

Building Our Community

Introduction by Lisa Huddleston, Principal

Raleigh Charter High School was born out of a community of parents and educators who believed in the value of active, social and creative learning. We intentionally work towards building and rebuilding this community, not only by welcoming and embracing families of new students who join us each fall, but also by strengthening connections between the faculty, students, alumni, families, and friends who have been part of this community for so many years.

In the last few years, the strength of our community has shined bright. Students and faculty have leaned on and supported



Top: Students explore 19th century history in Durham County as part of the 11th grade Slavery and the Civil War Flex Day. Bottom: Students create care packages on Community Work Day at Oak City Cares. one another through challenging times while continuing to learn together. Parents and alumni have supported the school and reconnected with one another. You'll find stories highlighting these activities in the pages ahead. For more than two decades, the importance of an intentional, inclusive, vibrant and involved community has remained at the heart of everything we do.

Lisa Huddleston has been part of the RCHS community since 2001 and has served as principal since 2015.



Beyond Glenwood Avenue

By Hannah Fatool '18, RCHS Community Liaison & Testing Coordinator

Over the last couple years, the Raleigh Charter community has worked tirelessly to care for and carry its students, faculty, and families through challenging times. This fall, we have been able to open our doors a bit wider and have begun a return to the (ir)regularly scheduled programming that makes RCHS so special. While we have been thrilled to gather again with members of our own small community, we have also had the opportunity to once again play our part in supporting the "ever larger communities" that are central to our school's mission. Two of the main forces behind Raleigh Charter's community engagement are Flex Days and Community Work Days.

Flex Days this fall allowed students to experience their curriculum outside of the classroom. Ninth graders toured local places of worship and broadened their knowledge of community traditions, while seniors worked with local architects from the American Institute of Architects to build their own structures and learn about a fascinating organization operating four minutes down the road. Community Work Day was also back in full swing this fall, as our 560 students participated in service projects far across Wake County, removing invasive species, knitting blankets, phone banking for the midterm elections, packaging diaper donations, and much, much more. Raleigh Charter is only Raleigh Charter when we are engaging with community on every level. We are so excited to be back in action.

Hannah Fatool is a 2018 RCHS graduate. She has served as RCHS's Community Liaison and Testing Coordinator since June 2022.



Students weed garden beds at Raleigh City Farm on Community Work Day in October 2022.

From Our Community Builders

Clockwise from right: Homecoming Dance in October 2022 at Marbles Kids Museum; the Halloween Costume Contest in October 2022; and Volley-Y'all in May 2022. Homecoming photo by Helen Hill.





Resuming Our Rhythm By Kathleen Healey '22

I vividly remember my first SOOTS Cake Bake. Everyone was dancing, laughing, and juggling plates with slices of cake the size of my head. The tangible joy of the day, as well as my fascination with Southern roots music, sparked my curiosity and I instantly wanted to get involved. Immediately I was swept up into the action: dancing on a porch in Chapel Hill at a Pat "Mother Blues" Cohen concert, writing letters to local artists, and silk screening SOOTS T-shirts.

SOOTS took a blow during the pandemic (as did most things) but nevertheless, we were determined to reinstate our beloved traditions once back on campus. We challenged ourselves to create a Cake Bake that would help rekindle the joyous community that is unique to RCHS, which I hadn't fully experienced since before quarantine. Through the power of friendship (and frosting), SOOTS helped our community fall back into rhythm again.

The SOOTS student leadership team at Cake Bake in April 2022. Kathleen Healey is far right.



By Students, For Students By Josie Krieman '23

The Student Government Association has been an important part of building community throughout my time at RCHS. Whether it's Spirit Week or Homecoming, SGA has always been able to bring students together. Being a part of SGA has shown me the importance of fostering a community that loves and supports their school. Not only does SGA bring together students within the club, its goal is to connect students to their peers outside of the classroom. Student-centered events help to promote that aim. Regardless of the nature of the event, whether it's Volley-Y'all, our volleyball tournament between the classes, or donating clothing to Note In the Pocket, SGA is always there to embrace, foster, and support the growth of community within the student body.

Advisory Adventures



By Caio Setubal, Academic Dean & Math Teacher

Extended advisory used to be a rare occurrence. It was reserved for the beginning of the school year, class registration, or used in the lead up to Flex or Community Work Days. This year, it happens every Tuesday and lasts 30 minutes. It has given additional space and time for students to build community with one another, outside of an academic setting. I have had so much fun constructing balloon towers, playing geography games, and doing daily word puzzles with my students, who have become demonstrably closer as a result. Extended advisory has created a wonderful opportunity for teachers and students alike to decompress during a fast-paced day.

A Community for All



By Sarita McIver, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

RCHS is a community that is trying to create a space where everyone belongs. To acheive this, RCHS has three major Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committees: the Board of Directors, the Faculty, and the

Student Body each has a DEI committee. Affinity groups are safe spaces for students from underrepresented communities to share experiences and receive support by meeting for social and educational events. The Parent Diversity Network helps us build a partnership with the parent community by providing opportunities for parents to participate in outreach and the school to support parents. RCHS understands that representation matters, and therefore members of these committees participate in broader school happenings like taking part in open houses and establishing connections with admitted families from underrepresented groups. The Board of Directors and school administration are committed to this work.

As we rethink some of our routines and practices, these committees and I are working to be thoughtful and considerate in how we support students. As part of that, we strive to keep equity in mind with all student activities and work to ensure everyone is included, and there are no barriers to participation. We're investing in DEI-related professional development for teachers and staff, so every faculty member is taking steps to be more competent and confident while we work to build a more diverse and inclusive community. This work is a critical part of our mission to educate knowledgeable, thoughtful, contributing citizens of the world.



The LatinX Heritage Month Social is one of many affinity group events held by the Faculty Diversity, Equity & Inclusion committee.

THE PHOENIX ANNUAL

The Phoenix Annual is published by the Raleigh Charter High School Offices of Development, Communications & Alumni Relations. 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. For information or inquires, please contact <u>development@raleighcharterhs.org.</u> Margaret Barnett, Director of Development & Communications <u>mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org</u>. Mimi Tomei, Development & Communications Specialist

mtomei@raleighcharterhs.org.

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.

From Our Community Builders

Artifact Museum

By Charles Montague, History Teacher



On Friday, November 18, our World History students once again created and showcased Raleigh Charter's Annual Artifact Museum. It was another delightful event — and the next time all of those students are together for one celebration will be when they graduate in 2026! For 24 years we've enjoyed this rite of passage together — students, teachers, parents, grandparents, and alumni, walking among exhibits while learning a little, smiling a lot and embracing the project joyfully.

Clubs Abound

By Lizzie Coats '23

Upperclassmen streamed out of classrooms at 1:05 exactly on Friday afternoon, rushing to claim the best spots in front of the school. They juggled desks, trifolds, and bags of candy, all carefully selected to encourage more sign-ups for the clubs they represented. Third Friday, Raleigh Charter's annual club fair, was underway.

Third Friday (formerly Second Friday, and before that, First Friday) is a long-standing Raleigh Charter tradition that dates back to the early days of RCHS. Club leaders assemble booths outside the building, and students examine the selection with one-dollar slices of pizza in hand, pausing to sign up for clubs that catch their interests. This year, Third Friday featured 86 clubs, ranging from athletic to artistic to academic. Elisabeth Austin, a senior, found widespread enthusiasm in response to Outdoors Club, a new idea she's launching this year. "I got 75 sign-ups...that's crazy." And Sylvia Buchanan, a junior, wore her swimsuit over her clothes to advertise for the swim team. "You know, it was embarrassing at first. But our booth was so high-energy...it was kind of fun," she said. "I think we got sixty [sign-ups]."

In the weeks leading up to Third Friday, daily announcements are made over the speakers. School ends at 1:05, but teachers and administrators firmly encourage students to stick around for the festivities. Mr. Felder, who has been teaching math at Raleigh Charter for over twenty years, finds it crucially important that students—especially freshmen—sign up for every club that they find even remotely interesting. It's a wonderful way to discover interests and make new friends, he insists. Students concur. "I take the approach of signing up for a lot of different clubs…making sure that [they] would fit my schedule," said Sahara, a sophomore. "I signed up for Ethics Bowl, Key Club, Envirothon, Pop Culture, Baking Club, Mahjong Club, and Indian Dancing Club." Whether the goal is to promote a new club, pursue existing interests, or find something new, Third Friday has something for everyone.





Forever Phoenix Come Together

We love to hear from our Forever Phoenix and we are grateful to the many alumni who have shared their time and talents with our students over the past year. Since Fall 2021, nearly 200 alumni have joined us for informative programs with our students and social gatherings with one another. These events include our PSAT Day Panel, Alumni Career Panel, College Chats, Winter Alumni & Faculty

Transitioning Together

By Duncan McSorley '20



College Chats participants in May 2022. Duncan McSorley is in the front row, far right.

When I was a student, it really stuck out to me when alumni came back to share their experiences and journey from the Raleigh Charter community to college and beyond. I always felt the alumni who came back had incredibly valuable perspectives to share, and I still remember much of the advice that was given. Raleigh Charter prepared me very well for college, but transitioning to a new lifestyle in college was still difficult in many ways. I think alumni events like College Chats are super important for easing this transition. Knowing about different campus resources that are available and other life hacks ahead of time makes a huge difference living in a new place on your own. I love having the opportunity to share some of that perspective at these events to students whose shoes I used to be in.

Mark Your Calendar!

Keep an eye on your email and the <u>RCHS Alumni</u> <u>Facebook group</u> for more information on these events, coming Spring 2023! Coffee, and Phoenix Fest Panel. In Fall 2022, we introduced a new event – the Alumni Social – as an opportunity for alumni to connect with their peers. We asked alumni to reflect on a few of the events they've been a part of in 2022. Alumni from all over the country (and even a few abroad!) have joined in-person and on Zoom to reconnect with one another and share their valuable insights with our students.

Walking the Halls Once Again By Nana Owusu '15

The PSAT Day Panel remains as such a special event for multiple reasons. Of course, for the students because they get to ask alumni about our college experiences, but for the alumni because we get to see peers that we have not seen or spoken to since graduating. Going into the panel, as nervous as I was to walk those familiar halls, I made up my mind to not give cookie cutter answers and to be very honest with the seniors about my experiences. I could tell they appreciated my perspective, especially the students of color. It was important for me to share the possible environment and people they would be challenged by, but at the end of the day let them know that they would find their people no matter where they choose to attend. It was amazing catching up with old friends and amazing to see how much RCHS remained the same. I did not realize how much I appreciated RCHS, so much so that I am now the women's basketball assistant coach. I see a lot of myself in those girls and that has made it easier and fun to coach them.



Alumni PSAT Day Panelists in October 2022. Nana Owusu is fifth from right.

- Alumni Career Panel Thursday, March 23, 2023: Share your career advice & insights with RCHS students.
- Alumni Spring Social Thursday, April 27, 2023, Transfer Co Food Hall: Reconnect with fellow alumni & the school & share your ideas as we begin planning the RCHS 25th anniversary celebrations in Summer 2024.
- Phoenix Fest Friday, May 19, 2023: Participate in our annual day of creative student-led presentations.
- College Chats Tuesday, May 23, 2023: Meet with seniors who are headed to the same college you attended.

Forever Phoenix Come Together

Connections Across Class Years By David Lenz '10

Preceding the Alumni Social, I heard from a few friends that they planned on attending, making it easier for me to take the step to reconnect with RCHS. At the social, I was delighted to also see old friends with whom I'd lost touch. However, the "challenge" issued to speak to someone we didn't know reengaged me in the community more than the nostalgia for Spirit Olympics or Pilot Mill. The collective hesitation was palpable, but once again we embraced the discomfort, and sowed new seeds of friendship. Though talking to a "stranger" is simple compared to the classes we took or the challenges of striving to be a good citizen, each action is possible because of the foundational openness that was fostered by the communities we built at RCHS. We still belong to the communities we formed then, but we also belong to the broader community of those whose lived experience has been altered by RCHS. I'm grateful to have glimpsed the larger community, and I look forward to hearing more new stories and learning from the journeys of others.



David Lenz (back row, left) with his Class of 2010 classmates at the Alumni Social at Boxyard RTP in November 2022.



Fostering Friendships By Piyusha Mittal '14

Serving on the Phoenix Fest panel in May reminded me why RCHS has such a unique sense of community and how lucky I am to be a part of it. I was heartened by the thoughtful, engaging questions that students asked about broadening their horizons and overcoming adversity, and I could see how even virtually, the students were motivated to stay connected. Before the panel, Margaret Barnett kindly connected me with another alumna who works in the same field as me, and has since become an incredible mentor. I think it is truly a testament to the strength of our community that Margaret went out of her way to make the introduction and that this mentor was so enthusiastic about guiding me. I shouldn't be surprised though — after participating in an alumni panel in Sra. Grimes' Spanish class in 2021, I got to know another alumna with whom I have developed a deeply meaningful friendship, one I never would have found without the opportunity for alumni such as us to connect. Many thanks to RCHS for facilitating such a fulfilling community even years after we've graduated!

A Parent Perspective

By Betsy Green



Betsy Green (left) is 2022-2023 Co-President of Phoenix Parents, RCHS's parent organization, and a member of the RCHS Development Committee. She is the parent of an RCHS graduate from the Class of 2020 and an RCHS junior.

RCHS Classroom Prep Day is one of the most interactive, hands-on, and fun ways to get involved and help our school. There are so many things I could tell you about our prep day. For example, I could tell you that having parents and students help with painting, cleaning and organizing our building saves the school a tremendous amount of money. I could tell you that by saving money you help keep our class sizes small and teacher pay competitive. I could tell you that our teachers and staff are extremely grateful to have help cleaning, putting up posters and organizing books so that they can focus on lesson planning. I could tell you that these jobs don't require any specific skills, just a desire to help out.

But what I really want to tell you is that helping on Classroom Prep Day is a wonderful way for students and parents to have a richer kind of shared experience and bonding with teachers, staff, and each other that creates a deeper connection to our school community and helps make it the amazing place that we call Raleigh Charter. To donate to the <u>Foundation Fund</u>, please give online or complete the form below and return to RCHS.

The Raleigh Charter High School Foundation

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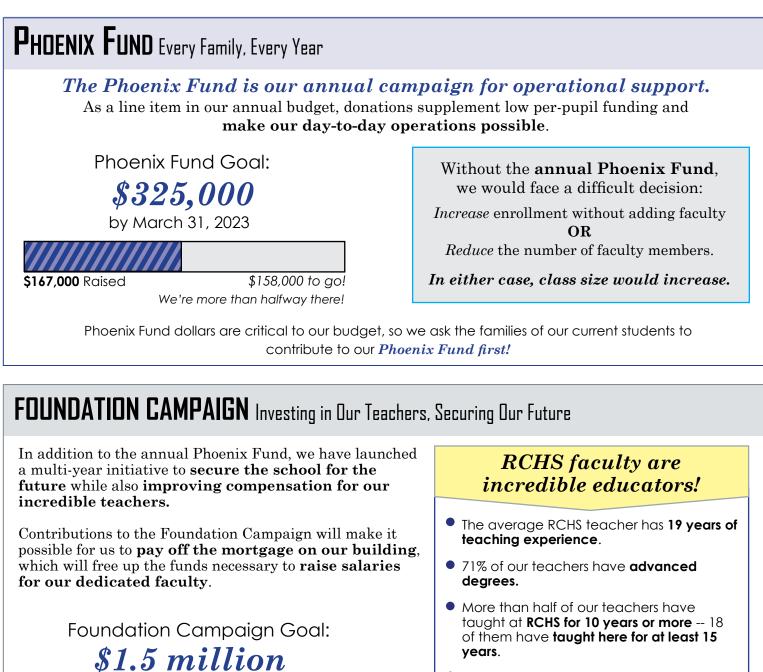
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Raleigh Charter High School PHOENIX FUR Every family. Every yea How will you support RCHS this year?	OUR 2022-2023 GOAL IS \$325,000 Contributions are used to supplement our limited per-pupil funds. The Phoenix Fund supports small class sizes, technology, textbooks, college counseling, community service, the arts and much more. As of January 5, we have reached 51% of our goal!
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Raleigh Charter Relies on Your Support

Contributions from our entire community, including current parents, alumni, alumni parents, grandparents, and friends, play a vital role in making Raleigh Charter's high-quality education

possible. Generous donations and caring support from families and friends of RCHS allow us to not only meet our operational needs, but also turn long-term aspirations into attainable goals. As we work to eliminate our mortgage to better compensate our dedicated faculty and staff, we are confident we will reach our goals together because of the steadfast and passionate support we recieve from our community. If you're reading this newsletter, you're a part of this community. We're grateful that you are part of our school and we deeply appreciate your continued support of our mission and our work.



• This year, we have **5 RCHS alumni on staff**.

And, yet... RCHS teachers could make more money teaching for Wake County.

\$400,000 Raised

by summer 2024.

\$1,100,000 to go!

Thank you!

During the 2021-2022 school year, thanks to caring and generous support from our incredible community of alumni, alumni parents, current parents, grandparents, friends, corporations, and foundations, we met our \$325,000 Phoenix Fund goal and made significant progress on the Foundation Campaign. Together, we raised \$333,185 for the Phoenix Fund and \$128,000 toward our Foundation Campaign goal in 2021-2022.



From everyone at Raleigh Charter High School, **thank you to the following contributors for donations received from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.** There is no way to fully express our gratitude for your many gifts. We are continually inspired by your dedication and generosity.

2021-22 supporters of our Phoenix Fund

Forever Phoenix

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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 science laboratory equipment, computer monitors, laptops, a teacher desk, and face masks. We are thankful for the inclusion of Raleigh Charter High School in the SECC and United Way of the Greater Triangle workplace campaigns.

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

Raleigh Charter High School

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

RCHS Events At-A-Glance

January 9 - February 28 Application Period for the 2023-2024 School Year

March 3-5, 9-11 RCHS Drama Presents Mamma Mia!, Burning Coal Theatre

- March 23 Alumni Career Panel, RCHS, 3:00 4:00 pm
 - April 21 SOOTS Cake Bake & Art Farm, 1:00 3:30 pm
 - April 27 Alumni Spring Social, Transfer Co. Food Hall
 - May 19 Phoenix Fest

Spring Concerts Strings (April 27), Choral (May 16), Band (May 18), William Peace University, 7:30 pm

May 23 Alumni College Chats

June 3 Graduation, Meymandi Concert Hall, 4:00 pm



Alumni & Alumni Parents: Need to update your contact info? Email us! <u>alumni@raleighcharterhs.org</u>