventional means," said Brian Ménard, Dr. Ménard's husband and GWA's Director of Curriculum & Program Development.

High School Registrar Badiia Benchekroun, who worked closely with Dr. Ménard last year as GWA's High School Coordinator, said, "Her ideas are big, her heart is strong, and her energy is infectious. As much as she amazed people last year with what she brought to GWA as the Upper School Principal, that barely compares to where she wants to take GWA as our Head of School. Yet, as much as she wants to do great things for GWA, the best thing about working with her is that she cares deeply for our students and for the people who work with her. Moroccan or expat, faculty or staff, Upper School or Lower School or Operations, she gives everything to make GWA what it can be for us and with us...And of all these, the most important for her are the students."

As for her plans, Dr. Ménard remains humble amid her planning, sharing success with those with whom she collaborates. "With Lower School Principal Kevin Brenner, Chief of Operations Danielle Bult, my Upper School Vice Principals Dusty Smith and Luke Kollasch, and many others, we have a tremendous team that has stepped up across the board," she said. She continued, "Over the last several years, GWA has positioned itself to become a leader of schools. With this talented and compassionate administrative team, with a Board energized to help us move forward, with parents wanting to partner

with us to give their children the best education opportunities we can provide, and with a faculty dedicated to achieving GWA's Vision, we have a rare opportunity to set the standard for 21st Century education in Morocco, the region, and ultimately even on a global scale," said Dr. Ménard.

While achieving such lofty goals takes time, Dr. Ménard emphasizes her desire to see her plans through to fruition. "My family and I fell in love with GWA and Morocco when we arrived last year. After feeling so at home with the students, families, and staff so quickly, making a long-term commitment to stay here in this new role was easy for us," she said.

Her first year as Head of School has started with a whirlwind of activity, both maintaining initiatives like the multilingual language acquisition program that remain central to GWA's education experience, and expanding undertakings like incorporating technology in the curriculum, grounding GWA's direction in data-based decisions, and ensuring a student-centered and learning-based approach to education. She also looks forward to expanding the Institutional Advancement activities of GWA, fortifying admissions and marketing activity while adding alumni and development components that will serve the school well and bring GWA in line with best practices at top schools around the world.

"We have much work ahead of us," said Dr. Menard of the task ahead. "Loving what you do and enjoying the people with whom you do it makes it all worthwhile."



“Reading by the numbers: using data to guide instruction”

We talk often about our American approach to education and define it generally as inquiry-based teaching and learning with an intentional character education and development emphasis. This goes a long way in summarizing two essential components of the approach. There is much more, however, and it is an exciting time at GWA to dig deeper into our approach as it applies specifically to our unique and innovative literacy program.



American education is research-based and committed to implementing best practices in teaching and learning. One example at GWA is the evolution of the guided reading format to reading instruction used in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Guided reading is defined by Fountas and Pinnell as children using leveled books in small groups while teachers are “providing instruction to the students in ways that allow them to observe their individual strengths while working toward further learning goals.” In a guided reading model, students are divided into small groups and instructed at their level in a homogeneous environment. This approach combines all three of the major themes of reading achievement for English Language Learners: vocabulary instruction, leveled readers and small group instruction. Through our pilot program in fourth grade last year, students showed improved confidence and excitement about reading, increase in test scores, and an improvement for struggling students while maintaining a high level of achievement.

American education is data-driven. GWA uses MAP Growth assessments in the fall and spring to monitor our literacy program and student progress in reading, language and mathematics. Unit benchmark assessments are administered every four to five weeks to track student progress and identify areas of need so that our faculty know what to work on and how to help individual learners. Assessments also ensure growth and alignment. GWA’s guided reading approach is research-based, data-driven, and aligned with best practices in teaching and learning.

Lastly, American education is student-centered and holistic. GWA prioritizes differentiation, emphasizes student choice, and focuses on the whole child, family, and community as opposed to academics only. Our guided reading approach allows teachers to differentiate and serve each learner’s need. It is comprehensive and holistic and allows for students to take the skills from guided reading back to the classroom and apply them in other subjects. In addition to the data which provides evidence that this approach works in empowering students to build their literacy skills, our students are building 21st Century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and resilience as we continue to build and equip the whole child at GWA.



Principal's Corner | Upper School

What is a Makerspace, and why do we have one?

George Washington Academy is committed to offering an American education rooted in 21st Century constructivist pedagogy. This means that, among other things, we focus upon creativity and problem solving. While we achieve this in a typical class setting, we also like to develop these skills in a purpose-built creativity lab known as a Makerspace.

Here are some descriptions from different educational sources on the purpose of a Makerspace:



1....Schools need more learning by doing, making, tinkering, inventing, and engineering. The term 'Maker' refers to using a wide variety of hands-on activities (such as building, programming, Internet of Things, 3D printing, wearable technologies) to support academic learning and the development of a mindset that values playfulness and experimentation, growth and iteration, and collaboration and community. <http://zurich.makersummit.org/>

2....A makerspace is a place where students can gather to create, invent, tinker, explore and discover using a variety of tools and materials. <http://renovatedlearning.com/2015/04/02/defining-makerspaces-part-1/>

3....At the heart of the Makerspace movement is a culture of participatory learning. Makerspaces provide both students AND teachers with opportunities to exercise elements of participatory learning, which Project New Media Literacies identifies as:

- Heightened motivation and new forms of engagement through meaningful play and experimentation*
- Opportunities for creating, using a variety of media, tools, and practices*
- Learning that feels relevant to students' identities and interests*
- Co-configured expertise where educators and students pool their skills and knowledge and share in the tasks of learning and teaching <https://smithsystem.com/smithfiles/2016/02/12/school-makerspace/#>*

These three excerpts show how, students get to go to this special place and design, prototype, and create. The students in Grades 6-12 love this class. The space is also available to be checked out as a tinkering lab by other teachers in the school. This concept applies to all curricular areas.

We have invested in a lot of learning materials including a 3-D printer, hardware and shop tools, electronics, crafting supplies, computers and other technology, legos, and much more. Our teacher this year, Mr. Clint Martin, is really enjoying teaching the class. He will attend a conference in Zurich this winter where he will learn from Makerspace teachers from around the world.

We conclude with the following quote:

Learning through Making is deeply rooted in educational theories set forth by Dewey, Papert, Piaget, and Vygotsky among others. It serves as the vehicle to personalized inquiry, project-based learning, and design thinking. Making and Tinkering can help learners develop an understanding of the world they live in, the impact they can have, and equip them with the skills to learn, adapt and create with others in our rapidly changing world. <http://zurich.makersummit.org/>

George Washington Academy is committed to providing a forward thinking education designed to empower our students to serve Morocco and the global community with wisdom and compassion.

Library-Media-Technology Center Anchors 21st Century American Pedagogy at GWA

GWA commenced its 20th Anniversary celebration by inaugurating the new, cutting-edge Library-Media-Technology Center (LMTC) with a Grand Opening ribbon-cutting ceremony on 12 September for dozens of notable guests from the Casablanca community and across the history of GWA.

“GWA’s Vision to equip minds and build character, empowering students to serve Morocco and the global community with wisdom and compassion, gave purpose to building the LMTC,” Dr. Audrey C. Ménard, GWA’s newly-installed Head of School, said at the event, “so that we can challenge our students’ intellect and curiosity in ways that set a standard for 21st Century education in Morocco. We are proud to begin GWA’s 20th Anniversary year with this ribbon-cutting event.”

Dr. Ménard said the LMTC is both a symbol and center for hands-on learning. “Symbolically, the building provides GWA with an administrative center and anchor for the campus planned since we moved to our present location more than a decade ago.” Substantively, the entire top floor houses a huge multi-use library with:

- student and faculty resources
- a versatile teaching theater space and other teaching rooms
- age-appropriate reading and work spaces both for Lower School and Upper School students
- study carrels and computer stations for high school student research

and areas where students, faculty, and parents can meet in small or large groups

The middle Technology Floor is home to:

- Lower School and Upper School Computer Labs that allow us to teach computer programming, web design, and other technology classes
- a Robotics laboratory for teaching Robotics classes during school hours and for GWA’s internationally-recognized student Robotics team to work after school
- a MakerSpace, equipped with technology ranging from a 3D printer to basic hand tools, that invites students to innovate and build their dreams into realities

and a large, multipurpose, LEGO Education Innovation Studio that is the only one of its kind in Morocco and one of only two in all of Africa

Dr. Ménard continued, “With the tremendous resources of the LMTC, we can lead technology education in Morocco, supporting the technology interests that our students have already established. For example, before creating the new Robotics Lab, our Robotics team carved out what they dubbed ‘The Hackerspace’ in an unused portion of a basement under the Upper School building. Even without having dedicated classroom space, they have won international awards. Now, with the new lab, we are able to give our Robotics students both the facilities and the recognition they deserve.” Elaborating on this, Dr. Ménard said, “This is a wonderful example of how our Vision manifests in the programs we offer, because the international First LEGO League competitions in which our Robotics team competes are built around real world problems that require our students to devise, research, and implement solutions that nurture their character as much as expand their intellect. This year’s Hydro Dynamics theme challenges them to explore how to find, transport, use, and dispose of water to solve hydro dynamics problems around the world. This curricular focus extends beyond Robotics into teaching innovation in the MakerSpace. And the LEGO Education Innovation Studio introduces educational opportunities across all academic disciplines and all grades. We spent three days earlier this year teaching our teachers and our students how to utilize this facility fully.”

LMTC

The Library, comprising the entire top floor of the LMTC, creates a bright and comfortable environment amenable for relaxed reading, individual study, or collaborative work. GWA conducted its orientation of new faculty -- a group of international educators coming to Casablanca from previous positions in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa -- in one of the meeting areas of the Library. Parents have already begun bringing their children to the Library to read and to check out books to bring home. GWA's parent organization will begin meeting in the new Library space this year, a significant expansion from the small conference space where they met previously. More broadly, discussions have begun about using the LMTC's facilities to collaborate with the other four American schools in the U.S.-Morocco Bilateral Agreement from Tangier to Marrakech.

At the September 12 red carpet ribbon-cutting event, guests were greeted by a receiving line of students in English, French, and Arabic to welcome them to the new building and a reception with refreshments in the lobby. After making their way to the Library on the third floor, they enjoyed a brief program featuring Dr. Ménard and President of the GWA Board Frédéric Louat before the official ribbon-cutting by GWA cofounder Ali El Hadi Belhaj Bouabdallah.

After the program, guests toured the building to see first-hand the wonderful facilities the LMTC adds to the GWA campus.



Character Assemblies

In the Lower School we teach our students about character everyday. It is taught in the way we learn to treat each other, the way we take care of our school, and the way we learn and grow. Our four rules, “Be Responsible; Be Respectful; Be Safe; Be Kind,” help build good character, and students are reminded of these rules in their classrooms and in all areas of school. Students are enriched each month through activities in their classrooms that focus on that month’s character trait. Guest readers come into each elementary class once a month to read aloud books about each character trait as well. On the first Friday of the month, we have a character assembly where all Kindergarten through 5th Grade attend. We discuss the character trait of the month and demonstrate it by having an object lesson. One student from each class is recognized for demonstrating the character trait that was focused on the previous month. Students also sing the “character song” that was written exclusively for GWA. They also sing the school’s alma mater. This chorus of children’s voices is phenomenal and inspiring!

On assembly days, students are invited to wear casual dress clothes for a 10-dirham donation. That money is collected and used to help a local charity. In past years we have helped a local orphanage, a Downs Syndrome Center, and a local community center, just to name a few. We have also donated clothing to the needy, helped paint a preschool center, helped purchase a water well for a poor community, and collected toys for a children’s hospital.

There is a team of Lower School teachers that make up the Character Team responsible for the assembly, monthly activities, guest readers, charities, and the student character team. Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade students apply to be on the Student Character Team and are selected by a team of teachers. This year’s Student character team is: Sonia Tagnaouti, Nour Hatimi, Ryan Batshoun, Aya Bennani, Maya El Azzouzi, Karim Lamrani, Sara Benlemlı, Chemsı Boutaleb, Adam Bouchachia, Noor Elhassani, Lokmane Boukhari, Sami Tazi, Ines Kelly, Yassir Jabli, and Layan Alsemrani.

This Student Character Team will have different responsibilities including helping make posters each month about the character trait, announcing at the character assemblies, helping with the charities, and being guest readers in 1st Grade classes.

We focus on one character trait each month, but we hope to see all the traits displayed in our students all throughout the year. This year we will focus on: responsibility, respect, compassion/caring, cooperation, self-control, patience, fairness, honesty, and perseverance.

(l-r) back row: Karim Lamrani, Sara Benlemlı, Nour Elhassani, Adam Bouchachia.
front row: Ines Kelly, Sonia Tagnaouti, Lokmane Boukhari.



French

Since the beginning of the year, students in the beginner French class have been developing their oral skills. They learned how to introduce themselves as well as their friends in French. They also learned colors, days of the week and the weather.

At the end of our units, and in order to encourage students to write in French, they were asked to make posters about the above mentioned themes. This activity was an excellent opportunity not only to review what we have learned, but also to decorate our classroom.

The following pictures show the walls of our classroom before and after decoration.



Literacy Day

Think of the last book you read. Why did you choose that book? Chances are you picked it up because of a recommendation from a friend or a review you read. This is exactly what our K-5 students are learning to do - get each other excited about books by showcasing. On Literacy Day, teachers and students alike dressed up as characters from their favorite books and shared their stories with classmates and new friends in partner classes. It was inspiring to see faces light up as they listened to fables and fantasy, realistic fiction and mystery. We had Wimpy Kids and Captain Underpants, Dragons and Giants, Miss Frizzles and Miss Nelsons, Junie B. Jones and Harry Potter. Some friends discovered a common interest in books while others had their eyes opened to a whole new series. What do you want to read next? Come ask our Lower School scholars for a recommendation!



Education Beat | Lower School

Preschool

We were happy to see our students after fall break. They came back full of energy and enthusiasm and were happy to see their friends at school.

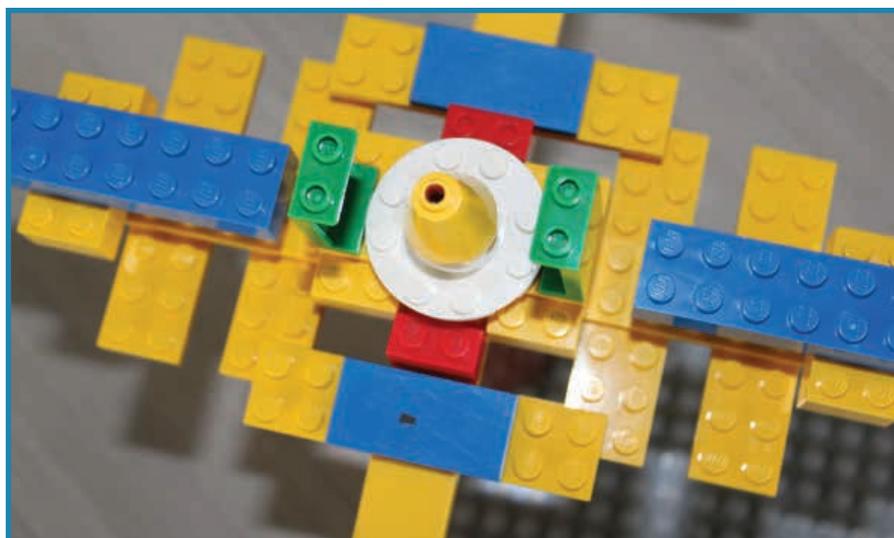
The first weeks of school went very well for our students. Teachers and parents had the opportunity to meet during Back to School Nights. Also, as part of Ashura celebration, Preschool and Kindergarten students came dressed in beautiful traditional Moroccan clothes. The students also had their hands tattooed with henna and decorated little tam-tams with their teachers.

In Kindergarten, students took the bus and the train as part of their lesson about means of transportation. Stay tuned for more events!



What's Going on in Art!

6th Grade students are currently exploring the work of artists Van Gogh and Cezanne. Both classes used the LEGO® Education Innovation Studio in the newly-inaugurated LMTC building to create a LEGO® version of a 2d still life in the style of Van Gogh's Sunflower painting and Cezanne's fruit still life. The LEGO® session allowed the students to see their art lesson at a new angle. There was a lot of communication, problem solving and critical thinking skills taking place wrapping our Art program in 21st Century curricular best practices.



Emerging Leaders

Gwa sent a delegation of students to the 2017 Emerging Leaders Conference at Collegiate School in Richmond, Virginia. The students joined peers from all over the world, gathered together to address environmental issues that are facing their countries and brainstorm potential solutions. Students were supervised and guided by lecturers, coaches and university professors.

The students distinguished themselves through their passion for learning. Throughout the entire conference, the students asked relevant questions and were very enthusiastic about learning.



Bringing classes together to collaborate in interdisciplinary work

This fall, the 8th Grade students are writing a combined interdisciplinary essay for their English and US History courses. In an effort to connect the two different curricula, teachers Charlotte Kimmel and Mason Grine constructed this month-long project. Students have been working on their personal narrative writing skills in English and their historical understanding of the original Americans in US History. This assignment has connected skills from both classes, and is demonstrating the value of the learning students are doing across the school, as well as teaching students to apply knowledge. Students are required to write a personal narrative essay from the perspective of an African slave, a Native American, or a European colonist.

Below is an excerpt from one student essay. This 8th Grade student demonstrates empathy, and truly captures the viewpoint of a Native American witnessing the arrival of the European colonists.

“...But then they came; the men with fair skin and greedy eyes. One day, a large ship made of darkest wood and sturdiest oars arrived, docking in our territory. The ship was larger than our kayaks, something monstrous. They got off, men and women alike, wearing the most covering scraps I have ever seen. It was made from something other than cotton, and heavier than stone. They spoke in a language foreign to ours, and walked with the pride of chiefs. We were hidden behind the trees, blending with ash and wood. We saw them looking at our land with hunger...”

We are proud of how our 8th graders are growing in their English and US History knowledge and skills.



Stress Management and Self-Care

“When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive - to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love.” Marcus Aurelius

Students at GWA are not immune to the effects of stress, which has become embedded in today’s culture and lifestyle. However, it is important to know that not all stress is bad. It is a daily part of our lives and is the “nonspecific response of the body to any demand according to Dr. Hans Selye, the father of stress research, who began using the word “stress” in its current form.

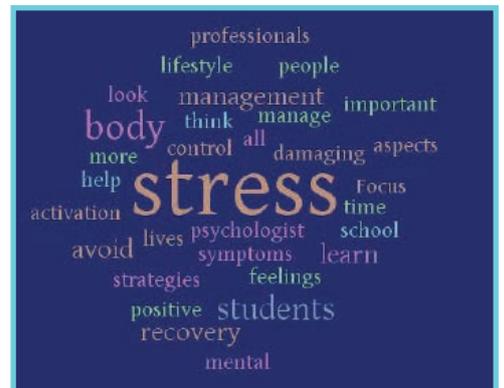


The body has three automatic reactions to “demands”:

alarm, activation and recovery. Ideally, the alarm and activation phases are followed by a lengthy recovery phase. However, in today’s society, and due to choices made, many people are regularly “stressed out” and are not getting enough rest to adequately recover for the next challenge.

“Anything – pleasant or unpleasant – that arouses your adrenalin system and mobilizes your body for ‘fight or flight,’ then doesn’t let up and allow time for recovery can predispose you to stress disease. Your body simply adapts to living in a constant state of emergency – and you feel no discomfort until damaging results occur”, writes psychologist Dr. Archibald Hart.

Stress will affect your body, behavior and your mood, with ongoing stress having potentially damaging consequences. If students have stress-related symptoms, it is important to enlist the help of qualified medical professionals, reporting symptoms to the school nurse and/or their personal physician.



Five stress management techniques can help students, and their parents, manage or even eliminate unnecessary stress (additional information is available on the Mayo Clinic website):

AVOID unnecessary stress: Learn how to say “no”, avoid people who stress you out, take control of your environment, avoid hot-button topics, and pare down your to-do list.

ALTER the situation: Express your feelings instead of bottling them up, be willing to compromise, be more assertive, and manage your time better.

ACCEPT the things you cannot change: Don’t try to control the uncontrollable, look for positive aspects of situations, share your feelings, and learn to forgive.

ADAPT to the stressor: Reframe problems, look at the big picture, adjust your standards/expectations, and focus on the positive.

ADOPT a balanced healthy lifestyle: Focus on all aspects of your life, including physical, financial, spiritual, social, work/school, mental, and family spheres.

These stress management strategies can be more difficult to implement than expected. As such, students are encouraged to meet with the school counselor or other mental health professionals, such as a therapist or psychologist, to learn and apply these strategies in their lives.

Updates from the Guidance Counselor

The beginning of the school year is always busy in the guidance counseling office. Here are just a few highlights of the year so far:

Parents Back to School Meeting: Ms. Casey presented to upper school parents at the back to school meeting on September 19th. Topics included review of GWA graduation requirements, Powerschool use Naviance for college preparation, career exploration, and university research. As a reminder, parents and students can access Naviance by going to the Parent and Student login portal on the GWA website.



University Visitors and the GulfEDU College Fair: We are only a couple months into the school year and already we've had admissions representatives from 30 universities visit GWA! On October 3rd, 15 universities were represented at the GulfEDU college fair in the MPR. High school students and parents spent two hours learning about higher education opportunities from universities all over the world including Spain, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Germany, and the US.



On October 24th, Lynn University (Boca Raton, FL) and Depauw University (Greencastle, IN) visited GWA to give a special presentation on their programs. We have GWA alumni at both universities and are excited to have more students apply to these programs this year. Students and parents who would like more information about Lynn or Depauw are welcome to contact the admissions reps or visit the university websites:

Depauw University - www.depauw.edu Loutfi Jirari (loutfijirari@depauw.edu)

Lynn University - www.lynn.edu Renee Loayza-Damergi (rloayza@lynn.edu)

University representatives will continue to visit campus throughout the year. Students and parents can find a schedule of upcoming visits on their Family Connection/Naviance home page. GWA also hosted two college fairs in November: a UK university fair on November 20th, and the A2 Education fair on November 22nd.

11th Grade College Ready with Ms. Casey: The Junior Class has started their “College Ready with Ms. Casey” sessions, which take place approximately twice per month during their U.S. History class period. Topics covered include: orientation to Family Connection/Naviance, the Junior year timeline for college readiness, college “lingo” terminology and vocabulary, and preparation for the PSAT. Future topics will include: picking a career/major, building a college list, researching colleges, financial aid information, types of standardized testing, the personal statement essay, writing a resume, letters of recommendation, and more.

Parents of 11th grade students are encouraged to join the Google Classroom to follow along with topics and assignments regarding college preparation. Parents should also check in with their students regularly to discuss the content covered in class and engage in a dialog about the college process. Having regular discussions about post-secondary planning in early high school helps students make informed choices when they reach senior year.

PSAT Testing: On October 11th Juniors took the PSAT, a preparation test for the SAT, test that most universities require for admission. Students will receive their results from the PSAT on December 13th and can access their scores by logging into their CollegeBoard account at www.collegeboard.org.

Seniors Parent Breakfast: On September 28th, Ms. Casey spoke with parents of Seniors about the college application process and timeline for Senior year. Ms. Casey covered topics such as types of financial aid, strategies for parents to help their students at home, how to develop a college list, and online resources for applications. Parents who were unable to attend the presentation can access the slides by clicking [here](#). Mr. John Caveness, Consular Section Chief, GWA Board member, and GWA parent, attended the Senior Breakfast as a guest speaker and gave a thorough presentation about the student visa application process for students studying in the U.S. Mr. Caveness’ presentation can be viewed [here](#).

Seniors have started to apply to colleges! The Class of 2018 have started to submit their college applications and are eagerly awaiting news of their acceptances. The current seniors began working with Ms. Casey last school year to get ready for their applications and are prepared and well-informed about the college admission process. Parents who have questions about the college application process should first talk to their student. Ms. Casey and Mrs. Badiia have met with each senior at least twice so far this school year to check in on their application progress.

Please wish our seniors good luck as they continue to submit applications!



Events

Speech and Debate

Our Speech and Debate students did an amazing job during the tournament hosted at GWA on October 28th-29th. Both judges and coaches commented on how respectful our students were. It was a long week-end, and they really persevered and exceeded all expectations.

This event was truly a TEAM effort and showcased the unity and school spirit we have here at GWA.

The following students merit congratulations to celebrate their successes:

Original Oratory:

1st place: Miya Bennis

Advancing to finals: Alex Moliner, Nivine Slaoui, Iness Nouni

Radio Broadcast:

1st: Hicham Elkhayri

2nd: Sammy Ait Seghir

3rd: Younes Skalli

Advancing to finals: Othmane Tazi

Program of Oral Interpretation (POI):

1st: Bhadha Shin

2nd: Imane Bekhiche

Advancing to finals: Iness Nouni, Ahmad Lahlou



Dramatic Interpretation:

2nd place: Justin Hart

Impromptu Speaking:

2nd place: Shalini Chugani

3rd place: Adam Motaouakkil

Extemporaneous Speaking:

3rd place: Jad Bousselham

Advancing to finals: Ayman Boulmarouf



Public Forum Partner Debate:

3rd place: Imane Soliman Mekkawi and Sammy Ait Seghir

Advancing to finals: Jad Bousselham and Adam Motaouakkil, Hicham Elkhayri and Yacine Benkirane

Lincoln-Douglas Debate:

2nd place: Younes Skalli

The Speech and Debate team competed again at Amicitia American School in Fes on November 18th-19th.



Events

First Day of School



Moroccan Dress Day



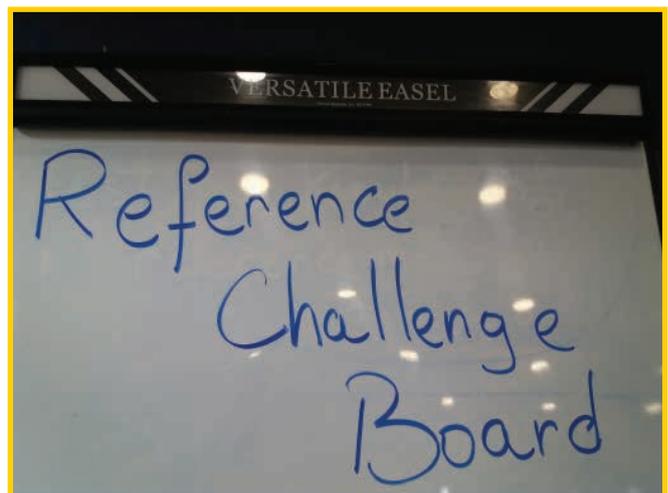
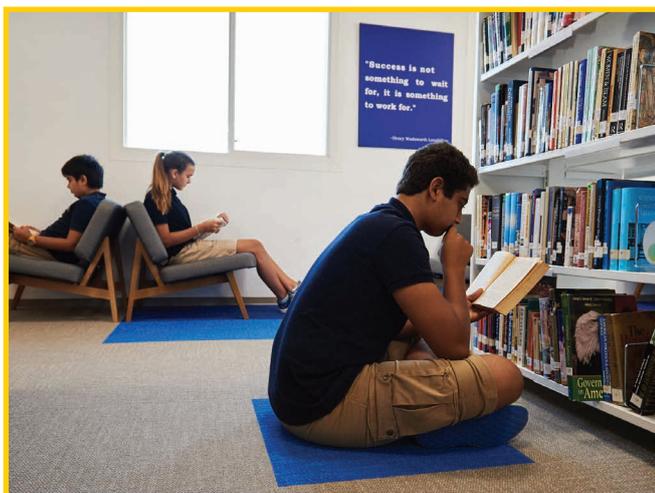
Library Corner

From its moment the new building came into view we could all feel the vitality of the community it represents. With its open layout, natural light, and all the resources it provides, students feel engaged and are inspired in different conversations and reflections.

The GWA Library has become the busiest place in the school, where learning is a social act and a collaborative exchange of ideas and information. There is a place for students to study alone and seek quiet space, and there is a place for other students who want to work collaboratively on projects and do research or study side-by-side and share class notes.

Lower school students fill our space at all hours. They come for library classes, read and talk about what they're reading or planning to read. It is a real joy to see them hunched over laptops or computers or crammed around group study tables helping each other finish up a library activity or competing in an information literacy jeopardy game.

For so many reasons, the GWA Library is a key component in students' lives.



Nurse's Corner



Celebrating healthy lifestyles at GWA!

Dar Bouazza 10km Run - Sunday September 17



Inspirational GWA staff runners ...

Danielle Bult

Michelle Guzman (taking 2nd place for the women!!)

Amy Botha

Lindsay Moore

Kristy Guertin

Charlotte Kimmel

Lydia Belcher

Dusty Smith

Mason Grine

Joel Unruh

Stephen Kraus



Inspirational GWA

student runners ...

Leul Bult

Achraf Laalej

Nurse's Corner

Medical Forms

Every year we collect a medical form for every 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th Grade student at GWA to ensure our students are seeing a family physician or pediatrician for a well-child check periodically through the critical years of growth and development. A physician stamped blank form does not meet this requirement! Please ensure your child has been assessed by a pediatrician, it is in the best interest of your son or daughter's health!

This year on September 6 we still needed 167 mandatory medical forms! ***By October 23 we had collected 100% of 1st, 4th and 7th Grades!*** We only need four more 10th Grade forms. Annually many hours are spent making phone calls to remind parents of this obligation. We look forward to receiving 100 percent of the mandatory forms by the given deadline next year.

**Please make a habit to read the Parent Weekly as the Nurse Office routinely uses that to communicate important information regarding health and safety here at GWA.

After School Activities

What is the GWA Innovation Studio?

A LEGO® Education Innovation Studio is based on a hands-on learning approach that actively involves students in their own learning process.

Tomorrow's scientists and engineers are sitting in our classrooms today, just waiting to be encouraged, inspired and activated. With a dedicated Innovation Studio at GWA, we can lift STEM subjects from the pages of a textbook and bring them to life.

In our Innovation Studio students make ideas come to life. LEGO® bricks are an ideal teaching resource to help students gain a firm grip on concepts that are new to them and difficult to understand. LEGO® Education resources let our students turn abstract ideas into tangible objects that can be seen, touched, described, and played with. This encourages your children to overcome challenges and learn together.

- Abstract ideas are brought to life.
- Students work together to solve problems.
- Students are motivated to learn using tools that can actually be seen and touched.

In our Innovation Studio students develop essential skills for the future.

To be able to thrive in tomorrow's world, your children will need to be able to think critically and creatively, and solve problems as part of a team. LEGO® Education resources are designed to nurture and encourage these skills, an important component of academic achievement.

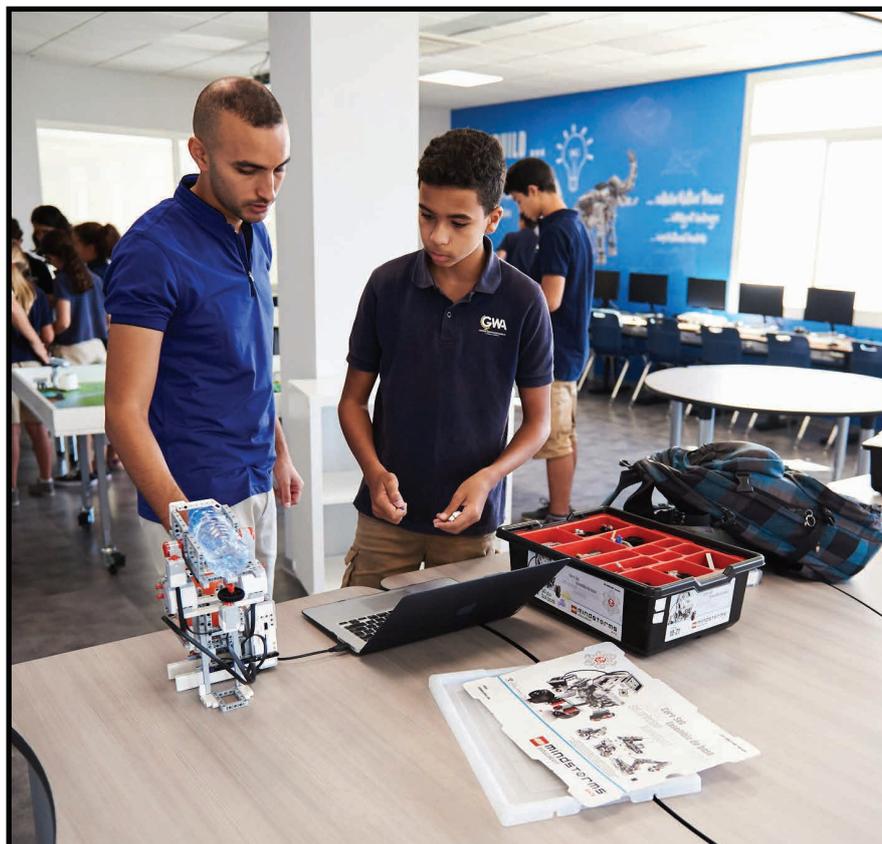
In our Innovation Studio students are being exposed to: computing, science, technology, engineering, math, and language arts. Students tell stories and explore elements, compounds and mixtures. LEGO® Education brick sets and robot kits nurture our students' analytical skills at the same time as stimulating their blossoming creativity.

- **Preschool**
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAx3LYzCLMc>)
- **Lower School – WeDo 2.0**
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9e_P9PXRQk&t=73s)
- **Mindstorm EV3**
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRZN8swnaDo>)
- **LEGO® Education**
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IJ-f_81CqU)

In our Innovation Studio students are having fun!

After School Activities

“We know, as teachers, that if students are engaged, if they are challenged to solve problems independently, if they are encouraged to collaborate, to take risks and if they are having fun, that they will learn more and learn better. LEGO Education products encourage this type of learning from a very young age and all the way through school and beyond.” STUART SWANN (Teacher & Education Specialist)



Alumni Outreach Emphasizes Ongoing Role for Alumni at GWA

As part of its 20th Anniversary celebration, GWA has prioritized reaching out to its more than 350 alumni to continue their engagement with their Alma Mater.

“The effort comes as part of a push to enhance GWA’s institutional advancement activity that fortifies enrollment management and marketing activity, and initiates development and alumni outreach activity,” said Director of Curriculum & Program Development Brian Menard, who is overseeing the institutional advancement effort.

Emmy Rachad, GWA’s After School Activities Coordinator has spearheaded the outreach effort. “Mrs. Rachad is the perfect person to launch our Alumni Relations outreach,” said Mr. Menard. “Beyond having one GWA alumna daughter and three more alumni children in the coming years, because of her ASA connection to GWA students from the youngest early elementary years through 12th Graders, I would bet that Mrs. Rachad knows more of our alumni and current students than nearly anyone else on campus,” said Mr. Menard.

The Alumni Relations outreach has a simple goal in this first year: find and engage as many GWA alumni as possible, reminding them that their Alma Mater values them and invites them to continue their relationship with GWA as alumni. “People do not lose their connection to GWA merely because they graduate,” said Mr. Menard. “Their relationships just change from that of a student to that of an alumnus or alumna with different ways to interact with GWA,” he said.

One simple example of this will come in future issues of The Echo, with each one including an alumnus or alumna feature that highlights life after GWA’s classrooms. Other examples range from returning to campus for Homecoming celebrations and participating in the annual “College Reality Check” in January to helping plan GWA’s first all-alumni reunion for the Pacesetter alumni of GWA’s first 20 years.

To build relationships with alumni, Mrs. Rachad has begun collecting contact information that will help GWA share ways alumni can get and remain involved. While starting with small projects like reaching out through the GWA Alumni Facebook page, future plans may include professional mentoring for current students and young alumni, a resume bank, building a network of class agents to help reach fellow alumni in their graduating years, and more.

“We want all alumni to know a few things,” said Mrs. Rachad. “First, an alumnus or alumna is not only someone who graduates from GWA, but anyone who attended GWA for any period of time. For example, as a school with an expat population every year, there are students who loved their GWA time even though their families moved before they could graduate. We welcome any alumni participation regardless of the number of years they attended GWA. Second, we want our alumni to feel welcome back home at GWA. The campus keeps changing. People who have not toured the new Library-Media-Technology Center should come home to GWA and see what amazing things happen here every day.”

