

Southwest FOUNDATION news

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Students Return to In Person Learning!



Senior Student Ambassadors Sonja Minge, Lucinda Emmen & Emma Knutson hand out backpacks to Freshman students on April 12, 2021.

April 13th marked the first day back for most Lakers choosing to return to in person learning, with 9th graders beginning a day earlier, and special education students a couple weeks prior. There was an excitement as nervous freshman and nostalgic upperclassman funneled inside donning masks and observing social distancing. As they passed under the new main entrance, they were greeted with a massive “Welcome Back Lakers” banner which was donated by Fast Signs, a longtime business partner of the community. Students were also given purple drawstring backpacks with the school and foundation logo. Inside they found two KN95 masks and an Amanda Gorman print with a quote from her inauguration speech, drawn by alumni Adam Johnson.

With a student body of about 1,800, roughly half elected to return for in person learning, while the rest will remain in distance learning. The largest percentage of in person learners by grade belongs to the freshman

class, who had never been inside their new school or met their teachers in person. Class schedules and teachers remain the same regardless of learning method as students at school and at home are being taught synchronously.

For teacher Peter Carlson, this hybrid model works well. “As a technology teacher, we teach students to embrace technology. I like that this model gives us real life applications and examples on a daily basis,” he says. Carlson takes technology a step further as microphones in his classroom allow virtual learners to hear what is happening at school. He has a TV in the back of his room to see all his students as he faces forward, and a camera in the back of the room sends a live video feed to students at home. His Digital Media class, which consists of mostly 9th and 10th graders, welcomed the return to school sharing that it was easier to focus and that they get more done at school. Like many students, they also loved being able to see their friends.

In Kim Kolstad’s French 4 class, about half of her thirty students returned to campus. A mix of all grades, they agreed that the return was a good change as one student admitted his grades were slipping from Distance Learning. But Kolstad was quick to point out that some students are doing better in Distance Learning. Like all teachers, she strives to serve all her students but admits, “It is difficult to teach both at times because as a teacher the division of attention can be tricky. Sometimes I feel like I am hosting a game show that has at home players as well as a live studio audience. Overall I am happy to be at work and I can feel the students’ gladness at being in school. This entire experience has reinforced in me, how incredibly important a place, that public schools are and continue to be, in our society.”

Outside of the classroom, the hallways remain a bustle (even with half as many students), but lunch has a very different feel. Students use their smartphones to scan a QR code at their table daily, in the event of needed contract tracing, and tables are limited to three so many eat outside or off campus.

It took a couple of weeks but students and staff are settling into their new routine, taking one step closer toward normalcy. The hope is to welcome back all learners for the next school year, when students can hug their friends around packed lunch tables.



Dean Mark Robinson greets students coming back for in person learning on April 13, 2021.



Golf Event & Athletic HOF Brunch - Weekend of September 24-25

Mark your calendars for the SW Foundation’s annual golf event! A 1:00 pm shotgun is scheduled for Friday, September 24, 2021 at Meadowbrook Golf Course. Sign up information is at SouthwestFoundation.org. We are looking for businesses, groups or individuals to sponsor a hole (\$200), or donate prizes for both the golf event and a raffle. Please contact Allison Krueger at fullswingconsultants@gmail.com if you are interested.

The annual SW Athletic Hall of Fame induction celebration will be held September 25, 2021. Nominations of candidates for induction can be made at swhshof.com.

From Our Chair



Adam Barrett, '00

"Life is filled with uncertainty... If I could give you one piece of advice it's to embrace life just as it is. Find the best of wherever you are. No matter how awful something is, there will also be some good there. Look for it and you'll find it." - Tracy McMillan (Southwest Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame; 1982)

I am often reminded of Ms. McMillan's thoughts and advice. The previous year presented us with challenges that we could never anticipate but the Southwest Community persevered as best we could.

Some first year students still have not walked the halls of Southwest between classes.

Art + Activism = Artivism

Southwest Class of 2000 alum, Adam Johnson (his students call him "Mr. Johnson"), recently returned to the Southwest community with his family. You have likely seen his artwork in yards, on television in the hands of marchers and the front-page of international newspapers. Also, the Southwest Foundation included Adam's painting of Amanda Gorman in every backpack handed out to students, upon returning to school for the first time this year.

Adam loved drawing and painting as a child, but he really got into the visual arts when he began painting with his middle school students in the South Bronx ten years ago.

The math curriculum he was given was not engaging students and he had trouble building relationships with them. He integrated drawing and painting into his lessons and began an after school art club.

Similar to the Southwest Foundation's emphasis on funding extracurricular activities that complement a rigorous academic foundation, Adam found that his students' self-esteem increased, they fostered new thinking strategies and he noticed an improvement in their sense of identity.

The Southwest Foundation recently had an opportunity to interview Mr. Johnson:

SWF: What is "Artivism"?

AJ: As a universal language, the arts have always been an effective tool for addressing social issues. Artivism or "activist art" is a form of social protest that explores cultural and political concerns. It involves attempts to engage others, create awareness, amplify stories and voices and inspire positive change in society. Artivism fights for issues of social justice including racial discrimination, environmental justice, gender equality, fair labor practices, human rights and more.

Seniors were forced to navigate post-high school planning via emails and virtual meetings.

All of our students, teachers and staff found themselves improvising distance learning approaches daily with the hope that pedagogical approaches and the material were absorbed.

The COVID-associated impediments exacerbated sadness and fear with a very humbling awakening for many with the murder and deaths of BIPOC community members at the hands of police.

Life continues to throw curveballs when we least expect or need it. The core of the International Baccalaureate Program at Southwest, may help act as a guide to improve our surroundings and selves: learning from failures, exploring the perspectives of others—especially those with whom you disagree, and operating with the humbling acceptance that none of us knows everything.

The Southwest Foundation aims to be better and acknowledges that our systems are imperfect because they were designed by humans and humans are imperfect. Ideas for improvement and new members on the Foundation's board are welcomed.

As the Class of 2021 moves into the next phase of their lives and we all emerge from a year that none will forget, it will benefit our immediate community and the world, if we encourage empathy and lifelong learning.

Learning to fail is a great place to start. Correcting the inequities and broken pieces of our systems is a long and tedious process. Use this fact as motivation to focus on what we can individually accomplish, doing our best, and searching for light in the darkest of days.

The Southwest Foundation appreciates your support of our organization and the Southwest community. We look forward to building Southwest stronger as we enter the 2021-2022 school year.



LEFT: Johnson's art is used on signs at a local protest. TOP: His Amanda Gorman print given to all students.

SWF: Do you have a personal purpose behind your art?

AJ: The purpose behind my art is to amplify the stories and voices of the individuals I paint. Another purpose is to portray their humanity. My goal is to get the art in the hands of activists and people that are demanding justice and change. As an educator, I also seek to provide educators with art that enhances their lessons and classroom environment.

SWF: What impact has your art had?

AJ: I have connected with activists throughout Minnesota and around the county. I've been able to provide them with art that adds unifying images to their demands for justice and change. The art is demanding justice for many lives that have been stolen and, unfortunately, many families have contacted me to paint their loved ones who have been killed by police.

SWF: How can Southwest students learn to express themselves through "Artivism"?

AJ: Cecily Spano and I have discussed carrying out an after school artivism club where we discuss social issues and create art to display our thoughts and feelings.

SWF: What impact did Southwest and International Baccalaureate have on your life?

AJ: Southwest and International Baccalaureate helped me think critically about the world and question the status quo, and exam-

ine how history and intersectionality have shaped institutions and systems that in many cases produce oppression.

SWF: Did you have a favorite class at SW?

AJ: My favorite classes at Southwest were taught by Cecily Spano, Ben Zhao and Patrick O'Connor. The content and discussions were meaningful, but how they treated me and genuinely cared about me is what I remember the most. Jamison Rusthoven also guided me in high school and helped me make important decisions after graduating.

SWF: Who inspires you?

AJ: I am inspired by many people throughout history, and I often paint those who inspire me, but I am exceptionally inspired by the young people that I have worked with that are using their platform to speak up against injustice. Young people give me hope that our world will become more equitable and sustainable.

SWF: Any additional thoughts, advice, or comments for the entire Southwest High School Community (including alumni)?

AJ: Our collective voice, fight and energy makes change more attainable. Use your voice and platform if you feel passionate about making change.

Contact & follow Adam at: mrjohnsonpaints@gmail.com. Instagram & Facebook: [@mrjohnsonpaints](https://www.instagram.com/mrjohnsonpaints)

From Our Principal

Southwest High School is truly grateful for the Southwest Foundation because of the numerous ways in which it supplements the limited budget provided by the school district. As the largest MPS student body, the numerous course offerings and the most athletic opportunities, the Foundation fills in the gaps to financially support the academic progression of all students. Without the generous support, teachers would not be able to consistently sustain the additional educational materials that are needed for differentiated teaching and learning.

I asked our staff to complete this statement: "I am grateful for the Southwest Foundation because..." I'd like to share their responses.

...Because they prioritize equity. In '19-'20 they made it possible for each grade of English Learners to take a tour of local college campuses! ~Louise Bonner, ESL Teacher

...Because they support scholarships for our students and provide volunteer after school tutoring ~Jenny Moore, Counselor

...Because they raise money for scholarships that help reduce college expenses for our students. ~Miriam Bungert, Social Studies Teacher

...Because they have grant opportunities that really enhance my classroom and thus, my students' learning experience. Additionally, the professional networking has been pivotal in bringing in guest artists from organizations like the Minnesota Orchestra. ~Reid Wixson, Director of Instrumental Music

...Because they help students pay for their exams through a scholarship fund. ~Lisa Ledman, Advanced Academics Coordinator

...Because they demonstrate both the connection, strength and dedication of our alumni to Southwest. It's pretty rare that a high school has such pride of connection for years past graduation. It is truly testament to the Southwest community. ~Michael Ries, Library Media Specialist



Principal Little-Butler hands out Laker backpacks to in person learning students on April 13, 2021.

"I am grateful for the SW Foundation because they prioritize equity."

...Because they have supported several projects I have run over the years. Together, we have helped students from Southwest gain experience in mathematical competitions and other advanced mathematics activities. ~David McMayer, Mathematics Teacher

Mr. Adam Barrett's tenacity to establish and maintain a congruent Foundation Board helps to fuel his passion to increase and sustain the financial support from the community at large. As a Southwest alumni, Mr. Barrett is personally invested in his effort to ensure that all of the students receive and surpass the quality educational opportunities that he received. He is dedicated to the academic progression of Southwest High School and his equitable intentions always drive the decisions about how funding is distributed. All Southwest staff have the same opportunities to apply and they follow the same funding request procedures that includes a vetted process with the board.

Kudos to the courageous leadership of Mr. Adam Barrett and the entire Southwest Foundation Board for your selfless time, efforts and ideas to continuously seek ways to support Southwest High School. Your knowledge and integrity speaks volumes of your efforts to ensure that the students of Southwest High School will continue to be an asset in this ever changing society.

~Dr. Valerie Little-Butler, Southwest Principal

their computer while simultaneously seeing a video of the conductor [me] and hearing the music. It has been wonderful to be able to provide this option for students to make recording at home a little smoother and a little less scary." He adds, "Thank you to the Foundation for the financial assistance during this difficult time of distance learning!"

In a year of no performances, "Singalong" now brings them to family and friends. And that's a good thing because not performing is a very sour note for Fisher and his students.

Alumni Corner

Jennifer Van Der Heide ('83), who became Senior Counselor to newly confirmed Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland.

Carolyn Blomberg ('04) whose comedy chops were featured in a story on MnComedy.com

From Purple & White to the White House

The first 100 days have come and gone for President Biden's administration, one that claims to



be the most diverse in history, and can now also claim having a Southwest connection in National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.

A 1994 IB Diploma graduate, Sullivan excelled in the political arena from early on. Before he was making his case to Presidents, he was making his case to competitors for Southwest's Debate and Quiz Bowl teams, in editorials to the student body in the school paper, or as Student Council President.

As Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton called him a "Once-in-a-generation talent" in a statement to the Star Tribune. "His Minnesota roots keep him grounded in the rough and tumble of Washington, and I have no doubt he will prove as invaluable to the next administration as he was by my side," she added. In a 2012 speech, she even referred to Sullivan as a "potential future president."

He also was a multi-tool athlete running Track, playing Soccer and Cross Country skiing. About his upbringing, biology teacher Theresa Rumppe said, "I have to sing the praises of the IB program, and the arts, and the athletics. IB gives a real foundation on how to think. It also attracts people [like Jake] that want to think. Anyone can google anything these days. Not everyone can critically assess information." IB Coordinator, Lisa Ledman agreed saying, "IB is the path for learning how to think critically and globally."

Dr. Matt Whalin, a classmate of Sullivan's told the Star Tribune, "Every year, Southwest would produce some very strong students who would go off to the top colleges in the country. Jake, I think, stood out as the best of the best even among that group. Great sense of humor. Intense, but not in an overbearing way," Whalin added.

Longtime physics teacher Sherwood Bergseid echoed that as he recalls, "Jake was one of the most intense students I ever had."

His humor (and maybe foresight) was on display as his senior yearbook quote included, "FP [future plans]: Rule a country with a pewter fist." Sullivan is well on his way.

Chloe Brevik-Rich ('11) who was featured on KARE11 News for serving as a "celebrity judge" for Minneapolis Community Education's citywide K-12 virtual youth talent show.

Quincy Powe ('13) who was a panelist in a virtual town hall on MPR's "Call to Mind."

To share an alumni update, please email us at info@southwestfoundation.org.

Singing Praises

This fall with school occurring virtually, the SW Foundation pivoted the annual grant requests to solely support staff needs during distance learning. Dozens of requests came in from all departments and nearly all were fully funded. Grants were approved for a computerized math program for special education students, guest artists for English classes and noise cancelling headphones for multilingual students. But one grant in particular had an immediate and immense impact.

Choir is the biggest elective at SW and Director Bryan Fisher was seeing the frustration among his students in not being able to sing together. He researched and found "Singalong," a collaborative online singing software that would solve this issue. Mr Fisher explains, "This software provides students with a convenient interface of singing to

Southwest KUDOS

Senior **Julia Stevens** (hockey, lacrosse) was named Southwest's 2021 Athena Award winner and featured in the Star Tribune.

Social Studies teacher **Robert Kohnert** was one of 25 semifinalists in the 2021 Minnesota Teacher of the Year program!

SW **Math Team** for advancing to their 15th consecutive State Competition.

Film students for their Black History Month video that interviewed US Rep. Ilhan Omar & MN Attorney General Keith Ellison.

Senior **Silvia Miller**, Juniors **Ian Lee**, **Peter Lindholm**, **Allison Hanka** & **Gracia Zachman** for attending the All-National Honor Guitar Ensemble.

SW **Performing Arts Faculty** for their uplifting video singing RENT's 525,600 Minutes in honor of one year of the pandemic.

Juniors **Sam Fider**, **Katie Hockenberry**, **Sophie Mack**, Sophomore **Zoe Gibson** & Freshman **Emily Springer** whose FIRST FTC Robotics Team advanced to State.

Senior **Isaac Kruger-Reeh** (1st), Juniors **Lauran Downham** (2nd) & **Ethan Edwards** (3rd) for ranking in the Haiku contest sponsored by Ibaraki, Minneapolis' sister city in Japan.

SW **Dance students** who teamed up with Roosevelt, South, North, Henry and Barton dancers in the film, "We Are Made For Now."

Junior **Emi Gacaj** who appeared in a Star Tribune feature on the effects of distance learning.

Sophomore **Abby Grabowski**, who was awarded the Outstanding Proposal Award in the virtual Youth Government conference.

Senior **Avery Berlowski**, who participated at the Class of 2021 Distinguished Young Woman State Finals Program.

Senior football running-back **Nick Flaskamp** was selected to lead 'The All-Metro Offense' in Randy Shaver's annual ranking on KARE11.

Athletic Update

Dear Laker Nation, Despite many obstacles this winter our student athletes and coaches found ways to safely and purposefully practice and compete! Thanks to all the hard work of players, coaches, trainer and Booster Clubs. We even won a State Championship in Boys Nordic Skiing! Here are some of the many notable accomplishments.

Cheer did a fabulous job supporting our teams! Being the only fans in the stands they brought tons of spirit to basketball games. And for the first time, our girls entered the competitive cheer scene in virtual matches! We hope to continue with competitions for years to come and are excited and grateful for the generosity of the Dr. Betsee Parker Grant which helped support new uniforms!

Boys Basketball finished 3rd in the City and had impressive wins over Henry, Washburn, Kennedy and St Anthony. **Hakeem Ford** and **Gabriel Sensman-Cassidy** were named to the All City Team while **Preston Engen** was named Honorable Mention. Many young and upcoming players helped win the JV City Conference Championship!

Girls Basketball continued to improve, finishing 3rd in the City with an 8-4 conference record. Our Lady Lakers beat Washburn twice, earned a 5th seed in sections and had two players selected to the All City Team in **Virginia Johnson** and **Jhanae Green**. **Anya London** and **Elsa Youngdahl** were named Honorable Mention.



Dance Team conditionally joined the Tri Metro Conference competing against Richfield, Columbia Heights, Fridley and Holy Angels. At the teams final competition they placed 1st in High Kick! We hope to join the Tri Metro Conference as official members for 2021-22.



Gymnastics completed their season with a 6th place finish at the Section 6AA meet at Hopkins while also winning the City Championship! New skills were added to almost every routine and many gymnasts set new personal records! Additionally, the team finished with a season high of 124.25 points! Within our very competitive section we had several standout performances including a 9th place beam finish by **Annabel Briggs**, **Vanessa Harris** made All Section on Bars, and **Ruby Brown** and **Annabel Briggs** made All Section Honorable Mention on Floor and Beam.

Boys Hockey earned an impressive #4 seed in sections, beating Providence Academy in the 2A quarterfinals with an epic goal in the last minute. Two of our three goals were scored by **Zander Zoia**. Minneapolis then advanced to the section semifinals where they lost to #1 seed Breck School. Scoring for the Lakers in the Section Semifinal were **Zoia** and **Jack Stock**. Goalie **Alex Lamont** played brilliantly making many saves, including a penalty shot. Our MPS Citywide boys team finished the season with an 8-5 record.

Girls Hockey finished with an impressive 10-5 record. Senior Laker defenseman **Julia Stevens** led the Minneapolis cooperative hockey team in points and assists and was quickly signed by the D1 hockey program, Franklin Pierce! Our girls had impressive wins over Eden Prairie, Holy Angels, Jefferson and Mahtomedi. They beat Armstrong in the 5A Section Quarterfinals and lost to Orono in the Section Semi-Finals.

Boy's and Girl's Alpine Ski teams had a tremendous season. Senior **Meghan Abel**, Sophomore **Elli George**, and Juniors **Erik Arnold** and **Charlie Smith II** all qualified for the State Meet at Giants Ridge. The Girl's Team's dual meet record was 11-14, highlighted by a victory against Edina. The Boy's finished an impressive season with a dual record of 14-4, defeating competitive arch-rival, Washburn, at 5 of 7 meets.

Nordic Ski brought home a State Championship for the Boy's Team at Giants Ridge in Biwabik, MN! HUGE congratulations to the Team, our amazing Booster Club and world class coaching staff! **Cooper Camp**, **Victor Sparks**, **Owen Lindseth** and **Miguel Fresco-Hanlon** led the way and were named to the All-State Team. **Bergen Thorson**, **Ruben Margolis** and **Ian Lee** rounded out the team. Truly an amazing accomplishment for our school and community. **Sudie Hall** and **Olympia Parks** represented SW at the State Meet as Individual Qualifiers in the top 30 and 40 respectively.



Boys Swimming finished 2nd in the City Conference and 3rd in the Tri-Metro. **Benjamin Kell** was named All Conference in the 100 free. **Eli Holm** and **Evan Binder** were All Conference Honorable Mention. We had two Divers advance to Sections - **Van Lederman** placed 6th and **Will Krueger** placed 8th.

Wrestling did an amazing job despite it being one of the most difficult sports to do in a pandemic! **Kade Grierson** (3-2), **Ozzie Gramentz** (4-1) and **Nate Umholtz** (3-2) were All-City award winners. Additionally, our team found a new look and feel after a successful fundraising effort for a new wrestling room mat, wall pads and coat of paint!

Please also follow us on Twitter @MplsSouthwest for more Southwest Athletics updates! Go Lakers!

~Robert Hollway Jr., Athletic Director



The Southwest Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to work with Southwest High School and its alumni to create an exceptional educational experience for all students. The Foundation raises money to support academic, athletic and artistic opportunities for students and to provide scholarships to graduating seniors.

There are many opportunities to become involved with and support the Southwest Foundation. We are currently seeking volunteers, additional board members and a new Treasurer. To learn more or to donate, visit SouthwestFoundation.org.

2020-2021 Board Members

Adam Barrett '00, Chair
Una Edwardson, current parent
Dan Froehlich '75, Dir. of Alumni Engagement, staff and graduate parent
Bradley Idelkope, '03
Allison Krueger, current parent
Dave Premack '04, Communications
Paul Roach '88, Treasurer
Gwen Spurgat, current parent

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