

LEARNING SPACES

The Oak Roost

HARRIET
Harriet Beecher Stowe
1797-1851



Harriet Beecher Stowe was an American novelist, poet, and abolitionist. She is best known for her 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was a major success and helped to shape public opinion in the United States against slavery.

HELEN
Helen Adams Keller
1880-1935



Helen Adams Keller was an American author, disability rights advocate, and lecturer. She was born deaf and blind, but through the efforts of her teacher, Anne Sullivan, she learned to communicate and became a prominent figure in the disability rights movement.

AMELIA
Amelia Earhart
1897-1935



Amelia Earhart was an American aviation pioneer and explorer. She was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean and the first person to fly around the world.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

BRIAN AND AMY CLEMENTS

Brian and Amy Clements looked high and low for the perfect school for their then-kindergarten-aged daughter Bella '26. When they walked into Norfolk Collegiate, they knew they were home.

“It’s the most nurturing environment,” Brian said. “We knew we wanted more than academics for her; it was also about the experience.”

So when it came time for daughter Sophia '30 to start kindergarten, Collegiate was the obvious choice. “She was really excited to ride the bus,” Amy remembered. “We were already so close with [Bella’s and then Sophia’s kindergarten teacher] Mrs. Adams, that it was a really easy, happy transition.”

Being part of the Collegiate family for four years, Brian and Amy not only want to support their daughters’ education, but also to uplift every student at Collegiate.

“When it comes to education—which is the foundation of everything—to be able to help the school where they need it and, in turn, every kid there, is really rewarding,” Brian said.

Besides giving to the Collegiate Fund, the Clements also gifted the school with an educational koi pond at the lower school Outdoor Learning Lab and helped to expand the hen enclosure. They helped bring an age-appropriate playground to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students and most recently provided funds to introduce flexible seating—an option that allows students more freedom in their learning—for lower-school students in the 2018-19 school year.

The Clements love that Collegiate provides students a balance of technology integration, discovery in nature, study time and purposeful play.



Parents Brian and Amy Clements were attracted to Norfolk Collegiate’s academic program, nurturing environment and experience other schools were not able to offer their children.

“It’s just a well-rounded experience,” Brian said. “The staff is always looking for new ways to engage their students so the kids get the most out of their education. When you have staff that gives it their all, it’s really easy to give.”

“It’s a family environment, and we love being a part of it,” Amy said.

Left: The Outdoor Learning Lab and Oak Roost, pictured on the left, has continued to grow, thanks to the help of generous families such as the Clements, who are pictured above.

OAKS THRIVE IN STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING SPACES

Norfolk Collegiate remains focused on student-propelled learning—so it makes sense to put students in a space where they’re free and safe exploring and absorbing what’s around them. Our MakerLabs across all three divisions and the lower school Outdoor Learning Lab are incredible, age-appropriate environments for students to grow and explore.

We think our school spaces should reflect our innovative curriculum, so in keeping with our strategic plan and with the help of some very generous donors, we’ve been able to give these areas an extra boost to support more hands-on learning across disciplines.

OUTDOOR LEARNING LAB

Initially underwritten by Franklin family, the Outdoor Learning Lab has come a long way since its grand opening on May 12, 2016. We unveiled the space with our beloved resident hens who live in the Oak Roost. Along with our hens, we introduced gardens to grow produce like kale, cabbage, lettuce, carrots, squash, melons and peppers, all planted by lower school students.

“This year, my class planted zucchini,” student Alexa Butler ’26 said. “But my favorite part about the [Outdoor Learning Lab] is watching the chickens and reading next to them.”

Due to the incredible support of families like the Clements, an educational koi pond also was added during the summer of 2018.

“The pond allows students to see and get their hands on a real aquaponics system,” lower school Science Teacher Melissa Silverman said. “Students are able to watch the fish in their natural habitat and see the water filter through the natural bog filter above. This filter cleans the water by way of rocks and plants roots, which absorb all of the nutrients from the waste created by the fish. Then, the clean, re-oxygenated water is sent back to the fish to help them prosper.” The space also fosters organic learning. “I

FRESH AIR & FRESH BOOKS

Lower School Librarian Mary Creekmore takes classes to read in the Outdoor Learning Lab every fall. Students bring blankets and read with their buddies.





Student-centered spaces, such as the Outdoor Learning Lab which is home to our five resident hens (pictured the left) and our MakerLabs (pictured below), provide students a place to engage with lessons in a new way while also bringing their visions to life. Innovative seating, such as the ErgoErgo, pictured to the left, allow students to move while learning.

feel very fortunate to have this amazing outdoor area for scientific discovery alongside all of my favorite young scientists,” said Silverman.

MAKERLABS

The MakerLabs have been part of our campuses and school culture for several years now, the spaces have been used to create amazing learning experiences.

In the upper school, the Theatrical Production classes use the power tools and 3-D printers to create unique stage productions (see page 25 for more details). It’s a safe environment in which students can learn to use state-of-the-art tools to produce their innovative sets.

Middle school teachers encourage students to use their designated creation space to complete classroom projects while thinking outside the box. For example, students taking Chinese created lanterns and other items that helped them better understand Chinese culture. Middle and Upper School English Teacher Jill Archer has students create how-to books on writing a great novel. They explore things like themes and timelines of whatever book they’d been assigned; this year, that book was “The Drowned Cities.”

Lower school students have a blast making and creating in their MakerLab. Most recently, students used virtual reality headsets to learn about different ecosystems and the organisms that inhabit them. First-grade students explored the forest where they identified trees and other plants and animals.

“There is no better learning than organic learning that allows students to spark their natural curiosity and then immediately learn from it,” said Silverman. “As educators, we are fostering that curiosity, and we’re so grateful for the spaces that allow our students to grow.”

A TRUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Alumni Amir

Horton '17, Hannah

Garcia '17 and Sarah

Smallets '17 devoted

time to the outdoor space

when conducting research for

their AP Capstone projects

as seniors. Amir installed the

garden’s drip irrigation system,

and Hannah developed an

algorithm to test the

efficacy of school-garden

donations to the local food

bank. Sarah formulated and

tested an organic pesticide for

cabbage looper, which also

affects crops like collard greens

and kale. In the end, as reality

would have it, the chickens

hatched a plan to escape their

roost and ate all the collard

greens. It was the perfect

real-world experience!

MADE TO MOVE

Flexible seating brings new learning opportunities for kinesthetic students

It's no secret children are movers. They wiggle, run, jump and occasionally break into dance. We understand the need to move, so we've reoriented some learning spaces to better accommodate our most kinesthetic students.

When the middle school was built, the planners ensured the classrooms were big enough for special seating that would allow students to sit more flexibly. The school brought in desks that were easy to move around the classroom, but more importantly, desks that fit easily into groups. Once the barrier of fixed seating was gone, it was much easier for teachers and students to collaborate.

Thanks to the generosity and support of the Clements family, we now are integrating special chairs and seating pods into our lower school classrooms. Instead of sitting in traditional chairs, students are able to wiggle while they learn. ErgoErgo (pictured below) and Hokkie stools are special seats that allow students to move more freely while still sitting and learning in a traditional classroom setting.

Both stools help alleviate the urge to fidget, and they're lightweight, so students can move them around the classroom to allow for easier collaboration.

"We're really trying to move away from individual desks," said First-Grade Teacher & Early Childhood Coordinator Dr. Catherine Thomson '94. "Tables are a much better fit for where our curriculum is going. I love the idea of seating that allows for more movement, choice and flexibility in the classroom."

Thank you to our incredible community members who are making our fun, new, engaging seating a reality for our lower school students.

