



# THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

STORIES FROM CHURCH HILL ACTIVITIES & TUTORING

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# HISTORY IS HAPPENING

February brought us special opportunities to honor the generations of Black Americans whose brilliance, courage, resistance, and love have shaped our country's story. Their contributions—past and present, familial and societal—inspire all of us to imagine and build a more expansive future.

Church Hill Academy makes it a priority to immerse students in Black history all year long. But one particular February highlight was the incredible privilege of a virtual visit with Lynda Blackmon Lowery, the youngest participant in the 1965 Voting Rights March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Dr. Maris-Wolf's "Law, Justice & Social Change" class recently read her book, *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*. This inspiring conversation gave students the opportunity to ask questions about Ms. Lowery's experiences and hear insights from her enduring faith and a life committed to furthering the progress of the Civil Rights Movement.

In the After School Program, students reflected on the meaning of Black history to them today and learned



about African American spirituals, the role of protest as a tool for change, and the legacy of HBCUs. Program Manager Cass Albert shares more about the motivation behind her facilitation of the month's events:

"For as long as I can remember, honoring the stories of Black Americans has been central to my life. Unfortunately, throughout my school-aged years, Black history was only presented through the lens of its painful aspects, including slavery, segregation, and stories that shaped it as being rooted in struggle.

"This year, it was especially important to me that our February programming celebrate not just Black history, but connect our past

to our present and explore how it can shape our future. Our history has been tainted for too long with the pain of centuries of oppression, and while we don't overlook this reality, it's imperative that narratives are changed to celebrate Black thriving and excellence."

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**CASS ALBERT,  
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM MANAGER**



**JONATHAN  
CHAN**

## NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With the sunshine and warmer weather of spring, and the expanding vaccine rollout, we're beginning to see brighter days ahead for our community. And as we dream about what's next, our goal is not a return to normal, but to something even better.

In this newsletter you'll read about some of the ways our students have been discovering their God-given potential, in spite of the challenges of COVID-19. Because of your partnership, these incredible young people are learning from our history, growing in perseverance, and beginning to shape the future—for themselves and for others.





PHOTO BY GREG MITCHELL

## GAME FACES

It's safe to say this wasn't an ordinary basketball season. New safety precautions, health screenings, face masks, and lack of fans cheering from the stands made athletics in the era of COVID-19 anything but normal.

But the Church Hill Academy Phantoms aren't your ordinary team, either. Led by Tim May, head coach and member of Church Hill Academy's Board of Trustees and CHAT's Board of Directors, and Assistant Coach

Roy Jones, the Phantoms took new challenges in stride and showed the dedication and dexterity of a strong, well-prepared team.

Coach Tim is quick to credit his players for their tenacity and resilience: maintaining the team's academic requirements (Cs or better) while navigating online learning and showing up for practices and games, even without the physical support of their school community. This team of four seniors, three juniors, and two freshmen (playing at the varsity level) committed 4–5 days a week, November–February, and gave the season their all.

Expectations for the team are high. Coach Tim looks for teachability and a willingness to put in the work on the court and in the classroom. He's made the strategic decision for the team to compete against the best in

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**TIM MAY, PHANTOMS HEAD COACH**

the region, continually raising the bar and giving his players opportunities to hone their skills. He doesn't let them rely on athletic ability alone without developing a firm academic foundation that will open doors for their futures. And his personal investment has created a bond of trust that allows him to offer care and guidance during this formative season in their lives.

Coach Tim can't contain his pride for what his players have achieved this year. He's watched them persevere despite tremendous uncertainty and step into leadership roles. They've beaten the past three state championship schools in their division. Three seniors have already received college acceptances, and two of them—A and B students—have offers to play college basketball.

Regardless of where their paths take them, Coach Tim wants each of his players to understand first and foremost that they're created in the image of God. “It's so important they know that,” he says. “That's why we love them the way we do. It's not by what they accomplish that they get this love; they don't have to earn it. And we want them to know that's how God loves them. That's what their self image and sense of worth should be based on, not their stats or sneakers or how they look on Instagram.”

He continues, “I also want them to embrace personal responsibility—not let their gender, skin color, which side of town they grew up on, or their family structure dictate what's possible for their lives. Could those circumstances make their journey more difficult? Sure. But none of them are the ultimate determination of their potential. And we want them to know, no matter what, there's a pathway for them to be successful.”





# COOKING UP CHANGE

At Legacy Farm, heritage is an ever-present source of inspiration. From cultivation of heirloom varieties to the care taken to honor the spaces they inhabit, the team is mindful of the creation God entrusted to us and the centuries of growers who came before. Their work in the soil and the love with which they put food on the table for their families and neighbors, through times of both oppression and freedom, continues to inform Legacy Farm's methods and mission today.

"One of the most influential efforts we can make to heal the wrongs of the past is to invest in the agents of change who live in the future," says Farm Manager Allison Hurst. "I believe that preparing the next generation and equipping them to share their stories fulfills the promise of the passion God has ignited within

us and what our 'foreparents' set out to pursue on our behalf."

This conviction is evident in the team's latest project: an original cookbook of recipes drawn from regional classics, family traditions, and new culinary explorations. The team spent months recipe testing and writing, a process that conjured up memories of meals shared with loved ones. The result is a 60-page book ranging from starters to desserts, accompanied by anecdotes from team members. It's a labor of love that reminds them of their roots and inspires them to keep imagining how their work can be a conduit of reciprocity and liberation.

Team member James Lowery reflects on the personal significance of his involvement with the farm: "The history of Black agriculture impacts me in a lot of ways," he says. "My dad grew up in the country, and all his family lived off the land. I come from a legacy of people of color who found their way working in the soil."

He also knows he's a part of something redemptive—writing new narratives of justice and equity to reclaim what was historically denied to so many ancestors. The generational trauma of slavery and barriers to land

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**JAMES LOWERY,  
LEGACY FARM TEAM**

ownership and autonomy have often led to a strained relationship with the land for many Black Americans. James continues, "For people of color, there's sometimes resentment toward our connection with the land. And it goes back far because of ways we've been exploited or disenfranchised. Being a part of this work helps me feel like we're starting a healing process—working toward getting closer to healing for all people through the earth."

*You can preorder the cookbook at [bit.ly/LegacyFarmCookbook](https://bit.ly/LegacyFarmCookbook). Plus, find one of the team's favorite recipes at [legacyfarmrva.org/eggplant-salsa-fresca](https://legacyfarmrva.org/eggplant-salsa-fresca).*

