March 2019

Cirque: A Rabun Gap tradition

“Cirque Qaos” wowed audiences in the Rearden Theater on February 15-16, 2019 (click here for photos). Did you know Cirque has been a Rabun Gap tradition for almost 20 years? Read on to learn more about the growth of one of our most popular and unique programs on campus.

High-flying aerialists, intriguing storylines, dazzling costumes and sets — it's much more than you'll see on most high school stages across the country.

In February, we celebrated another successful performance with “Cirque Qaos.” Near sold-out audiences were amazed as students dangled from aerial silks, contorted into different shapes, and told the story of a production team coming together for a successful show after chaos ensued. The yearly show continues to gain popularity across the region.
The Cirque program has become an essential part of the Rabun Gap experience for our entire community. It started in 2001, when Larry Smith and his Gap Players performed the first Cirque show with a handful of dedicated students.

Cirque combines theatre performance, acrobatics, and dance. Students perform on apparatuses including the Spanish web, aerial silks, trapeze, German wheel, and aerial lyra. The program is led by our arts faculty and draws on the expertise of regional cirque trainers and performers.

More than ever before, the annual cirque show has become a full performing arts endeavor, showcasing the best in theatre, instrumental music, and dance. Each show features a live orchestra (in this year’s "Cirque Qaos," the music was all student-arranged), as well as student-choreographed dance numbers. The student-led production also includes stage direction, costume design, and technical theatre experience for students.

"One of the main elements that makes Rabun Gap’s cirque program unique and exciting is that it reinvents itself every single year. We create a custom show based upon the skills, talents and interests of the performing arts department," said Mr. Sean Lakey, fine and performing arts department chair and director of Cirque. "The students not only perform but help conceive the show itself, from the characters and script, through the design process and even the acts themselves. It is mass collaboration in every sense of the word, and something truly rare among high school programs."

But the Cirque program extends beyond just a yearly show. Our cirque performers have year-round access to Cirque instruction through the School’s after-school activity program. Exposure to Cirque begins in Middle School through our Cirque afternoon activity in the fall. We also offer a “Cirque Out” training program in the spring, as well as classes and lessons through The Studio at Rabun Gap.

"Cirque has evolved each year and it is built around the interests and talents of the students. One year we had a quartet of musicians that love jazz and that evolved into a film noir murder mystery. We’ve had students interested in fake fighting and that turned into a show about pirates. Students created a doubles trapeze act and that turned into an act about a lover’s quarrel," Mr. Lakey said. "Cirque is entirely about what the students can bring to the program and as we have evolved, so too has the size and scope of the program. This year we had roughly one hundred students involved in some capacity or another. It is this excitement and passion that makes this program so amazing."

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Last dinner served in Addie Corn Ritchie Dining Hall
Before students departed for Spring Break, we paused to remember the nearly 70 years of meals enjoyed and memories shared in the Addie Corn Ritchie Dining Hall. Dr. Sgro gave a special blessing during the final dinner served in the dining hall on Feb. 28. The new Richard and John Woodruff Dining Hall will officially open on March 18. The old dining hall space will be preserved and restored into a student center.

Click here to follow the progress on the Richard and John Woodruff Dining Hall.

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Lower School participates in Read Across America Day

The halls of the Evelyne Sheats Lower School were full of characters from favorite books on Thursday, Feb. 28.

In celebration of Read Across America Day, Lower School students dressed as their favorite book characters. Read Across America is an annual day that aims at increasing reading awareness and motivation in children. The goal is to promote the idea of spending some time reading every day.

Students were dressed as a myriad of characters, from Harry Potter to Winnie the Pooh and Little Red Riding Hood to Pete the Cat. The students were encouraged to bring their character’s book along with them and were happy to share about their character with visitors and friends. Teachers even got in on the action by dressing up as popular superheroes.

Click here to see more photos from Read Across America Day.

If you are interested in supporting the Lower School's Emerging Readers program, with a charitable donation, please contact Paige Spivey at 706-746-7731 or pspivey@rabungap.org.
Winter sports finish with impressive seasons

It was another successful athletics season this winter! Our varsity wrestling team had a historic showing at the state tournament in Asheville. We came in 6th overall, with three state runner-up finishes and eight placements in the Top 6. Head Coach Jamey Ledford was named NCISAA Coach of the Year and Assistant Coach Thomas Fon was named Assistant Coach of the Year. This is an impressive feat for Rabun Gap wrestling, which competes against much larger and experienced programs. Go Eagles!

The Middle School boys basketball team brought home the Tri-State Championship after defeating Tallulah Falls School in the championship game. We're proud of our championship level programs!

Other highlights from this season included:

- Varsity boys basketball finished in the second round of the state playoffs.
- Varsity girls basketball made it to the state quarterfinals.

Spring season began February 18. Check out our athletics calendar for the latest game information.
Sixth-graders impress with Deep Sea Museum

The sixth-graders have been hard at work researching and creating deep sea creatures as a capstone project for Mr. Johnathan BySura’s science class. In a culmination of their efforts, they transformed Mr. BySura’s classroom into a museum of deep sea creatures. The sixth graders eagerly shared with visitors information that they had learned about their creatures and enjoyed the opportunity to play host. They put a lot of hard work into their museum and it was a success!

To see a video from the museum, click here.

International Week celebrates our cultural diversity

Thanks to the work of the Global Awareness Panel, students in the Upper School enjoyed a variety of programming and activities that all highlighted the beauty of the cultural diversity found at Rabun
Gap during International Week early in February. Rabun Gap is blessed to be home to students from 50 countries!

Click here to see photos from International Week.

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**Upcoming Events**

Click here to view the full calendar

Spring Break - 3/1-18/2019
MADFest Showcase - 4/12/2019
Dance Recital and Concert - 5/4/2019
Commencement - 5/19/2019
Heritage Homecoming - 6/1/2019

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**From the Archives...**

The new Richard and John Woodruff Dining Hall will open this month! Did you know that it will be the fourth dining hall in Rabun Gap history? Check out this photo from the School's first dining hall. It was located in the Industrial School building and it was the dining room and location for study hall. This photo would have been taken around 1908.

For any questions regarding our archives, please contact David Grist '67 at dgrist@rabungap.org
Donate to the Fund for Excellence

Annual giving to the Fund for Excellence supports every area of the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School experience. While tuition provides an important foundation, gifts to the Fund for Excellence enable the school to provide a depth and breadth of education that would not be possible with tuition alone.

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