

2018–2019

## DEI Newsletter

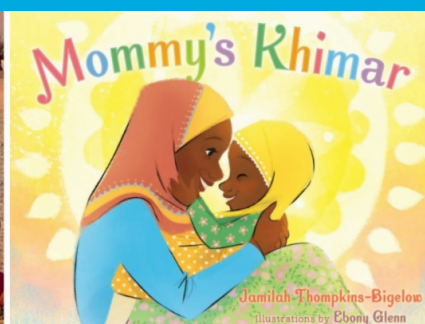
This past school year we have seen what it means to be a community that celebrates and honors every individual member and the unique experiences they bring to our school. By embracing these diverse experiences, we become a home of social, emotional, and academic excellence.

Reinforcing the depth of our commitment to diverse, global, multicultural perspectives is the work of our faculty and parent-led, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and its chairs, Roger Bridges and Isabel Sanchez. The committee works to solidify the true meaning of a welcoming community, bringing our many cultures together, actively seeking to understand our complex and rich identities, and leaning into topics of diversity.

Next school year, we will be regularly updating you on the work of this committee. In the meantime, we would like to share the multitude of ways that Echo Horizon carried out this important work in the 18–19 school year.



Did you know that every single time children enter a space, including their own school, they subconsciously ask themselves, “Am I safe?” According to anti-bias curriculum experts and recent studies, the more valued and connected children feel in school, the more academically productive and successful they become. The opposite is also true... the more isolated they feel, the more their academic production suffers.



### STORIES HOLD POWER

When children of color, LGBTQ+ children, gender non-conforming children, children with disabilities, and other marginalized children do not see themselves reflected in literature, they can feel invisible. Thanks to the work of our extraordinary librarian and DEI committee member, Claudette Brown, we've made great strides in creating a more diverse and inclusive library. Ms. Brown, who reads to every single grade, including 6th (!), has enjoyed many thoughtful discussions with our students after reading these books. We look forward to continuing to find more stories and authors that make *all* Echo Horizon students feel seen.

Third-grade students undertook a series of lessons focused on developing the students' understandings of people who experience homelessness in LA, including a visit from Safe Place for Youth (SPY) and participating in a sandwich-making event to support SPY's Venice outreach program.



S . P . Y  
safe place for youth





Pre-K explored gender stereotypes, identity, and expression with a particular interest in how toys are marketed for girls or boys, and society's assumptions of these stereotypes. The theme continued in STEAM, where students designed toy boxes that would appeal to both genders.



Fourth graders experienced a world drumming workshop with the organization Get Empowered!, explored African tribal dances and Latin American salsa dance, and examined why dance is an expression of self and an expression of culture throughout our community, city, and the world.



The ALAS program students (3rd–6th grades) experienced a vibrant and diverse performance of hip hop history and dance forms from VersaStyle, an ensemble that consists of committed and conscientious artists representing the diversity and beautiful complexity of Los Angeles.



We had the great fortune of working with Dr. Donald E. Grant Jr., an LA-based psychologist and college professor who specializes in diversity, equity, inclusion, and multiculturalism. Dr. Grant has facilitated training workshops for our EHS faculty, a special night for our EHS parents, and spent time with our DEI committee, addressing the important work of anti-bias curriculum and parenting, as well as conversations around gender.



Family physician and *Adolessons* expert, Dr. Dolly Klock joined Echo for our fall speaker series event, and then joined us again to lead a parenting seminar for parents of 4th–6th graders on puberty, sex, and other tricky “growing up” topics. She taught our parents what to expect from this phase of life, and left us armed with practical advice on how and when to start important (and fun!) conversations with our kids.



This year, our teachers and administrators went to professional development conferences all over the country, including the People of Color Conference (POCC), an annual diversity and equity conference; Equity As Excellence, covering topics including gender issues, racial literacy, and leadership strategies; and The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Conference, whose theme this year was “Equitable Schools and Inclusive Communities.” For the second year in a row, Head of School Peggy Procter and Assistant Head Roger Bridges co-presented a workshop at the conference aimed at inspiring women and people of color who aspire to senior leadership in independent schools.

This year, our teachers and administrators went to professional development conferences all over the country, including the People of Color Conference (POCC), an annual diversity and equity conference; Equity As Excellence, covering topics including gender issues, racial literacy, and leadership strategies; and The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Conference, whose theme this year was “Equitable Schools and Inclusive Communities.” For the second year in a row, Head of School Peggy Procter and Assistant Head Roger Bridges co-presented a workshop at the conference aimed at inspiring women and people of color who aspire to senior leadership in independent schools.



Meg Baltazar and Jennie Willens joined 20 women educators in Kenya



for the Ustahimilivu Dadas Educators Exchange, where they took a deep dive into exploring experiential learning, reflective inquiry, equity, justice, and cross-cultural understanding. To support the female students in Kenya, our team brought 350 menstrual cups, allowing girls to attend school with fewer interruptions and stress.



In honor of June and LGBTQ+ Pride Month, we celebrated Acceptance Day, organized by The Changemakers, a newly established student leadership club for upper elementary students who are interested in social justice and service learning.



In addition to in-school activities, our committee suggested local DEI-related activities, via the Tuesday Bulletin, so our families can explore these themes on weekends outside of school, as well. We were thrilled to see so many families celebrate MLK Day in a meaningful way with youth-focused events at the California African American Museum (CAAM). Look out for more suggested activities next year!



## All Are Welcome

We welcome ALL parents and faculty to join the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in the coming school year, and to help us continue work that is so deeply enmeshed into the core values of our school. Please reach out to Roger Bridges and Isabel Sanchez for more information or to join.

[Isabel Sanchez](#)

[Roger Bridges](#)



3430 McManus Ave.  
Culver City, CA  
90232  
ECHOHORIZON.ORG

Connect with us

