



# THE PHOENIX ANNUAL

Issue 15

The Raleigh Charter High School Annual Newsletter

December 2024

## A Quarter Century of Quality Education

Celebrating twenty-five years is a remarkable milestone in the life of our school. Throughout the spring 2024 semester, we enjoyed celebrating and connecting with our current families, alumni parents, and alumni. Collectively more than 1,000 folks came together to celebrate the past, present, and future of RCHS. In this newsletter, you'll read reflections from a few of them. Each and every member of our Phoenix community has helped shape the school that we are today and we are deeply grateful for your continued engagement and support.

- Lisa Huddleston, Principal



"My favorite moment at the 25th Anniversary Celebration was when I looked around and saw how many alumni were there. It was amazing to me. I did not like high school. My son, Kenny Felder, was one of the original teachers at RCHS. I told him I would apply and if I got the job, I would try it for a year. Nineteen years later I retired! I discovered that at RCHS I was expected to nurture and try to inspire and encourage young people. I loved that role. Seeing all the alumni students and faculty who turned out for that event showed me that RCHS truly did inspire and encourage young people and I felt like I had been part of something wonderful. I still feel like I am deeply connected to RCHS and it seems like many of the alumni also feel that way."

- **Barbara Soloman**, former faculty member

"I have such fond memories of my time at RCHS and the 25th Anniversary Celebration gave me the perfect excuse to head back south. My favorite part was getting to see some faces (classmates' and teachers') I hadn't seen in YEARS - they're still beautiful - and hearing from the faculty panel after lunch. Finding "ancient" photos from the 2002-2006 era in the drama room was also a highlight. I don't think I'd be one of those people who loved high school if Raleigh Charter hadn't been the high school. I think the school creates a wonderfully inclusive environment



for its students (and provides a great education!) and it's important to me to support that!"

- **Mica Iddings**, Class of 2006

"I so enjoyed seeing friends and reconnecting with other alumni parents at the 25th Anniversary Alumni Parent Social. But, what I loved the most about the event was meeting parents from earlier years, making connections through our shared experiences at RCHS, and making new friends. I hope all the parents felt a renewed connection to Raleigh Charter and came away from the event knowing that we all are truly Forever Phoenix!"



- **Susan Ramquist**, alumni parent '17 & '20

# A Very Happy Birthday

# 25

On May 10, 2024, we kicked off our season of anniversary celebrations at Raleigh Charter's 25th Birthday Party. Over 700 party-goers – including students and their families along with faculty and friends – filled the parking lot for an evening of spirited celebration. Folks enjoyed food trucks, lawn games, a photo booth, a craft station, and a raffle of fun and festive prizes. In true Raleigh Charter fashion, many people contributed to making the celebration special. Student-artists presented Art Farm (an eclectic array of artwork and crafts for sale), parents donated raffle items and volunteered their time, and our favorite Phoenix DJ (Athletic Director and Coach Bobby Lyons) kept the music flowing.

The event also marked our second annual Day of Giving. Many donations plus proceeds from our limited-edition anniversary T-shirts (designed by current students!), Phoenix swag items, and raffle tickets contributed to outstanding results far exceeding last year's total. With incredible generosity from current and alumni families, our community raised over \$43,000 to support Raleigh Charter!

The birthday party was a true reflection of what makes Raleigh Charter such a unique and vibrant place: our amazing community. Together we raised our cupcakes (instead of glasses!) to toast to 25 years of learning and growing.



Our teachers revealed a Giving Day progress report during the event.



“My favorite part of the RCHS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was the welcoming climate. I met a lot of the new freshmen there and I could tell they'd already been accepted into the community. There were also some alumni there so it was nice to see so many different generations together. There's a lot that we can learn about our school and its values from events like this with so many different people celebrating in one space.”

**Xavier Sneed '26**



“We had a blast at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party. As someone who was new to Raleigh Charter that previous Fall, we had the opportunity to meet other parents, parents of alumni, and members of the faculty. It was clear what a special community RCHS has fostered in its students and their families and we're so happy to be a part of it.

I firmly believe that the more we're invested in something important, the more we will get out of it. I have loved volunteering with Raleigh Charter. It's given me an inside look at all the good things happening within the walls of the school and I have had the opportunity to meet and get to know the staff behind the scenes. Driving students during Flex days and volunteering side by side with them during Community Work Days has given me a chance to meet students in other grades and hear about their experiences with RCHS and what they are looking forward to in the future. I love knowing (and seeing firsthand!) that my student is in community with staff and students who care about his success and challenge him to be the best he can be.”

— **Alexandra Flynn, parent '27**

## Alumni Parents Reconnect

More than 50 alumni parents gathered at Standard Beer + Food, a local venue near Pilot Mill, on June 13, 2024 to kick off the weekend of alumni celebrations. Together they shared memories of driving for Flex Days, volunteering for Phoenix Parents (or, as it used to be called, PASTA), and serving on boards and committees together. They listened to remarks by RCHS Board Member Jessica McDonald and Principal Lisa Huddleston thanking the alumni parents for their contributions to the school community and encouraging them to stay involved at RCHS for the next 25 years and beyond.



“One of my favorite things about this event was reconnecting with parents that I hadn't seen in a while and meeting new people. Time flies by once your child graduates from high school so it was fun to catch up and reminisce. It's important for alumni parents to remain engaged with RCHS. It's an easy way to give back for the amazing education our children received when they were there.”

**Jessica McDonald**  
alumni parent '20 & '22,  
RCHS Board Member



### Publication Information

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This issue and past issues are available online at [www.raleighcharterhs.org/alumni](http://www.raleighcharterhs.org/alumni). For information or inquires, please contact [development@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:development@raleighcharterhs.org).

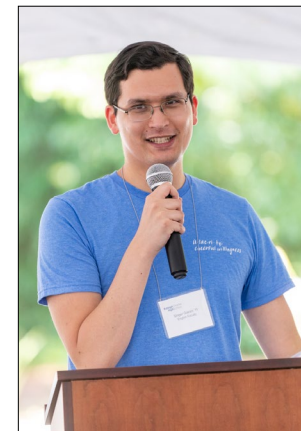
**Margaret Barnett '08**  
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[mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org)

**Mimi Tomei '16**  
Development & Communications Specialist  
[mtomei@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:mtomei@raleighcharterhs.org)

# Celebrating Our Community



On June 15, 2024, nearly 300 alumni, alumni parents, and current and former faculty gathered at RCHS for our 25th Anniversary Alumni Celebration. It was incredible to see so many graduates (and alumni parents!) from nearly every year of our school's history. We love catching up with our alumni and hearing about all the wonderful things you all are up to. Thank you to everyone who helped make this such a special day for our Forever Phoenix community.

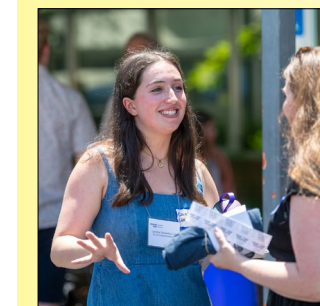
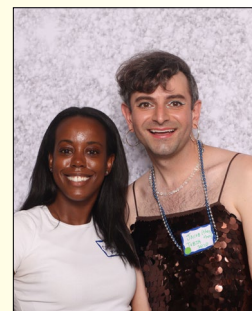


Several of our current and former faculty members shared their stories, memories, and perspectives with us during the Faculty Panel Session which featured questions submitted by alumni. Thank you to Forever Phoenix and RCHS English teacher Singer Gianini '11 for moderating the discussion with this very special group. Panelists Kenny Felder, Cynthia Brown, Amy Koch, Mark Slattery, Shayne Klein, Amy Marschall, and Tom Humble are pictured above.

## Reunion Reflections

"I'll never forget the 25th Anniversary Celebration at RCHS. I remember looking up at the stage during the faculty panel and thinking 'These are the people who made me who I am. So much of what I love most about myself, I learned from the people on this stage.' It was staggering, the gratitude I felt. From Maggie Rasnick to Dr. Humble, from Shayne Klein to Dr. Marschall, from Amy Koch to Kenny Felder (and so many more), I was blown away. How fortunate I was to be molded by such committed, loving, dedicated teachers. I'm getting a little weepy just thinking about it -- which is to say nothing of how weepy I was on the day of. Also, I wore a sparkly sequined cocktail dress that I was very proud of. It's a high school reunion after all; gotta let everyone know that you've had a glow up!"

- Jacob Tobia '10



"Everyone shared wonderful memories from their time at Raleigh Charter; I love this school's ability to bring people together! Events like the 25th Anniversary Alumni Celebration allow me to reflect on my own time at Raleigh Charter and how the community has continued to support me after graduation. I feel lucky to have learned from the amazing faculty and staff at Raleigh Charter, and I hope to find ways to give back as best as I can in the future."

- Caroline Edmondson '22

During the event, several individuals spoke about their experiences here at Raleigh Charter. Margaret Barnett '08 and Mimi Tomei '16, who manage the RCHS Development, Communications, and Alumni Office, shared many opportunities for alumni to volunteer and engage with the school. RCHS Foundation Board Chair Jameson Marks '03 spoke about being a member of one of the first graduating classes and the importance of staying involved with our school community. Academic Dean Shayne Klein reflected on the past, present, and future of RCHS and the valuable role alumni and alumni parents play in making our school possible.

One of our newest alumni, Maryam Siddiqui '24, reflected on her four years at Raleigh Charter, a tumultuous but joyful experience that included everything from virtual school to sharing laughs and snacks with friends in advisory. She offered a message of gratitude for the community of teachers and learners who supported her and her classmates.



Maryam Siddiqui '24



Mimi Tomei '16 & Margaret Barnett '08



Shayne Klein



Jameson Marks '03



Betsy Newmark and Eric Grunden hosted a pop-culture and RCHS-themed trivia game. Much like a high school classroom activity, alumni formed teams and worked together to answer questions. It was wonderful to see alumni from different graduating classes collaborating.



## Many thanks!

We are especially grateful to current parent and professional photographer, Bianca Thompson, for spending the day with us and photographing so many special moments! Many photos on this spread were generously provided by Bianca Thompson of 6-3 Photography.



## Alumni Cohort Reunions

Small groups of Forever Phoenix gathered off-campus following the on-campus 25th anniversary celebrations. Classes of 2007 - 2011 (pictured above) gathered at Riparian Provision Company.



# Showcasing Our Cultures



On April 5, 2024, students showcased and celebrated the rich diversity of heritage and traditions within our school community. The Cultural Fair was led by a group of dedicated student leaders and supported by staff members Sarita McIver, Akilah Govan, and the School Culture faculty committee. It was a fantastic event that we hope to continue for years to come. Students worked together to plan and host the after-school event which included presentations by more than 30 students and faculty members. Presentations ranged from introductions to Jamaican, Haitian, South Korean, and Indigenous American cultures to performances of Bhangra, a form of traditional Punjab Indian dance. Students also shared homemade food, ranging from samosas to challah.

"My favorite part of the Cultural Fair was watching our community come together for such a fun event! Giving a space for students and teachers to showcase their passions for culture, while allowing our school to come together and appreciate everyone's culture was a moment I'll cherish forever! In organizing and participating in the Cultural Fair, I learned how important and impactful this event was for our school. An experience no one knew the school was longing for, students and faculty appeared relaxed and delighted, staying hours after its ending!"  
- Mohit Piryani '25, student organizer



"The best part of the cultural fair was the energy. The fair created an environment where students and faculty were encouraged to share facets of themselves that won't always be shared in a classroom setting. I have never felt as comfortable sharing my culture as I did at the fair. Before organizing the event, I had no grasp on the cultural diversity at Raleigh Charter. It was truly a privilege to hear from students with such a diverse array of perspectives stemming from their cultural backgrounds. The cultural fair demonstrated that in talking about and sharing these differences, we can find similarities — an invaluable lesson in our current political climate."

- Pari Sidana '24, student organizer (left in photo)



# Citizenship in Action

*Flex Days and Community Work Days have evolved over the years, but active, social, creative learning remains our focus, allowing students to put their lessons into action in hands-on learning activities and meaningful community service projects.*

## Flex Days



**Scale Up! with The American Institute of Architects**



**EcoStation Exploration**

## Community Work Days



**Boomwhackers**



**Spanish 4: Art, Music & Culture of Mexico**



**Art Museum: Inside & Out**



**Operation: Build-a-Bridge**



**A Note in the Pocket**



**Invasive Species Removal**



Anne Williams Foglia '07 (left) joined the RCHS faculty in Fall 2024 to support our Flex Days, Community Work Days, and standardized testing programs alongside Hannah Fatool '18 (right).



**The Immigrant & Refugee Experience**



**Catholic Parish Outreach**



**Raleigh City Farm**

# Raleigh Charter Relies on Your Support

Every gift of every size makes a difference!



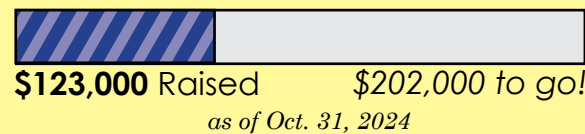
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Every family. Every year.

Current Parents Remember:  
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As a line item in our annual budget, donations supplement low per-pupil funding and **make our day-to-day operations possible.**

Unlike traditional public schools, we don't receive funding for our building and facility costs. This means **we must stretch every dollar to cover the costs of operating our school.** This year our average facility cost is projected to be **\$1,600 per student.**

Our annual Phoenix Fund goal is **\$325,000**



[www.raleighcharterhs.org/phoenix-fund-give-online](http://www.raleighcharterhs.org/phoenix-fund-give-online)

[Click here to DONATE ONLINE!](#)

If you have already given this year, **thank you!**

To learn more, please contact Margaret Barnett, Director of Development & Communications, at 919.715.1155 or [mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org](mailto:mbarnett@raleighcharterhs.org). Raleigh Charter High School (EIN #56 2121381) and the RCHS Foundation (EIN #26 4266980) are two separate 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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**Pay for today:**

**Keep class sizes small**

Our average class size is 19 students.

**Support our faculty**

Pay the salaries of our dedicated teachers and staff

**Provide our classrooms with essential resources** such as technology, textbooks and basic supplies.

**Pay annual expenses for our**

**school building** including paying our mortgage, cleaning services, utilities, and building maintenance.

and...

**Secure the school for the future:**

**Raise salaries for our excellent teachers**

Improve compensation for the teachers who are here now and continue to offer competitive salaries for future hires.

**Eliminate our mortgage expense**

by paying off the bond on our school building

## Raleigh Charter High School FOUNDATION CAMPAIGN

Investing in our teachers,  
Securing our future

By completing this campaign, we will be able to pay off our mortgage and direct funds to sustainably increase salaries for our dedicated teachers and staff.

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# Thank you!

During the 2023-2024 school year, thanks to caring and generous support from our incredible community of alumni, alumni parents, current parents, grandparents, friends, corporations, and foundations, we raised **\$306,500 for the Phoenix Fund** and **\$132,800 for our Foundation Campaign goal.**



From everyone at Raleigh Charter High School, **thank you to the following contributors for donations received from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.** There is no way to fully express our gratitude for your many gifts. We are continually inspired by your dedication and generosity.

2023-24 supporters of our

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**Class of 2022**  
 Caroline Edmondson

**Class of 2023**  
 Nilay Ghodasara  
 Ben Howard  
 Mackenzie Langosch

**Class of 2024**  
 Anonymous (7)

Ansh Aggarwal  
 Laith Alia  
 Stewart Allen  
 Annie Allen  
 Rahul Bammidi  
 Emma Bracken  
 Sylvia Buchanan  
 Diana Cantú-Melo  
 Faith Canulli  
 Daniel Couto  
 Zoya Das  
 Katarina Dobrosky  
 Sabe Hairston  
 Daniel Harris  
 Alex Karsten  
 Meghan Healey  
 Tate Holste  
 Joseph Inkumsah  
 Lahari Jaligama  
 Vanessa Kang  
 Krish Kathpalia  
 Joshua Lee

Evan Lepisto  
 Bradley Maher  
 Rohan Mehrotra  
 Amaury Melin  
 Lasya Nerayanuri  
 Henry Oehrlich  
 Nina Olshansky  
 Charlotte Pare  
 Esther Hong Park  
 Bansari Patel  
 Lola Patel  
 Kate Ragsdale  
 Maryam Siddiqui  
 Arthur Soong

Brianna Spriggs  
 Fiore Ren Stanford  
 Reid Stephenson  
 Harsha Sudhakar  
 Molly Sullivan  
 Akhil Surapaneni  
 Suhani Tailor  
 Dwight Thompson Jr.  
 Lucia Tuinstra  
 Siddharth Vijaymurugan  
 Abigail Wilber  
 Katie Zhao

**Forever Phoenix Parents**

Anonymous (6)  
 The Abed Family  
 Susan Arrendell & Abie Harris  
 Sue Ann Austin  
 Ned Barnett  
 Lorna Briganti DeWalle  
 Noelle & Howard Browne  
 Laurie Cone  
 Daniel Dittman  
 Paul & Jennifer Elam  
 Judi & Bert Fenoglio  
 The Family of Dylan '11 &  
 Hannah '08 Friedenber

The Gaines Family  
 Peter & Karen Gamble  
 Matthew & Kathryn Gerber  
 The Hash Family  
 Sandra Headen, PhD  
 The Heintschel Leonard Family  
 The Hren Family  
 The Hubbe Family  
 Pam & Joe Huck  
 The Karsten Family  
 The Kilgore Family  
 Battle Koonce  
 The Lackmann Family  
 Suzy Lamb  
 Khai & Colette Le  
 Craig & Becky Lightfoot  
 The Lochbaum Family  
 Julie, Steve & Charlie '12 Lowe  
 John & Judy Marks  
 Amy & David Marschall  
 Jessica & Michael McDonald  
 Ellen & Paul McSorley  
 Karl & Barbara Meyer  
 Hilarie Nickerson  
 Swap & Shushma Patel  
 Dave & Jane Perez  
 Kathy & Jeff Perkinson  
 Susan & Neil Ramquist  
 Patricia Reid in honor of  
 Margaret Jane Barnett '08

Paul Rencibia  
 Susan Robson  
 Adolfo & Karina Rodriguez  
 Anders Skaar  
 John & Marilyn Tomei  
 Sharon Van Dyke  
 Charles Wang  
 Robert & Jackie Weintraub  
 Terry & Michelle Wells  
 Margaret Westbrook &  
 Phillip Baddour

**Former Faculty**  
 Anthony L. Clay  
 Thomas Humble

**Corporate Matching & Giving Programs**  
 Fidelity Foundation  
 GlaxoSmithKline

<sup>F</sup> indicates current faculty

Courtney & John Whalen  
 Beth, Ellie '16, Claire '19,  
 and Levering '21 White  
 Holly Xu  
 Robert Zandt & Diana Monroe

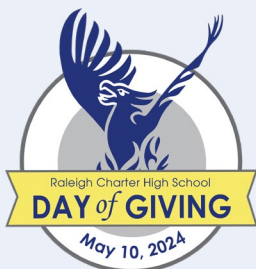
**Current Parents**

Anonymous (2)  
 Nick & Julia Addison  
 The Family of Jennifer  
 Arias-Alcivar '24  
 The Benjamin Family  
 Daniel & Catherine Bergschneider  
 The Berney Family  
 Kate Brant & Olivier Van Dierdonck  
 Shengli Ding  
 Dana & Aaron Golub  
 Christian & Erin Grant  
 The Green Family  
 The Gu Family  
 Morgan Hefner  
 The Boyer Hiller Family  
 Michelle Huff  
 Yong Jie  
 Jitendra & Jayshri Malik  
 Missy Mangum  
 Todd & Laura Olson  
 The Perdomo Family  
 The Simone Family  
 The Soong Family  
 David & Sharon Spitz  
 The Strygin Family  
 The Surapaneni Family  
 Alice & Christian Tate  
 Anil Thakur  
 Dwight & Rachelle Thompson  
 Mayur & Nishant Tiwary  
 The Turlapati Family  
 Charles Wang  
 The Waters Family

**Grandparents**

Janet Clair & the Stutts Family  
 Joanna & Joseph Gerber  
 Kathy Jenkins  
 Jim Murray in honor of Patrick  
 Murray & Isabella Murray '22  
 The Northrup Family  
 Dolores M. Parker  
 Yoshie Wajima  
 Ann & Phil Wood

**A Wonderful Day of Giving**



Our 25th Anniversary Birthday Party also marked the day of our Second Annual Raleigh Charter Day of Giving. This year's Day of Giving also included funds from our Birthday Raffle as well as 25th Anniversary merchandise sold at the Birthday Party. Thanks to enthusiastic generosity from parents, alumni parents, alumni, grandparents, and friends like you, our 2nd annual Day of Giving was a great success for our school, raising more than \$16,000 more than last year!

**With your help, we raised \$43,927!**



Thank you to the many donors who contributed in support of our **Drama, and Athletics programs.** We are grateful for the in-kind donations of office supplies and the many raffle items donated for our 25th Anniversary events. We are thankful for the inclusion of Raleigh Charter High School in the SECC and United Way of the Greater Triangle workplace campaigns.

# RCHS Events At-A-Glance

- December 11 **Strings Winter Concert** at Meredith College, 7:30 pm  
December 20 **Annual Alumni & Faculty Winter Coffee** at RCHS, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
January 8 **Choral Winter Concert** at William Peace University, 7:30 PM  
January 10 **Band Winter Concert** at William Peace University, 7:30 PM  
January 13 - February 28 **Application Period for 2025-2026 School Year**  
February 5 **Open House for Prospective Families** at RCHS  
Feb. 28, March 1-2 and 6-8 **RCHS Drama presents *Once Upon a Mattress*** at Burning Coal Theatre  
February 28 & March 7 **Flex Days**  
March 21 **Admissions Lottery for 2025-2026 School Year**  
April 25 **Spring Community Work Day**  
April 25 **SOOTS Cake Bake & Art Farm** at RCHS, 1:00 - 3:30 PM  
**Spring Concerts**  
**Strings** (date TBD) at Meredith College, 7:30 pm  
**Band** (May 20) and **Choral** (May 22) at William Peace University, 7:30 PM  
June 7 **Graduation** at Meymandi Concert Hall, 4:00 PM

Connect with RCHS!



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



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