

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2021

JUNE 24

We are **PRESENT, POSITIVE** and **PASSIONATE!**



These beautiful humans are among the ranks of High School graduates. Congratulations to the LaFayette Big Picture class of 2021. We held an inspiring graduation ceremony on Wednesday, June 23rd. It is tradition for a staff member to introduce a graduate. The graduate then has the opportunity to reflect on their Big Picture experience. The stories that are shared are always among some of my favorite moments of the school year. A graduation plaque designed by the graduating advisor is then branded with the LBP brand. I have spent the last 24 hours in awe of the students and staff in this school. This year the staff has worked on allowing ourselves to be vulnerable in deeper and meaningful ways. The vulnerability the staff shows to our students is always strong, however, we are working on the vulnerability with each other. We spent a portion of our last full day of the 2020-2021 school year being so incredibly vulnerable, respectful, honest and caring that I am bursting with emotion. I have never been more proud of a group of people who are relentless in the pursuit to be better for the sake of our school, students and self. Without the adequate words to express my gratitude, THANK YOU LaFayette Big Picture staff! Congratulations on the work you have done. The world is a better place!

Rest up and let's get ready to do more amazing work next school year.



2021

LaFayette Big Picture
Graduates



TGIF from Lenny

As this remarkable school year draws to a close there is a great deal to reflect on. I'll admit that when we began the year in person five days a week, I had little faith that it would last. There were myriad of challenges that were overcome to keep students in person, safe and engaged but we did it. And as we wrapped up the last couple of weeks, the student participation and project work finished strong.

Stuart moved many plants from the greenhouse and into the garden. Stuart has the patience and attention to detail needed to care for plants. Our garden now has the garlic from our ER experimental plot activity along with tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers squash, eggplant and various herbs. We hope to be harvesting and eating what we've grown in the fall. Thank you Stuart for your time and hard work.

Kyle has been building a sugar shack for the school. He has brought a fair amount of experience and knowledge to the process and has learned many new skills. We mixed concrete by hand, framed walls, hung rafters and roughed in windows. There is more to do and more to learn though.

Jacoby and Dayton wrapped up the 4 planter boxes they built for use at Grimshaw Elementary. I

love the fact that their work will lead to kids growing plants. That alone, is enough. But I also am excited about the skills that they gained that will transfer to future projects in and out of school and possibly even future employment.

Darryl finished strong by completing a third desk. And by completing I mean build from scratch and with zero help from me. Darryl has gained and applied many skills and has a great work ethic to match.

We had a cardboard raft regatta to celebrate our last day with students. There were many positives about the day, but I have to say I was impressed that students built vessels that really held up. I expressed to Darryl that I had my doubts about the prospects for success. His retort was quick as he had full confidence in the vessels that were built. He was right. Watercrafts that the students built were surprisingly seaworthy. It was a great day.

The year culminated with a wonderful graduation ceremony. We gathered outdoors with family and friends to celebrate a remarkable group of graduates after a challenging year. The weather was perfect, the students were proud and the evening went off without a hitch. Congratulations to Jessica, Christine and the class of 2021. See you next year!

TGIF from Crystal

I am excited to announce that I have accepted the full-time School Social Worker position at Big Picture and I will be at school not only Wednesdays and Thursdays but EVERYDAY starting in September! I want to thank Susan, Mr. Belfield, and the Board of Education for this amazing opportunity.

I have spent the past year getting to know the program, staff, and the students. I am looking forward to partnering together next year. We have some exciting things planned for the fall. I cannot wait to continue our work together.

We have all survived a very stressful year, I hope everyone takes time to rest and recharge.

Here are some ideas to cultivate wellness with your family this summer:

- Get out in nature
- Model healthy habits and routines
- Be a good listener
- Talk openly about mental health
- Name your feelings
- Spend time together and build supportive relationships
- Participate in Community & activities
- Celebrate successes ~ big and small

I am here to support students and families in any way that is needed. Please feel free to reach out with any questions, concerns, or anything I can be helpful with. cbutler@lafayetteschools.org

I look forward to hearing from you and partnering together.

TGIF from Walt

101 year can be very challenging, to say the least. However, this year was very different from my previous 101 year experiences. This was largely due to having David as a co-advisor. We were able to provide our students with a number of opportunities that I never would have been able to do on my own in previous years. As a result, I believe that we made a great amount of progress this year, both academically and personally. I have seen much growth in my 101s, and I am really looking forward to coming back next fall.

One of my favorite moments from this year was catering the 201's Gateway Ceremony. David and I thought that it would be a nice practice to have 101s help prepare for the Gateway ceremony. Many of our students have an interest in culinary arts, so we thought catering would be a great way of contributing. We broke our advisory into groups, and each one chose a dish to make. They were able to practice making the dish prior to the event and gain feedback on how to improve. The day of the event was chaotic, just like any kitchen, but they were able to complete all the dishes and have them ready in time for the event. We received many compliments about the food, and I was very proud of what my advisor accomplished. I am hoping that maybe this

could become a tradition, because it was such a positive experience.

Charlie and Cody both interned at the On The Dot Coffee shop, and they did an amazing job this year. It was very difficult to do any internships this year, but thankfully the coffee shop was an option. Cody delivered drinks and helped in opening the shop and managing inventory. Charlie took on a great amount of responsibility this year, and became our official treasurer. She created drinks for the shop, created surveys and processed results to ensure our quality was at a high standard, and she managed all purchases. It was a large undertaking but she did an amazing job and was very professional. Both students did an amazing job this year, and they contributed to the great success we had this year.

Dayton and Jacoby both worked on the GaGaball pit and raised bed planters that were given to Grimshaw. They worked very hard, and learned much about woodworking and construction. It was not an easy task, and they had a short deadline, but they persisted and it paid off. Both of these projects were a huge success and will make a large impact.. I am very proud of the work they did, especially because the final product gave back to the community and will be enjoyed for years to come.

TGIF from David

I'm not going to talk about how this was a different year due to Covid. It was different for all of us in different ways. My year was always going to be different because I took on the role as a co-advisor to our 101 students. It was different in all the ways I wanted. It meant I got to have more of an active role in helping students design projects that reflect their interests. It meant I got to take on a larger role encouraging students to work through moments of doubt. It meant I got to push their thinking by asking questions that challenged what they knew, and what they thought they knew. Being an advisor pushed me in ways that I never considered before. It pushed me to dig deeper about how to better serve students.

As we wrapped up the year, the 101s offered their services to cater the 201s Gateway Ceremony. I think the students realized it wasn't just us providing a service, but a way to build some new skills. Walt and I taught them some basic culinary skills. Walt led the way because cooking is a strong passion he

has. The students learned how to make Spring Rolls, Chicken Tikka Masala, Korean Fried Chicken sandwiches, Chana Masala, Naan, Lo Mein, and rice. Taking the time to learn these skills is probably the most spirited I saw Bruce all year. Students worked in small teams to prepare each dish and they did a fantastic job.

The 101s doing a fantastic job was not a surprise. They showed all year the ability to work as a team. They grew as a group academically, emotionally, and socially. They are a group of creative, passionate, and hardworking individuals. Walt and I are lucky to have the opportunity to serve as their co-advisors. The year went by too fast. There are projects and ideas we did not get to, but we will have the opportunity to catch up. We have at least three more years together. This year was just the beginning. Check back here in 2024 to see what I have to say after we've graduated all of these 101s.

TGIF from April

We did it! We made it successfully through our 201 year, pandemic and all. We began in the basement so we could social distance, moved back upstairs to the Main Room in January, and by this spring we were able to be back in our advisory room and in the last few weeks we were able to put our room back together as it was prior to the pandemic. In the last few weeks we had successful exhibitions where we learned about streaming, computer systems, gaming, building a motocross bike rear end, welding, coffee, farming, fashion including embroidery and screen printing, expressionism, photography and landscaping.

This week we were able to Celebrate all the hard work the 201s have completed over the last two years at our Gateway Ceremony. Thirteen 201s successfully completed all Gateway requirements to enter Big Picture Senior Institute as 301's in the fall. With the easing of COVID restrictions we were able to celebrate together in person! Walt, David and their 101 students: Kat, Bruce, Charlie, Ronnie, Cody, Dayton, Stone, and Steven catered the event. It was fabulous! The theme was foods around the world and Walt spent weeks teaching them proper techniques of cooking. The 101's also acted as servers during the celebratory meal. I cannot thank them enough for all the hard work they did- it was truly wonderful!! Thank you to Hollis

and the rest of the BP staff for their hard work and dedication to the 201s each and every day! Earlier this year I read the 201s the short book: The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charles Mackey. It is an inspiring read and after we read it, I told the 201s that I wanted to get each of them a copy of the book. The Gateway celebration seemed to be the perfect time to gift the 201s this wonderful book. Thank you to all the parents/guardians/grandparents who support our students daily! The success of this group of 201s would not have happened without your support as it takes a village.

We were able to close out our school year with a cardboard regatta and picnic at Cazenovia Lake with the entire school. As so many of our traditional customs were denied due to COVID it was wonderful to celebrate the end of the year as an entire school in typical BP fashion- a little fun competition embedded in learning! The weather was perfect, the competition was terrific and the 401's won the regatta hands down no question! Congratulations 401s! It was such fun! After and the students ended the day bringing back fond memories of our days on Feather Drive when BP students and staff would play volleyball (almost daily) as our PE time. At Caz Lake the students impromptu gathered and played volleyball, with way too many players on each side of the net (which was awesome) and they laughed and played, bringing both the old and the new together



TGIF from Greg

WOW, what a year! I am so proud of these 301s. The growth these kids have shown this year is amazing! They all are smarter than me now, as they like to tell me. Every student presented their best exhibition to date. Aiden, Kyler, and Gabe put so much work into their exhibitions; they completed their awesome half pipe and each presented about it with informative, knowledgeable presentations. Clarie completed college courses and performed really well in her robotics competitions. She challenged herself this trimester by creating her own experiment and doing a ton of research and trials with hydrogen. Morgan showed us how college and Big Picture requirements can be completed together. She taught the class about mental illness, explained her writing, and showed us all how bullet journaling can benefit everyone. Secorrah, Caitlyn, and Garrett have made unbelievable progress with photography. Their exhibitions with instruction through Carol DiSalvo have made a lasting impression on me and Big Picture as a whole. It was amazing to see Secorrah light up when explaining her photos and how she got to where she is now with her internship. She was so confident showing us how she learned to develop film by hand! Caitlyn worked hard to push herself farther with this exhibition using photography, her composition class, and her creativity to come up with a unique "Caitlyn Exhibition". She has taught us how a student can persevere even through the most challenging school year and be successful. Garrett

has blown us away this year and has had one of his best trimesters of his Big Picture career. He spent time with Lenny in the shop completing his guitar build, as well as working with Carol to learn more about photo editing and collaging. Austin learned some really important job skills as well as learning with Walt to help Ronnie's Diner. Devyn showed his expertise on the history of the car engine, explaining that he may like to go into the automotive field in the future. Hayden explained how running helped his mental state and kept him focused when he was stressed out. He performed great in track and field this year. Hayden also spent time in an internship learning how to weld from one of our students, Evan, in our building this year. He was taught the basics of welding, and came up with his own measurements and designs to create a mailbox for his home. Evan was a mentor for beginning welders in our building this year. It was great to see him apply the knowledge he's acquired with BOCES and teach a couple of students here. Griffin has made a great addition to our class this year. He did wonderful in his internship at the On The Dot Coffee shop for Dawsun and is interested in branching out next year. He's learned how the Big Picture program works and has flourished with all three of his first learning plans here. We are excited to see what our students come up with next year (SENIOR YEAR!!!) for their Senior Thesis Projects and what the future holds for them all.



TGIF from Jessica

I can't believe it is the end of the year, let alone that four years have gone by! Looking back to where we were at 101 year to now as 401s, it's amazing and so rewarding for a teacher to experience. I am in awe of how much they have all grown, how much confidence they have gained, and how much care we all have for one another. I am so proud of each and every one of them, I enjoyed celebrating their accomplishments this Wednesday evening at our graduation ceremony!

Before we made it to our graduation ceremony, we had a few fun days. On our senior fun day we started out with continental breakfast. We then painted trees together which I planned to gift them with a note for graduation that reflected on their growth over the past four years. After playing Picaso, we went outside and challenged each other to badminton and volleyball games. In between, we stopped to enjoy lunch from Tully's, which was delicious! They also enjoyed ice cream from Gannon's Ice Cream which was provided to all seniors by the senior class council.

Last Friday we celebrated the end of our year with a Big Picture picnic day! As soon as we got to the park, the students naturally dispersed and began engaging in physical activities. They naturally intermingled and mixed across advisories, enjoying eachothers company; it was beautiful. After we set up, we split into advisories and each advisory had two teams of students that were tasked with building a boat. They were provided with cardboard, scissors, tarp, and duct tape. Knowing my seniors love challenges and that they sometimes aren't sure how to get started, I was curious how this was going to go. After kicking me out, they got their ideas, got into the zone, and became worker ants. They whipped up two amazing boats! When it came to race the boats, both of the 401 boats soared. Kylee and Brandon manned them and they peddled to victory, in fact, they peddled so much that I was worried I would lose them at sea. I had to go downstream to get them...and convince them to come in from the water. They all had so much fun and it was a perfect last day of school for the 401s.

Congratulations class of 2021!!





CARDBOARD REGATTA!

