

Deeper Connections

designed by kirsten howell
story by caroline cluiss

Author Laura McBride came to visit Pre-AP and AP English students to discuss her new novel *'We Are Called to Rise.'*

Laura McBride never planned to become an author. She dreamed about it as a child, but always assumed it wouldn't work out. When a publisher was interested in her work after a four-month writing sabbatical, McBride was shocked.

Bestselling author Laura McBride spoke to students as part of the Richardson Reads One Book program. Students were selected to read McBride's book, "We Are Called to Rise," and given the opportunity to meet her and ask questions. This was McBride's first time to speak with high schooler students about her book.

"What I was really struck by was how thoughtful the questions I got were and how carefully students had read it," McBride said. "And this is always true, we imagine that high school students are younger than they are or know less than they do."

The book covers heavy topics including PTSD and police brutality. For students like junior Samantha Sturgeon, the novel has a deeper connection.

"I thought the book was really well-written and inspiring, but also sad," Sturgeon said. "I have a lot of family in the military, so it's sad to read about PTSD and how it affects so many lives."

McBride got the idea for the central conflict from a news article that made an impact on her.

"I remember the story very well, it was very troubling and upsetting,"

McBride said. "I used it as a springboard for inventing a story and the people that would have been involved in it."

McBride was working to get her doctorate degree when the legislature shut down the program she was in. This gave her extra time and she decided to use it to begin writing.

"By 50, I knew that life would slip past you, so I spent a month at this artist's residency program where I was writing every waking hour," McBride said. "I knew what a rare opportunity it was to have that kind of time."

The Richardson Reads One Book program began in 2004 to encourage reading in the community.

"I enjoyed reading the book, but listening to McBride speak made me love it even more," junior Anna Maupin said. "Listening to her speak about her book and writing process reenergized my existing love for art."

Many of the students enjoyed reading McBride's book, listening to her speak and talking with her afterwards.

"The way she writes her book, it connects to mothers, it connects to children, and it connects to soldiers – it really connects to a lot of people," senior Douglas Garbutt said. "I think it's rare for a book to do that."

NOW

YOU know

How do you feel about Richardson Reads day?

"I like Richardson Reads because we get a break from learning and since we don't get to read much in class it makes it fun to take an entire day to read. I read the book "Fan Girl" by Rainbow Rowell, and I thought it was really interesting. Overall, I love having the day to read and I look forward to it every year."

—Haidan Moore, 10 [kirsten howell]



Learning Experience



"The shortest amount of time I have put into a project was 10 minutes in AP Human. Most students worked hard on the project, but I gave it my all for a whole 10 minutes and managed to get an 85."

—Max Wilson, 10



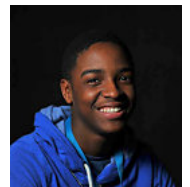
"I once worked really hard on an English project for almost three hours and I really thought it was good enough, but it turned out she wanted more than I did. I was a little upset because I expected like a 95 but I got a 71. So all the effort I put into it wasn't really worth it."

—Cassidy Gatlin, 10



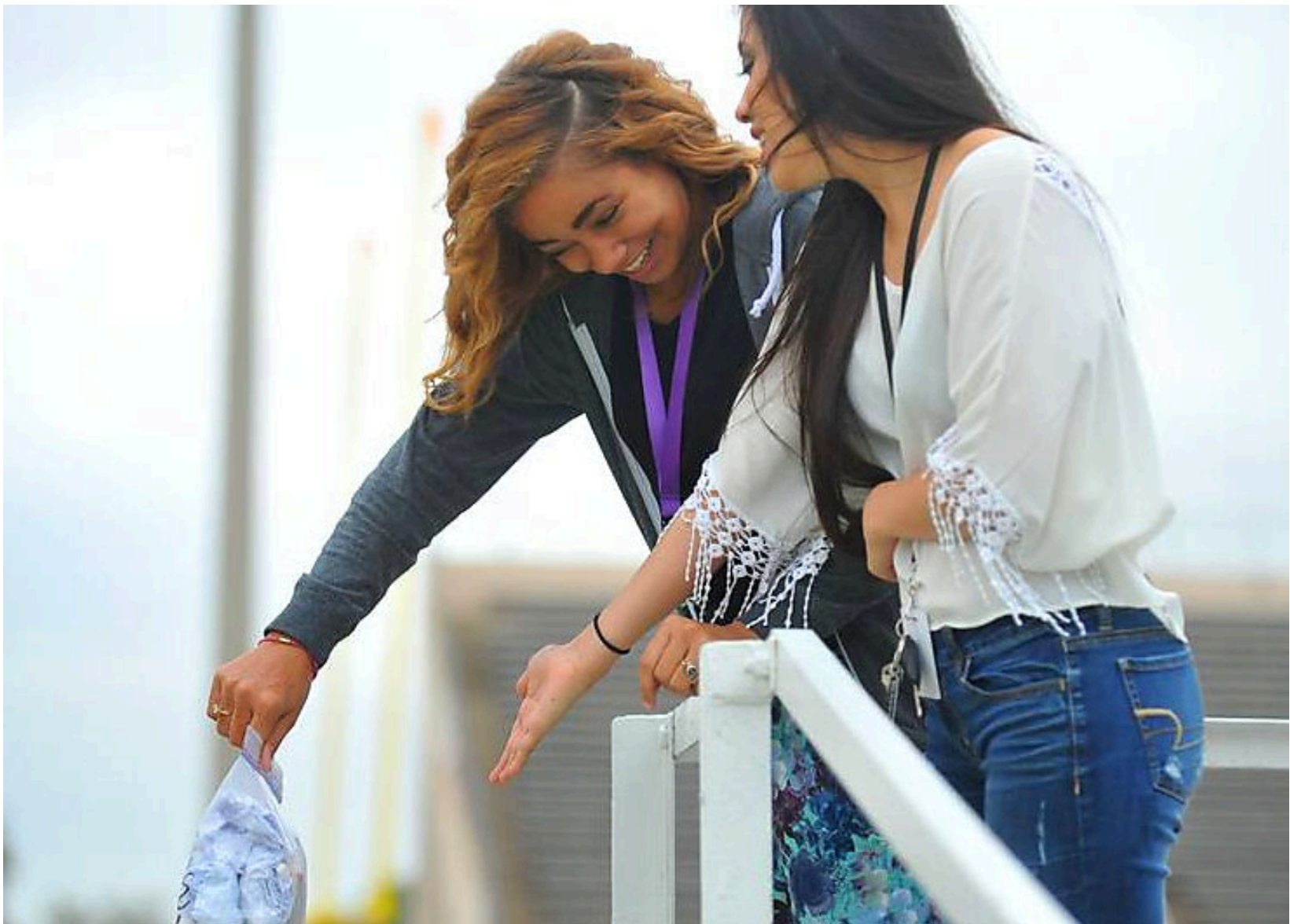
"We finished class work in physics when I realized I had a huge quiz the next period that I didn't study for at all. So I tried to memorize all my notes within like five minutes, and I got a 96 on the quiz. The work I put into studying was worth it because I did so good."

—Jane Giles, 11



"The longest I've worked on a project would have to be in physics. We were in this group, and we had worked on it for over a month and a half, but we got a 67 on it. But all the work, sweat, and tears was worth it because I got some moral values from it."

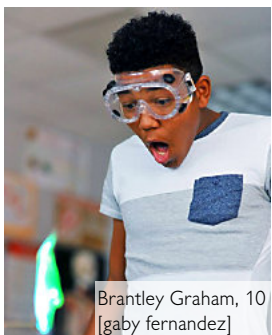
—Cameron Moore, 12



SENIORS LAISA Aguilar and Deja Johnson laugh as they prepare to drop their egg in the annual egg drop physics project. Students prepare by creating "containment" to protect the egg from its 30-foot fall to the concrete from the bleachers. Aguilar and Johnson put their egg in a jar full of peanut butter, then a plastic bag filled with marshmallows. "We were really happy about it because we got a really good grade on the project," Johnson said. [caroline cluiss]



Violet Espinoza, 11/Dafni Chin, 11 [caroline cluiss]



Brantley Graham, 10 [gaby fernandez]



Zeera Seaman, 11 [chase karacostas]



just the *basics...*

SUBJECT: AP Human Geography
TEACHER(S): Jennifer Becraft, Jean Chapman

STUDENT NO.: 32

workload: 1 hour

study time: 1 hour

applicability: Geographer
 Mapmaking
 Anthropology

"I like that you get to learn about what's going on now in the world and not just about what has gone on in the past. It's really interesting."
 -Kathleen Cutting, 9