

KENT PLACE SCHOOL Voyager 2016

Our Newest Global Partners

By Nathan Lutz, Global Learning Coordinator and Primary School French Teacher

The mission of our Global Learning Program is to empower young women as leaders who understand, evaluate and take action in response to the challenges and opportunities of an interconnected world. To accomplish this, we have defined four key components that will shape the growth of the exciting global initiatives already under way on- and off-campus. These initiatives are Community Service, Global Curriculum, Partnerships and Travel.

Under the pillar of Partnerships, for example, you'll find Kent Place girls engaged in a variety of activities that enable them to work with, exchange ideas with and build knowledge with communities around the globe. We've designed our efforts to connect learning in a stimulating way and to create educational environments that prepare all students to succeed in our diverse and technologically advanced society. Together, our young leaders will work to find new and innovative approaches and solutions to our world's pressing problems.

This fall, the Primary School launched two afterschool enrichment courses: Global Storybook Engineers and Global Minecraft Builders.

Global Storybook Engineers is for girls in kindergarten through grade two. Students read a popular multicultural folktale, such as *Strega Nonna* (an Italian story about a witch and her helper), *Jabuti the Tortoise* (a mythological story from the Amazon) or *Monkey* (about the exploits of a trickster in India). From there, they must create an alternate solution to the story's ending. To accomplish that, the girls learn the components of what's called "design thinking" — that is, empathy with an audience, definition of the problem, a solution, the prototype and testing. Says Claire Chenill '26, "Sometimes it's frustrating because the thing you want to make fails. But that's part of the process. If it doesn't work, you try again."

What we as teachers especially appreciate about this course is that it pairs literacy with STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) classes. Research shows that when STEM problems have a narrative, real-life story to them, students working on them are more engaged, and that when students are reading to solve real-world problems, such as how to engineer their own designs, there's a boost in literacy.



Level Up Village

To make it even more interesting, our KPS girls are paired with a sister school, Seeds of Hope, in Huaraz, Peru (<http://seedsofhopeperu.blogspot.pe/>). Each week, the girls make and exchange videos during which they discuss their problems and their solutions. These partnerships were put together by Level Up Village, whose mission is to use technology and training programs to build a global learning community. Founded in 2012, LUV fosters relationships between more than 95 schools in the United States and more than 30 global partner organizations in 23 countries in the developing world. Each participating US school directly sponsors a global partner school through the "take a class, give a class" model: a portion of the tuition delivers the same class to students at one of LUV's global partners, many of whose families live on less than two dollars a day.

"We're proud to bring together students from US schools with peers from our global partner organizations," says Amy McCooe, a cofounder of Level Up Village. "Although their lives may be very different, they soon discover that they have a lot in common and much to learn from each other."

In fact, many of LUV's partner schools serve girls who would not normally get an education. As a result, Kent Place's involvement in LUV courses helps Michelle Obama's #62milliongirls initiative,



Lauren Pence '25 builds a community in Minecraft.



Guided by a Level Up Village staff member, Ava Burroughs '25 chooses a block to build a firehouse.

which fights to provide education for girls who for economic or other reasons are not able to go to school.

Global Minecraft Builders is designed for students in children in grades three, four and five. In this course, our girls learn about urban planning and the mathematical principles that drive it through the popular game Minecraft. By the end of the course, they will have built a Utopian city in collaboration with their global partner using the program Minecraft. As with Storybook Engineers, Global Minecraft Builders calls for students to make weekly video messages to exchange with their partners, who are constructing the same Utopian city. Kent Place is paired with students at the Science League in Sweileh, Jordan (<http://www.scs.jo>), which has been serving students at refugee camps in Jordan (among them Syrian and Palestinian children) as well as other groups in the country who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford opportunities to learn anything science related.

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"In Minecraft," says Lauren Pence '25, "you get to learn how to build things using geometry. . . . My partner and I discovered that we like to build the same things. We're making a garden together."

Says Sofia Wanosky '25, "I really like how you get to make a new friend across the world, and that you get to work together on the same project. We're making a house."

Through the partnerships we have with Seeds of Hope and the Science League, we hope to broaden perspectives and dissolve borders. Never have intercultural fluency, global citizenship and acquisition of critical-thinking skills been so easily within our students' reach. 