



From the Hill has been reimagined.

Historically created for our alumni community, this newsletter now serves as York's external publication for all who want to stay connected. From current families to local business owners and community partners, From the Hill is your inside look at everything happening within York School and beyond.

Alumni Spotlight



Neil Shah '08 Returns to York to Teach Personal Finance

Meet Neil Shah, York School alumnus from the Class of 2008, who recently returned to campus in a new role as an Experiential Learning advisor for York's Personal Finance offering.

Over the past six months, Neil has been giving back to the York community by sharing his professional expertise with current students. A Certified Public Accountant and financial specialist, Neil partnered with York through his firm to lead

hands-on lessons covering essential financial topics, including saving and budgeting, investing, opening and managing bank accounts, understanding stocks and bonds, and building long-term financial literacy.

Reflecting on his own time at York, Neil shared how the school played a foundational role in shaping his career path. One class in particular stood out: economics with Mr. Steve Peters, where Neil was first introduced to economic principles and financial concepts that sparked his long-term interest in the field.

Neil remembers his York experience fondly, noting the wide range of courses available to students, from psychology and the arts to advanced mathematics and beyond. He also credits York's academic rigor for helping prepare him for success after graduation. He shared that university and business school felt more manageable because York had already equipped him with strong study habits and advanced coursework.

Returning to York as a mentor and advisor has been especially meaningful for Neil. He has been impressed by today's students, describing them as highly inquisitive and engaged. Students posed thoughtful, high-level questions about topics such as artificial intelligence, virtual currency, and what it takes to build a successful business.

"It's been really interesting to be on the other side of the classroom," Neil reflected. "Being able to give back in the same place where you were guided is special. It's rewarding to serve as a role model and help students navigate topics that will impact their futures."

Neil also shared how meaningful it was to collaborate with York faculty and reconnect with the community that helped shape his own journey. Overall, he expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity to return to York, support students, and contribute to their real-world learning.

York is proud to celebrate alumni like Neil Shah '08 who continue to embody the spirit of experiential learning and lifelong connection to the York community.

[LinkedIn](#)

York Lifers

We're proud to highlight one of our York Lifers, a student who joined our community in 8th grade and will be graduating with us this year. Elysha Kennedy has crafted a blog post to share more about her experience here at York School and reflect on her journey through the years. Read her story at the link below.

[Elysha Kennedy Blog Post](#)



York Happenings

Lunar New Year

On February 20, York School celebrated Lunar New Year with a vibrant festival that brought our community together through both education and entertainment. Students enjoyed Chinese pop singing and dance performances, K-pop dance, and a variety of cultural booths featuring calligraphy bookmark making, Asian history and culture trivia, mahjong matching, and more.

This special event was presented by our Mandarin Program, Asian Culture Club, and Chinese International Students, with dedicated planning support from Mandarin teacher Ms. Hsu. Thank you to everyone who helped bring this beautiful celebration to life for our community.

See the highlights [here](#).

New York Highlight

Several of our students packed their bags and headed to New York this February to perform

in a production of Jane Eyre at Lincoln Center. It was an incredible opportunity that our students embraced wholeheartedly, and they represented York beautifully on a national stage. We are so proud to provide experiences like this that allow our students to grow, perform, and shine beyond the classroom.

See the highlights [here](#).

Alumni News



Carnegie Hall Debut

Maggie Finnegan '02 will be making her solo Carnegie Hall debut on April 5 2006, singing Mozart's Coronation Mass and Missa Brevis in d minor and Vivaldi's Gloria. I thought the York family might like to hear the news! Feel free to email back or call me with any questions you may have.

Here is a [link](#) to the event.

Here is a [link](#) to Maggie's website..

Introducing Marisol Chiu '44 A Future Falcon is Born!

Harry Chiu '08 and his wife, Chantal, welcomed their first child on January 8, 2026. The baby was born in Singapore and she is already soaring as she dreams about attending York one day. Her parents couldn't be happier!



Shop the Falcons Sideline Store [Here](#)

York Philanthropy



Introducing the Robert P. Balles Mathematics Scholarship

We are proud to announce the creation of the Robert P. Balles Mathematics Scholarship, made possible through a transformational legacy gift of well over a quarter of a million dollars from the late Robert P. Balles. His extraordinary generosity will directly support our York students who demonstrate exceptional achievement in mathematics as they pursue higher education.

Although Mr. Balles had no personal connection to York as a student, teacher, or parent, he believed deeply in the power of education and chose to invest in the future of local students. Through careful trust and estate planning, he directed that a significant portion of his estate be used to provide college scholarships for students excelling in

mathematics.

This remarkable gift was made possible through the thoughtful stewardship of Monterey Trust Management, whose team worked closely with Mr. Balles in the later years of his life. Beyond managing financial affairs, Monterey Trust built a personal relationship with him, ensuring his needs and wishes were honored every step of the way.

A longtime mathematics professor at Gavilan College and lifelong advocate for academic excellence, Mr. Balles dedicated much of his life to supporting young scholars. Through the scholarship created in his name, his legacy will continue to expand opportunity for our York students for years to come.

Supporting York's Mission — Today and for the Future

York's mission is sustained by the strength and generosity of our community. Philanthropic support ensures that current and future students continue to benefit from the exceptional academic programs, student experiences, and opportunities that define a York education.

We welcome all who wish to support York through their time, talent, or treasure — whether by volunteering, sharing professional expertise, serving in the community, or making a philanthropic gift.

To make a gift, please visit our [website](#).

For questions about York Philanthropy or ways to get involved, please contact us at giving@york.org.

Thank you for your continued partnership in advancing York's mission.

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