



# TILDEN PREPARATORY SCHOOL

*We're here for every student.*

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## Together Again!

### A CONVERSATION WITH LAURIE KUMAR, M.S., DIRECTOR

Looking back on the two year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am so proud of our community. First, for the initial response to the pandemic and transition to remote learning, but also for the transition back to campus. Students had not been on the Tilden campus in almost a year and a half and many of our new students were stepping foot on the campus for the first time. Our administrators and faculty welcomed our students with warmth and excitement. We have worked hard to make sure that we could maintain a safe environment for everyone while also providing the crucial experience of coming back together as a community.

These last few months have been marked with a lot of intentional work by the leadership team to create social opportunities and experiences for students to reintegrate into the community. We also undertook significant campus redesigns to better utilize our space to allow for more group connections. Students are here building new relationships and taking part in fun activities while making memories.

It has been so gratifying to see students back in the “classroom” with their teachers, being engaged in dynamic, thoughtful, hands-on learning experiences. The one-to-one model is truly magical at unlocking the learning potential for our students. Each day our teachers are finding new ways to teach our students by personalizing instruction to their learning style. There are so many great examples of this each day: an AP History teacher was able to create a kinesthetic learning activity to help an AP student develop a thesis for a DBQ, at the Albany campus, we have a terrarium that a student built with their teacher to demonstrate the water cycle, and at the Walnut Creek campus, we have a wonderful Drama teacher making an impact on campus working toward a possible performance planned for the end of the year.



## CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

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ALBANY  
510.525.5506

WALNUT CREEK  
925.933.5506

## TOGETHER AGAIN CONT.

One of the biggest challenges our community has faced was the uncertainty that students experienced during the pandemic and the ongoing uncertainty as we navigate the new landscape; we have been able to support students with ongoing discussions and acknowledgment as together we face the continuing changes and challenges. At the same time, we have been so proud of the resilience our students demonstrated in the last two years as many of them prepare for college next year without skipping a beat.

While so many families expressed their concerns about the learning loss and gaps that their students experienced during the pandemic, Tilden has been able to provide the wrap-around support to help students address gaps in content knowledge and regain confidence in themselves and to better tackle the material in their classes.

Over the last year, Tilden has been able to expand the social opportunities available to students and we have seen greater participation than ever. It has been wonderful to see our students connecting with each other and forming real friendships. The success of our weekly clubs has been key to bringing students together. The Makers Club is a space for students to learn robotics and programming and the Debate Club facilitates discussion about current events. Our Student Leadership Clubs on both campuses have been busy organizing special campus events. Our monthly campus events have been a special opportunity for us all to come together to celebrate different seasonal milestones such as Halloween, the Gratitude Potluck, and a Winter Cookie Exchange. At the start of the term, we had our first annual Tilden at Tilden picnic which was so successful a second is being planned. Here students, parents, teachers, and administrators came together for a barbecue in the park. We have also hosted additional social events for students like a movie day or an evening event at The Plank in Jack London Square. It has been so nice to see more students taking advantage of these opportunities and we appreciate the support that has come from parents to encourage their students to come and connect. Tilden will even be hosting its first-ever prom and we are expecting over 75 students and their guests to attend – it is a very exciting time to be at Tilden!

While it has been a challenge to come back together as a community, I hope that we can hold on to the lessons we learned from navigating the pandemic and appreciate the importance of coming together as one Tilden community.

Tilden Together, *Laurie Kumar*

# Community Partnerships

## ROOPA RAO

Written by Dr. Rebecca Hawley, Ed.D,  
Director of Admissions and Special Education

Over the past eighteen months, Tilden has formed several new partnerships with educators and specialists in the community to increase our community engagement efforts and for cross referral purposes. We have formed thriving partnerships with the Summit Center, Trackers East Bay, Clear Water Counseling and Assessment, Gender Spectrum, Willows in the Wind, The Inclusive Schools Group, The Autism and Mental Health Insurance Project, Evolve Treatment Center and more.



Inclusive of these partnerships are newly developed relationships with individual specialists in the field of education, special education, family support, and individual therapeutic services.

This season we would like to highlight Roopa Rao who recently conducted a parent workshop on the difference between academic assessment and neuropsychological reports at one of our parent support groups.

Roopa Rao Mased, holds a Master's Degree in Special Education. She has extensive experience working in both private and public school settings. Most recently, Roopa opened a private practice and administers academic testing in all core content areas. She also works as an education advocate for parents. Roopa is excited about working with Tilden families on academic assessments. For those that need private academic assessment she can create an individual academic plan for your child! Her practice highlights a student's strengths while looking for areas of growth.

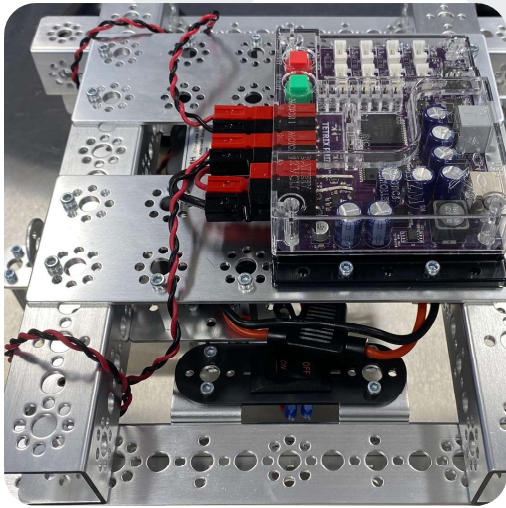
For referral information please contact the Director of Education Dr. Rebecca Hawley by email at [rebeccahawley@tildenprep.com](mailto:rebeccahawley@tildenprep.com).



# MAKER SPACE

## ROBOTICS & MAKERS CLUB

Written by Malcolm Govender,  
M.A., Associate Head of School,  
Walnut Creek Campus



**"ROBOTICS IS ABOUT US.  
IT IS THE DISCIPLINE OF  
EMULATING OUR LIVES, OF  
WONDERING HOW WE WORK."  
- PROF RODERIC GRUPEN**

Tilden's makerspace and the club are part of a global maker movement trend in which many disciplines converge, offering informal learning opportunities. The maker movement is an umbrella term used to describe a convergence of designers, computer programmers, and traditional artisans. Each year, tens of thousands of kids, adults, and families gather together at Maker Faires around the country and world to build community and creative projects for self-development, community transformation, and quality of life. At Tilden, we see the potential of the maker movement in transforming education and creating lifelong learning.

Our Tilden Robotics and Maker Club began in the Fall of 2021, and students began immediately working on some exciting projects in robotics, electronics, and 3D fabricating. Student and community input was important, so before starting our Robotics and Maker Club, we surveyed our students and provided a selection of potential campus clubs. We take pride in discovering that our club is as popular as the gaming club!. We also have a great team guiding and facilitating our robotics and makerspace initiative. At our Albany campus, we have Zachary our Math department head, and Khoa our computer science and math teacher at our Walnut Creek campus leading and facilitating our maker movement.

As educators, we also see the maker movement's potential to transform the educational landscape by creating more self-directed learning, providing a hands-on experience for students, and allowing them to apply their knowledge to tangible projects. Students are currently working on putting together a robot with controllers, sensors, and motors. It is an excellent project that incorporates 3D fabrication, electronics, programming, using new tools, and project management. It also gives our students access to invaluable 21st-century learning skills like critical thinking, communication, creativity, and plenty of opportunities for social and community collaboration.

The club helps to put our broader School-Wide Learner Outcomes into action; we are creating self-directed learners, who are competent users of technology. In the process, we hope to shift our students from being consumers of technology to being creators and innovators. Finally, going forward we see our makerspace as a vehicle for industry partnerships, tech competitions, and student internships, and an ecosystem for all learners to discover their creative potential. The skills developed from the club provide students with an innovative mindset, communication skills, and problem-solving skills, giving them the experience and knowledge to develop lifelong hobbies or stand out in their college applications with portfolio projects.





# STUDENT ARTWORK



ELLA SOBEL - GRADE 9



LENA SCHAFFER - GRADE 8



PAIGE BROCKMEYER - GRADE 10



# Spotlights

## RACHEL HERTOOG, PH.D.

Teacher - Albany Campus

This is Rachel's 4th year at Tilden. She teaches Math and Science courses like Pre-Calculus, Statistics, Marine Biology, Human Anatomy and Physiology and Environmental Science.

Rachel grew up in Seattle, Washington. She attended San Francisco State and the University of California, Davis for her education. Rachel lives in the community and rides her bike to school every day.

### What made you want to be a teacher?

"I was a student where the traditional structure of a public school was not a fit. The reason I became a teacher was because I wanted to help, support, and teach kids that had the same experience as I did. I learned from my own experience in school that kids internalize the bad experience. They feel like they do not belong, that they are bad at school.

What I have learned from my experience is that kids are not bad at school, they are just in the wrong place. Not all structures work for all kids and that is why I love Tilden so much. I like to see students for their strengths and build confidence in themselves, to show them that they are smart and they can learn."



### How did Rachel land at Tilden Prep in Albany?

"I was working in Academic Publishing and did not like sitting in an office setting in front of a computer all day. I lived in Albany and I would walk past Tilden all the time. I was curious about the one-on-one model and so I started doing some research about Tilden and the Mastery Model. I applied for a Math/Science teaching position in the Fall of 2018. Everything was going great and then Covid 19 hit. It was very difficult for everyone. It was a loss of development for everyone for 18 months, both academically and socially/emotionally. I think that both kids and adults were affected by the isolation. I love being back to in-person learning. I love being back with the students and my teaching colleagues. I feel like there were things that we all took for granted that we don't anymore. It's so nice to be back at Tilden."

### What are your goals for the next five years?

I feel like I have a lot to learn with every individual student. I learn so much from each student that I teach. I want to continue to learn from kids. I would love to have a leadership position at Tilden in the area of Science curriculum.

### What does Rachel do in her spare time?

"I love to spend as much time as I can in the water. I love to scuba dive, kayak, and sail. I also swim in the bay three times a week year-round.

## JUNE FREEDMAN

STUDENT - ALBANY CAMPUS

By Michele Patterson

M.A., Head of School, Albany Campus

June attended Marin Elementary School and she first came to Tilden Prep in the second semester of her 7th grade year. She then went to Albany High School for 9th grade, where it was all remote due to Covid-19. This year June has been in-person at Tilden for her entire 10th grade year and plans to stay at Tilden until graduation.

The most exciting thing that is happening now for June is going through her transition from male to female, and finding her authentic self. "When you're 16 years old everything is new and exciting!"

I asked June what advice she would give to students starting this transition. "It might seem like nothing is changing but things do get better. For me, it took a year to start feeling gender correct. Things started to get so much better and fun, but you have to be patient and give it time. There is no rush. Don't feel pressured to put a label on your identity. Your transness is unique and beautiful in itself."

### What's the best thing about being your authentic self?

"My self confidence. I have so much more confidence in myself now than I did two years ago. I don't feel so disconnected. I am so much more myself. I know myself more as well.

### What are your favorite things about Tilden Prep?

"I like one-on-one teaching because it really works for me. The people here are super cool! I have some good friends here."

I asked June about her future. "I will have a great Tilden education. I will be my authentic self. I just want to be doing me, I love painting and art, I want to attend Art School, I want to travel and see the world but I will always need to go somewhere safe and accepting.

June's favorite quote:

**"IF YOU COME HERE TO HELP ME, YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME. IF YOU COME BECAUSE YOUR LIBERATION IS BOUND-UP WITH MINE, THEN LET US WORK TOGETHER."**



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Spring Break

April 4 - April 8

### Rock Climbing

April 16

### Teacher Appreciation Week

May 2 - May 6

### AP Exams

May 2 - May 13

### Tilden at Tilden

May 21

### Graduation

June 2, 3:00 - 5:00

Albany Veterans'  
Memorial Building

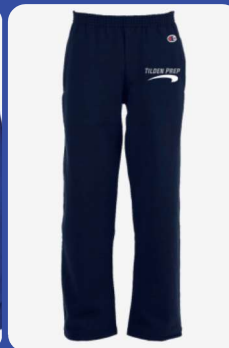


## STUDENT EVENTS



# TILDEN SWAG

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