

Middle School Curriculum - January 31, 2020

This year the Middle School has been transforming their curriculum to have a focus on Climate Change, the challenging and critical topic of our times. There are many youth leaders across the globe and we are working to teach and learn information with an eye to action, while also supporting our students in developing all the competencies that have always been a part of our “skills based” program.

A recent project that focused on Climate Action was the students’ “Society Films”. This project is presented in the curriculum every two years of the cycle. Each student chooses a person in our local community, researches them, contacts them (an adult they don’t know!), interviews them, and plans a photo shoot (to capture the themes and information developed from the interview). With the final data in hand, they learn how to edit on “Final Cut Pro”, choose music, and put together a photo-montage that conveys this person and their role in our community. This year, the people selected all fit the theme of addressing Climate Change in some way. The films were screened at a wonderfully successful event earlier in January to a community audience that included many of the subjects themselves. A collection of these films can now also be viewed on our [website](#).

The project also involves creating a final montage in the form of a one dimensional collage. All 21 collages are on display at Amy’s Bakery during the month of February. Please stop in to Amy’s to see the collages and support this lovely local business, owned by a supportive Hilltop alum parent.

A current parent was moved to write to the teachers after the film showing. Her note is included here:

My heart is full with deep appreciation after last night’s viewing at 118 Elliot. I am so impressed by how you all rose up to change the curriculum and develop projects for the Middle School students to address the reality of climate change. You took the thing that is causing the students and most of us so much anxiety about the future and are addressing it head on! As a psychologist, I have learned that the best way to manage anxiety is to move TOWARD it. And here you are - .providing the knowledge to understand what is truly going on scientifically, and then sending them out to find ideas about how people already are addressing this issue - through government, local business and art. AND you taught them the tools and skills to spread the word through filmmaking. Providing our students with this hands on knowledge base, skill, and inspiration is a true gift. This project was a demonstration of true teaching, for our students and the surrounding community. Plus, you made it fun! I am so grateful for the work that you are doing and so happy that my daughters get to be part of it.

Thank you!

~Debra