

For Immediate Release
May 10, 2022

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Media Release

Find your brave: A journey of middle school journalists

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Charleston, SC - What does a South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) agent, SPOT - the Boston Dynamics Biomimicry Robot Dog, and a municipal court judge have in common? This is not the opening line of a joke. Instead, it is a way to highlight the interesting work that James Simons Montessori School students are doing in their weekly journalism mini course.

This semester, journalism students at James Simons have been exploring topics that interest them and reporting on local news.

Seventh grader Lamar Heyward, who is interested in a future career in law enforcement, invited senior SLED agent Richard Johnson to his school to conduct an interview. Heyward was able to model for his classmates the practice of asking open ended questions that he then turned into an article for their school's Lit Zine, their literary magazine. JSMS Lit Zine uses the hashtag #findyourbrave as journalists uncover their voices and find the courage to ask questions that interest them.

As the popularity of the middle school journalism class and Lit Zine grew, students were invited to a College of Charleston event, *SPOT on the Bricks*, where students had the opportunity to observe technological advances in biomimicry and ask pertinent questions. SPOT is the creation of Boston Dynamics and is an agile, mobile robot which was designed with biomimicry to mirror the actions of a typical domestic dog. Students had a front row seat to this phenomenon and were able to report their experience to their friends and classmates.

Additionally, middle school journalism students toured the Charleston County Municipal Court House and were able to interview Judge Susan Herdina and other staff members of the court.

Seventh grader Layla Jeffcoat is writing a piece on the Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson and wanted to know more about what a local court system and structure looked like. All of the students were able to ask thought provoking questions and have the opportunity to learn more about a day in the life of a judge or court worker.

These real-world experiences are examples of the adolescent Montessori curriculum.

“Experiential learning has always been a cornerstone of our program”, said Jennifer Savage, James Simons literacy coach.

“Students extending their learning outside of the classroom and making real-life connections to what they are learning is an invaluable experience and an integral part of their growth and development as future problem solvers,” added media specialist and STEAM coach Rosie Herold. “We are all very proud of the work that our adolescents are doing and of the willingness of these outside organizations and individuals to support educating our future leaders.”

For more information about the James Simons journalism program, visit the school [website](#).

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), music and other creative and performing arts, career and technical preparation programs, and military.