



February 26, 2021: Changemakers

Dear CDS Community,

Longtime CDS second grade teacher Kay Washington closed out our assembly this morning with the pledge for all of us that Black History Month is not just for February, but forever. In her remarks, Kay described attending The Moth Teacher Institute a few years ago and this week, Kay responded to the following prompt from the institute's social media pages: Tell us a time when you experienced the power of black joy. As Kay said this morning, "I could not think of anything more powerful than what I have seen at CDS the past several weeks!"

During the past month, there have been many examples of our community celebrating Black history. I would like to share just a few highlights with you today.

Earlier this week, our seventh graders met with and interviewed Amber Sparks (aka Melanin Mvskoke), an Afro-Indigenous activist, cultural critic/commentator, student of decolonial theory, and budding abolitionist. She is also a Citizen of Muscogee (Creek) Nation and is also of Shawnee, Yuchi, Quapaw, and Cherokee descent. She's passionate about Black Indigeneity and seeks to normalize, affirm, and advocate for intersectional identity in both the Black and Native communities through discourse and direct action. The questions that our students asked were deep, thoughtful, and probing for truth.

Another activity celebrating Black history was last night's inspiring group of speakers at the Black Entrepreneurship Panel: MLB All-Star Bip Roberts (brother of CDS PE Teacher Lori Roberts!), Dominique Tutwiler of [Oaksmith Furniture](#), Marlon Richardson of [Hip Hop for Change](#), Nikki Cooper of [Two Jacks Nik's Place](#), DJ Lamont of [Fingersnaps Media Arts](#), and Debbie Day of [Ashay by the Bay](#). I felt honored to be present with them as they told stories of forging their own paths, pursuing their dreams, carrying on family traditions, or starting businesses. Thank you so much to Anthony Witte, Jasmin Flores, Xochi Batlle, Lori Roberts, Kay Washington, Patricia Jameson, Jack Hamm, Chris Wachter, Cristal Fiel, Alyce Ide, and Jackie Katz for organizing this inspiring event.

Many other classes were engaged in projects or created beautiful art work during this past month, and much of it is on display in the hallways, from Jasmin's class studying Prince and his Purple Rain album to the visual showcase of Greg's personal record collection of Black musicians to many posters of renowned historical figures of the Black community, past and present. And in this week's newsletter, we highlighted many examples of insightful student work. I am proud that the CDS community is celebrating these examples of Black voices, Black creativity, Black excellence, and Black joy. These stories are inspirations for all of us. Black History Month Forever.

And lastly, at assembly this morning we also heard about the great work of this year's recipients of the Josef Cooper Changemaker Grants. I want to thank Anand Gupte, Jack Biggar, James Hammond, Noah Kirsch-Lopez, Joaquin Morillo, Kavi Greenwood, Elliot Weil, Skye Leibnitz, Finn Leibnitz, Charlotte Edwards, Milo Sperry, Miles Day, Michael Dubrovsky, and Otto Saphir. These students are modeling the changemaker spirit that is so much a part of our mission and daily lived experience.

Sarah Muzhaqi, CDS Class of 2019, was announced as this year's Josef Cooper Changemaker Award recipient. While still a student at CDS, Sarah helped lead the March for Our Lives demonstration through the Mission District. Since graduating, Sarah has continued her impactful social justice work. She delivered a speech encouraging white allies of the Black Lives Matter movement to push harder to examine white privilege and systematic racism at the Snitch on Racism event, and she has worked internships with NAACP Youth Council as their Social Media Coordinator and with Team Enough as their Press and Social Media Coordinator, where she helped to successfully lobby for a California state bill that restricts the manufacture or sale of unsafe handguns. These young people make it clear that the world is already feeling the impact of change that focuses on a more just, equitable, environmentally conscious, and accessible future. I am proud that together, as a community, we notice where we can take action in the world and do not let anything get in the way of change.

Warmly,
Shelly