

Quarterly Confluence

WINTER 2023



Sr. Director of External Relations

Launch Message From Khizer Husain

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Confluence! While the weekly Trib covers the immediate news and announcements that are vital for our community, we felt that we needed a space to celebrate the many people who make Two Rivers special. We can lean on, learn from, and contribute to crew only when we know one another. Historically, confluences - where two rivers meet - have been the place for gathering. They even hold sacred weight in some cultures. Come join us at this confluence; only as crew can we live out our mission!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Framing the Future Gala

The Framing the Future Gala helps fund our amazing arts program. This year, hear more stories of how the arts transform lives!

Save the date: April 14, 2023, 6:30-10 pm
at AutoShop 416 Morse St, NE.



Middle School Musical

The middle school musical is back: Beauty and the Beast, Jr.! Auditions/interviews for onstage and backstage roles kick off January 17.

"The skills I feel that I learned through the musical I take to my everyday life - just my ability to give a presentation in college or have a conversation with anyone. I really dedicate that to my experience with the middle school musical." Calissa, TR alum

Save the date: Performances on
June 8 and 9 at Young Elementary



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- Family Spotlight - Devin Turner
- Student Spotlight - Eris Busey
- Alum Spotlight - Drew Dozier
- Staff Spotlight - Suzanne Katz



DEVIN TURNER

You have been a member of the Two Rivers community for a few years, and now your twins are in the 7th grade. This year, you are the president of the Family Student Association at the middle school. What led you to take this leadership role? What excites you about the Two Rivers community?

I took this role because I have experience leading on a PTA in the past, experience with community organizing, and I really want to consider continue to see our students grow into caring, compassionate and well educated members of our society. I enjoy the loving and safe environment that Two Rivers has provided in the past and the intentionality of addressing socio-economic issues in addition to some of the traditional content that curriculums have provided for students in the past.

You spend a lot of time with young people as a youth pastor. Middle school years are typically a challenging time of growth and self-discovery. Add to that social media, increase violence in our city, and the pandemic; and the lift for our middle schoolers balloons exponentially. What can parents do to partner with the school to help young people to live the Two Rivers mission - especially to become "responsible and compassionate members of society?"

Parents can let their voices be heard and serve. Speaking words of affirmation to their students, to teachers and staff on things that are going well is so important. What we reward will often be repeated. The serving comes in many forms. Asking your student's teacher if there is any support that the teacher may need in order to do their jobs more effectively is a great way to start. Also, being involved with Family School Association (FSA/PSA) is a great way also as we will be meeting on a regular basis as parents/guardians of students to strategize and implement ways that we can encourage more academic success, social emotional support, and fun activities for our students.

What hopes and dreams do you have for your own sons for their middle school career? And high school?

I hope that my sons will continue to thrive in their self-awareness, academic pursuits, and social interactions with their peers.



ERIS BUSEY

Our mission includes the words "develop a sense of self and community." In what ways have you developed your sense of self and community? How has Two Rivers contributed to this?

I have developed a sense of self and community by staying humble and positive and I am committed to being involved in my school community. Two Rivers has contributed to this tremendously by keeping me on the right track and the teachers and staff are always available if there is an issue.

You are a Student Ambassador. What drew you to the role? Why is this role right for you?

When I saw the application, I automatically knew this was something for me. A Student Ambassador embodies the qualities of leadership, positivity, and advocacy. Being all of those things and more, I knew that it would be a perfect fit.

Our goal is to give graduates of Two Rivers "rich and varied options for their future." How do you think your Two Rivers Middle School experience sets you up for a future of rich and varied options?

My Two Rivers Middle School experience has set me up for a future of rich and varied options by teaching me about advocacy and how to be an independent thinker. At Two Rivers, they are very big on being student-led. Whether it's Student-Led Conferences, VOMP Meetings, etc. Being here at Two Rivers has taught me all about advocating for myself and my peers.

You are in 8th grade and will graduate at the end of this school year. Wow! You are an author, model, activist, and more! Where do you hope to find yourself?

In the future, I hope to find myself surrounded by nothing but positivity. I also hope to find myself striving for greatness at Duke Ellington School Of The Arts and last but not least...I hope to be traveling to somewhere in Paris!

Anything else that you want to share?

Absolutely, Stay focused and positive! Never let anyone interfere with your passion because....it's yours!



**ERIS
BUSEY**



DREW DOZIER

You attended Two Rivers from preschool to 8th grade. You were a Student Ambassador for many years and you said that you still have the mission memorized! What drew you to the role of Student Ambassador in the first place? What did you learn in giving all those tours and sitting on so many panels while at Two Rivers?

As a fourth grader, I saw an opportunity to get out of class, talk to adults, and seize on the occasional free food. I quickly deduced from giving tours and participating in panels that my education and its purpose were explained to me on an adult level. This explanation made it much easier to see the objective of acquiring knowledge and the abstract approach we take to it. It deeply reaffirmed the real-world connections being made in the classroom at the time.

After Two Rivers, you attended School Without Walls and now you are at Morehouse College. Amazing! How are those learning environments similar to Two Rivers? In what ways are they different? Did you feel prepared for success?

School Without Walls and Morehouse are similar to Two Rivers in that School Without Walls provided me the space to continue academics in a free environment. The area in which we learn is overlooked a lot in education. Two Rivers uses the bright and excited nature of children to provide a learning space that is just that; bright and exciting—School Without Walls provided that environment on the high school level while also pushing me to college-level work. Morehouse nurtures a similar space, but college is much more self-determined. I am often reminded of expeditions and KWIs as I investigate my research questions toward a hopeful doctorate. I think the primary way that they are different is that these institutions are increasingly more selective and less openly empathetic. In both high school and college, I have participated in fantastic opportunities. These accomplishments came with their fair share of both academic and people work.

Why do you continue to stay engaged with Two Rivers after so many years?

Honestly, I feel a slight sense of obligation. I loved my time at Two Rivers; it made me the academic I am today. I have asked questions in class this semester using the thinking tools I picked up in elementary school. My formative years at Two Rivers shaped my ability to think and communicate effectively. These skills have proven priceless. I want to help facilitate that experience for as many people as possible.

Anything else that you want to share?

I hope all are doing well, and developing as responsible and compassionate members of society. The world needs that right now.

DREW DOZIER





SUZANNE KATZ

How did you get involved with an opportunity at the Kennedy Center? What's your role in it?

I am the show's (Finding Rhythm) director.

Dante' Pope, who has previously taught music at Two Rivers, had been working with the project's creator, Jessica Phillips Silver, on composing and producing music that highlighted her research findings on the intersection between music and brain development. When they decided their EP was going to grow into a one-act production, and particularly one that would involve children as well as seasoned stage performers, Dante' reached out to me to come on board.

How does this "extracurricular" work help you be a better teacher at TR?

This show, in particular, adds many dimensions to my teaching. First, any time I am involved in professional stage work, it renews my knowledge of production techniques and expands the frame of reference I use with students. The vocabulary I use to discuss creative processes is necessarily different when I work with six year-olds, tweens, or adults; however, each of those conversations informs the other and expands my classroom practice.

The content of Finding Rhythm has also increased my knowledge base. Dr. Phillips-Silver neuroscience research firmly links into the type of research-based curriculum design we like using at Two Rivers. I often use singing in my classes, and FR now has me thinking about how accessing complex rhythm work can support teaching and learning in drama- and how that work can prepare students for further learning outside my classroom.

Finally, since moving to D.C. I have listened to and learned about Go-go generally, but I never took a deep dive into the music itself. Jumping into the genre with the help of Dante and other cast members has given me a greater connection to a D.C. tradition. I am particularly grateful for that experience and have already found ways to bring Go-go into the classroom.

What is this show all about? Who is it appropriate for?

The show is meant for children and families and best suited for children 5 and up. We have worked with Kennedy Center's Accessibility team, and all performances are sensory-friendly. The run time is about 45 minutes, and there will be a talk-back with the actors and creator at the end of each performance.

The show takes a look at where the rhythms that underlie Go-go come from and how their structure enhances cognitive function. This is all done through music and movement- and the audience is invited into the performance itself. The performance is meant to be an interactive experience- and there are definitely activities that families can bring home after the curtain goes down.



**SUZANNE
KATZ**

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



At Two Rivers, we provide our students with a high-quality education that goes Beyond the Basics. For example, Ms.Katie and Ms.Christel Crew at 4th St Upper School had their first Socratic seminar. They discussed the pros and cons of animal captivity.

Each student in the inner discussion circle had an outer circle partner who wrote notes on their partners' contributions as they referenced evidence to support their claims. At the end of the discussion, everyone shared their feedback with their classmates.



The middle school gym was electric, with a dozen high school reps showcasing their schools. Through our home-grown My High School Search program, we guide our 8th graders to research, select, apply, interview, and matriculate into phenomenal schools. Bonus: Seeing our alums repping their schools.



A native Washingtonian and TR founder Jessica Wodatch built Two Rivers from the dream of local families into a vibrant network of schools that has served thousands of students and families. She created an inspiring and collaborative community and served Two Rivers from 2004 - 2020.

Jessica articulated, embodied, stewarded, and loved the Two Rivers mission: "To nurture a diverse group of students to become lifelong, active participants in their own education, develop a sense of self and community, and become responsible and compassionate members of society."

Thank you, Jessica, for bringing the mission to life!



We are thrilled to introduce a new TR tradition: Ms. Brenda's Day of Service! If you knew Ms. Brenda, you knew she lived and embodied what it means to care for your community. You could find her supporting morning arrival, bringing lunches for students, checking in with those needing extra love and care, and connecting with parents. She gave of herself to all those she encountered.



On January 5, we had our first ever Alumni Community Meeting. (Ago/Ame is still magic!) Thirty-five alumni from the Class of 2010 to the Class of 2018 shared their accomplishments, how TR can help them, and what impact TR had on their lives - from expeditions shaping their college majors to showcase giving them the confidence to present for any audience.

We thank our alums for sharing their voices and helping us envision our upcoming Framing the Future Gala (April 14) and 20th anniversary (fall 2024)!

