

# Graduation and Passing of the Classes 2025

There was just enough time between the afternoon and nighttime rains for families, friends, students and staff to gather on the school lawn on May 28, 2025, and hold Ridgewood's eighth-grade graduation and passing of classes ceremonies. Following the student body procession, eighth-graders Jude Konecki and Gavin Crawford offered the evening's invocation. Eighth-graders Mylo Frazier and Annia Ameur then welcomed those assembled. Their welcome was followed by the annual eighth-grade speeches, but more about that later.

Head of School Aliya Ranginwala presented the Class of 2025 to those attending and with Ms. Afshan Ahmed Syed '83, President of the Ridgewood School Association, awarded the nine class members their diplomas. After the diplomas were awarded, Mrs. Syed congratulated the graduates and talked about the "magic" that happens at Ridgewood, "magic" that prepares students for future academic success. Following Mrs. Syed's speech, graduates Malcolm Raffensperger, Caden Groth, and Alyse Linardos presented the class gift, freshly painted tunnels for the playground.



**The passing of the classes.**

It was then time for the student body to participate in the "passing of the classes" in which each class moved into the chairs vacated by the class before them beginning with the seventh graders moving into the chairs left empty by the eighth graders.

During the evening's program, numerous awards were presented to the Class of 2025. Mrs. Ranginwala presented the Gold Presidential Education Award



**Mrs. Ranginwala and the Class of 2025**

to Annia Ameur and Jude Konecki for their outstanding academic records and the Silver Presidential Award for academic improvement to Malcolm Raffensperger, Dominic Ray, and Gavin Crawford. Tim Bodey, Ph.D., president of the local chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, presented the S.A.R. Citizenship Award to Annia Ameur who had been selected by the Ridgewood faculty for this honor. Mr. Dan Metzger, Ridgewood Dean of Students and upper-level teacher presented two awards. First, he presented Mylo Frazier, who served as student council president this past year, with a gavel in recognition of Mylo's leadership that is characterized by great self-confidence and belief that all things are possible. Mr. Metzger then presented Gavin Crawford the Ann Barrett-King Award that is presented to the student who contributes the highest number of community service hours. Mr. Metzger complimented Gavin not only on his achieving 195 service hours, but also for the selfless way in which he worked those hours.

The K-7 Grade Choir under the direction of Ridgewood music teacher Mr. Eric Barga performed two pieces, "Remember Me" from the movie *Coco* and "Do-Re-Mi" from *The Sound of Music*, and led everyone in singing the school's alma mater.

And now about the eighth-grade speeches. A special component of each Ridgewood

graduation is the eighth-grade speeches which are based on the premise of the classmates meeting each other at a point in the future when they are young adults enjoying successful careers. This year's class members pictured themselves in the future as a lawyer, volleyball star, football legends, neurosurgeon, cardiologist, mechanical engineer, tech wizard, and astounding singer/dancer/actress. The occasion for their happenstance meeting was Superbowl LXXIX. When writing their speeches, each student develops his or her part of the story building upon what the students before him or her have shared.

The "speeches" the graduates presented this year were not quite "speeches" but more a humorous tale and theatrical reading, complete with a thirty-yard football pass down the center aisle. The tale opened poetically,



**Ridgewood Choir**

“So, yon listeners,  
Do not be sad, and do not tarry,  
As this tale is meant to be merry.  
Even if the path may be fraught,  
With peril, lunacy and vagrant thought.  
Allow us now, to play the  
strings of thy heart,  
Be still now, for it is time to start.”

The presentation was well written with each student building on what had been shared previously. The students read confidently and expressively. Their account was filled with humor that came from the writers making fun of themselves and sometimes each other. It revealed their individual personalities, their many favorite memories of their Ridgewood schooldays,

their friendships, and their respect and gratitude for Ridgewood and its teachers.

Ironically, without planning, their “speeches” focused on the “magic” of Mrs. Syed’s speech. One student shared that a teacher taught him “you can make work that may seem hard into an experience that is fun and worthwhile for yourself and others.” Another reported that “Ridgewood had a way of making school feel like more than just something you had to do,” and shared that “Ridgewood was where I grew, learned, laughed, messed up, and figured things out, and somehow had fun doing it.” A third went beyond examples of the magic and explained how the magic happens, “Ridgewood may

look like it’s made of bricks, but it’s built from hundreds of different people coming together to build a community that is accepting and loving to all who enter.”

Just before it began sprinkling, Mrs. Ranginwala in her closing remarks urged the graduates to carry with them in their lives what they learned at Ridgewood about the importance of maintaining a good work ethic and respecting others. To the students who will return to Ridgewood in the fall, she encouraged them to spend a lot of time outside this summer and rather than looking at life on a little screen, to go out and live it.

## Ridgewood School National Junior Honor Society



Upper-level students joined the families of Ridgewood students who were being inducted into the National Junior Honor Society in the Cole-Carpentieri Commons on May 21, 2025. Ms. Sana Ahmed, Ridgewood’s NJHS advisor, along with NJHS members Caden Groth, Annia Ameur, and Gavin Crawford conducted the induction ceremony in which two upper-level students became NJHS members.

NJHS membership is based on a students’ exceptional demonstration of five qualities—scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. It is the expectation that those awarded membership will continue to demonstrate these qualities. Members are selected annually by the faculty. This year, Jude Konecki from the eighth grade and Cameron Mowers from the sixth grade were selected for this honor. Congratulations, Cameron and Jude!



Left to right: Mrs. Ranginwala, Cameron, Jude, Gavin, Caden, Annia.



## Preschool Celebration!

Joyous! That’s the word that best describes the preschool’s end-of-year celebration held on May 20, 2025. The printed program for the students’ “Celebration of Music and Dance” was illustrated with their drawings of the images of children found on the preschool’s Children of the World rug along with a picture of the Earth and a rainbow. The evening moved quickly and enthusiastically with students singing and dancing to songs from various countries and cultures. Each child was featured vocally in a solo or duet and together the class performed “Are You Sleeping?” as a two-part round. The evening was a joyous close to the school year and was greatly enjoyed by the students’ families. Kudos to Ms. Suzel, Ms. Grim, Ms. Dillard, and Ms. McDonald who produced this special event, as well as to our preschool students!



## Ridgewood Recognized by Exchange Club Of Springfield

Springfield’s local chapter of Exchange Club presented Ridgewood School its “Proudly We Hail” award on May 13, 2025. The award recognized Ridgewood for its regular display of the American flag as an expression of our nation’s greatness and an inspiration for students to develop their respect and love of the United States. Ridgewood proudly displays its national flag on the schoolyard flagpole and in morning assembly students recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Ridgewood faculty member Paul Sauter proudly accepted the Exchange Club’s “Proudly We Hail” plaque on behalf of the school.



The Alumni Dinner

# Earth to Table 2025



## You Are Invited to Earth to Table 2025: The Alumni Dinner

You are invited to Ridgewood School's Earth to Table Dinner 2025 on September 26. The dinner is a happily anticipated annual fall gathering of the Ridgewood family that celebrates the harvest from our Learning Garden and the "harvest" that results from the seeds sown by our teachers over the years, our outstanding alumni. The dinner provides the opportunity for current families to meet Ridgewood alumni and for all to share tales of "then-and-now" about this special school.

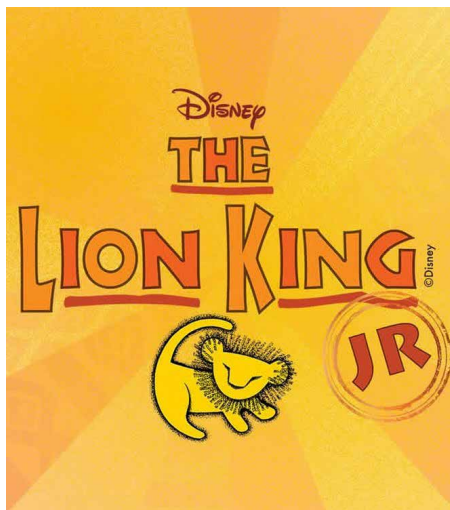
This year's dinner is being catered by Kohler Catering of Dayton. The program for the evening will include Mrs. Ranginwala providing remarks about Ridgewood today followed by the presentation of Ridgewood's Distinguished Alumni Award, Honorary Alumni Award, and Distinguished Teacher Award. The Ridgewood School

Association will honor local business leader James McGregor, Jr. '90 and Juan P. Dahdah '89, founder and CEO of Vantage Self-Directed Retirement Plans, as distinguished alumni, former Ridgewood parent and former Director of Development Bonita K. Heeg and Ridgewood trustee Margaret S. Roark as honorary alumnae, and Teresa A. Foreman as the first recipient of its Distinguished Teacher Award. The anniversary classes of 2000, 1975, 1965, 1960, 1955, and 1950 will be recognized.

The dinner will be held in the Cole-Carpentieri Commons at Ridgewood School, 2420 Saint Paris Pike. The evening will begin with a social hour at 6:30 p.m. Reservations (\$50) may be made at [2025AlumniEvent.givesmart.com](https://2025AlumniEvent.givesmart.com) or by phoning Michelle Dutton at 937-399-8900.

## The Lion King, Jr.

From *The Lion King, Jr.*'s commanding opening number, "Circle of Life," the standing-room-only, opening night audience knew it was going to be a special evening! Performed on February 28 and March 1 in the Cole-Carpentieri Commons, *The Lion King, Jr.* is a coming-of-age story that follows a young lion, Simba, who flees his kingdom when his father, King Mufasa, is murdered by his paternal uncle, Scar. After growing up in exile, Simba returns home to confront his uncle and claim his throne.



Ridgewood's production of this popular musical performed by the 4th-8th grade students moved quickly. Student actors understood their characters' intentions and worked together to create an ensemble production. Dance numbers choreographed by Abbie Hawke added to the spectacle and advanced the plot. Scenery, created by Ridgewood students under the direction of Ridgewood Art Teacher Molly Loftis helped differentiate the plot's various locales and contributed to the show's ambience. Sound and lighting, both skillfully operated by student technicians, helped create the various moods of the production. Student stage crews worked diligently and with great care to maintain the rhythm of the production. Together the students produced an enjoyable and exciting production. As one parent said after a performance, "that play was something!"

Like former Ridgewood productions, *The Lion King, Jr.* was a wonderful educational experience that introduced students to the theatre arts, developed their communication skills and self-confidence, and taught them the importance of being responsible and working as part of a team.



*The Lion King, Jr.* was directed by Eric Barga, Ridgewood Music Teacher; Abbie Hawke, Clark State theatre student and Ridgewood friend; and Ridgewood parent Theresa Lauricella who is Professor and Production Coordinator of Theatre and Music at Clark State. The directors were supported by the following Ridgewood teachers, alumni, and parents: Molly Loftis, Kelly Biers, Krissy Brown, Traci Cardinal, Jen Groth, Rachel Detraz, Megan Landry, and Abbie Groth.

# Hearts & Hands Dinner & Auction 2025: “All the Buzz! Building Community”



The bidding begins!

The 2025 Hearts & Hands Dinner & Auction was held in the Cole-Carpentieri Commons on the evening of April 11, 2025. The auction developed the theme “All the Buzz! Building Community.” Ridgewood trustee Randall Comer served as emcee and entertained everyone with bee trivia. Prior to dinner, guests inspected and bid on the fifty-five silent

auction items that seemed to include something for everyone. Participants then sat down to dinner catered by Rich Taste Catering. Following dinner and dessert, the live auction, masterfully conducted by Jeff Harvey of Harvey Auction Company, LLC., began. The fourteen live auction items included a week stay in a Palm Springs condo, Bosca Leather bags, a

handcrafted sterling floral bracelet created by Ridgewood alumnus Howard Zitsman, a week stay in Belize, a private evening at the Westcott House, Reds and UD Flyers tickets, Blackstone griddle, and other items.

The annual dinner/auction is a major fundraiser and social event for Ridgewood School. Its revenue supports Ridgewood’s students by helping cover the school’s operating expenses. On behalf of our students and the school, thank you to everyone who worked on the event, especially Co-chairs Tamara Comer and Sarah DeLong along with Development Director Dan Funk, those who generously donated items for the auction, and everyone who attended this “community building” evening.



Auction Co-Chairs: Tamara Comer and Sarah DeLong

## Ridgewood School Students Visit Washington, D.C.



At the Whitehouse

On the fourth of May, Ridgewood’s eighth graders flew to Washington, D.C. where they would spend the next four days sightseeing and learning about our nation’s capital. Our students were accompanied by parents Ms. Arbia Ameer, Ms. Megan Landry, Dr. Aaron Groth, Ms. Janey Walls, and Ridgewood science teacher Ms. Rachel McLaughlin.

The students’ four-day itinerary was packed and included visits to the White House, Ford’s Theatre, Georgetown Escape Room, African American Museum, Native American Museum, National Zoo, Holocaust Museum, National Air and Space Museum, International Spy Museum, and various monuments on the National Mall.

Students reported that it was a great trip. Some students reported that the best part of the trip was flying for the first time. Annia reported she enjoyed riding the Metro. Malcolm shared that “seeing all the sights and museums was incredible. Just truly amazing.” Caden pointed out that a highlight of the trip for him was the Spy Museum. Jaylyn appreciated “seeing all the monuments light up at night,” and several loved seeing the sand cats at the National Zoo. In writing about their trip, students shared that they enjoyed being together,



At the National Zoo

hanging out in the Airbnb, helping each other, and that they were grateful to “the chaperones for making the experience way more enjoyable.”



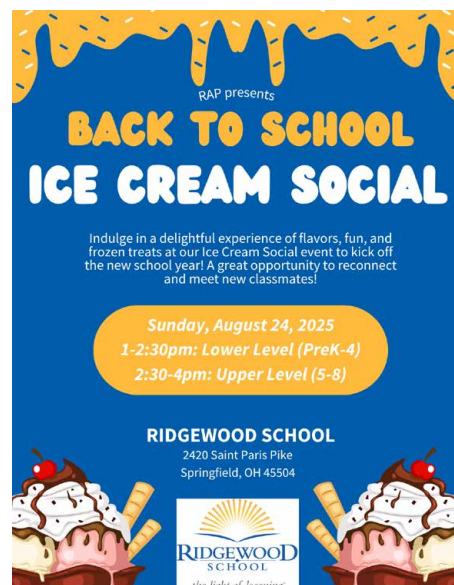
# RAP WANTS YOU!



RAP (Ridgewood Advising Parents) works with Ridgewood's teachers and staff to provide outstanding educational and social

experiences for students and their families. Whether it's the annual ice cream social, Fall Fest, classroom parties, Trunk or Treat, auction, or field trips, RAP creates fond memories for students and helps build a sense of community in Ridgewood families.

Please support Ridgewood students and staff by joining RAP. Research shows that the children of parents who participate in the activities of their children's schools are more successful students. The next RAP meeting will be held at the school on September 11, 2025, at 2:30 p.m. If you have questions about RAP, please contact Dan Funk, Development Director, at [dfunk@ridgewoodschool.org](mailto:dfunk@ridgewoodschool.org).



## Academic Accolades

### Power of the Pen

Ridgewood School's students competed in the district Power of the Pen competition on February 1 at Kenton Ridge Middle School. Our seventh-grade team placed second and our eighth-grade team placed fourth. Avalyn Sellman placed seventh overall. Devyn Cardinal placed fourth overall, and Jude Konecki placed first overall.



Left to Right: Back row: Mr. Sauter, Malcolm Raffensperger, Annia Ameur, Edith Swingle, Mylo Frazier, Arhem Rizvi, Jude Konecki, and Caden Groth. Front row: Alyse Linardos, Vivian Guest, Avalyn Sellman, Devyn Cardinal, and Lina Ameur.

The regional Power of the Pen competition was held at Clark Shawnee Middle School on March 1. Ridgewood's 8th Grade team placed third in the competition. Mylo Frazier received a "best of round" award and Avalyn Sellman placed sixth overall in the region.

The state Power of the Pen competition was held May 21-22 at Ashland University.

Ridgewood's Avalyn Sellman, Annia Ameur, and Mylo Frazier competed. Congratulations to Annia who placed seventh in the state competition!



Left to Right: Avalyn, Annia, and Mylo

### Spelling Bee

Ridgewood School Spelling Bee was held with students from the fourth through eighth grades participating. First place winner was Matthew Comer 6th grade, second place Shashank Palla 6th grade, and third place Malcolm Raffensperger 8th grade.



Left to Right: Matthew, Shashank, Malcolm



Matthew (center) in regional award ceremony.

Matthew then represented Ridgewood at the regional spelling bee held at Wright State University and placed second. Congratulations, Matthew!

### News Bowl Tournament

Each month student teams from grades 5-8 compete in a current event contest. At the end of the year, the winning team competes with a team of upper-level teachers. Congratulations to this year's winning student team of Easton, Lorelei, Cameron, and Matthew!



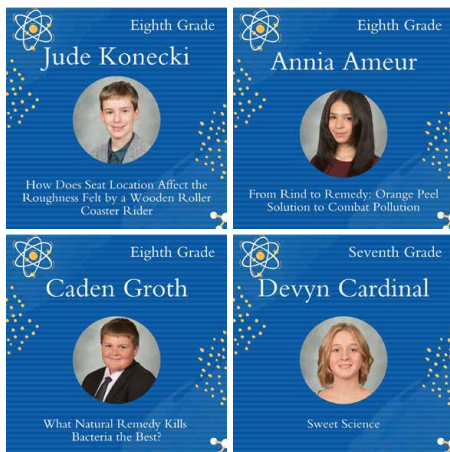


## Science Fair

Ridgewood School Science Fair was held on January 30. Congratulations to all of our students who prepared diligently for the event and thanks to our friends and alumni who served as judges for the event. Students who received superior ratings moved on to the regional science day held on March 15 at Miami Valley Career Technology Center.

The projects of Ridgewood students who participated in the regional science day were all ranked either excellent or superior. Excellent ratings were received by Hassan Bilal, Gavin Crawford, Mylo Frazier, Claudia Lauricella, Shashank Palla, Dominic Ray, and Malcolm Raffensperger. Malcolm's project received a HFES Award for Human Factors. Superior ratings were awarded to the projects of: Annia Ameur, Devyn Cardinal, Julia Doss, Caden Groth who also received a Health and Wellness Award, Jude Konecki, Alyse Linardos, Evan McWhorter, and Arhem Rizvi. Annia, Devyn, and Julia received College of Wooster B-Wiser Science Day Invitations. Projects rated superior that day were then adjudicated at the state science day.

At the State Science Day Celebration on May 10, all of Ridgewood's entries were rated either excellent or superior. Congratulations, Annia, Devyn, Julia, Caden, Jude, Alyse, Evan, and Arhem! Superior ratings were awarded to the projects of Annia, Devyn, Caden, and Jude. Annia received a Dr. Lynne Elfner Young Scientist Award, Governor's Award for Excellence in Environmental Protection Research, Thermo Fischer Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge, and Four-Year State Science Day Award.



Congratulations to our students who admirably represented our science program and to Ms. McLaughlin our exceptional science teacher!

## Be the Change: Youth Summit

Ridgewood School placed first in this year's Be the Change Youth Summit at Wittenberg University on May 13 where they presented their yearlong youth-led prevention project entitled "Deal with the Feels." The website they created, dealwiththefeels.com, promotes health and wellness. Students made videos on yoga, healthy living habits, meditation, and how to deal with issues like anxiety, anger management, and peer pressure. Their project stood out among the seven participating middle schools because Ridgewood students collected data surrounding their work that showed its impact. They were awarded \$250 to be used for future youth-led work at Ridgewood School.



## Chess Champion

Congratulations to the 2025 Queen City Classic Chess Tournament 10th Place Winner Carter Keriazes, member of Ridgewood's Chess Club.



## Community Health Foundation Healthy Smile Video Contest

Congratulations to Gavin Crawford, Malcolm Raffensperger, and Mylo Frazier pictured below with Faith Bosland from the Community Health Foundation, for placing first in the foundation's competition.



## 2025 Ridgewood School Awards

The close of the school year brings with it the recognition of our Honor Roll, Head of School Honor Roll, and Perfect Attendance Students. We congratulate these students for their outstanding records!



**Our Honor Roll includes the following students who earned a 3.5 GPA with no grades lower than a B:**

Adam Ameur, Grayson Harnly, Lucas Harrison, Owen Hecker, Eva Reyes, Zosia Rose, Rosalie Nevius, Porter Swingle, Meredith Blair, Kinley Cardinal, Emery Groth, Evan Maynard, Roopali Palla, Evelyn Schmidt, Iris Mohler, Hezekiah Zima, Lina Ameur, Devyn Crawford, Vivian Guest, Arhem Rizvi, Edith Swingle, Gavin Crawford, Jaylyn Elrod, Alyse Linardos, Malcolm Raffensperger, and Dominic Ray.



**Our Head of School Honor Roll includes the following students who maintained a 4.0 GPA throughout the year:**

Zayn Ashraf, Weston Beck, Abdullah Edhi, Nathan Krogg, Ryder Picklesimon, Arlo Prince, Natalie Thompson, Morgan Detraz, Jacek Rose, Lillian Shaffer, Blaze Skinner, Elijah Wright, Anis Ameur, Matthew Comer, Evan McWhorter, Shashank Palla, Annia Ameur, and Jude Konecki.



**Perfect Attendance Students**

Left to Right: Derreon Miller, Henry Lehmann, George Lehmann, and Kang Zheng.



# Congratulations, Citizens of the Month!

Each month, Ridgewood students focus on embodying a specific positive behavior. At the end of the month, teachers select a student from their class who best exemplified the behavior during the month.

Congratulations to our spring-semester exemplary citizens!

## January: Generosity

Kindergarten-Jonathan Johnson; 1st grade-Lanaya Williams; 2nd grade-Kathalia Zima; 3rd grade-Marie Frantz and Caiden Londergan; 4th grade-Cari Jones and Grayson Walls; 5th grade-Judah Ray; 6th grade-Devyn Crawford; 7th grade-Vivian Guest; and 8th grade-Gavin Crawford.

## February: Grit

Kindergarten-Ben Hunt; 1st grade-Asher Sharp; 2nd grade-Avery Mowers; 3rd grade-Porter Swingle and Henry Lehmann; 4th grade-Evan Maynard; 5th grade-MyLynn Terry; 6th grade-Cameron Mowers; 7th grade-Devyn Cardinal; and 8th grade-Dominic Ray.

## March: Creativity

Kindergarten-Rosie Frantz; 1st grade-Ariela Currie; 2nd grade-Evelyn Brunner; 3rd grade-Nathan Krogg; 4th grade-Ayvah Crawford; 5th grade-Lindy Radlowski; 6th grade-Lorelei Nevius; 7th grade-Avalyn Sellman; and 8th grade-Alyse Linardos.

## April: Stewardship

Kindergarten-Jade Coffey; 1st grade-Paisley Hamilton-Robinson and Ariya Thomas; 2nd grade-Carter Keriazes; 3rd grade-Dhruv Mohindroo; 4th grade-Jacek Rose; 5th grade-Cai Jones; 6th grade-Hannah Dobbins; 7th grade-Jacob Gomez; and 8th grade-Gavin Crawford.

### 4 KEY ATTRIBUTES

Generosity  
Grit  
Creativity  
& Stewardship



## Beyond the Schoolyard



K-3 students attending performance of *Tati Nuzi and Friends* at Clark State Performing Arts Center.



Intermission during Ridgewood Night at the Springfield Symphony Orchestra.



Eighth graders taking a break while Haiku Hiking in John Bryan State Park.



Upper-Level students attending the movie *Mufasa: The Lion King*.



Ridgewood students and their parents attended "Meet Peter Brown, author of *The Wild Robot*" at Clark County Main Library. Emma Robinow '99 and her son Theo Schmidt.



Ms. Phillips and her Spanish students ready to practice their Spanish.





Learning about Mexican art and culture



Rock climbing

## Summer Enrichment Program 2025

After a week of silence that came with the close of the school year, Ridgewood's halls and schoolyard were filled with the sound of students having a wonderful time in their Summer Enrichment courses. Weeklong Summer Enrichment classes were offered for students PreK through 9th grade during the weeks of June 9, 16, and 23 and were open to Ridgewood and non-Ridgewood students. This summer's course offerings included: gardening, Italian, tennis, golf, robotics, art, art history, origami, Spanish, music, musical theater, magic, rocketry, entrepreneurship, flight, outdoor skills, poetry, games, and more. After class each day, the voices of students excitedly reporting to their parents and grandparents about what they had done in class were heard leaving the building.



Golf Lessons



Making magic



Beginning tennis



Retro collage animation

## Thank You to Our 2025 Business Partners in Education!

### Citizenship Level



### Academic Excellence Level



### Critical Thinking Level

Business Equipment Company  
The Comer Group at Coldwell Banker Heritage  
Comprehensive Vein Care  
Dye and Doss, Inc.  
Esterline and Sons MFG  
Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum  
The Heart House Research Foundation  
Hi-Hat Social  
KAPP Construction  
Link-Hellmuth Insurance

Martin, Browne, Hull & Harper PLL  
McGregor Metalworking Companies  
Mercy Health  
The Miami Valley School  
Park National Bank  
Seasons Kitchen  
Springfield Arts Council  
Springfield Foundation  
Springfield Symphony Orchestra  
State Theater  
Wallace and Turner, Inc.  
WesBanco, Inc.  
Westcott House

### Student Engagement Level

Cintas  
Community Health Foundation  
Daniel C. Harkins, Esq.  
KB&P Financial Partners  
Krogg and Jayjohn Family Dental  
North Spring Dental  
Orthodontic Specialists of Ohio  
Springfield Health and Fitness





# Student Council Spring 2025

Throughout spring semester, the Student Council provided activities at Ridgewood for students while also raising money, collecting donations, and volunteering for local charities. The new year kicked off with a Lower-Level Movie Night, the annual Gals and Gamers event, and Super Week which featured a punt, pass, and kick competition and Madden Tournament.

In February, students collected and delivered paper products and hygiene products along with a donation to the Homeless Shelter. The annual Service Day featured twenty students volunteering at four local charities including the Food Bank, Homeless Shelter, Literacy Center, and Project Woman.



Students also worked on sets for the play, made and delivered cards to local nursing homes, picked up trash in the land lab and made blankets for children at C.A.R.E. House.



Also in February, the students made and delivered over 1,000 valentines to residents at nine local nursing homes as well as treat bags to children at Project Woman and the Homeless Shelter.

Spirit Week in March included themed days (Ridgewood Spirit, Twin/Triplet, Pajama, Rhyme without a Reason, Anything but a Backpack, and Sports Day), Ridgewood at the Chiller, Pi(e) Day, and a Read In.



Read In



Anything-But-A-Backpack Day



Twin/Triplet Day

Pi(e) Day raised over \$300 toward a donation of \$840 to Project Woman. Students helped with Empty Bowls at Wittenberg and then hosted their own event at school where they sold pottery (including some made by the 7th-grade class) and homemade soup.



Throwing pottery for Empty Bowls Event

Ridgewood's Empty Bowls raised over \$620 for the Second Harvest Food Bank. Students distributed seven bookshelves and books to families in the FAST program. They have delivered books and bookshelves to almost 50 families over the last three years!

Students stayed busy in April and May by hosting a variety of school events including the Spring Fling, Ties & Tiaras,

movie night, gym games, and a Smash Brothers Tournament. Students also started a project at the Homeless Shelter where they cleaned the garden area, added mulch, planted flowers, and worked on the playground. A group of 7th and 8th graders presented their mental health website, DealwiththeFeels.com, at the Be the Change Youth Summit at Wittenberg in May. The website included a variety of activities and videos to help with mental health, anxiety, peer pressure, etc. It was voted the top project at the Summit and the students received a \$250 grant. Students continued to run the Zero Waste Store each first Friday of the month and had a table at The Health Fair where they distributed healthy recipe cookbooks (made by Ridgewood students), Choose Water materials, vegetable seeds for gardens, and Deal with the Feels magnets. The students also presented a donation raised at the school's annual Health Walk to the Health Fair organizers.



Health Fair Table

During the summer, students volunteered at the Food Bank, Project Woman, and Homeless Shelter. Students also raised money for a project that provides clean water to areas in need throughout the world. They "passed the hat" at a Summer Arts Festival's performance and participated in the Farmer's Market on Saturdays in July and August.

We want to thank the Springfield Foundation, WellSpring, and BPO Elks Lodge #51 for their support throughout the year.



**Springfield Foundation**  
For good. For ever. For all.®



# Thank You to Our SGO Donors of 2024-2025!

What is an SGO Donor? An individual or couple that contributes to Ridgewood's Panthers Scholarship Fund at the Ohio Association of Independent Schools (OAIS), a scholarship granting organization (SGO). The contributions that the donors below made to Ridgewood via OAIS offset a portion of what the donors owed in state income tax. Ohio law allows each taxpayer to deduct the amount they contribute to an SGO, up to \$750, from what they owe in state income tax. If an individual contributes \$250 dollars to our Panthers Scholarship Fund and owes Ohio a total of \$400 in income tax, the donor only owes Ohio \$150. Thanks to our SGO donors, Ridgewood received a total of \$31,680 in scholarship funds in 2024-2025! Thank you, Ridgewood School SGO Donors! For more information about contributing to our Panthers Scholarship Fund, go to "Giving" at [ridgewoodsschool.org](http://ridgewoodsschool.org).

## SGO Donors 2024-2025

Bill and Deanna Brougher  
Edward & Traci Cardinal  
Randall & Tamara Comer  
Ross & Heather Cunningham  
Graham Davis & Jessimi Jones  
Thomas & Marilyn Davison  
Corwin & Anne Georges  
Deborah Hill  
Bruce & Elizabeth Kelley

David Krauss  
Joaquin & Megan Llado  
Thales & Nancy Pavlatos  
Brian Potts & Caitlin Smith  
Thomas Pendergast  
Mujeeb & Aliya Ranginwala  
Bill Ray & Jeanne Lampe  
Tariq & Afsheen Rizvi  
Derek Roath & Clare Georges  
Greg & Kathryn Rogers

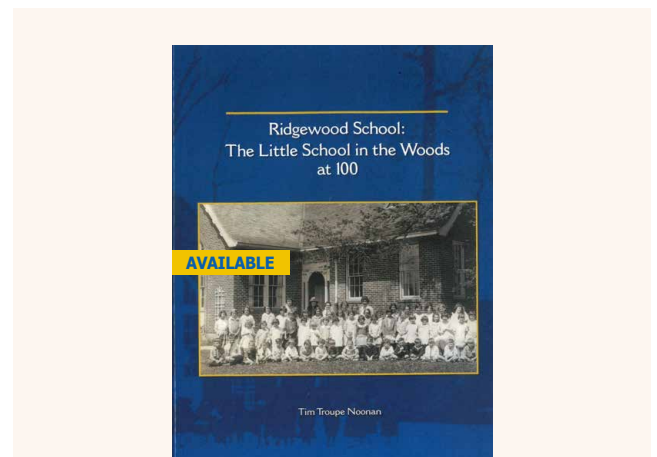
Kevin Rose & Marta Wojcik  
Tom & Mary Jane Rumpke  
Rick Rutan & Melinda Marsh  
Jacob Schmidt & Emma Robinow  
Mike & Mindy Skinner  
James & Gail Suzel  
Ashfaq & Afshan Syed  
Ajaz & Humera Umerani



### H.S. Kissell Legacy Society

The H.S. Kissell Legacy Society provides you an opportunity to ensure Ridgewood School's future and allows us to thank you at the time you plan for ours. Planned gifts are designated in many different ways. The most common is a bequest designating Ridgewood School in your will. Other contributors choose to convert funds such as purchasing a life insurance policy or designating retirement assets that name the school as a beneficiary.

**If you are interested or for more information, please contact Dan Funk at [dfunk@ridgewoodsschool.org](mailto:dfunk@ridgewoodsschool.org).**



## Ridgewood School: The Little School in the Woods at 100

**Take a look back at 100 years of Ridgewood School.**

**The centennial history of Ridgewood School** authored by distinguished alumnus Tim Noonan '66 can be purchased by phoning Christine Reynolds, Administrative Assistant, at 937.399.8900, Ext. 104. Purchase and shipping cost, \$45.

### Would You Prefer to Receive Our Newsletter Via Email?

Please send your email address to either [cgeorges@ridgewoodsschool.org](mailto:cgeorges@ridgewoodsschool.org) or to [chreynolds@ridgewoodsschool.org](mailto:chreynolds@ridgewoodsschool.org). Thank you!

### Help Us Stay in Touch

If you move, please provide us a new address so we can remain connected! Email your new address and other contact information to [cgeorges@ridgewoodsschool.org](mailto:cgeorges@ridgewoodsschool.org). Thanks!



# Ridgewood Student Authors

For the past few months, we have displayed examples of the professional writing of Ridgewood alumni in the Pavlatos Atrium. Works included in the exhibit were written by alumni from the 1940s through the 2020s. Their subjects included history, physics, psychology, law, education, nature, French literature, mountain climbing, religion, etc. It is an impressive collection and reflects the emphasis Ridgewood has placed on writing throughout its history.

Writing continues today as an important part of the Ridgewood curriculum. This spring, our first- and second-grade authors were truly excited to see their writing in print.



First-Grade Authors



Second-Grade Authors

At the upper-level, Mr. Sauter stressed writing in his language arts classes. After school, Ridgewood students successfully participated in extracurricular writing competitions across the state. (See Academic Accolades.) We want to share with you a sampling of our young authors' poetry. Beside the author's name, you will find the literary form or device used in his or her poem. Enjoy!

## "The Fleeting Thief"

*In Spring's embrace the world begins to bloom  
A tapestry of color begins anew  
With petals bright dispelling winter's gloom  
Each fragrant breeze a whisper soft and true  
The daffodils do dance in golden light  
While cherry blossoms blush in softest hue  
The fields awash in vibrance, pure delight  
Awakening the heart as morning's dew  
Yet time, that fleeting thief, will soon bestow  
A fleeting kiss upon the vibrant morn  
For petals, once so rich, will fade and go  
As nature's cycle weaves both joy and scorn*

*Thus, relish now the splendor spring can bring,  
For in its beauty hides what changes sing.*

—Annia Ameer, 8th Grade (Sonnet)

## "The Fox"

*The fox wore a coat made of flame  
She darted through the forest  
"Catch me!" She giggled with a flick of her tail  
"I'm faster than the wind and quieter than mice."*

*She whispered like the breeze and sang like a bird  
She tickled the trees with her soft little paws  
When it was day, she would dance  
with the sun's rays  
When it was night, she would talk to the stars.*

—Avalyn Sellman, 7th Grade (Personification)

## "Wiggly Toes"

*Little piggies in a row,  
Some long, some short, a fleshy show.  
Wiggling, jiggling, never still,  
Anchors to the ground, against my will.*

*Buried in sand, or trapped in shoes,  
Painted bright with vibrant hues.  
They carry me far, they carry me near,  
Silent servants year after year.*

*Gnarled and twisted a roadmap of time,  
Each telling a story, in its own rhyme.  
From mountain peaks to ocean floors,  
My toes have walked through life's open doors.*

—Cameron Mowers, 6th Grade (Rhyme)

## "Quiet World"

*The sky was brushed with strokes  
of fading light  
As dusk descended gently on the land.  
The stars prepared to pierce the veil of night,  
While shadows stretched like fingers  
from the sand.  
The trees stood tall like guards in silent rows,  
Their branches whispered secrets  
in the breeze.  
A fox slipped by with fur as white as snow,  
Its motion flowed softly through the trees.  
The world grew still beneath the silver glow,  
The moon climbed high to take  
its watchful place.  
Each sound became a song,  
both sweet and slow,  
Wrapped gently in the night's cold,  
starry lace.*

*And in that calm, I found a quiet peace,  
A moment where the world began to cease.*

—Gavin Crawford, 8th Grade (Sonnet)

## "Beneath the Waves"

*The strong waves crash on the shore  
Pulling whatever it finds  
Taking it to someplace  
That's never told  
Only the waves know what's below*

—Lina Ameer, 7th Grade (Free Verse)

## "Future, Past, Present"

*Future, Past, or Present  
Which one do I change?  
I can't change the past,  
but can I change the future?  
Staying in the past doesn't help  
Staying in the future changes nothing  
But being in the present  
helps change everything  
That you want to change.*

*So stay in the present  
Don't look forward  
Don't look back  
Stay where you are now  
For you can change the present  
But not the past  
Wait for the future to come to you*

—Avalyn Sellman, 7th Grade (Didactic)

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and Instagram!



# The Ridgewood Fund 2024-2025

Thank you to the families, friends, and alumni who contributed to the Ridgewood Fund 2024-2025. Your generosity made it possible for Ridgewood School to actualize its mission of creating “a vibrant and personalized learning environment that cultivates the intellect, creativity, and character of our students.” Thanks to the Ridgewood Fund and its other fundraising activities, Ridgewood covers the difference between tuition revenue and operating expenses. **We truly appreciate the support of the Ridgewood Fund Donors!**

## The Ridgewood Fund 2024-25 Donor Honor Roll

(July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)

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of my Ridgewood School years.

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in honor of Corwin Georges.

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'#=Alumni graduation year

(D)=Distinguished Alumni

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or scan below. Thank you!



# Alumni Spotlights



**Robert Zitsman '67**, with more than 35 years in healthcare administration, has a strong commitment to promoting

evidence-based patient care. He has overseen a variety of healthcare facilities, including skilled nursing, post-acute rehab, and dementia care. Robert holds an M.B.A. from Wright State University and a B.S. in business administration from The Ohio State University. He holds a California Nursing Home Administrator License and is serving as the administrator of Community Memorial Continuing Care Center in Ojai, California. He also serves as a health care advisor, management consultant, and expert witness.



**John Minney '71** has served as an Assistant Professor of Military and Security Studies at USAF Air

Command and Staff College in Alabama since 2017. Before that he served as Chair of Arts and Sciences at Concordia College Alabama. John holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in history from the University of Alabama, an MA in Strategic Studies from the Air War College, an MA in Military Operational Art and Science from the USAF Air Command and Staff College, and a B.A. degree in Architecture awarded by the University of Detroit Mercy.



**Jeremy Flack '84** was recognized by the Springfield City Schools last April as a distinguished alumnus. While here to receive his award, Jeremy visited Ridgewood

School and talked about Ridgewood's significance in his life. He later wrote, "I came to Ridgewood at a pivotal time in my life. My first year in the public middle school was not productive and my parents chose to enroll me at Ridgewood for seventh and eighth grade; my life changed. Ridgewood became a place where I received the guidance, attention, and discipline (and help with math!) that I needed. Looking back now, I understand the impact and feel eternally grateful

to Ridgewood School." Jeremy is the founder and CEO of Flack Global Metals in Phoenix, Arizona, "a company built to change the way steel is bought and sold in America." He received his Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and finance from Miami University and his master's degree in business administration from Cleveland State University. Congratulations, Jeremy!



**Asha Morgan Moran '84** is a lead director at Plum Laboratories, a partner in Glen Street Capital, and interim CEO at Clear Path, LLC. With an extensive

experience in leadership positions, Ms. Moran describes her leadership process in writing, "I know how to diagnose a situation or problem. I enjoy creating order out of chaos and have a reputation for being compassionate but not afraid to be decisive and take action to drive results." Her leadership experience includes the fields of retail, manufacturing, agricultural equipment, and digital photography. Asha, her husband and children reside in North Carolina. She graduated from Grinnell College with a BA in economics, and from the Kellogg School of Management with an MBA.



**Juan Pablo Dahdah '89** is founder and CEO of Vantage Self-Directed Retirement Plans. J.P. has received numerous awards and recognitions

including the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's "Entrepreneur of the Year." In 2019, he was honored by the *Phoenix Business Journal* with the "Forty Under 40 Award" for being one of the most influential leaders in the community and in 2019 he was one of twenty-five honorees of the "Most Admired Leaders" award presented by the *Phoenix Business Journal*. He is actively philanthropic via various charitable organizations, including his own, Advance Guatemala, which he founded in 2008 to serve Guatemalans in need of aid. He is the former president and proud member of the Arizona Chapter of Entrepreneurs' Organization and currently serves as an executive committee member of the Scottsdale Arts Board of Trustees.



**Mattie Fitch '00, PhD** is an assistant professor at Marymount College in Arlington, Virginia. In the Fall of 2018, she moved to Arlington from

Stephenville, Texas where she taught for several years at Tarleton State University. Dr. Fitch has also taught at the University of Dayton and Wright State University. She completed her BA at Wellesley College and her MA and PhD at Yale University. She teaches the history of modern Europe and is a cultural historian of modern France. She also taught as part of the Prison Education Program through Wilmington College. Dr. Fitch has a book being published this year entitled *The People, the Workers, and the Citizens: Antifascist Cultures and the Popular Front in France, 1934-1939*. This summer, she travelled to Paris to begin another research project. Mattie reports that she has three kids who keep her busy.



**Saif Ahmed '02, DO** completed medical school at Lincoln Memorial University DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine in Harrogate, TN

after attending The Ohio State University for his bachelor's degree and Wright State University for a master's degree in physiology and neuroscience. After medical school, he completed a general surgery residency at Henry Ford Health in Wyandotte, Michigan. In 2022, he was selected as Resident of the Year and received the Academic Achievement Award as the resident with highest percentile score on the American Board Surgery In-Service Exam. After residency training, he completed a fellowship in hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine. There he authored multiple publications in the field of surgical oncology. Today, he practices general, hepatobiliary, and pancreatic surgery for Kaiser Permanente in Fontana, CA. He is a clinical instructor for the Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine and a faculty member of the Arrowhead Regional Medical Center/ Kaiser Fontana General Surgery Program. He is happily married with two sons and lives in Orange County, California.



**Ian Shelburne '08**

is now a Deputy Group Leader in Detonation Science and Technology at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Ian completed his

BS in mechanical engineering at Miami University of Ohio and his MS degree in aerospace, aeronautical and astronautical engineering at Purdue University. He has been at Los Alamos for seven years.

**Thomas Edwards '17**

served as a judge for Springfield's "What's Up Danger? Premiere the Positive" Student Film Festival in March. Thomas was very impressed



by the students' work and said, "It was amazing to see what message the middle and high school kids are spreading through filmmaking...I cannot wait to see what they do in the future." The festival was produced by the City of Springfield and the BATS program. Thomas graduated last spring from Columbia University where he majored in Film and Media Studies. He describes himself as a "filmmaker and photographer with a passion in storytelling, entertainment, and media production." He is employed by the Empire State Building as its first video producer.

**Emerson Babian '23**

was chosen as one of sixty high school students from the United States and abroad to compete in the Gladiator Mock Trial Competition in Atlanta, Georgia

last month. In the Gladiator Competition, each competitor is required to perform the roles of prosecutor, defense attorney, prosecution witness and defense witness in mock trials. Each of their performances is scored with attorney performances carrying greater weight. Based on their total scores from the four trials, the highest scoring students face off as attorneys in semifinal and final rounds. Congratulations, Emerson, for placing fourth in this rigorous competition!

**Special Alumni Moment**

Our Summer Enrichment Program was truly special this year with three of our alumni participating. Alumnus **Chris Bosca** and his wife Courtney offered a course that introduced students to the

Italian language and culture. A special part of the experience came from the class reaching out each day to someone in Italy who taught them more about the country. Here is Chris and students in their Italian tee shirts.

**Alumna Nadia Syed '10**

who is now a special education teacher in Washington, D.C. offered "Art and Math Fusion." Her course explored mathematic

principles that are found in the art of various countries and cultures—Persia/Iran, Japan, Brazil, etc. Students left each day having created a piece of art demonstrating this fusion.

**Christian Reynolds '19**

served in multiple capacities in our Summer Enrichment program. Christian, popular with students, was an aide to teachers, oversaw the daily

lunch and afterschool programs, and handled numerous other responsibilities.

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# Ridgewood Alumni Graduations

We celebrate these alumni who completed another step in their educations this year!

**Class of 2021**

**Zoe Bisdorf** graduated from Springfield High School and will attend The Ohio State University to pursue film studies and communications.

**Brayden Herron** graduated from Springfield High School and will attend Kent State University to study aerospace engineering.

**Gary Iddings** graduated from Springfield High School and will attend Sinclair Community College this fall.

**Brendan Russell** graduated from Springfield High School and will attend Auburn University to study mechanical engineering.

**Class of 2018**

**Isabella Fissel** completed her associate degree in nursing at the University of Cincinnati and will complete her BS in nursing next spring.

**Class of 2017**

**Thomas Edwards**, Columbia University, BA in film and media studies with a focus on business, screenwriting, and genre study. Thomas was selected to be the Class of 2025 Speaker for Columbia's graduation. In July he became the Video Producer helping lead the video team at the Empire State Realty Trust and the Empire State Building Observatory.

**Morgan Reynolds**, University of Connecticut, BS in ecology and evolutionary biology. She will begin a MS in biodiversity and conservation

biology this fall. This past summer she was an intern with Avalonia Land Conservancy which stewards lands and habitats in southeastern Connecticut. Morgan also traveled to Golfoito, Costa Rica to continue a research project.

**Aadil Umerani** graduated *summa cum laude* from The Ohio State University having completed a B.S. in neuroscience. He is working at Wright State Physicians and applying to medical schools.

**Class of 2016**

Neil Patel received his B.A. in cyber security from the University of Cincinnati.

**Class of 2014**

**Armaan Ahmed** completed an MA in philosophy and the arts at Stonybrook University.

**Shivam Patel** completed his doctorate in pharmacy (PharmD) at The Ohio State University.

# Please Welcome to Ridgewood!



**Dan Funk**, Director of Development, originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, came to Ridgewood in March. He received his BA degree in Integrated Studies: Communication,

Organizational Leadership, and Environmental Education from Northern Kentucky University in 2020. Prior to coming to Ridgewood, he worked as an Associate Director of Alumni Relations at Moeller High School in Cincinnati of which he is a 2015 alumnus. Dan and his wife Heather live in Springfield and have a Great Pyrenees named Bear.



**Tera Mohler**, fourth-grade teacher, may already be familiar to some of you. She has been with Ridgewood since the fall of 2020 as one of our tutors and substitute

teachers. Mrs. Mohler earned her BA in elementary education from Wittenberg University and her MA in education from Otterbein College. Her wealth of professional experience includes teaching at Catholic Central Preschool, Urbana Local Intermediate School, Clarfield Elementary in Columbus, and Grayhill Elementary in Springfield. Mrs. Mohler and her husband Justin are the parents of four, including Iris who is a Ridgewood sixth-grade student.



**Beth Dixon**, librarian/media specialist, has returned to Ridgewood! Earlier in her professional life, Ms. Dixon taught upper-level language arts at Ridgewood

and served as Ridgewood's Director of Development and Alumni Relations. Although she left Ridgewood in 2018 and joined the staff of WellSpring, Beth has continued to work with Ridgewood students in her capacity as director of WellSpring's Youth-Led Prevention program. Welcome back, Mrs. Dixon!



**Susan Van Voorhis**, lower-level computer teacher and tutor, taught grades 2-5 in Clark Shawnee Schools for thirty-two years and in 2020 was recognized as the

district's Teacher of the Year. She earned her B.S. degree in elementary education at Bowling Green State University, her MA

at Marygrove College in Detroit, and her Reading certification at the University of Dayton.



**Lisa Grove** is the principal oboist with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra and a member of the Springfield Symphony Woodwind Quintet. She earned

her Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music Education degrees *magna cum laude* at The Ohio State University and her Master of Music at Carnegie Mellon University. In addition to her career as a professional musician, Lisa has taught in the music education program at Wittenberg University.



**Lori Whitaker**, lower-level music teacher, is already familiar with some of Ridgewood students. For the past seven years, she has been teaching piano in our after-school

program. Lori, who has been a member of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra's Chorale and Choral Arts of Springfield, taught K-8 music at Holy Trinity and St. Mary's Catholic Schools. She is the owner of Whitaker Music Studio and accompanist and music coordinator at First Baptist Church in Springfield. Lori earned her BS degree in music at the University of Indianapolis.

## Ridgewood Staff and Faculty 2025-2026

**Head of School:** Aliya Ranginwala

**Dean of Students:** Dan Metzger

**Development Director:** Dan Funk

**Alumni Director:** Corwin Georges

**Administrative Assistant:**

Christine Reynolds

**Bookkeeper:** Mailin Johnson

**Secretary:** Michelle Dutton

**IT Manager:** George Berkhofer

**Social Media Manager & Webmaster:**

Kristyn Keriazes

**Auxiliary Clerk:** Mary Jane Rumpke

**School Nurse:** Lisa Reynolds, RN

**Preschool Lead Teacher:** Christina Crose

**Preschool Teacher:** Maginta Grim

**Preschool Assistant:** Deanna McDonald

**Preschool Assistant Aftercare:**

Kristine Dillard

**Kindergarten Teacher:** Anna Kiehn

**First Grade Teacher:** Jenna Carter

**Second Grade Teacher:** Rebecca Jones

**Third Grade Teacher:** Kelly Biers

**Fourth Grade Teacher:** Tera Mohler

**Fifth Grade Teacher:** Megan Miller

**Upper-Level Social Studies and Math:**

Dan Metzger

**Upper-Level Science:** Rachel McLaughlin

**Upper-Level Language Arts:** Paul Sauter

**Spanish:** Sylvia Phillips

**Visual Arts:** Molly Loftis

**Music-Upper Level:** Lisa Grove

**Music-Lower Level:** Lori Whitaker

**Pre-school Music:** Gail Suzel

**Physical Education:** Alex Sarihan

**Librarian/Media Specialist:** Beth Dixon

**Upper-Level Computer and**

**Math Enrichment Tutor:** Amy Fischer

**Lower-Level Computer and Tutor:**

Susan Van Voorhis

**Tutor-Language Arts:** Stephanie Clark

**Tutor:** Teresa Foreman

**Tutor:** Pat Russell

**Tutor:** Tricia Yeager

**Aftercare:** Deanna McDonald

**Auxiliary Clerk:** Mary Jane Rumpke

**Chef and Kitchen Manager:**

John Linardos

**Environmental Services:** Jessica Yoakem

**Academic Coordinator PreK-1:**

Gail Suzel

## Fall Semester Schedule 2025-2026

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Aug 22, 25 &amp; 26</b> | Teacher Workdays                               |
| <b>Aug 25</b>              | Open House<br>6 – 7:30 p.m.                    |
| <b>Aug 27</b>              | First Day of School                            |
| <b>Sept 1</b>              | Labor Day, No School                           |
| <b>Sept 5</b>              | *Early Release 2 p.m.                          |
| <b>Sept 26</b>             | Interim Reports                                |
| <b>Oct 2</b>               | Parent-Teacher<br>Conferences<br>3:30 – 7 p.m. |
| <b>Oct 3</b>               | Conference Make-up<br>Day, No School           |
| <b>Oct 16</b>              | Multicultural Night                            |
| <b>Oct 24</b>              | End of 1st<br>Grading Period                   |
| <b>Nov 7</b>               | *Early Release 2 p.m.                          |
| <b>Nov 26-28</b>           | Thanksgiving Break                             |
| <b>Dec 5</b>               | *Early Release 2 p.m.<br>Interim Reports       |
| <b>Dec 9 &amp; 11</b>      | Winter Concerts                                |
| <b>Dec 22- Jan 2</b>       | Winter Break                                   |
| <b>Jan 5</b>               | Return to School                               |
| <b>Jan 9</b>               | End of 2nd<br>Grading Period                   |

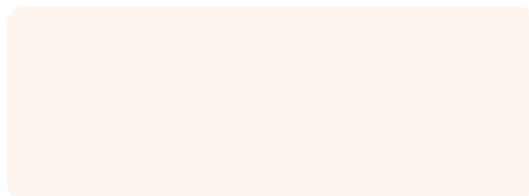




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### Ridgewood Times

Published for families, alumni, and friends of Ridgewood School.

Editor: Corwin Georges, PhD

Copywriters: Corwin Georges, Dan Metzger, Aliya Ranginwala, Dan Funk  
Design: Andy Hayes, Hucklebuck Design Studio

Photos: Trina Jones, Kristyn Keriazes, Dan Metzger, Aliya Ranginwala

### Ridgewood School Association Officers and Trustees 2025-26

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Vice President: Kathryn Rogers

Secretary: Heather Cunningham

Treasurer: Melissa Hallmark

C. William Brougher

Nicholas "Tony" Bryan '79

Randall M. Comer, JD

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Jonathan F. Johnson

Sayed Tariq Rizvi, MD

Margaret Roark

Afshan Syed '83D

Scott A. Thacker '69D

Aliya Ranginwala, *Ex Officio*

#D=Distinguished Alumni

Ridgewood School Association meetings are open to the public and are held on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m., at Ridgewood School. Anyone wishing to speak to the Board at a meeting, please write the Board president at least one week prior to the meeting requesting that you be added to the agenda and provide a brief statement of the subject you will address. Leave your request with Christine Reynolds, Administrative Assistant, at the school office.

## From the Head of School



Head of School Aliya Ranginwala

Traditions...

Another summer races by with the lightning speed of an F1 car on the track, leaving us with the urgency of preparing for the soon-to-begin school year.

As I reflect on the past few months, I'm reminded of my preoccupation with my daughter's wedding and all the planning that went into it. Like summer itself, the wedding passed in a flash—ten months of preparation unfolded beautifully within one weekend, leaving behind cherished memories of time spent with family and friends, and the traditions woven into our ceremony and celebration.

Being of Pakistani heritage, I made every effort to incorporate our cultural traditions—from the henna on her hands to the traditional bridal attire, the decor, and the food that captured the look,

feel, and flavor of our roots. A wedding, in many ways, is a blending of traditions from two families. Through these new bonds, we learn from each other, come to understand and respect differing values, and embrace one another's ways of celebrating—what we eat, what we wear, and how we honor special moments. Eventually, every family creates its own unique version of tradition, rooted in heritage yet adapted for the future.

I see Ridgewood School through a similar lens.

Over the years, as I've met more alumni, I've come to understand the remarkable uniqueness of Ridgewood and its enduring spirit. A few years ago, I saw an old film reel of a 6th-grade graduation from the 1950s—when Ridgewood only went up to 6th grade. Each graduate was accompanied by a kindergartener to the stage. It immediately reminded me of our current "Bigs & Littles" mentorship, where older students choose younger ones to guide throughout the year. It's the same tradition, carried forward in a new form.

Another treasured Ridgewood tradition is our freshly prepared meals, lovingly crafted by cooks who have become part of our school's lore—from Ridgewood cooks like Cookie, Ms. Bradem, Grandma Jo, and now Mr. Linardos. These meals

remain a favorite memory for many students long after they graduate.

Our community is built on traditions: annual musicals, egg hunts, Halloween parades now enhanced by trunk-or-treat, community service, 8th-grade announcements and dismissal duties. We've conducted and participated in spelling bees, science fairs, Power of the Pen competitions, and our beloved 8th-grade speeches forecasting the future, a very unique Ridgewood staple. These traditions aren't just events—they're the glue that bonds Ridgewood students like families bound by shared customs.

Such traditions instill belonging and forge a powerful culture. They allow our students to confidently venture into the world, always carrying with them the spirit of Ridgewood and knowing they can return home. Any alum, regardless of when they attended, will find a familiar thread that connects them to their time here. That isn't something you find in most elementary school experiences.

Strong traditions—whether within our families or our school, which itself feels like an extension of family—remind us of our roots and the places we call home