

Jaguar Journal



About Us

The Georgetown International Academy (GIA), formerly known as Georgetown American School, first opened its doors on September 1, 1971. This newsletter is GIA's monthly publication for the purposes of keeping the GIA community members informed of past and upcoming events. Please contact the Editorial Team, at jaguarjournal@giagy.org if you have any questions or would like to contribute a piece.



Happy Reading!

Save the Date!

APR

Apr. 22-25: Earth Week

Apr. 23: World Book Day

Apr. 22-May 2: iReady Testing Window

Apr. 29: RULER Take 10; 8:15-9:15 AM

Apr. 30: RULER Take 10; 6:30-7:30 PM

Apr. 30: Lower School Sports Day

May 1: Labor Day; NO SCHOOL

May 2: Upper School Sports Day

May 6-12: MAP Testing Window

From the Head of School



Jaguar Journal – April 2025

Dear GIA Families,

As April winds down, it's clear that this month has been filled with energy, celebration, and meaningful community connections. Whether in the classroom, on the stage, or out in the field, our students continue to shine. Here's a look at what's been happening at GIA—and a few things to keep on your radar as we look ahead.

Spring Performances & Celebrations

This month, our campus was alive with the spirit of creativity and culture:

- The students delighted the community with its production of **Moana Jr.**, held at the National Cultural Center. A huge thank you to our parent volunteers and staff who made this event possible. The students lit up the stage!
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Spring Break Highlights

We hope your families enjoyed a restful and rejuvenating **Spring Break**. Whether traveling, exploring locally, or simply enjoying some downtime, we know the break was well deserved for students and staff alike. As we return, there's a renewed energy on campus and a shared commitment to finishing the school year strong.

Looking Ahead: End-of-Year Events

Mark your calendars for these exciting upcoming events:

- **Sports Day** – Our students are gearing up for friendly competition, school spirit, and team-building.
- **Senior Farewell Activities** – As graduation approaches, our seniors will be participating in reflection activities, prom and special recognition ceremonies.
- **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** – Join us on **May 20 at 6:00 PM** as we share the achievements and growth of the 2024–2025 school year, celebrate successes, and look ahead to future plans. Your presence and voice are vital to our community.
- Details and invitations for each of these events will be shared in the coming weeks.

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From the Head of School



Board Elections

We'd like to remind all GIA families that the Board of Directors elections are just around the corner.

- There are three open seats up for election this year.
- Voting will take place from April 30 until May 20 at 5:59 PM, with results confirmed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on May 20 at 6:00 PM. More information to come.
- We need at least 25% of our membership present (in person or online), so we encourage you to attend and participate in shaping GIA's future.

Your voice matters, and we encourage those interested in serving to step forward.

In Closing

This time of year always brings a sense of momentum, reflection, and celebration. We're grateful for all the ways you support our students and our mission. Let's continue working together to ensure the final months of the school year are full of purpose, pride, and joy.

With appreciation,



SHAUNA HOBBS
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Georgetown International Academy



Tract 'C' Block XXX
South Railway Embankment
Patterson
Georgetown, Guyana



+ 592-226-1595



www.giagy.org

Director of Teaching & Learning

Inquiry Drives Our Professional Learning

Last month, I shared how the Danielson Framework for Teaching serves as a guiding tool for excellence in instruction at GIA. I also promised to explain how we are using this framework to enhance student learning. Our approach to professional learning is built on three key elements, all designed to support teacher growth and, ultimately, benefit our students. Focusing on Teacher Inquiry

The cornerstone of our model is teacher inquiry. Research from the Gallup Organization has shown that traditional employee development efforts—focused on identifying and fixing weaknesses—often fail to drive meaningful growth. Instead, Gallup’s research highlights that developing strengths leads to higher performance, increased engagement, and greater well-being (Buono). Inspired by this, we have designed our professional learning system around teachers’ strengths, curiosity, and internal motivation. Rather than focusing on “fixing” problems, our teachers actively seek ways to enhance student learning in their classrooms.

The Role of Reflection in Learning

Research on metacognition tells us that reflection is essential to learning. That’s why our Wednesday faculty learning sessions provide dedicated time for teachers and teaching assistants to share insights, reflect on their inquiry work, and collaborate with colleagues. For example, during last week’s session, teachers came together to discuss their classroom growth efforts. Using structured discussion protocols, they asked thoughtful questions, analyzed the impact of their strategies, and planned next steps in small groups. This collaborative process mirrors the type of student-centered learning experiences we strive to create in our classrooms.

Using Data to Drive Improvement

Our school gathers a wealth of data through MAP and iReady assessments, which help us understand students’ individual needs and tailor instruction accordingly. However, in our faculty inquiry process, we go beyond standardized test data. Teachers are learning to collect and analyze classroom-level data—such as observational checklists and student reflections—to assess the immediate impact of their strategies and adjust their teaching in real time. This approach ensures that instructional decisions are informed, responsive, and effective.

See Our Teachers in Action

We invite you to visit on a Wednesday at 3:00 PM, when our faculty can be found in small groups across the school, deeply engaged in discussions about how to enhance student learning. Their energy and commitment to growth are inspiring, and their work directly benefits your child’s educational experience.



Mark Hillman

Director of Learning

Georgetown International Academy

From the Lower School Principal

March Magic: Celebrations, Conferences, and Curtain Calls in the Lower School!

March was a vibrant and engaging month in the Lower School, filled with opportunities for learning, cultural appreciation, and meaningful connections between students, families, and educators. From festive celebrations to academic milestones, the month was a true reflection of our school's commitment to holistic education.

Encouraging a Love for Reading

At the start of March, students and families participated in the Scholastic Book Club Order, an exciting initiative that allowed young readers to explore new books and build their personal libraries. Encouraging a love for reading remains a priority, and this program continues to foster enthusiasm for literacy both in and out of the classroom.

A Burst of Color and Joy: Phagwah and Holi

The Lower School embraced the festival of Phagwah (Holi) on March 12, covering friends, classmates, and teachers with vibrant colors and joy. With March 14 declared a school holiday for Holi, families had the opportunity to continue the festivities together, strengthening their understanding and appreciation of Guyanese traditions.

Empowering Student Voices Through Conferences

On March 13, students took center stage during Student-Led Conferences, where they shared their progress, goals, and learning experiences with their families. This initiative fosters self-reflection, accountability, and confidence, allowing students to take ownership of their academic journey while strengthening home-school partnerships.

Capturing Memories and Exploring Nature

Lower School students had the opportunity to extend their learning beyond the classroom with exciting field trips. Grades 3 and 4 visited the Guyana Forestry Commission Yarrowkabra Training Centre, where they explored sustainable forestry practices and environmental conservation. Meanwhile, Grade 5 students visited the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) to learn about hydroponic agriculture, food security, and sustainable farming methods. These hands-on experiences deepened students' understanding of Guyana's natural resources and environmental efforts.

From the Lower School Principal

A Time of Transition: End of Term 3 and Start of Term 4

As March came to a close, students and teachers reflected on their learning experiences with the **conclusion of Term 3 on March 26 and 27**. With Term 4 now underway, students are setting new academic and personal goals, eager to finish the school year strong.

A Magical Night with Moana, Jr.

The month ended on a high note with Disney's **Moana, Jr. Musical Performance on March 29**. Students dazzled the audience with their talent, hard work, and enthusiasm, bringing the beloved story to life through song and storytelling. The production showcased the creativity and dedication of both students and staff, making it a memorable experience for all who attended.

March was a month of celebration, reflection, and preparation for the exciting months ahead. As we step into April, the Lower School remains dedicated to fostering curiosity, growth, and a deep sense of community among students, families, and educators.



Cathryn Allen, M.Ed.
Lower School Principal, Georgetown International Academy

Counselors Corner

Mindful Jaguars: Learning Through Play in Counseling

In life, we know that when students feel safe, seen, and supported, they're more ready to learn and grow—not just academically, but socially and emotionally too. That's why, in our counseling lessons, we've been focusing on mindfulness and positive communication through play-based learning.

Over the past few weeks, students have been diving into exciting games like Counseling Vocabulary Bingo and creative twists on classics like Red Light, Green Light, Simon Says, and Four Corners—but with a mindful message. These aren't just games—they're fun, interactive ways for students to explore big ideas like self-regulation, empathy, and kindness in action.

Each game highlights key counseling terms that help kids better understand themselves and others. And the best part? These are concepts that families can talk about and practice at home too!

Here are just a few of the powerful words your child has been learning through these activities:

Communication
Self-Regulation
Empathy
Self-Control
Focus
Cooperation
Time Management
Confidence
Assertiveness
Celebrate Others
Open to Feedback
Kindness

Try asking your child about these words! For example:

- "How did you show self-control at school today?"
- "Was there a moment you used kindness or encouragement with a classmate?"
- "Tell me about a time you used assertiveness to speak up respectfully."

By reinforcing these terms at home, we help our students connect their learning across environments—and empower them to grow into thoughtful, confident, and caring young people.

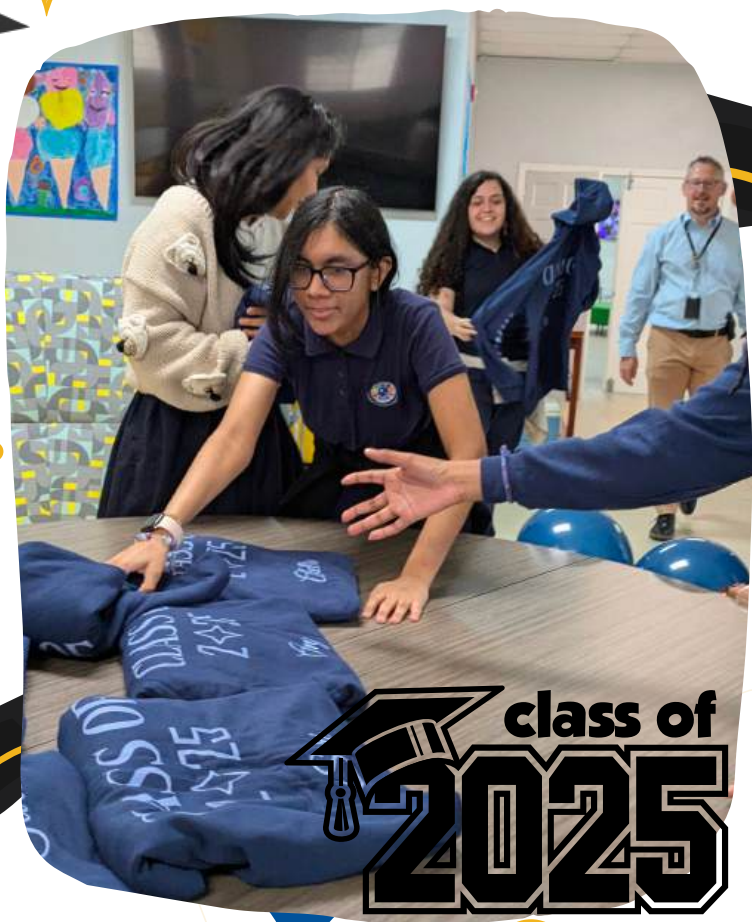
Thanks for being partners in this work. Together, we're helping our Jaguars shine—inside and out!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Leah Ben-Israel, Dean of Students and Upper School Counselor

Ms. EdRienna Thomas, Elementary School Counselor

Senior Sweatshirt Distribution



class of
2025



Senior Sweatshirt Distribution



class of
2025



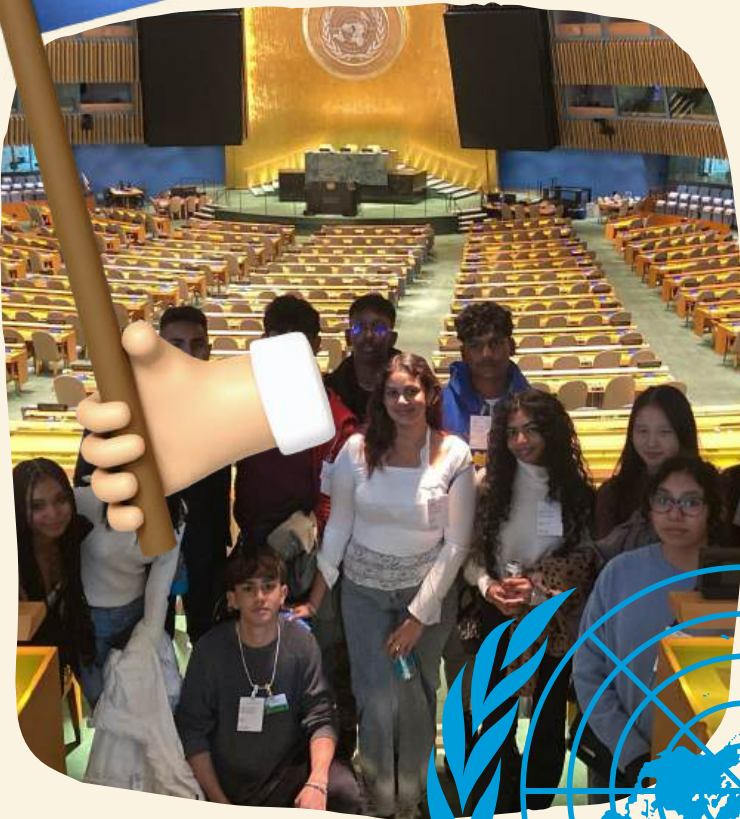
MUN Trip : New York



MUN Trip : New York



MUN Trip : New York



McMaster University Visit



McMaster University Visit



Phagwah Celebration



Phagwah Celebration



Phagwah Celebration



Phagwah Celebration



St. Patrick's Day



Soccer Tournament - Jamaica



Soccer Tournament - Jamaica



World Down Syndrome Awareness Day



Gala & Silent Auction



Gala & Silent Auction



Western Kentucky University Visit

The collage features several elements related to a university visit:

- Top Left:** A rolled-up diploma tied with a yellow ribbon, next to a blue graduation cap.
- Top Right:** A student wearing a dark blue hoodie with "CLASS OF 2025" and "Tarell" printed on the back, sitting on a green beanbag chair.
- Middle Left:** A presentation slide titled "UNIVERSITY" featuring a graduation cap, books, and autumn leaves. Below the slide is a red banner with the word "UNIVERSITY".
- Middle Right:** A group of students sitting on blue beanbag chairs in a lounge area, engaged in conversation.
- Bottom Left:** A presentation slide titled "UNIVERSITY" featuring a graduation cap, books, and autumn leaves. Below the slide is a red banner with the word "UNIVERSITY".
- Bottom Right:** A group of students sitting on blue beanbag chairs in a lounge area, engaged in conversation.



Western Kentucky University Visit



UNIVERSITY



Thank you for Reading!



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JAGUARS