The Insider

KHAN LAB SCHOOL

Fall/Winter 2025-26

Featured In This Issue

New Year, New Spaces —
Reimagining our learning environments

AI in the Classroom —
Leading the thoughtful use of technology

Updates —
Achievements in and out of the classroom



Growth, Connection, and Discovery

Dear KLS Community,



My office sits right in the middle of our Middle School, which means I have a front-row seat to how our students have truly made this new space their own. Every day, I see them gather in the open areas to collaborate, reset between classes, or simply connect with friends. I hear the energy of their conversations, see them problem-solving together at the whiteboards, and witness the confidence with which they navigate what was, just months ago, an empty construction site filled with dust and stacked furniture. The transformation has been remarkable—not because we built a beautiful space, but because our students have made it their own.

This transformation captures something essential about the year we're having so far. Our Middle School didn't just move into the Khan Academy space; they brought it to life, hosting a 6th–8th grade dance, the AIED Summit, community meetings, the Parent Partnership Series and countless moments of learning and connection. What once felt "under construction" now feels like it's always been our Middle School home.

The same spirit of ownership has shown up everywhere. One of our students redesigned our entire advisory program based on their own research— and now seniors are leading workshops for younger students on everything from AI ethics to financial literacy. Our iGEM team didn't just compete in Paris; they were one of only 14 US schools represented, earning a gold medal for their work on engineering bacteria to create a sustainable method of reducing pollution. And when I look at our math competition results—25% of our students in the top 10% nationally—I'm reminded that depth and mastery aren't just buzzwords here. They're what happens when kids are genuinely engaged.

In this edition of The Insider, you'll find more of these stories: student-led clubs and performances, the growth of our athletics program, artistic work that reflects real skill and creativity, and the many ways our students are learning to lead, create, and connect.

We're excited about the continued evolution of our programs, the expansion of opportunities for our students, and the ongoing work to strengthen our campuses as vibrant learning environments. We remain committed to supporting our educators, deepening our partnerships with families, and growing with intention as we prepare our students for opportunities ahead.

We invite you to read on about what makes KLS the innovative learning community our students experience each day.

Warmly,
Kim Dow
Executive Director

Engineering, powered by teamwork



Costumes on, minds at work





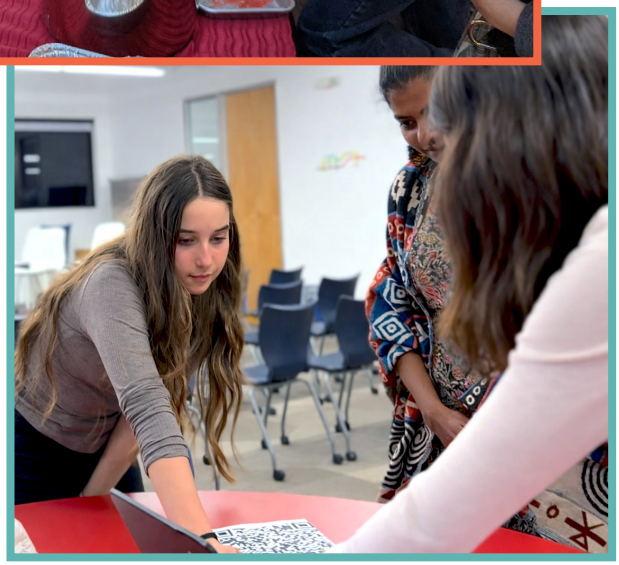
First day smile says it all



Where connection is part of the curriculum

School pride begins with our youngest students



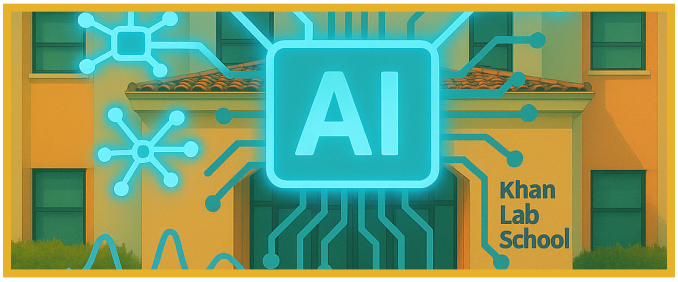


On display: student confidence



AIED Summit

A Day of Innovation, Inspiration, and Human Intelligence



On Saturday, November 1st, 2025, Khan Lab School hosted its first-ever AI in Education Summit—a sold-out event that brought together nearly 300 educators, innovators, and students from across the country and beyond. With over 80 guests from outside the Bay Area representing diverse schools, districts, and educational organizations, the summit spotlighted the evolving role of artificial intelligence in learning spaces—and more importantly, how human intelligence remains at the centre of it all.

While the event didn't have a formal theme, one naturally emerged: How do we honour the human experience in an AI-powered world? Throughout the day, that question came to life through keynotes, panels, and over 40 synchronous presentations led by educators, researchers, and edtech leaders—from Arizona State University, Florida, and even Paris.

Keynote speakers included Sal Khan (Khan Academy), Dr. Isabelle Hau (Stanford HAI), Dr. Misty Freeman (Mocha Sprout), Than Healy (Menlo School), Shantanu Sinha (Google for Education), and Drew Bent (Anthropic, Schoolhouse. world, and KLS faculty alum). These speakers set the tone for a day rich in perspective, grounded in research, and driven by purpose.

From classroom case studies to district-level implementation strategies, presentations explored how AI is reshaping curriculum design, assessment, accessibility, creativity, and more. But far from tech evangelism, this was a day of thoughtful critique—spotlighting both the opportunities and real concerns surrounding AI in schools.

One of the most moving moments came at the end of the day during our student panel, where middle and high school students from the Bay Area, Chicago and San Diego shared their views on AI's role in their education. They spoke candidly about when and why they use AI tools, how they want to be taught about it, and what matters most: learning that feels authentic, meaningful, and human. Their message was clear: AI is useful—but not when it replaces curiosity or relationships.

This summit was the brainchild of the Middle School Director, Natasha McKeown and Middle School Humanities teacher, Kanishka Seth. It wouldn't have been possible without Marcus Fong, Marketing Manager, the energy of our student presenters, the generosity of parent volunteers, and the magic of Chi-Ray, who ensured everything went smoothly on that day.

Ultimately, the event reminded us that innovation in education is strongest when driven by community. We're already dreaming of next year's gathering—and we hope to see even more voices, stories, and shared learning when we do it all again.

Kanishka Seth
Humanities Faculty & AIED Summit Co-Organizer



iGEM

Rock the Plastics!

Back in the time when the adults of today were college students, computers were too expensive for the average person to own, but now young kids have access to computers, allowing them to become coding geniuses. Biology is in a similar place to computer science; lab equipment costs deter students from really experiencing practical synthetic biology until college. That is until iGEM.

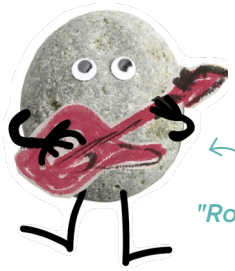
iGEM is an international competition that invites teams to define a real world problem and solve it using synthetic biology. The KhanLab-BayArea iGEM team started two years ago with two students and an idea and has expanded to over twenty students across five schools. Over the course of a year, students with varying levels of biology knowledge went into lab (often staying for longer than a 9-5 work day) using devices like electroporators and thermocyclers to genetically edit E. coli K-12 to trap microplastics in a rock-like structure, creating a reusable material. They reached out to experts ranging from parents in our own community to cold-emailing professors, culminating in a conference in Paris where the team presented the work to a worldwide audience of over 4,000 people. Judges at the Jamboree agreed that the team had met the criteria to win a gold medal and village nomination!

But the medal isn't the team's biggest achievement; the most amazing part of the team is the influence it has on the community. **Being the only iGEM team in the Bay Area and one of only 14 schools from the USA**, the team attracts students from across multiple local high schools, giving each the opportunity to do real lab work in synthetic biology. In addition, through education outreach, the team is also introducing middle school and elementary school students to biological sciences.

As the team plans for the next season they continue to rock with their mascot, Rocky!

Khushi (10th Grade)
Team Specialist

Ansh (12th Grade)
Team Captain



"Rocky"



Math Competitions

Results that add up



Lower School

This is the Lower School's third year competing in **Math Olympiad**, and this year we're proud to have our greatest level of participation yet, with 24 students in the elementary division. Each week, students devote an hour after school to work on challenging problems and explore new strategies. Their enthusiasm for math and willingness to try different types of problem solving are a testament to our students' growth mindset and love of learning. Most inspiring to see is the collaborative spirit of the team: students encourage one another and think through problems together.

Julia
Lower School Math Teacher

Middle School



We are proud to share the results of two mathematics competitions recently completed by our students:

The **Noetic Learning Math Tournament** is a nationally recognized team-based competition that challenges students with creative problem-solving and advanced mathematical reasoning tasks.

Our students achieved excellent results:

- **4 Team Winner Medals**
- **7 Honor Roll Medals**
- **8 Honorable Mention Ribbons**
- **1 Team Recognition Award for our 6th-grade team**

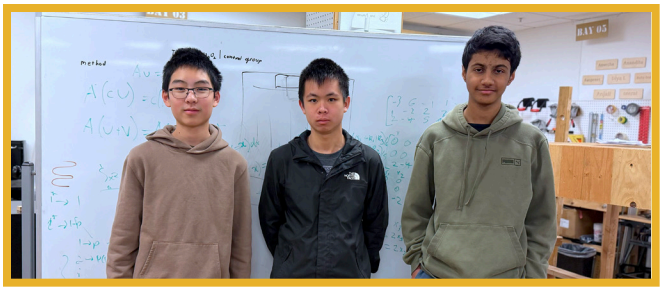
The **MathWorks Competition**, organized by the University of Texas at Austin, is an international contest designed to promote mathematical thinking and perseverance through rigorous problem sets.

Our students earned:

- **1 Silver Award**
- **10 Bronze Awards**

Marine
Middle School Math Teacher

Upper School



Our Upper School students have been actively competing in prestigious math competitions this year, with notable results including:

- **AMC 10A**: One student earned the highest score at KLS and placed in the top 10% nationally
- **AMC 10A & 10B**: Three students placed in the top 25% nationally on both exams
- **AMC 12A**: One student achieved a top 25% national ranking
- **Berkeley Math Tournament**: One student placed in the top 20% in both Algebra and Discrete Mathematics

We are proud of our students' hard work and enthusiasm for mathematical challenge and look forward to sending a team to the upcoming Stanford Math Tournament.

Kanzah
Upper School Math Teacher

Parent Partnership Series

A Community of Learners



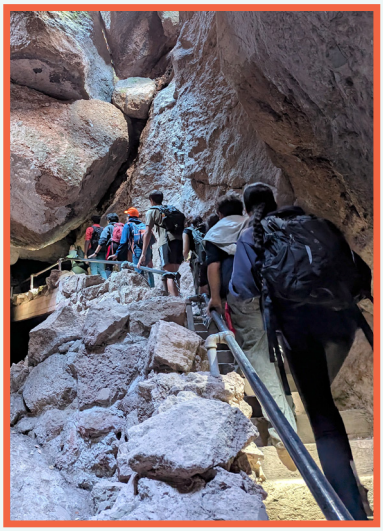
Last year's parent survey revealed something we found both inspiring and actionable: the desire for more opportunities that bring together parents across all grade levels, TK-12, and an interest in educational programming around topics that matter most to our families. Thus began our search for speakers who could open these important conversations for our community. In October, we welcomed Denise Pope for our first of several keynote talks. Dr. Pope is a senior lecturer at Stanford University School of Education, author of Doing School, and co-founder of Challenge Success, a national project aimed at reducing unhealthy pressure on youth. Her talk invited a timely conversation about supporting our children's academic success while protecting their well-being and joy in learning. The community is now ready to welcome their next speaker, Erin Walsh of the Spark and Stitch Institute, who will discuss how we can help our students to navigate a world filled with screens!



Upper School

9-12th









As the first semester of our new schedule comes to a close, it's hard to believe just how much has shifted, and how much this community has grown in response. What began last year as a vision and a series of planning meetings became a reality this Fall: a new semester schedule, a new rhythm to the school year, and for many of us, a completely new way of thinking about time.

Students, families, and teachers alike stepped into the unknown with a mix of anticipation and uncertainty. And while the transition hasn't been without its bumps, the ability of this community to adapt, stay curious, and make the model work for them has been one of the most inspiring parts of the journey.

One moment that crystallized this shift came during our Fall Exhibition. For the first time, students were showcasing work from just three classes, rather than six. The difference was palpable; less scrambling, more depth, more focus. Across the school, students were engaged in thoughtful conversations about their learning, proud of what they had created and eager to share it. It felt like exactly the kind of learning environment we've been working toward.

Teachers, too, have found new opportunities in this model. With extended blocks and more flexible time, they've been able to dive deeper into content, connect more regularly with colleagues, and design new electives that speak to their passions. This has led to the development of some exciting offerings like Cristina's Storymapping class, which you can read more about in this issue.

While the schedule itself is just one piece of the puzzle, its impact has been far-reaching. Seniors are now on the other side of their college applications and entering that uniquely tense waiting period. Juniors are looking ahead to summer programs, to leadership roles, to their own application process just around the corner. Sophomores are stepping into mentorship, beginning to guide younger students in ways that reflect their growing confidence. And our freshmen? They've figured out what it means to be high school students - and they're ready to take off. Independent study proposals, Foothill courses, applied learning projects... it's all starting to take shape.

As we turn the page to the spring semester, there's a clear sense of momentum. With new courses beginning, Applied Learning projects now well underway, an international trip on the horizon, and student-led workshops continuing in advisory, the community feels both grounded, ambitious, and ready for what comes next.

Laura Khanna
Upper School Director

Experiential Learning

Not Bound by Time or Space







Pinnacles Camping Trip

Our experiential learning program includes both an orientation camping trip at the beginning of the year and a global expedition in the Spring. We spent our Fall in Pinnacles National Park, where we not only got to sleep out under the stars, but went on a rock climbing expedition and put on a fireside talent show!



Applied Learning Program

Our Applied Learning program is an opportunity for students to use the skills and knowledge they have acquired in real-world applications. They are designed to allow students choice in the topics, whether it is personal passions, new interests, or an important cause. They provide a safe place for students to explore an idea or concept that might not otherwise be explored in the context of a classroom.

In Stepping Stones, 9th graders engage with community partners to learn how non-profits operate, and how small, local teams can make a big impact on the world. They then form groups and pursue a passion project of your own. Along the way, they learn important skills like project management, collaboration, and networking.

In Cornerstones, 10th and 11th graders have the option to complete an independent year-long passion project on a topic of their choosing. In 12th grade, students are required to complete a Capstone project, where they connect their personal projects to the larger world of academia, completing a research-based thesis paper to support their work.



The Upper School Competes!

Mock Trial



The Mock Trial Team gives students space to explore their interests, build confidence, and collaborate as part of a close-knit community. In Mock Trial, high school students step into the roles of attorneys and witnesses to construct a cohesive legal case, gaining hands-on experience with courtroom procedure and the legal system. Along the way, students develop essential skills such as critical thinking, quick decision-making, evidence-based argumentation, and persuasive performance.



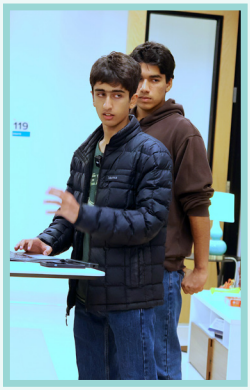
There is a role for everyone. Pre-trial attorneys argue evidentiary motions before a judge, trial attorneys shape the case and conduct examinations, and witnesses bring written statements to life through characterization and testimony. Established in 2023 with guidance from the Mountain View District Attorney's Office, the team brought together students from across grade levels to build a murder case set in a hotel room. Members met twice weekly to learn how to write and deliver direct and cross examinations, make and respond to objections, and refine a strong, coherent case.

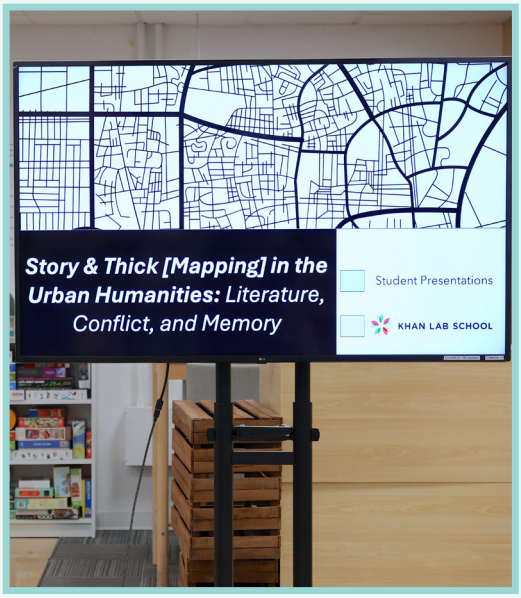
This year marked our third appearance in the Santa Clara County High School Mock Trial Competition, where retired judges preside and practicing attorneys rigorously evaluate both legal knowledge and courtroom presence. Teams must argue both the defense and the prosecution, requiring students to analyze the case from every angle. This year's case centered on a cooking competition in which a judge was poisoned by heartstopper mushrooms, placing a contestant on trial for murder. While the defense focused on establishing reasonable doubt, the prosecution worked to present a compelling and comprehensive case of guilt. Throughout the term, the team prepared for competition in late January, traveling to the Santa Clara County Office of Education to face other county high schools.

We are deeply grateful to our coach of the past two years, Steven McKeever, a litigation associate at Morrison Foerster who specializes in high-tech litigation. Mr. McKeever supports the team from start to finish—helping establish the case, providing detailed feedback on examinations, and guiding witnesses as they refine their performances. He is a crucial part of our Mock Trial program, and we are incredibly fortunate to have his mentorship.

Alisha & Mira (Grade 12)
Mock Trial Team Mentors







Stories in Layers

A Unique Course in Mapping Narratives

The Story & Thick Mapping in the Urban Humanities elective engaged students in the practice of thick mapping as a method for reading place through multiple, overlapping layers of meaning—geographic, historical, literary, visual, and lived. Over the course of the term, students used ArcGIS StoryMaps to investigate how space is shaped by conflict, power, memory, and inequality, and how maps can function not only as tools of representation, but also as instruments of spatial justice. Through close reading, archival research, data analysis, and multimedia storytelling, students learned to question dominant narratives, surface silenced histories, and reflect critically on the ethics of mapping trauma and community experience. Working individually or in small teams, they produced public-facing StoryMaps that combined research rigor with creative expression, inviting audiences to encounter place as something contested, layered, and deeply human.

The student presentations demonstrated the depth, care, and intellectual maturity with which students approached this work. *The Aftermath* used thick mapping to trace the long-term social, medical, and psychological consequences of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, foregrounding survivor testimony and postwar spatial reorganization. *Bangalore: An Evolving Urban Landscape* layered urban history, infrastructure, ecology, and cultural change to reveal how rapid development produces uneven access to resources and opportunity. *Why Loiter in Bangalore*: *Mapping Gendered Space and the Geography of Absence* explicitly mobilized spatial justice frameworks to examine how gendered mobility, surveillance, and infrastructure shape who is visible, protected, or erased in the city's public spaces. *The Golden Age of Piracy* re-mapped the Caribbean as a zone of imperial conflict, trade, and resistance, challenging romanticized narratives by situating piracy within broader systems of power and exploitation. *Train to Pakistan* used literature as a basemap to trace displacement, violence, and memory during the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan, integrating testimony and archival sources to emphasize human movement and loss. *Patron Saints of Nothing* followed a literary journey through the Philippines to map the legacies of colonialism, state violence, and national identity, showing how place mediates personal and collective reckoning.

Across all projects, students demonstrated a remarkable ability to think spatially, synthesize complex sources, and communicate with empathy and precision. They spoke with confidence about difficult histories, asked thoughtful questions of one another's work, and embraced the responsibility of creating maps meant for a public audience. As a class, they built a collaborative learning community grounded in curiosity, care, and critical reflection—one that treated mapping not as a neutral act, but as a powerful practice of interpretation and accountability. The final showcase stood as a testament to their growth as researchers, storytellers, and ethical digital humanists.

Cristina Vázquez
World Language Coordinator &
Spanish Specialist

Beyond the Classroom

Research, projects, and pursuits driven by student curiosity



Stanford HAI / Jeanina Matias

Anandita (Grade 10)

Anandita participated last summer in Stanford AI4ALL, a two-week program hosted by Stanford's Institute for Human-Centered AI (HAI) that immerses high school students in AI through daily lectures, mentorship, and hands-on research. The program paired technical learning with conversations about how AI should be developed and evaluated, particularly in healthcare, where accuracy, bias, and trust have significant implications.

Anandita's research explored biomedical image classification using two MedMNIST datasets: BloodMNIST (classifying blood cell types from microscope images) and PneumoniaMNIST (detecting pneumonia from chest X-rays). Her team investigated how vision-language models can be adapted to medical images with minimal task-specific training. They tested a progression of approaches, starting with zero-shot classification to establish a baseline, then using prompt engineering to refine the text descriptions paired with each label, and finally applying linear probing, a lightweight method that trains a small classifier on top of a model's frozen visual features. Comparing these methods provided a realistic view of research as an iterative process shaped by evidence, troubleshooting, and revision. A highlight of AI4ALL was the speaker series, with daily talks from researchers and practitioners across the AI field.

Two of Anandita's favorites stood out in particular: Peter Norvig (HAI Distinguished Fellow), who placed AI in the broader story of intelligence and explained how learning from examples changes what computers can do while also pointing to AI's potential to expand access, especially in education. Ge Wang (Stanford professor and founder of Smule) offered a different lens, urging students to think beyond efficiency and ask what we want AI to optimize for, including creativity and human values.

A condensed version of Anandita's reflections and a description of her research were later published on the Stanford HAI blog. She returned with stronger research skills and a clearer sense of how to pursue AI work that is both technically rigorous and meaningfully human-centered.

Building on this work, Anandita brought her research into the KLS community by presenting a student-led poster session at our AIED Summit. Her project explored how vision-language models like CLIP can support biomedical diagnostics through zero-shot classification, prompt engineering, and linear probing—connecting her Stanford summer research to broader conversations about human-centered AI, ethics, and real-world impact in education and healthcare.

Read more about Anandita's AI experience at Stanford AI4ALL

Beyond the Classroom

Research, projects, and pursuits driven by student curiosity



Anna (Grade 11)

Anna was recently shortlisted for the highly competitive John Locke Essay Competition and invited to attend the Award Ceremony and Gala Dinner in London. The multi-day program featured lectures, discussions, and seminars led by leading public intellectuals, including Steven Pinker and Matt Ridley, as well as sessions with admissions officers from universities such as Oxford and Princeton.

We are pleased to share that Anna received a Very High Commendation, an honor awarded to only a small handful of participants from a global pool of approximately 64,000 students representing 191 countries. In recognition of her achievement, Anna was also awarded a scholarship to attend the John Locke Institute's Summer School, with opportunities to study at one of several international locations, including Oxford, Princeton, Washington, DC, Singapore, or Dubai.



Krish (Grade 12)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is often reduced to surface-level check-ins and scripted lessons that fail to reflect the complexity of students' lived emotional experiences. The disability rights mantra, "Nothing about us without us," feels especially urgent here. For educators, the question becomes: How do we design programs not only for students, but with them? At the time, KLS junior (now senior) Krish addressed this question head-on.

In many schools, advisory programs fall flat. Prebuilt curricula are inconsistently implemented, leaving students' experiences dependent on which adult they happen to be assigned. Teachers, often untrained in facilitation, are asked to lead sessions without a clear sense of purpose, resulting in advisory that feels awkward, unstructured, or performative. At our school, Krish took a different approach. Using student surveys and developmental psychology research, Krish worked with faculty and peers to identify distinct needs by grade level: executive-function support for ninth graders, interpersonal skills for tenth graders, real-world readiness in eleventh grade, and mentorship in twelfth. Students helped design the structure, workshops, and special projects, ensuring the program reflected what they actually needed.

Advisers were reframed as facilitators rather than experts, supported by a toolkit grounded in adolescent development research and paired with student leaders who helped run workshops. The result is a structured but flexible advisory program that leverages the strengths of teachers, administrators, families, and students alike.
Learn more about Krish's research as featured on Edutopia

Beyond the Classroom

Research, projects, and pursuits driven by student curiosity



Vivek (Grade 12)

Speech and debate give students a space to find their voice, test their ideas, and learn how to engage thoughtfully with the world around them. Through research, public speaking, and respectful argumentation, students build confidence, sharpen their thinking, and learn how to listen as carefully as they speak—skills that shape their growth both inside and beyond the classroom.

This year, the Speech and Debate Team continues its mission of introducing young minds to the power of articulation, critical thinking, and respectful interpersonal engagement.

Under the leadership of Vivek (President and Co-Speech Captain), Ansh (Grade 12, Debate Captain), and Avery (Grade 11, Co-Speech Captain), the team has expanded to a record-breaking 30 members competing across an unprecedented nine competitive events (in both Speech and Debate).

Building on last year's competitive success – 23 top rankings earned at 17 state and national tournaments – the team is aiming even higher this season. Competing in several scrimmages and invitationals has resulted in multiple victories, setting a strong tone for the year ahead.

The team remains under the guidance of longtime coach Deano Pape, who leads four hours of practice each week through a blend of small-group instruction and lecture-style sessions.

This season also marked a special milestone, as students welcomed Deano in person from Minnesota for the first time, allowing many members to meet him face-to-face and benefit from individualized, one-on-one coaching.

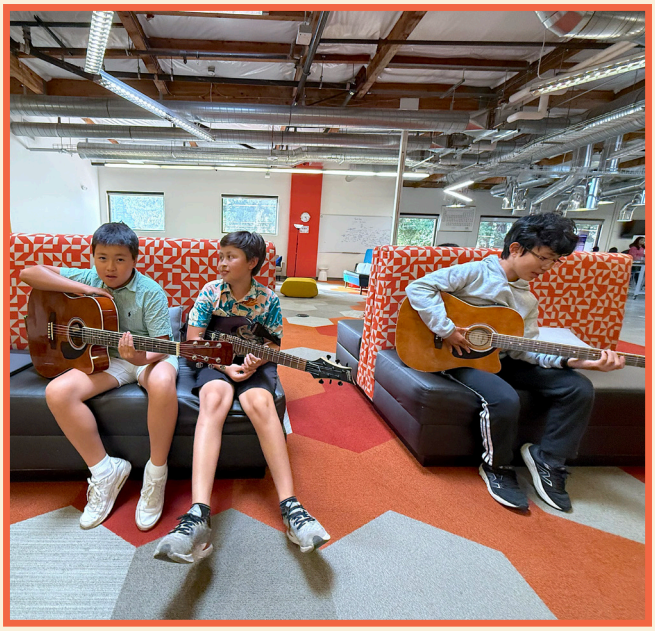
With a packed competitive calendar ahead – including the UC Berkeley and Harvard Invitationals, as well as major national tournaments such as the NSDA National Tournament and NIETOC – the team is poised for another ambitious and successful year.

Middle School

6-8th







After months of the new Middle School space living only in blueprints and conversations, our team returned to campus in August to a very different reality. What greeted us was a very large, very dusty space still in the final throes of construction with enormous piles of furniture waiting to be sorted, moved, and imagined into something usable.

Admittedly, it was challenging at first to picture how the space would actually work or how we would work in it. Where would students gather? How would classrooms feel? Would it support the kind of collaboration, focus, and sense of belonging that define our Middle School?

And then, all at once, the students arrived and the space began to come alive.

In fact, it's difficult now to imagine the Middle School anywhere else. The open areas have become places to connect and reset; the classrooms, spaces for deep focus, collaboration, and curiosity. What once felt cavernous and uncertain now feels purposeful, familiar and very much ours.

Over the past four months, these walls have held far more than day-to-day classes. They've hosted spirit events filled with energy and laughter, our very first 6th–8th grade dance, the AIED Summit, community meetings, Pathways and Possibilities conversations, and even an AMA with Sal. Each event added another layer of meaning, helping transform an unfinished building into a shared, vibrant space shaped by students, faculty, families, and guests.

Natasha McKeown
Middle School Director

Turning Learning into Lasting Experiences

Orientation Trips



This year, we kicked off the expansion of the Middle School Program with two exciting fall orientation trips. The purpose of these trips was simple but powerful: to give students the opportunity to bond with peers and teachers, step outside their comfort zones, and begin the school year feeling a strong sense of belonging.

7th and 8th graders took to the South Fork of The American River for a two-day, overnight rafting trip where they conquered class 3 and 4 rapids. The 6th graders spent a day on the water at Shoreline Lake where they went boating and played games in the field. They followed that day up with a trip to the Santa Cruz redwoods where they participated in team building activities at Mt. Hermon Adventures and a group hike through Henry Cowell's State Park. Together, Middle School students made lasting memories and built relationships that they carried with them into the school year, and hopefully beyond. Building on the momentum of these experiences, we're excited to continue expanding learning beyond the classroom with three planned Intersession trips to Yosemite, the Four Corners region, and Costa Rica, offering students new opportunities for adventure, connection, and growth.

The Next Chapter

This past summer, in anticipation of our newly constructed library, 8th grader Emma helped bring the space to life through student-led design and care. She organized the book collection, co-built a custom check-out system, and created wooden letter dividers to keep the shelves thoughtfully arranged. Building on last year's student-driven work, Emma continues to shape the library as a shared space for reading and connection by launching a book club and a regularly updated newsletter.







Science Olympiad

As a first-year team, we've embraced the challenges and successes under the guidance of Science Teacher, Vy. At our first Invitational, multiple teams placed in the top 10 out of 30 teams, which felt like a meaningful early win and a testament to the students' motivation and perseverance. We're excited to build a self-sustaining Science Olympiad program where veteran students become mentors and stewards for future teams, embodying the school's motto that everyone is both a teacher and a student.





Next Gen Robotics







As the lead coach for middle school FIRST LEGO League (FLL) and a mentor on our high school FRC team, this first year of FLL has been an exciting and meaningful step in building a strong robotics pathway at KLS. FLL gives younger students an authentic entry point into engineering, programming, teamwork, and competition, while also introducing them to the culture and mindset that carries through to FRC. Watching students design, iterate, problem-solve, and represent KLS with "Gracious Professionalism" (a key requirement of FIRST) at competition made it clear how powerful early exposure to robotics can be.

This was our first year running the program, and we're incredibly proud of what the students accomplished. We sent two teams to two different competitions and it was clear to see the learning never stops, from when the game was first revealed all the way to the competition and the awards and season debrief. At the same time, we've learned a great deal about pacing, structure, and how to better support students as they grow technically and collaboratively. Looking ahead, we're excited to build on this foundation as we kick off the FRC season in January and offer a winter-term Middle School robotics class that allows students to deepen their skills in coding, design, and fabrication. FLL has set the stage, and we're looking forward to the next chapter of robotics at KLS.

Baxter Smith
FLL Lead Coach

Lower School

TK-5th



At the Lower School, our new “Cottage” space for TK and Kindergarten has been a wonderful addition to campus. It has created a warm, cozy setting for our youngest learners to begin their KLS journey, build daily routines, and feel grounded in community from the start. The Cottage has quickly become a special part of Lower School life, supporting both learning and connection throughout the week.



From an early age, Khan Lab School students are encouraged to lead, collaborate, and contribute in ways that truly shape their school experience. Lower School Student Council is a leadership opportunity for 4th and 5th grade students who want to take a more active role in strengthening school spirit and community. This year, Student Council is led by Maddie (5th Grade Humanities Teacher) and Emily (4th Grade Humanities Teacher), and students have already taken on meaningful responsibilities with pride and enthusiasm.





This Fall, Student Council organized fundraising efforts such as raffles, with proceeds supporting student celebrations and community events throughout the year. They also led Spirit Week, planning and helped bring energy and creativity to campus through student driven themes and traditions.
In addition, Student Council organized a schoolwide hot chocolate party before Winter Break. It has been a wonderful way for students to build leadership skills while advocating for their peers and contributing to a joyful Lower School experience.

Julia, Shannon, and Saadiya
Lower School Leadership Team



Fall Festival

Fall Festival is one of the most loved community events of the year, and we are deeply grateful to our Family Association for leading and organizing the entire celebration. This year's festival took place on Halloween and began with a festive costume parade, giving students the chance to show off their costumes and celebrate together as a school community. Following the parade, families enjoyed an afternoon filled with fun activity stations, games, and shared traditions across campus. Fall Festival is always a meaningful opportunity for families to connect with one another and for staff to spend time with families outside of the classroom early in the school year. The energy, joy, and community spirit throughout the afternoon made it a true highlight of Term 1.







Exhibition



Winter Exhibition is a special KLS tradition that gives families an inside look at student learning in action. In December, Lower School families joined us for an afternoon celebrating growth across Term 1 through classroom exhibits and student work.

Across grade levels, students shared hands-on projects spanning art, math, humanities, and science — from paper mâché sculptures and interactive math centers to data analysis, engineering challenges, and original writing. Younger students welcomed families into imaginative spaces like *Kinder Wonderland*, where they guided visitors through favorite math centers and read aloud, and the *Yum Tum Tum Café*, a student-created restaurant inspired by weekly cooking projects. Older students explained their research and models and led read-alouds and short classroom performances.













Spotlight: Art

With the addition of TK this year, it's hard not to focus on their enthusiasm for art and play. However, to say I am amazed at the creativity possessed by these students would be an understatement. In an effort not to disrupt the creative process, I have chosen to spotlight the process of creating rather than the finished products in the majority of these photos.

The process of making art matters just as much as the final piece. Students learn new techniques, develop ideas from start to finish, and practice working through setbacks and mistakes along the way. They're encouraged to focus on their own creative voice rather than comparing their work to others, and to see creativity as something that grows through exploration. No matter where a project begins or which examples are studied, the emphasis stays on originality, curiosity, and creative growth.





In an effort to ensure the students are in a good creative headspace, we often have soft music playing in the background, low lights and plenty of time between large projects to decompress and to choose their mediums and subject matter. In addition to Art class, I would be remiss to explore the effects Exploration has on ingenuity as a whole, Ex lab is in full swing as young as 1st grade who worked hard to better our attention and behavior in class to earn the freedom of possibilities in the makerspace every Friday. The students' ideas get to flourish without the rigidity of traditional learning settings, they get a chance to plan and explore what it is like to do more crafts without the lecture, to turn their mistakes into something intentional and explore strange and funny ideas that would otherwise not have a place in formal academia.

Roxana Romero-Vega
Lower School Art

Spotlight: Math

This term, the Lower School has ten math groups that span Kindergarten math through Algebra 1. Our math groups are mixed-age and organized by similar skill levels, with careful attention to developmental needs and social-emotional readiness. This approach creates learning environments where students feel capable and challenged in ways that fit them.

In the **Math A** class, which focuses on second-grade skills, our students were especially captivated this year by our unit on measurement. We explored how different systems of measurement function like different languages for describing the world around us. Students were fascinated by the idea of very large and very small units and had fun imagining the scale of what those measurements represent. Much of our work centered on measuring models of different reptiles, ranging from the small leopard gecko to the large adult alligator, which gave students a concrete and engaging way to compare size and scale.



For their end of term project, students designed imaginary sea creatures using set measurement requirements and then wrote word problems about them, giving them meaningful practice with understanding how word problems are structured.

The **Math H** class, which brings together students working at the 7th grade, 8th grade, and Algebra 1 levels, is a uniquely dynamic group. Early in the term, students took the lead in shaping how their class would run. They discussed the balance of independent work, group work, direct instruction, and Khan Academy time, and considered how to support classmates working at different points in the curriculum. With guidance from the math specialist, they designed a weekly structure that reflected their learning needs and priorities, including a dedicated group-work day that every student wanted to protect because it gave them space to collaborate and work through challenging problems together.



Throughout the term, the class continued refining this structure based on academic performance. The result was a learning environment shaped directly by student voices, where ownership of the process was as important as the math itself. Their ability to reflect, make decisions, and adjust the class in real time became one of the most powerful parts of the experience.



Transitional Kindergarten

This year, Khan Lab School launched its very first Transitional Kindergarten (TK) class for four- and five-year-old children, designed to bridge early childhood education and support young learners as they transition into an elementary school experience.

Our class dedicates daily time to group work, helping children develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. During these times, we focus on the stepping stones of early learning: self-regulation, social expression, large and small motor skills, early academics, and practical life skills. Activities include songs, stories, journal writing, name recognition, puppetry, games, and open-ended provocations. Learning is guided by driving questions throughout the year to inspire curiosity and inquiry. Children are often engaged with beads, gems, and other small materials. These activities strengthen fine motor skills, which are essential for writing. The more children practice pinch grips and handling tiny objects, the greater control they develop when using pencils and other writing tools.

Storytelling, choice-making, and even mistakes are powerful components of learning at this age. When children imagine stories, practice making their own decisions, or learn how to ask politely, they are building skills that support both school readiness and life beyond the classroom. As Mister Rogers reminds us, “Hopefully your choices can come from a deep sense of who you are.”

Cooking is a weekly activity and plays an important role at this age, as it fosters teamwork, following directions, using our senses, and developing early math and literacy skills. The children practiced safe cutting with plastic knives and worked together for extended periods of time to prepare our delicious treats such as scrambled eggs, pancakes, udon soup, corn on the cob, biscuits, fruit salad to name a few—yum!

Our TK program includes a daily rest time, during which children listen to chapter stories or watch a calming meditation show featuring underwater sea life. For about 20 minutes, they relax on their mats, allowing their bodies and minds to recharge for the rest of the day.







Observation is an essential part of teaching young children, as it helps us better understand their intentions and needs. For example, many children at this age confuse accidents—such as bumping into someone—with intentional harm. We work through conflicts by slowing down, observing closely, and talking things through together. Often, the issue isn’t meanness but proximity—seven children gathered into one corner of a large sandbox! Together, we practice responding with compassion: “Oh, are you okay? I didn’t mean to hurt you.” These small but meaningful lessons lay the foundation for empathy and long-term social skills.

From field trips to see the Trolls at Filoli Historical Garden to weekly walks to the park, the TK class is always immersed in meaningful inquiry and exploration of the world around them.

Kim Nave
Transitional Kindergarten

Kindergarten

Kindergarten so far has been filled with curiosity, growth, and joyful learning as children have built friendships, explored new ideas, and developed confidence as learners. Together, we have created special classroom routines, gained new skills, and shared many fun and meaningful learning experiences that make each day exciting.







We started the year by focusing on getting to know one another and establishing our classroom expectations and routines, rather than jumping right into academic instruction. Setting clear routines and expectations helps students become more independent learners. When children know what to expect, they feel more confident and are better able to self-regulate throughout the day without surprises.

This naturally leads into Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), which is how we begin each day. SEL helps students develop a strong sense of safety and belonging. During our morning SEL time, students share their experiences, interests, and feelings. While SEL has a dedicated time each morning, it continues throughout the entire day as students learn how to connect with one another, show up for each other, and respond with kindness.

Our Humanities block includes English Language Arts and follows a play-based curriculum that integrates music and puppets. We began the year with a unit on Toys and Play, where students learned how to describe the attributes of toys they enjoy. They interviewed classmates to learn about their peers' favorite toys and how they like to play, encouraging students to step outside of their comfort zones and sparking meaningful conversations. We then moved into *Weather Wonders*, which we will continue into the beginning of the second term.

We also spent a significant amount of time focusing on handwriting and sentence formation. In kindergarten, we are not looking for correct spelling; instead, we encourage students to spell words phonetically, meaning they sound out and write the sounds they hear. Later in the second term, we will begin daily writing journals. Our goal is for students to independently write two to three complete sentences with confidence.

Aside from our classroom curriculum and routines, we also make space for lots of fun and meaningful learning about different cultures. We began by learning about the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, watching a video and inviting students to share how they celebrate at home. Diwali was another special experience in our classroom, as a parent visited to share the history of the holiday and brought materials for students to create their own Rangolis. Another family also sent in a Diwali book, giving students even more opportunities to learn. We love exploring different cultures and holidays in kindergarten, as it helps students see that while celebrations may look different, there are many similarities that connect us all.

In October, we took a field trip to the Pumpkin Patch in Half Moon Bay, where we rode the bus, enjoyed lunch together, slid down three exciting inflatable slides, went on a hay ride, rode ponies and a train, and fed farm animals. The students had an amazing time and each went home with their very own "class-sized" pumpkin! Kindergarten has had a wonderful first term this year, and we are so excited to see what the rest of the year has in store!

Kayla Greer
Kindergarten



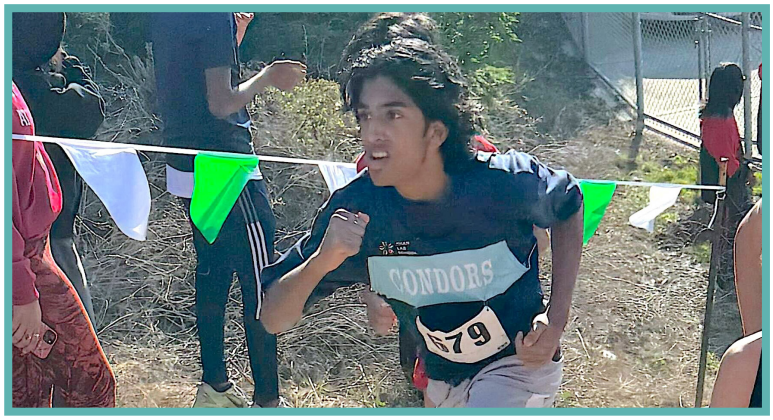
Athletics

Setting the Standard

Athletics Highlights

The 2025-26 KLS fall athletic season has been one of the most successful seasons on record in terms of student athlete participation and performance.

- Our Varsity Girls Volleyball team, composed primarily of 10th graders with two more years to grow, won 5 games thus far (more than the previous total in program history), and they were competitive in every match.
- The Varsity Cross Country team had runners compete in 4 regional meets thus far (the most in program history), and multiple runners posted personal best times in various distances.
- The addition of the 6th grade to the Middle School program invigorated our athletics program and created increased opportunities for students to participate in team sports. The revival of our Middle School Girls Volleyball team from two years ago and the increased number of participants in Middle School Cross Country are examples of the increased levels of student engagement and enthusiasm in athletics.



- We've been fortunate to hire and retain good coaches who motivate and inspire our student athletes to reach beyond themselves and contribute to a culture of strong teamwork, character, and sportsmanship across both Middle School and Upper School athletics programs.
- The positive attitude, high level of collaboration, and commitment of our student athletes continues to drive the success of our athletic program. For one game this fall, while our Varsity Girls Volleyball Coach was out of town, we had two members of our Varsity Boys Volleyball team volunteer to take over as coaches. It was a great experience for all and might require a new addition to our motto: Everyone's a player. Everyone's a coach.

Morgan May
Director of Athletics

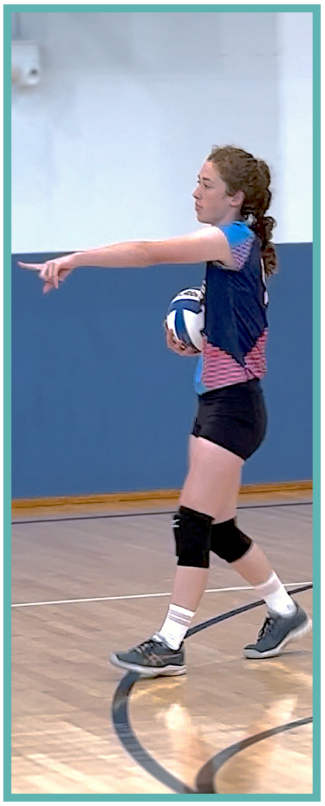
Spotlight: Volleyball



Bo Grade 11

Current junior, Bo, joined KLS in 4th grade. In her time here, she has relished her experience of being a student athlete for the Condors. She has been a member of both the middle school cross country team and the varsity track team, but it was in 9th grade when she started playing on the varsity girls volleyball team. Her innate athleticism helped her to excel as a volleyball player and she quickly became one of the team's top performers.

This past fall season, Bo was selected to be team captain, and she led the Condors to their best record in school history. Bo commented, "Playing volleyball has helped me grow closer with my teammates. I have made friendships with people who I didn't hang out a lot with before we were on the team together. I would totally recommend playing on a team at KLS, even if it is a new sport! Being on a team with your friends and working together is really fun. It's not too stressful, and everyone is supportive!"



Athlete Spotlights

Highlighting students dedicated to athletics beyond school



Asher Grade 3

Asher's had an outstanding cross-country season, recently earning 1st place in the U9 division out of 121 runners at a popular San Francisco 5K and securing recognition as a top-100 U8 cross-country runner nationally. After a challenging season, he delivered a strong performance competing for the first time at the National Junior Olympics Cross-Country Finals. Beyond results, Asher demonstrated resilience, humility, and a strong work ethic, lessons that reflect athletic growth and personal development.



Abhinav Grade 10

Abhinav has played table tennis since the age of nine. Years of training have helped him develop discipline, perseverance, and the ability to remain calm under pressure while thinking strategically—skills that extend well beyond the sport. At thirteen, he became the U13 California State Champion and the U15 State Finalist. In 2025, he reached a major milestone by competing internationally, earning a silver medal in the U15 Boys event in Canada and bronze in U15 Mixed Doubles in Egypt.

Vidit Grade 10

Vidit had an exceptional year in competitive cricket, earning recognition at the regional and national levels. Vidit was honored at USA Cricket's Bay Area awards for captaining his U15 team to a runners-up finish and for leading a combined U15 squad from across the West Coast in the USA Western Conference tournament, with awards presented by local city leaders. Vidit continued his strong run by captaining his team to a U19 championship victory, underscoring his leadership, teamwork, and competitive excellence on the field.







Ishaan Grade 11

Current 11th grader and accomplished cricketer, Ishaan teamed up with Vidit and played a crucial role in the U17 championship win in Los Angeles. As wicketkeeper, Ishaan formed a strong on-field partnership with Vidit, the team's captain.





Beyond KLS: Alumni Voices

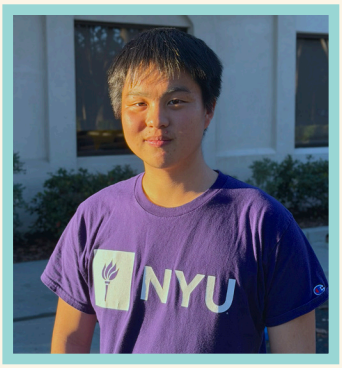
Diana Steuck ‘25

Purdue University

"Surrounded by endless crowds of people, mountains of fascinating things to study, good food, and all the clubs one could imagine, I've had so much fun finding out about new opportunities and meeting new friends, as well as working on schedule planning to make time for studying and other learning-related activities. I love Purdue for all the freedom and choice-making I get to do while still having that accountability safety net of the community and advisors."



Diana on a recent visit to KLS



John Fan ‘25

New York University

"As a Photography major, NYU gives me access to so many creative opportunities. I’m focused on building my portfolio, exploring other creative disciplines, and getting real industry experience. And being in New York is the best part—there’s always something inspiring happening and I look forward to building connections across the profession."

Adam Shams ‘25

Georgia Tech

"I'm studying Computer Engineering in the Honors Program. Right off the bat, I was able to join the Bio-MIBLab as an undergraduate researcher, where I’m working on Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) pipelines, architectures, and evaluation metrics for improving clinical remote therapeutic monitoring summarization with Large Language Models (LLMs). It’s been an exciting start to college, with challenging classes, meaningful research, and getting to experience the energy of Georgia Tech football – I’m really enjoying my first semester here."





Laker giving the 2025 Commencement Address

Laker Newhouse ‘21

MIT graduate and current Khan Lab School Board Member

"What it means to me to be a board member: In the ideal KLS, every student is on their own board of directors for their experience through the school. This is KLS's mission to empower every student to navigate their own path. I experienced this freedom (in equal part, responsibility) during my time at KLS. To be on the actual board of directors, I hope, will amount to serving the continued ability of students to navigate their own path–just all students and all their paths at once, rather than only myself and only my own path. I will prioritize my efforts based on this principle. I'm grateful to the board for the opportunity."

A New Chapter and Goal for Our Community

Thanks to the generosity, passion, and belief in possibility that define our community, last year's Annual Fund was a tremendous success: we raised over $592,601, exceeding our $500,000 goal. Your gifts made concrete, meaningful change, enabling important building renovations and space enhancements that are already reshaping daily life at KLS. Because of you:

Our 6th grade has officially moved from the Cowper Campus to the Villa campus, creating a true Middle School for grades 6-8. The entire second floor of Villa is now dedicated to our growing Middle School community.

The Cottage has been transformed and is now home to our new Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program and Kindergarten. That renovation welcomed our youngest learners into a bright, fresh, and thoughtfully designed home at KLS.

When creativity, collaboration, and curiosity are given room to flourish, innovation begins.

Looking Ahead: Why This Year Matters

This year, we've set our sights on another $500,000 goal for our Annual Fund and we're excited about where these resources will lead us. The funds will go toward acquiring KLS vans, a tangible investment in more opportunities and greater access across our campus life. These vans will open up new possibilities:

- Expanded access for athletics. Students can travel together, build team spirit, and represent KLS beyond our campus walls.
- More field trips. Classes can explore, learn, and grow beyond the classroom.
- Community-wide events. Enhanced engagement connecting students, families, teachers, and staff with our surrounding community, making logistics smoother for all.



Building the Spirit and Momentum

Our inaugural 5K / 10K Fun Run was a small but mighty taste of what's possible when we rally together. While modest in fundraising, the event was a community-building success. Student enthusiasm was infectious. Families voiced appreciation. What made it special wasn't the dollar amount, it was the shared energy, the teamwork, the laughter, and the sense of belonging. It gave us a strong foundation to build on, and we're already imagining ways to make it a regular tradition that connects our learners directly with the impact of their efforts.

And we're not slowing down! Preparations for this year's Gala, scheduled for April 11, 2026, are well underway. Mark your calendars! We can't wait to gather to celebrate, to connect, and to raise up the next chapter of KLS together.

Thank You, and Cheers to What Comes Next

To everyone who gives time, energy, creativity, generosity, and heart - thank you. Your support does more than fund projects; it invests in our students, our culture, and our shared vision for what education can be. Your dedication helps us build environments where learners are curious, adaptable, and empowered.

We're honored to share in this journey with you. As we look ahead to new goals, new adventures, and new possibilities, we're grateful for your partnership, your trust, and your commitment.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Cindy Chu
Director of Business Operations & Development



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650-489-0071

Lower School (TK-5)

Palo Alto Campus:
3233 Cowper Street, Palo Alto, CA 94306

Middle School (6-8) **and Upper School** (9-12)

Mountain View Campus:
1200 Villa Street, Mountain View, CA 94041

Admissions Team

admissions@khanlabschool.org or 650-557-3334