Laurie Gruhn joins Gateway as the new Head of School with over 35 years of experience in New York City independent schools. Laurie is closely familiar with The Gateway School as the parent of Susie Gruhn ’20, a recent Gateway graduate. As an educator, she believes deeply in the profound relationship between home and school and emphasizes that strong relationships are the foundation to teaching, leadership, and education.

Leading the school in this remarkably challenging and historic time, Laurie emphasizes, “We are here together. We hold fast to our community and to our program because we know it works. Our children are developing resilience, hard found optimism, strength, and joy through real challenge. They did not ask for these opportunities, but we will help them grow from them.”

Like many people in the world, The Gateway School community was affected by the recent health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in this issue of The Gateway School Newsletter, we seek to share some of these stories from Gateway faculty, students, and alumni. You will learn how a Gateway alumni parent, Mamie McIndoe, has been working at one of the hardest hit hospitals during the apex of the health crisis. Gateway also pays tribute to its longstanding consultant and branding specialist, Ron Louie. Finally, we celebrate Gateway’s recent 8th grade graduates for their strength, perseverance, and flexibility as they graduate under remarkable circumstances; we are so proud of their accomplishments.

Be sure to turn to the last page for more information on Gateway’s distance learning and summer programming.
“I was doing work I felt called to do, and I was helping a lot of people.”

Mamie McIndoe, mother of Gateway graduate, Blaine (’14), works as the Associate Director of Patient Experience at Elmhurst Hospital in Queens, New York, one of the hardest hit during the height of the coronavirus pandemic in New York City. “We were the epicenter of the epicenter,” Mamie explains. “We had a lot of cases, a lot of trauma.” Mamie’s role at Elmhurst is to support patients, making sure their needs are met on many levels. She additionally supports the staff and conducts training and coaching. Mamie shared with us her experience during the height of the pandemic: “It came quickly; overnight, 200% capacity. Trauma after trauma. There was no reprieve.” When asked how she handled that demand, Mamie explained, “People react to trauma in different ways. My way was to go full force, to do whatever I could. I just felt compelled to go in. Most of our staff came, unless they got sick. I was doing whatever needed to be done, whatever I could, even wheeling the 6 a.m. coffee cart around to all of our doctors and nurses.”

Reflecting on these past few months, Mamie said, “It was a hard experience. Through it all, you saw heroic efforts being made. It felt like you were doing what you needed to do to help save lives.” Patients are still coming into Elmhurst, but the cases are lower. Even through the toughest moments, Mamie reflects on the wonderful support of the surrounding community who donated PPE and brought flowers, cards, and signs. Former Gateway parents sent Mamie gift cards to help with her travel to and from work. “People reached out, and that was heartwarming and very appreciated.”

Mamie is now the champion and part of the leadership team for the peer-support program Helping Healers Heal. “There is a belief by the whole system that we need to help people process and share their feelings so their trauma doesn’t become larger. Now, I’m running support groups, working with a psychologist. We don’t want our staff to be secondary victims – we’re trying to prevent that and long-term effects of trauma.” For more information on the Helping Healers Heal program and the wonderful work Mamie and her colleagues are doing, be sure to visit the NYC Health and Hospital website at this link.

IN FOND MEMORY OF
Ron Louie

In fond memory of Ron Louie, a longtime friend of The Gateway School, who passed away from COVID-19 this March.

Ron Louie was the creative designer and branding arm of The Gateway School. As the original co-founder of the design company, Opto Design, Ron worked with a number of leading companies to tell their brand stories in their respective industries, including New York University, Ford Foundation, Cornell University, and New York Public Radio. His work focused on helping organizations streamline the consistency of their message in order to reveal why they were best in their field.

Ron joined The Gateway School as the graphic and creative designer and was responsible for the rebranding of The Gateway School’s signature door logo and colors, and the creation of its style guide. He orchestrated the design and placement of the life-size logo signage that currently resides in Gateway's Plaza Level.

Every design you see in the school is a product of Ron’s creative mastery. His work was essential in Gateway’s strategic plan to solidify its mission and messaging to the community and to future families. Ron served as a key player in Gateway’s success and ability to bring their specialized education to families of students with language-based learning disabilities within the greater New York area.

You can see more of Ron’s work at his company’s site optodesign.com. When not designing, Ron was known for his deep love of music and attending live concerts. Rolling Stone magazine published a moving memorial that you can read in its entirety at the following link.

We will forever be grateful to Ron for the indelible impact he left on The Gateway School.
In the Words of our GRADUATES

Congratulations to The Gateway School Class of 2020 who exemplified the core traits of Gateway and demonstrated resilience in action when this year’s Graduation Ceremony had to be held virtually. See highlights from each of our graduates’ speeches below.

My best academic memories include doing well on tests and quizzes, writing essays in ELA about the book Journey to Jo’burg, and completing science projects.

Throughout my time at Gateway, my favorite subject has always been math. I enjoy problem solving and geometry. Additionally, I have learned to work with my peers and advocate for myself.

My time at Gateway has shaped my future in several ways. What does [my] future hold? In the future I want to become a psychologist. I hope to complete this by using the empathy skills I developed during the change unit we studied in Humanities.

During these formative middle school years, we grew in so many different ways and at a rapid pace. I have learned that everyone can improve in some way, whether it is related to their education or not. For instance, I have changed my mindset immensely and have learned to have a more positive one.

At Gateway I have improved in reading, writing, and analyzing. One way I improved in reading is being able to read more fluently. In writing, I’ve been able to add more details and thoughtful comments. I’m also better able to analyze characters in the stories I read, all because the Gateway teachers taught me strategies.

At my previous school, I struggled with reading, writing, and paying attention. However, when I came to Gateway, I noticed I was changing. I was introduced to a community that shaped and molded me into the student I am today.

My experience at Gateway has helped me become a better student. Since I came to Gateway, everything has helped me become a better student. Since I came to Gateway, I have learned to have a more positive one.

My goal for my new school is to use the strategies I learned at Gateway and apply them to get good grades... Even though high school will be great, I will miss some things at Gateway, particularly the teachers and students. I will miss the teachers because they are helpful and understand us, so they help us accordingly.

Gateway has taught me skills that have helped me learn a lot about myself... I have developed the ability to be more confident, social, and a leader. As a result of my time at Gateway, I now have the skills to help me try new things, such as being the 5th grade class president, a driver in the school play, and the captain of our Gateway Lions basketball team.

When I came to Gateway, I couldn’t write a paragraph to save my life, and that doesn’t even include an essay. However, with the help of my ELA teachers, I have improved drastically in using more specific language in essays, writing better topic sentences, and getting better at analyzing text work.

My time at Gateway has taught me many valuable skills and has helped me decide what I want to do in the future. The most important thing I learned was how to speak with teachers about my feelings and concerns. I also began to feel comfortable in asking them for help with school work and class assignments.

The unforgettable memories and education I had here were transformative; of course, that does not imply that I did not have to face my share of challenges throughout the years. But, I had friends and teachers who were eager to help and guide me through it all.

Since coming to Gateway, I have learned various methods and strategies for retaining information... Through classes such as Social Development and Humanities, I have learned not only to debate my point of view, but also understand where others are coming from.

I am thankful for my teachers and the staff that engaged with me about topics I was interested in. For example, I especially appreciated my ELA teacher because he is flexible and connected with me about Marvel.

My favorite after-school activity was Drama. I have participated in four plays, one for every year of Middle School, and it has made me a lot more confident and connected with me about topics I was interested in.

At Gateway I have made many good friends over the years. But, I had friends and teachers who were eager to help and guide me through it all.

Throughout my time here, I have grown into a talkative student. Gateway has taught me good ways to be open with people and excellent ways to make friends. Moreover, I used to be shy, but now I’m not, and now I ask teachers more questions.

When I think about what I’ve learned, I have improved in math and reading. I have learned to have a more positive one.

My time at Gateway has been transformative of course, even though high school will be great, I will miss some things at Gateway, particularly the teachers and students.

My favorite field trip was our sixth grade trip to Ashokan because I got to meet new people and got to know my grade better. I will always remember the song we sang around the campfire and playing football and Mafia with my friends. When I think about what I’ve learned, I have improved in math and reading.

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IN OUR FAMILIES’ OWN WORDS...

“I know every New York City parent is concerned what the future looks like in the fall for our students. The one thing that gives me peace of mind is that I do believe my son will still learn and thrive at Gateway.”

“We know that this is a culmination of many years of hard work at Gateway, but still we have been so impressed and really proud of [our child]. We want to thank the Gateway faculty and administration for all of their hard work in putting together such a wonderful program.”

“The Gateway School’s distance learning program was simply fantastic in helping our fourth grader keep up with his studies and spend time with his teachers and friends.”

LIONS LEARNING LAIR

Gateway’s Distance Learning Program

- Daily Homeroom classes with the child’s Homeroom teacher or Advisor
- Live instruction in all core academic subjects, including ELA, math, social studies, and science
- Individualized daily student schedules
- Weekly community-building opportunities
- Incorporated specials including visual arts, P.E., and virtual field trips

LION P.R.I.D.E

The Gateway School Summer Program

- Gateway was proud to offer our existing students a free summer program we called Lion P.R.I.D.E., which stands for Proactive Remedial Individualized Direct Explicit, the key tenets of our unique academic program.
- This four-week live online program was designed for rising 1st-8th graders
- Students acquired and strengthened essential academic skills in reading, writing, and math and received end-of-program feedback from expert faculty

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