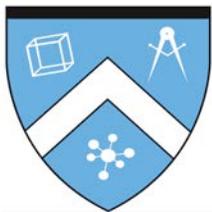


# Columbia Secondary School Newsletter

September/October 2014  
Volume 3, Issue 1



M362 — CSS  
Columbia Secondary School  
for Math, Science & Engineering

## Mark Your Calendar

- ✓ **Bake Sales**  
Friday, 10/3 & 10/31  
Bring donations to the OSS on the morning of the sale
- ✓ **Philosophy Roundtable**  
(lead by Prof. Senechal)  
Weds, 10/8, 6-7:30 pm  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor of CSS
- ✓ **School Closed**  
Monday, October 13  
Columbus Day
- ✓ **PTA Meeting with backpack workshop**  
(lead by Prof. Hill!)  
Tues, 10/14, 8 am,  
Room 402. All welcome!
- ✓ **B'fast with the Principal**  
For High School Families  
Fri, 10/17, 8 am, Rm. 501
- ✓ **B'fast with the Principal**  
For Middle School Families  
Fri, 10/24, 8am, Rm. 501
- ✓ **SLT Meeting**  
Thurs, 10/16, 4:45 pm  
Room 410. All welcome!
- ✓ **Hispanic Celebration**  
Thurs, 10/30, 5-8:15 pm  
West Gym & Auditorium
- ✓ **School Closed -**  
Tues, 11/4 - Election Day

Miriam Nightengale, *Principal*  
Lenice Nelson, *Assistant Principal*  
Dan Novak, *Assistant Principal*  
Andi Velasquez, *Parent Coordinator*

## Letter From Our Principal

Dear CSS Community,

Over the past month, our CSS faculty, students and parents have pulled together for an exciting opening to the school year. Our first month of school has us all re-establishing routines, meeting new friends or re-connecting with old ones, and diving back into the curricular and extra-curricular programs that make our school such a unique and engaging environment.

Much of our strength lies in our classroom curriculum and instruction, with many teachers working through the summer to refine and enhance their monthly units and daily lessons and to prepare for the return of our students. We are also blessed with an active parent and student community that help make the after school hours as enriching as the in-school hours. Highlights of this month include our first PTA meeting, a stimulating curriculum night and the launching of

our electives program. Other events displayed the breadth of our community's talents, including our first-ever Rugby Day and auditions for the school musical, *Guys and Dolls*. Coming in October are Hispanic-America, our first Math/Art Festival weekend, and the first Philosophy Roundtable of the year. Don't miss these opportunities to mingle, enjoy and learn – mark your calendars now!

*Sincerely,*  
*Miriam Nightengale*



*Parents fill the 6<sup>th</sup> floor conference room at the September PTA meeting.*

## CSS Welcomes New Faculty & Staff Members

**Catherine Burke – 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science**  
I am excited to join the faculty of CSS for my eighth year of teaching! I studied chemistry and American Sign Language at the University of Rochester and earned my master's degree from Lehman College. When I am not teaching or planning, I enjoy long-distance running and baking. If the weather is cooperating, I love to spend time biking and swimming!

**Christine Cheung – 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math**  
I was born in Hong Kong and raised in Brooklyn. Before becoming a teacher, I worked as a financial analyst for six years at JPMorganChase and UBS. I

lived in London for four years which is where I decided to change careers. I loved volunteering at the Spitalfields City Farm, where there are students, community gardening and a donkey named Derek. I love to cycle, watch the sunset and travel.

**Erin Flaherty – 11<sup>th</sup> grade ELA & Philosophy**

I grew up in New York City and left the big city to study English Literature at John Carroll University in suburban Ohio. I received my master's in student affairs from the University of Toledo and spent a year living on the tiny South Bass Island in Lake Erie –

population 800! I am a NYC teaching fellow and I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of the CSS community. I enjoy traveling, good books, and baking. You also won't miss me – I'm 6'3"!

### **Brandi Kovac – Geometry & Trig**

I was born and raised in New Jersey - and am proud of it! After completing my undergraduate degree in Mathematics, I moved to NYC to begin my first career in retirement planning and mutual fund services. Switching gears, I received my masters in education from Pace University and have been working as a high school math teacher in NYC public schools for last 10 years. I'm now thrilled to be a part of the CSS community! Outside of school, gymnastics (competing, judging, or coaching) has been a huge part of my life. My other hobbies include watching the Food Network, and eating ice cream - only, of course, after eating five servings of fruits and vegetables every day!

### **Jonathan Lauter – H.S. Math & Engineering**

I recently became a teacher after a 30-year career in mechanical engineering. I earned my engineering degree from Hofstra University and began my career working in research and development on advanced, high-efficiency internal combustion engines. I owned and operated a small engineering business for about 15 years. I hold four patents for inventions related to advanced engine technology. I'm also a semi-professional rock and blues guitar player, and I love sailing and dabbling with vintage vacuum tube electronics. I am very excited about sharing my enthusiasm for engineering with my students this year, and I hope that many of them will consider engineering as a possible career path.

### **Eion McGuinness – 8<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies**

I grew up in the Flatlands section of Brooklyn and attended New York City public schools through high school. I majored in philosophy, and philosophy, politics and law (PPL), with a minor in religious studies at Binghamton

University, and then attended Teachers College at Columbia University where I received my masters in the teaching of social studies. I am honored to have the opportunity to cross the street and contribute to one of the strongest and most historic communities in America. In my down time, I enjoy studying urban geography and the pursuit of social justice. As that pertains to teaching, I aim to engender students to *act*, in order to preserve and protect that which means most to them.

### **Kushal Patel – 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math and Science**

Originally from Washington Heights, I'm looking forward to working Uptown. I received my B.A. in sociology from Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., and am completing my Master's in Education at L.I.U. Brooklyn. I enjoy playing sports, reading and working together with people in pursuit of common goals.

### **Joel Rodriguez – IT**

I was born in the Dominican Republic and came to the US when I was two. I grew up in the Bronx but remained fluent in Spanish. I graduated from Syracuse University and majored in IT. I worked in sales after college and I now work for T-Mobile after school and on weekends. Now I'm back to doing IT here along with David Ocampo. In my spare time I like playing the drums and learning new languages (I'm currently working on French and Japanese).

## **New in the College Counseling Office...**

Joining **Kristin Harris** are:

**Karlette Fuchs**, the new college counselor working primarily with 11th and 12th grade students. Karlette has over 10 years of experience in public education, the last four working with students in College and Career Readiness.

**Tom Harvey**, working part-time supporting more early awareness initiatives as well as helping seniors with editing college essays. Tom has almost 20 years of experience working in Independent Schools as a president, headmaster, college counselor and teacher.

**Ann Paul**, a graduate student from U Penn, interning in the office three days a week.

## **Sustainable CSS**

CSS is off to a new year of building awareness about environmental issues and taking action to address them. Green Team students helped publicize the People's Climate March at CSS by distributing fliers and hanging posters. The PTA's Richard Rubin and Cintra Supersad organized logistics for the entire parent, teacher and student community to walk together in this historic global event, where they were joined by around 400,000 people.



*CSS community members at the People's Climate March*

Students can stay involved in sustainability efforts by joining the green team or volunteering in the school's community garden. In the Green Team elective, students work on areas like Recycling and Waste Management, Energy and Carbon Footprint Reduction, and Water Sustainability. Check out the green team's newest project, to build a water well for the Ararso Primary School in Ethiopia: [www.h2oforliveschools.org/index.ph](http://www.h2oforliveschools.org/index.ph)