



# THE PHOENIX ANNUAL

Issue 11

The Raleigh Charter High School Annual Newsletter

January 2021

## *A Year Like No Other*

Adapting to change and rising to the challenges of 2020 together

*Introduction by Shayne Klein, Academic Dean & History Teacher*

The last day of school before we closed down the building for COVID was a Flex Day. We decided to move all of our Flex Day programs on campus, and teachers and students did their best to stay focused as we learned about schools and businesses shutting down throughout the nation. In 1999, when we designed the first iterations of Flex Days, we envisioned programs that would grow and evolve over time. At their core, Flex Days are all about doing things differently and embracing a flexible approach to learning. What we didn't know when we modified our programs that day, is that flexibility and creativity would become two of our most essential tools as the year progressed.

With just one teacher work day to get our online plans ready, we jumped into a new way of teaching and learning. As the spring continued, we did our best to keep our classes interesting, help students to stay engaged, and to prepare them for online AP exams. We modified grading to meet the state rules, learned Zoom, Google Meet, and a myriad of other online platforms, and figured out how to welcome our newly accepted students and families via video.

We were very sad not to be able to bring everyone together all at once for graduation. But we tried to make the day special for all of our graduating seniors and their families. With a red carpet, a stage, tent, and lots of festive decorations, we welcomed families to a drive-up graduation. It was wonderful to see our students, even at a distance, after those

first months of isolation. Our faculty cheered from the Triangle as we celebrated each one of our graduates. Later that night, families watched student and faculty speeches and performances in a special graduation video.

As we planned for school this fall, we had to consider lots of possibilities. After gathering feedback from student focus groups, conversations with teachers, and student and parent surveys, we developed our Plan C (remote learning) for the fall. We decided to use an Ex Day model with 75 minute classes two times per week (either T/Th or W/F). Every Monday we hold an asynchronous learning day where students complete assignments and many teachers hold office hours. We meet with our advisories four days a week so that students can build relationships. We also developed a Plan B (partial capacity in-person) that may allow us at some point to come back into the building with half of each of our classes each day for four days a week.

Now, halfway through the school year, I am cherishing the fact that I am getting to know my students and getting to share my love of history with them. School at RCHS does not feel like it used to, but in the midst of COVID, we've stayed true to our mission statement and to our focus on community. We held an online Flex Day where our 9th graders did a version of Flex 101 with games and even an escape room and our seniors looked at life after Raleigh Charter with a focus on some practical skills like budgeting and interviewing. We've held multiple



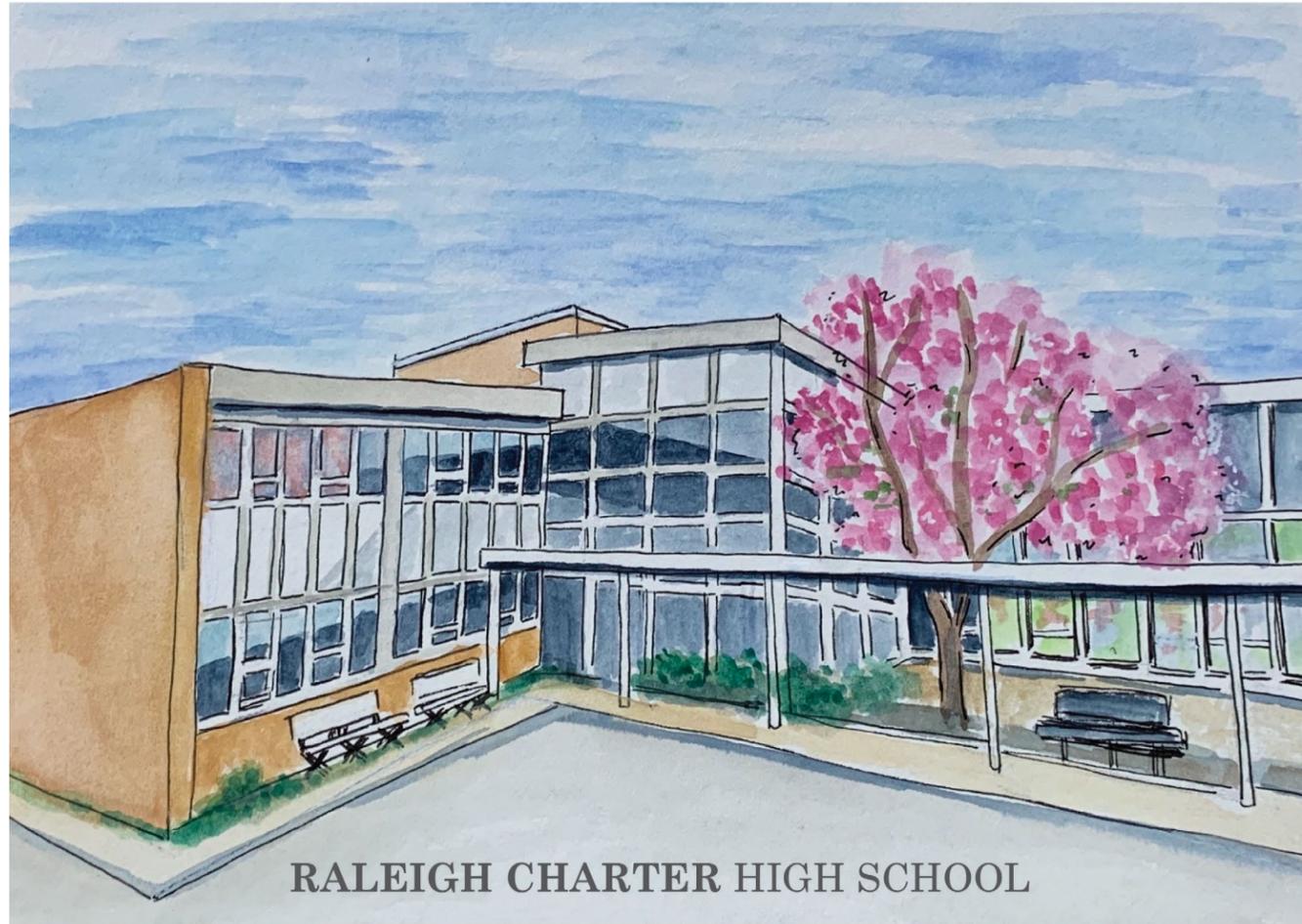
on-campus, outdoor social gatherings for students with games and pumpkin carving. Clubs presented a video version of Second Friday using Flipgrid and have been meeting regularly online. And our faculty has stayed connected with one another via social "Zoom-alongs."

This unusual and difficult year has challenged us to re-evaluate, redesign, and recreate so much of what we do and we are grateful to all who have supported us through these many changes. At Raleigh Charter, we are committed to building and maintaining not only a sense of community but also fostering a supportive environment where our students can rely on their teachers and relate to one another no matter the physical or virtual setting. We look forward to the days when we can welcome our students, teachers, parents, alumni, and friends back to campus once again.



*Shayne Klein is a founding member of the Raleigh Charter community. She teaches history and serves as Academic Dean.*





RALEIGH CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

We are pleased to offer prints and magnets that feature a beautiful painting of the school building created by RCHS alum Katie Liu. Phoenix Parents, Raleigh Charter's parent organization formerly known as PASTA, has partnered with Lew Wilson Art, a local art business, to present this special fundraiser benefiting RCHS.

Magnets and prints are available for purchase online at [LewWilsonArt.com](https://www.lewwilsonart.com). Simply use promo code "RCHS" at checkout and our school will receive 20% of your entire purchase (including non-RCHS artwork and items!).

To access the online store, use the link below and then enter "charter" in the website's search bar to view the RCHS items.

<https://www.lewwilsonart.com/online-store>  
then enter "charter" into the website's search bar

Free pickup is available in Apex or you may have your items shipped anywhere for a fee. This fundraiser will continue through June 2021. Don't forget to use code "RCHS" at checkout!

### About the artist

Katie Liu graduated from RCHS in 2019 and is currently pursuing degrees in Media Arts and Business Administration from the University of Southern California. While studying from her home in Raleigh, she is also working with Lew Wilson Art to create artwork featuring local scenery, schools, and businesses. We are grateful to Katie for sharing her talents in support of our school!

## THE PHOENIX ANNUAL

The Phoenix Annual is published by the Raleigh Charter High School Offices of Development, Communications & Alumni Relations and includes stories and events from the previous school year. Printed copies are sent by mail to parents of current and past students. Alumni receive a digital version via email.

This issue and past issues are available online at [www.raleighcharterhs.org/alumni](http://www.raleighcharterhs.org/alumni).

For comments or inquires, please contact Margaret Barnett, Director of Development & Communications at [mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org).

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### Our Mission

*Raleigh Charter High School challenges college-bound students in a creative and supportive atmosphere to become knowledgeable, thoughtful, contributing citizens.*

### Citizenship Preamble and Principles

We, of RCHS, intend to cultivate the understanding and practices that sustain individual self-determination and equitable, self-governing communities. We have adopted the following principles in order to ensure that all who pass through our halls can imagine, create, and govern a more perfect world.

We believe:

That a foundation of knowledge and ethics must precede all intellectual inquiry;

That if we

- encourage self-awareness
- build and maintain local communities
- develop an awareness of our membership in ever larger communities
- work consciously towards equity and against oppression and injustice
- recognize and embrace the dignity of every human being
- engage in common enterprise
- facilitate problem solving
- foster balance in life and
- take ownership and responsibility for learning,

We shall become good citizens.

The Citizenship Preamble and Principles was originally drafted by the faculty between 2007 and 2009 at a series of meetings and retreats. These ideas exist in a living, working format that we revisit and reflect upon often. They are meant to express our aspirations for our school community. The principles shown above were most recently revised in July 2020 by our entire faculty of teachers, staff, and administrators.

# Celebrating Our Retiring Faculty

At the end of the 2019-2020 school year, we wished farewell to several longtime faculty members as they entered into retirement after many, many years being with us. Congratulations to **Dr. Steve Busonik, Dr. Thomas Humble, Ms. Carolyn Jackson, Ms. Barbara Soloman, and Ms. Peggy Wall.** Together these incredible individuals have given nearly 100 years of service to the Raleigh Charter High School community! While there is no way to fully express our gratitude and appreciation, here are some sweet sentiments shared by alumni, fellow faculty, and parents.

## Barbara Soloman



During her twenty years at RCHS, Barbara Soloman taught a variety of math classes to hundreds of students. Many alumni fondly recall taking Systems Theory, a multidisciplinary course Barbara designed to encourage students to think critically and approach problems from different perspectives. She also advised

several clubs including Ethics Bowl and My Name, My Story. Fortunately, Barbara will not be leaving our school community entirely. She will still be helping and tutoring our students in various capacities, and we appreciate her willingness to continue to support us all!

*"I learned pre-calc and Systems Theory from her, but I also learned more about what I valued in life, how to think through big decisions, and how to stick to what I believe in. I truly believe that I became a better person from knowing her. I really treasure how Ms. Solomon pushed us all to be creative, thoughtful, and kind, and the class gave me a perspective on the world that I carried with me through college."*  
— A 2016 graduate.

*"She genuinely cares about each and every student, and makes each day of class an adventure."* — Emma Ferraro '15

*"I cannot stress this enough, I have used skills you taught me every day."* — Neel Dutta '16

*"You gave me a voice to speak my truths. I will always remember the impact you had on my life. Thank you for your incredible guidance."* — A 2007 graduate

*"Whenever I needed help or advice, she never hesitated to be there. It was an absolute privilege to have met Mrs. Soloman. She is not only an amazing teacher who pushed her students to reach their potential, but also a sincere friend and an inspiration as to the person I hope to become."* — Emily Xu '17

*"Your classroom was a bright and happy place. I felt encouraged being there and it made me feel safe and at home. Thank you for making me feel respected and seen. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You are loved and appreciated."* — A 2009 graduate

## Steve Busonik



For the past nineteen years, Dr. Steve Busonik has taught English and life to Raleigh Charter High School students. He often modeled for us all the value of teaching students not only to think critically but also to ask the right questions. His students have come back year after year to tell us how well prepared they were for college after taking senior English with Dr. Busonik.

*"A student came out of their first day of class in senior year, and I asked them how it was going. They said, 'English blew my mind, but I loved it.' I knew that they had Steve."* — A colleague

*"Thank you for modeling an examined life. In classes you encouraged us to interrogate texts, ourselves, and the attributes of the vehicle which meant that we all left the classroom with richer, messier, and deeper questions to ask about our world than when we entered. While I appreciated the feedback you gave on our writing at the time, it wasn't until I became a teacher myself that I truly understood the dedication and care your work required. Your instruction unlocked for me the nuance and power language can command, a gift that has served me long after I left Pilot Mill. In Philosophy and Film Club, you facilitated formative moments and conversations for countless students, and demonstrated the essential role of art in the pursuit of understanding."*  
— A 2011 graduate

*"Beyond improving our capacity for language, I think many of us can say Dr. B's class made us realize that we were even capable of unlocking the second-order, higher level critical thinking abilities buried deep within our brains. These skills have proved useful not only in college, but in life in general. I am still so often reminded of his common phrase, 'never stop at your first good idea.' Thank you, Dr. B."*  
— Jacob Weintraub '15

*"You undoubtedly had more impact on my writing than anyone else. If it wasn't for your specific, meaningful, and constructive feedback I never would have had the skill (or willingness to revise) necessary to become an academic. When I give feedback to my students I try to channel you and cannot imagine the hours you spent ensuring that each and every person in your class each year got meaningful feedback that made them grow as writers and critical thinkers."*  
— Elena Dowin Kennedy '05

## Carolyn Jackson



Fifteen years ago, Carolyn Jackson joined our staff to manage our Flex programs and has stayed to coordinate virtually every logistical challenge that we have faced since her first day, including how to build our Development Office from the ground up. As only one example among many, Carolyn not only figured out how to pack up

and move our whole school from one space to another but also managed to turn the whole thing into one giant paint party and adventure that we all thoroughly enjoyed. Her energy, enthusiasm, and passion for our school have been boundless.

*"Carolyn, the DOER. Carolyn, the GIVER. Carolyn, the BUILDER OF COMMUNITY. Carolyn, the truly wonderful soul."*  
— A colleague

*"Carolyn is the kind of person who never met a stranger. Her welcoming and kind personality is infectious and it was a pure delight to work with her."* — Betsy Green, parent

*"Thank you for your tireless contributions over the years to help us build and grow this incredible school! Your kindness, humor and desire for continuous improvement was never overlooked, and we will certainly miss you."*  
— Peter Smith '04

*"Carolyn championed the mission and culture of Raleigh Charter and her depth of knowledge and passion for the school was incredible."* — Jodi Schwartz, parent

## Thomas Humble



In August, 1999, Dr. Thomas E. Humble embarked on a mission to create a school full of kind, caring, smart teachers who would work to help all students learn to love learning. He served as our inaugural Principal for sixteen years and stayed for five more to teach English and work with students as a College Counselor.

There is no way for any of us to be sufficiently grateful for his wisdom and vision as he turned his dream into reality for all of us. The more than 2,500 Raleigh Charter High School students who have walked across the stage to become graduates of "our little school" are grateful for his dedication and love. All of us who have been privileged to work with him are, too.

*"All through my senior year, you guided me with your loving patience through both senior English and the college application process, as you have with so many others. It has truly been an honor to learn from you, and I hope your days are filled with joy as you enter this new time of life."* — Jennifer Robson '20

*"You must know you are ingrained in all our memories as the iconic figure of RCHS. Thank you for your thoughtfulness, care, and humor."* — Adrienne Le '10

## Peggy Wall



Peggy Wall was lured out of her first retirement 19 years ago to help us manage our books and our office. As she noted, she had no plans to stay with us so long but loved it so much that she just couldn't leave. She has provided love and care to a generation of our students and faculty, and we are grateful for her kindness, wisdom, and support through the years. We are all way better at organizing and counting money now, too!

*"Mrs. Wall, thank you for the never ending smiles and joy you brought to the main office. Thank you for your trust in me and for your genuine interest in my well-being."*  
— Marietta Stewart '07

*"Your radiant smile and warm personality always made my trips to the office extra special. I wish you all the best in this next chapter of your life. Just know that your work at Raleigh Charter made my time there extra special."*  
— Anna Kipps '20

*"Peggy has been a pure light of joy every day I've been at Raleigh Charter."* — A colleague

*"You have provided sorely needed wisdom and made me laugh until I cried."* — A colleague

# Forever Phoenix

As we continue to adapt some of our favorite traditions to a virtual format, we have discovered opportunities to connect with our alumni in ways that we had not previously explored.

During our final in-person event in March, ten alumni joined us on campus for a Career Panel where they shared their real-world experiences with our students (see page 8). In May, thirteen alumni shared their expertise with our students by submitting videos for our Virtual Phoenix Fest. In early December, college-age alumni provided advice and insight about the college experience to our juniors and seniors through a virtual panel discussion (see page 11).

There are many ways for alumni to engage with RCHS no matter where you live. We invite alumni to volunteer as guest speakers in our virtual classrooms throughout the year, and we hope many of you will join us for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Alumni Career Panel which will be happening online on March 8, 2021. (See page 9 for details about signing up!)

We look forward to resuming on-campus events and reconnecting with our alumni in person when it is safe to do so.



### The Alumni Association Mission

We, as **knowledgeable, thoughtful, contributing** citizens of the RCHS Alumni Association, will work together to provide peer-led opportunities for alumni to **connect** with one another, **serve** our school and greater community, and **give back** by supporting the initiatives of Raleigh Charter High School.

**Connect** *Build connections among alumni and strengthen relationships between alumni and our school.*

**Serve** *Volunteer together to help RCHS and the greater community.*

**Give Back** *Contribute our time and resources to support school initiatives and ensure the legacy of excellent education.*

## Get Involved!

- 1 All alumni are automatically members of the RCHS Alumni Association and we hope you will join us at many events.
- 2 Make sure we have your correct contact information and check your email for updates and invitations.
- 3 Join our RCHS Alumni Facebook group to connect with other alumni and stay up-to-date on what's new.

## Help Us Grow

Whether you would like to help plan a single project or join the Alumni Committee, we would love to have your help! If you are interested in learning more about how you can contribute to the development of the Alumni Association, please email [alumni@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:alumni@raleighcharterhs.org).

## Update Your Information

We will use your updated information to

- Send you Alumni Association News by email
- Connect your skills & talents with school volunteer opportunities
- Keep you updated on all things RCHS!

Use the links below or visit [raleighcharterhs.org/alumni](https://raleighcharterhs.org/alumni) to update your contact information today.

### Alumni

<https://tinyurl.com/ForeverPhoenixAlumni>

### Alumni Parents

<https://tinyurl.com/ForeverPhoenixParent>

# Checking in with the Class of 2010

Since they couldn't gather in person, graduates from the class of 2010 took to Zoom to hold their 10-year reunion online. On July 16, 2020, classmates logged in from around the country to reminisce about their times at the old Pilot Mill. They even had a special guest appearance: Dr. Humble joined in to say hello!



Seniors pose with their banner during the Spirit Olympics held at Halifax Community Center in spring of 2010.

## Ten years after graduation: Where are they now?

We reached out to 2010 alumni to see what they have been up to in their first decade since graduating from Raleigh Charter. Here are some updates from a few!



**Tom McTernan** majored in Chemical Engineering at NCSU and is currently enrolled in an online Master's degree program in Environmental

Engineering through NCSU. Tom lives in Seattle and works as an environmental consultant with a focus on air quality. When he's not working or studying, Tom says he enjoys hiking, skiing, and attempting DIY house projects.

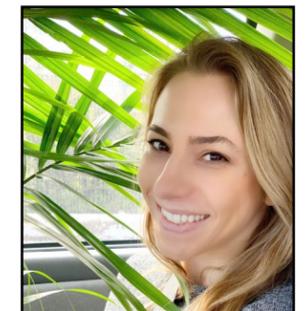
"At RCHS, I learned how to approach learning new material with patience and an open mind. This paid dividends when taking complex engineering courses in college and having to handle difficult projects at work."



**Anne Marie Fristoe** majored in Political Science and Criminology at NCSU and holds a JD from NC Central University School of Law. She is now employed by

the Department of Justice as part of the Honors Attorney Program. She works as an attorney in the Atlanta Immigration Court. Outside of work, Anne Marie says she enjoys hiking, spending time with her dog, and taking care of her plants.

"At RCHS I learned the importance of being involved in my community and using my voice and position of privilege to help others which helped shape my career."



**Katherine (Hobbs) Evans** majored in Computer Science & Aerospace Engineering at MIT and works as a software engineer at Google on the

Gmail team. She has lived in several places from New England to Northern California since graduating from RCHS. In 2021, Katherine says she is planning to move to Hawaii for three months.

"At RCHS, I learned how to befriend people with differing opinions."

## Happy Anniversary!

The 2019-2020 school year marked these milestone anniversaries:

**Class of 2005: 15 years**  
**Class of 2010: 10 years**  
**Class of 2015: 5 years**

Interested in hosting a reunion for your class? Email [alumni@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:alumni@raleighcharterhs.org). We are happy to help you connect and coordinate with your classmates! (Our 25th schoolwide reunion will be held in summer 2024!)

# Creating Career Connections

## Alumni offer real-world advice to students

By T. Baddour '21, Student Contributor\*

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, a group of alumni returned to Raleigh Charter to participate in a career-focused panel discussion where they talked to students about their own experiences after high school. Students from the Creating Career Connections Community Work Day group partnered with the RCHS Alumni Relations Office to invite alumni and plan the logistics of the event. The panel was held after school and many students attended, completely filling two classrooms. Student leaders from the Creating Career Connections Community Work Day group served as moderators and asked our alumni lots of questions about college, their jobs, advice, and their favorite high school memories.

The panel featured ten alumni from a variety of professions and educational backgrounds. Here is a glimpse into the lives of just four of the panelists.

**Nathan Brothers '04** is a Product Management Director. He works at Audible, an audio entertainment company that sells audiobooks and audio versions of magazines and newspapers. Brothers, who drove from his home in Virginia to attend the event, said he loved his time at RCHS noting that the maturity of his classmates and the tight-knit community of the school really made a difference. He says his Raleigh Charter experience continues to influence him because in high school he learned to never take problems at face value, and that problems are an opportunity to learn in a new way that you might not have thought about before.

**Jen Yeh '09** works as an Associate Editor at Research Square, a Durham-based company that provides author, editorial, and video services. At work, Yeh writes articles about neurology and interacts with people all over the world. Yeh said her time at RCHS had a lasting impact as it taught her valuable communication skills that she uses every day.

**Safah Mahate '11** is a Forensic Chemist in the Toxicology Department at the North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. She investigates suspicious or unusual deaths involving toxins. Mahate remains connected to RCHS by attending alumni events and keeping up with teachers. In Mr. Caudill's 9th-grade Biology class, Mahate was introduced to a guest speaker who would later offer her the internship that eventually led to her current job. Mahate said that she wanted to return to RCHS to serve on the career panel because she knows, from her personal experience, how influential guest speakers can be for students.

**Elise Karsten '12** is a Brand Strategist at Clean, a marketing and branding agency here in Raleigh. Her work focuses on researching what audience a company should target with its advertisements. Like Yeh, Karsten mentioned how grateful she is for the communications skills she learned at RCHS. She reflected on how RCHS taught her to always be authentic and her true self, which is something she strives to do every day.



## Thank you to all of our panelists!



From top left:

<b>Nathan Brothers '04</b>	Product Management Director at Audible in Charlottesville, VA
<b>Jonathon Vandezande '09</b>	Scientist at Zymergen, a science & material innovation company in Boston, MA
<b>David Hash '10</b>	Lead Constellation Designer at Swarm Technologies, Inc in Mountain View, CA
<b>Jen Yeh '09</b>	Associate Editor at Research Square in Durham, NC
<b>Nandini Sridhar '10</b>	Employment Services Coordinator at CWS Global in Durham, NC
<b>Elise Karsten '12</b>	Brand Strategist at Clean, a marketing and branding agency in Raleigh, NC
<b>Savannah Beckler-Jones '08</b>	UI/UX Designer at Constellation Digital Partners in Raleigh, NC
<b>Safah Mahate '11</b>	Forensic Chemist at the NC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Raleigh, NC
<b>Meredith (Wehrle) Hall '09</b>	Social Worker with the Children's Home Society of North Carolina in Raleigh, NC
<b>Vanessa (Clark) Lopez '02</b>	Administrative Assistant at Sola Gratia Classical Academy in Cary, NC

### Interested in serving on the next panel?

The next Alumni Career Panel will be held virtually on March 8, 2021. We are looking for alumni who graduated from RCHS in 2016 and earlier to volunteer. Panelists will be asked to share their perspectives and advice regarding topics like finding a career path, interviewing, work-life balance, and more. Details and an interest form will be sent via email in early February. Check your inbox or send an email to [alumni@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:alumni@raleighcharterhs.org) for more information.

\*T. Baddour is a current senior. He volunteers as a student contributor and has interned for the RCHS Office of Communications. In addition to *The Phoenix Annual*, he has written articles for *The Flame*, the RCHS student newspaper, and *The Phoenix News*, the weekly parent newsletter.

# College During COVID-19

*Four years a student, forever a Phoenix!*

## Four alumni share their perspectives on college during a pandemic

We know COVID-19 has changed high school in innumerable ways. But what does life look like for our alumni who are now attending college? We interviewed four college seniors to find out how the pandemic has affected their collegiate experience and how Raleigh Charter prepared them for life after high school.



**Linnea Howe '16**  
**Attending:** UNC Chapel Hill  
**Studying:** Global Studies, Hispanic Linguistics, & History



**Langdon Ogburn '17**  
**Attending:** U.S. Military Academy West Point  
**Studying:** Philosophy



**Kim Sharp '17**  
**Attending:** Emory University  
**Studying:** Chemistry & Math



**Christina Whetzel '17**  
**Attending:** Georgia Tech  
**Studying:** Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering

### How did RCHS prepare you for college?

**Whetzel:** Raleigh Charter did a really good job of teaching me time management and planning skills. I remember in high school I was always trying to plan how to get my homework done between basketball practices and Mock Trial meetings. Understanding right away how to make a study plan, keep track of my work, and make time for myself to explore what college has to offer gave me a boost going into my freshman year.

**Sharp:** The biggest thing I feel carried over from high school to college was the confidence to grasp bigger projects. I had to learn to adapt and do things differently in college, but even if I had to write a paper using a new process, or learn to study more progressively throughout the semester rather than the few days leading up to a big exam, I had written papers and grasped difficult material before. The approach was different, but I knew it was within my realm of ability.

**Howe:** I think that Raleigh Charter helped me in terms of workload. The type of work is different — in high school, you don't have lots of 30-page long reading assignments — but Raleigh Charter helped me learn how to prioritize it all. Plus Raleigh Charter taught me how to write. In my first year seminar, I peer-edited papers and I could tell I was better prepared. Dr. Busonik definitely helped teach me grammar, which helped me a lot.

**Ogburn:** Unequivocally, the time management skills I learned at RCHS prepared me incredibly well for college, especially, in my case, for military college. Oftentimes, it feels like my schedule is completely outside of my control, yet I still need to find time to complete assignments and personal tasks. Having learned how to manage challenging coursework along with multiple extracurricular activities at RCHS, I was able to transition into an environment that is both academic and military with relative ease.

### How has the pandemic affected your college experience?

**Whetzel:** The pandemic has definitely made campus a lot less social than it normally is. Most student organizations that require in-person interaction to some degree are taking the semester off. On the bright side, I feel like the pandemic has given a lot of students some extra time to prioritize mental health and explore what their needs are, which will make us all happier people in the long run. The key for me has been staying positive and finding creative ways to interact safely.

**Sharp:** It's made doing research much more challenging; I was planning on spending the summer working in a prestigious lab that I now am unable to work in. The independence and freedom and involvement that are all made available in college are now all much more limited, and require much more effort to engage with.

**Howe:** The pandemic has completely derailed my senior year. The biggest thing is changing from in person classes and spending less time on campus. I was the kind of person who would spend all day out of the house and pack my meals to bring along. I was used to just spending enough time in the house to sleep and eat. Now, I have to remind myself to go outside.

**Ogburn:** Typically, senior year at West Point is seen as the best year because of the immense privileges senior students have that other classes don't. However, because of the pandemic, some privileges (like being able to drive and being able to leave campus every weekend) are no longer possible. It's definitely not the senior year that my classmates and I were anticipating having, but we are still finding ways to have fun on campus!

### Are you attending classes in person or remotely?

**Whetzel:** One of my classes is entirely online while the others are in hybrid format, and I'm still doing on-campus research in person.

**Sharp & Howe:** All remote.

**Ogburn:** Although 100% of my classmates are currently on campus, our classes are split between being completely in person, completely remote, or a hybrid schedule. As a philosophy major, my department has gone completely remote. For my class on military leadership, I always meet in person. For my cyber engineering class, half the class is in person and half the class is remote, switching groups every class.

### What's something you've learned during this period?

**Whetzel:** The pandemic has taught me the importance of recognizing which things are within my locus of control (and which are not). I think the key is to make change where you can, control what you can control, and focus on the good things that are happening and how you can maximize those positive effects in your life and in the lives around you.

**Sharp:** The pandemic has certainly required us all to be much more intentional with how we treat ourselves. The lack of social interaction, no spatial difference in work versus home, and challenges with continuing to pursue hobbies and travel have gotten to many of us. It's important to recognize that those are problems that can't be completely solved right now and accept that a decrease in productivity is reasonable given all of those things. Identifying ways to mitigate these problems—making sure you live with roommates, going for walks with friends, setting up a desk in a different area than right next to your bed—is an important way to take care of yourself, and something we all should put effort into.

### Have your future plans changed? How?

**Whetzel:** Before the pandemic started, I was considering trying to graduate earlier, but I have decided to work an extra semester instead to both gain more professional experience and hopefully experience a somewhat normal second senior year.

**Sharp:** As of yet they haven't, but they may yet depending on how next year goes. I have been planning to graduate a semester early then go to grad school for a while, and I will continue to do so. However, since I'm applying to some international programs that may not accept Americans starting their program in Fall 2021, I'm not sure how exactly this will work and I may end up having to take a gap year of some variety.

**Howe:** My original future plan was to hike the Appalachian Trail, but I don't think that's going to happen because of the pandemic. So now I'm applying to a bunch of jobs. It's made future plans much more uncertain.

**Ogburn:** Luckily they have not changed too much! The U.S. Army still needs junior officers, so my classmates and I will still be joining the Army as officers early next year. In December, I will find out what job I will have in the Army.

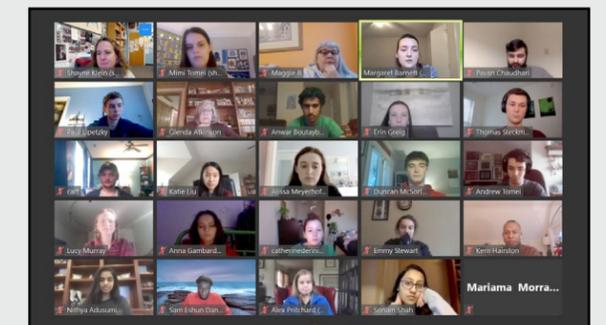
## Recent Alumni Offer Advice to Students During Virtual Panel

On December 7, 2020, twenty RCHS alumni from different colleges and universities joined us on Zoom for a virtual Forever Phoenix College Panel for our 11th and 12th graders. Alumni offered their advice and answered questions from over 50 current juniors and seniors about topics ranging from applications and academics to campus life and extracurriculars.

Our students enjoyed hearing from alumni attending a variety of schools including NC State University, UNC Asheville, UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Charlotte, Duke Kunshan University, Fordham University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Notre Dame, University of Pennsylvania, University of Southern California, and Yale University.

We're grateful for the many ways alumni and their families continue to engage with and enrich our community, even in this virtual environment. We are sad to miss our alumni at our annual Winter Coffee, which is usually held during winter break.

We cherish hearing from our former students and celebrating their growth and accomplishments. We look forward to welcoming our alumni back in person once it is safe to do so.



# Thank you!

Despite the turbulent nature of the 2019-2020 school year, we were able to meet our fundraising goals thanks to our incredible community of alumni, alumni parents, current parents, grandparents, friends, corporations, and foundations.



From everyone at Raleigh Charter High School, **thank you to the following contributors for gifts received from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.** There is no way to fully express our gratitude for your many gifts. We are continually inspired by your dedication and generosity.

## Phoenix Fund

### Forever Phoenix

Anonymous (1)  
Margaret Barnett '08  
Akhil Jariwala '10  
Calvin Koonce '18  
James '04 & Emily '04 Kotecki  
Katie Liu '19 & family  
Jameson Marks '03  
Mariama Morray '18  
Langdon Ogburn '17  
Gautam Sanka '10  
Alex '06 & Mary Smith  
Peter Smith '02  
Sallie Thompson '11  
in honor of the  
Thompson Family  
Caroline Williams '11

### Current Parents

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The Acharya Family  
Nicholas Addison  
The Ahn Family  
Frank Alexander  
The Amoroso Family  
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Ted & Terri Aron  
Debra & Ron Aronson  
Robert & Connie Atkinson  
Javed Awan  
Vijay & Sapeena Awasthi  
Astor & Xenia Ayala  
Matthew & Shannon Aycocock  
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Margaret Westbrook  
Barampuram family  
Kari Barsness  
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Jennifer Casillas  
The Clauss Family  
Laura Clougherty  
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Rebekah Davis & Grady Jackson  
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Marc DeWalle  
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Daniel Dittman  
The Dolicker Family  
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Carrie Dow-Smith  
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Allison Dugan  
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The Esleeck Family  
Santiago &  
Mary Michaels Estrada  
Haiti Feng  
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The Finch Family  
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Robert & Hee Su Kim Hill  
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Helena Oakley  
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Debra Hurst  
Mark Immler  
Samantha Indukuri  
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Dave & Laurie Jeffries  
The Jiang Family

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Bala Kamuj  
Prasad Kashyap  
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Leah Ragsdale  
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Anne Scott  
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Abid & Ambreen Shah  
Sunil Sharma  
Cameron & Wendy Shearon

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Thusheeta Sivayogan  
The Southworth Family  
The Springle Family  
Palghat Sridhar  
Nambi & Suba Sridharan  
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Robin & John Stewart  
The Strickland Family  
Karen Strickland  
The Summers Family  
The Surapenehi Family  
Ryan & Benilde Swenson  
Alice & Christian Tate  
Terrel & Susan Thomas  
Preethi Thomas  
The Toothman Family  
Nishant & Mayur Tiwary  
Mary Ung  
Prashanth Urs  
Ranga Vatsavai  
The Vick Family  
The Von Weihe Family  
The Walsh Family  
The Waltons  
Lynn Wanbaugh  
Charles Wang  
The Wedge Family  
Alison & Seth Weinreb  
The Wells Family  
Ellie, Claire, Levering &  
Beth White  
Lynn Whittenberger  
Tricia & Mark Wilson  
The Woolard Family  
Jean Xu & the family of  
Alex Kuang

## Current Faculty & Staff

Glenda Atkinson  
Lisa Huddleston  
Kern Hairston  
Thomas Humble & Sally Humble

## Former Faculty & Staff

Anthony Clay  
Lisa & Joe Tranquillo  
Marylee Deifer

## Contributing Friends

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Rosie Barraza on behalf of  
Chuck Lotz  
Kenon Crumble  
Brian Lane  
Chuck Nichols, Jr., &  
Nichols Law PA  
Professors Judith W. Page &  
William H. Page

## Grandparents

Bonnie Elam  
Joan & Jay Hill  
Robert Jones & the Seby B.  
Jones Family Foundation  
Marie Kehres  
Lauri Morrow-Alsaffar in honor of  
Peyton Lutz  
Mary Pelletieri  
Susan Poux

## Forever Phoenix Parents

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The Nagaranthal Family  
Winston Atkins & Kathy Green  
Mike & Winnie Beach  
Ben & Clare Bonifant  
Howard & Noelle Browne  
Shanna Darwish  
Catherine Davis Photography  
Damita Davis  
Gayle DiLalla  
Dr. Rudra Dutta  
Warren Edwards &  
Gigi Karmous-Edwards  
Cindi & Joel Freeman  
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Barbara Gibson  
Jane Gilewicz  
The Munger Family  
The Greig Family  
Brent & Felicia Heyward  
Lisa & Jeff Hardesty  
Anthony Ivosic  
Bo Kasal & Dana Kasalova



Edward Keating  
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 Jak & Page King  
 Calvin Battle Koonce, Jr.  
 Suzy Lamb  
 Laura Heintschel &  
 John Leonard  
 The Lipetzky Family  
 Audrey Mark  
 John & Judy Marks  
 Amy & David Marschall  
 Sharon & Alan McConnell  
 Carol Anne & Dick Moehring  
 David Nelson  
 Bob & Tammy Noel  
 Kathy & Jeff Perkinson  
 Robert Ray  
 Karen Rhodes  
 Jane & Bill Roberts  
 Keith & Graham Satsky  
 Robert Siegel &  
 Rafaella DiGiorgio-Siegel  
 The Simone Family  
 Miles Smith, Jr.  
 The Steckbeck Family  
 Dirk & Anne Steckmann  
 Michael & Veronique Sweeney  
 Mr. & Ms. Kyle E. Webb  
 The Xu Family

### Foundations & Organizations

John William Pope Foundation  
 Phoenix Parents  
 State Employees  
 Combined Campaign  
 The Tom Russell  
 Charitable Foundation, Inc.  
 United Way of Greater Atlanta  
 United Way of the Greater Triangle

### Corporations

Autodesk Foundation  
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 Duke Energy Foundation  
 Eaton Matching Gifts Program  
 First Citizens Bank  
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 Education First  
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### In-Kind Gifts

Catherine Davis Photography, LLC  
 Sucre & Sel French Catering  
 Patrick Murray  
 SAS, Inc.  
 Jodi Schwartz

### Foundation Fund

Anonymous (3)  
 Patricia Anderson  
 in honor of  
 Caroline Edmondson  
 The Ayerbe Family  
 Margaret Barnett '08  
 Daniel & Catherine  
 Bergschneider  
 Sondali & Parag Birla  
 The Bracken Family  
 Robert Bradley  
 Roger & Nancy Callanan  
 in loving memory of  
 Angela Callanan Joseph  
 Damita Davis  
 Babu Dawdi  
 Daniel Dittman  
 Vincent Smith &  
 Carrie Dow-Smith  
 Jennifer & Paul Elam  
 Michael & Caroline Escuti  
 Santiago &  
 Mary Michaels Estrada  
 Dave Garrin  
 Joe & Joanne Gerber  
 Matthew & Kathryn Gerber  
 Oscar Saenz &  
 Claudia Gonzalez  
 Karen Gower  
 The Green Family  
 Paul & Christy Greene

Thomas Humble & Sally Humble  
 Stephen Humphries &  
 Helena Oakley  
 Elizabeth & Randal Karsten  
 Steve & Carolyn Jackson  
 The Jawali Family  
 Dick & Pat Johnston  
 in honor of the Hill Family  
 Marie Kehres  
 Mike & Heidi King  
 Arnold & Jane King  
 Calvin Battle Koonce, Jr.  
 Haden, Beth, & Peter Lane  
 in honor of Carolyn Jackson  
 Craig & Becky Lightfoot  
 Charles & Jodi Long  
 John & Judy Marks  
 Jameson Marks '03  
 Hilarie Nickerson  
 Susan Poux  
 Robert & Mary Starbuck  
 Dirk & Anne Steckmann  
 Corinne & Martin Thiele  
 Sharon Van Dyke

### Corporations

Fidelity Foundation Matching Gifts  
 to Education  
 GlaxoSmithKline Foundation

## A Letter from Our Board Chairs

Dear Phoenix Community Members,

For 22 years, Raleigh Charter High School has fostered a creative and supportive atmosphere in which students grow to become knowledgeable, thoughtful, contributing citizens. While daily life at Raleigh Charter has changed significantly in the last several months, our unwavering commitment to our mission remains as strong as ever.

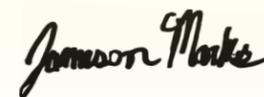
Every year, we ask our community to support our school by donating to our annual Phoenix Fund. **Our goal is to raise \$325,000 each school year.** As a line item in our budget, the Phoenix Fund is used to directly support our operational needs and supplement low per-pupil funding. The Phoenix Fund is critical because **the quality of education we offer costs more than state and local funding provides.**

**Our greatest expense funds our greatest asset:** 81% of our budget pays for the salaries of **our incredible teachers and staff.** Raleigh Charter teachers are highly qualified and exceptionally experienced. The average teacher at RCHS has 18 years of experience in the classroom. Our teachers are committed to our school. We have 24 teachers who have taught at our school for over 10 years. Another challenge to our budget is that **as a charter school, we do not receive capital funds for our building and facility expenses.** Our budget is lean; every dollar is used wisely.

This year, digital learning has pushed our teachers to reimagine the classroom experience. Using resources ranging from Zoom meetings to document cameras, they are developing innovative opportunities for students to **engage in active, social, creative learning, no matter the setting.** Teachers and students continue to solve problems, explore concepts and discuss ideas as they navigate virtual learning together. We are doing everything we can to equip our students with the resources and support they need to participate in this new way of learning. The Phoenix Fund helps us provide materials, like Chromebooks and internet hot spots, to any students who need assistance.

This year presents unique and unforeseen challenges, but we are confident that our school will continue to thrive because of **the caring support that we receive from our community.** We recognize that the pandemic has affected our families in many different ways and some cannot give as they did before. If you are able, we ask you to contribute. And, if you can, consider stretching to give more this year. **Every gift, of every size, helps us reach our goal.** Everything you need to respond to this request is enclosed, and more information about how to give can be found at [www.raleighcharterhs.org/giving](http://www.raleighcharterhs.org/giving). Together, we will rise to the challenge.

With great appreciation,



Jameson Marks '03  
 RCHS Board Chair



Jeff Simone  
 RCHS Foundation Board Chair

## ...and a Note from Our Development Office

At the end of June and the close of our fiscal year, Carolyn Jackson retired from her fifteen years of outstanding service to RCHS. Carolyn continues to be a great advocate for our school and we are grateful for the legacy of strong support and spirit of giving that she fostered in our school community.

In July, after three years managing Raleigh Charter's communications program, **Margaret Barnett** transitioned into the role of **Director of Development and Communications.** Margaret is a proud RCHS alum and holds a BA in Graphic Design from Loyola University New

Orleans. **Mimi Tomei**, a 2016 RCHS graduate, joined our team this year as **Development and Communications Assistant.** Mimi graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in May 2020 with majors in Media & Journalism and Political Science.

**Please see the next two pages for information about how you can support RCHS and contact us at [development@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:development@raleighcharterhs.org) with any questions. We look forward to hearing from you!**

*Thank you to the many donors who contributed in support of our **Drama, Athletics, We the People, and student assistance programs.** We are grateful for the in-kind donations of a file cabinet, professional photography services, desktop computers, and meals for staff. We are thankful for the inclusion of Raleigh Charter High School in the SECC, United Way of the Greater Triangle, and the United Way of Atlanta workplace campaigns.*

We make every effort to ensure that this listing of donors is accurate. Please contact Margaret Barnett at [mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org) with corrections.

Together we can reach our \$325,000 goal!



Raleigh Charter High School  
**PHOENIX FUND**  
*Rising to the Challenge Together*

The Phoenix Fund is operational. It pays for today.

The Phoenix Fund is our annual fundraising appeal. Contributions are used to supplement low per-pupil funding and make our day-to-day operations possible.

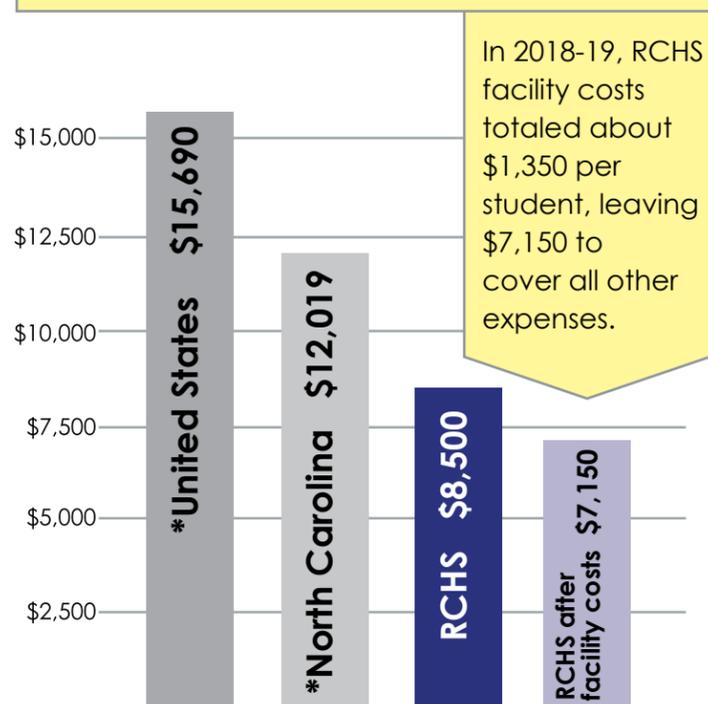
The Phoenix Fund is crucial to our annual budget.

Our **\$325,000 goal accounts for greater than 5%** of our budget. Our 2019-20 budget was \$5,690,000. This year's budget will depend on state and local funding decisions which have not yet been made.

We use our limited resources wisely.

**As a charter school, we do not receive capital funds for our building.**

**2018-19 Average Funding Per Pupil**



\*Data source: NEA Rankings and Estimates Report, June 2020.

*Your support is critical to securing the quality of education at RCHS!*

With your support we will...

- + **Keep class sizes small**  
*Our average class size is 19 students.*
- + **Attract and retain excellent teachers**  
*Our teachers are highly qualified and exceptionally experienced!*
  - ★ The average RCHS teacher has **18 years of teaching experience.**
  - ★ We have **24 teachers who have taught at RCHS for over 10 years;** 17 of them have taught here for 15 years or more!
  - ★ This year, we have **5 RCHS alumni on staff.**
- + **Make digital learning possible by purchasing materials and resources**
  - ★ Chromebooks
  - ★ Zoom subscriptions
  - ★ Internet hot spots
  - ★ Document cameras
  - ★ Computer monitors
  - ★ Headsets and web cameras
- + **Pay for our school building**  
*This includes paying our mortgage, cleaning services, utilities, and building maintenance.*

The RCHS budget is lean: 81% is spent on salaries. **Without the annual Phoenix Fund we would face a difficult decision:**  
Increase enrollment without adding faculty **OR** reduce the number of faculty members.  
**In either case, class size would increase.**

# Every Gift Matters

We appreciate your contributions to either of our two funds.



Raleigh Charter High School  
**PHOENIX FUND**  
*Rising to the Challenge Together*

The PHOENIX FUND is operational. It pays for today.

The Phoenix Fund is our annual fundraising appeal. Donations are used to supplement limited per-pupil state funding. The Phoenix Fund supports **small class sizes, technology, textbooks, college counseling, community service, the arts,** and much more.

To contribute to The **Phoenix Fund**, direct your payment to

**Raleigh Charter High School**  
Fill out a Blue Card or donate online at [raleighcharterhs.org/giving](http://raleighcharterhs.org/giving)

## Foundation Fund

SUPPORTING TEACHERS & CLASSROOMS

The FOUNDATION FUND is aspirational. It secures the school for our future students.

The Raleigh Charter High School Foundation exists to support our school. Donations to The Foundation Fund will be used to steadily and sustainably **increase compensation for our dedicated faculty.** The Foundation Fund will also secure our classrooms by replenishing reserves used for **major building maintenance.**

To contribute to The **Foundation Fund**, direct your payment to

**Raleigh Charter High School Foundation, Inc.**  
Fill out a pledge form or donate online at [raleighcharterhs.org/giving/foundationfund.asp](http://raleighcharterhs.org/giving/foundationfund.asp)



## Donate Today!

- **Write a check\***
- **Donate online** (one-time or recurring)
- **Set up a recurring gift** through your bank\*
- **Give a gift of stock**
- Ask Your Employer to **Match Your Gift**
- **Participate in a Workplace Giving Campaign** such as SECC or United Way

\*These methods incur no fees so RCHS will receive 100% of your donation!

Raleigh Charter High School, Inc. and Raleigh Charter High School Foundation, Inc. are two separate 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. Your gift is tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

To learn more about how you can support RCHS, contact Margaret Barnett, Director of Development & Communications, by email [mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org) or phone 919.715.1155.

# *Raleigh Charter High School*

*Raleigh Charter High School challenges college-bound students in a creative and supportive atmosphere to become knowledgeable, thoughtful, contributing citizens.*

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Connect with RCHS!



Online  
[raleighcharterhs.org](http://raleighcharterhs.org)



Like us on  
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Follow us on  
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Alumni News  
[raleighcharterhs.org/alumni](http://raleighcharterhs.org/alumni)



Raleigh Charter Alumni  
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