

## Summertime at Breakthrough

What do a timecat, a picnic, and kneecaps all have in common?

If you're a Breakthrough student or former teacher, this will immediately remind you of one of our most classic games! "Picnic" takes place in a large circle, where every participant is required to bend their knees when they hear the word *picnic*--and they are automatically eliminated if they bend their knees for any similar sounding word such as *pickle*. A Breakthrough summer is filled with many such odd but beloved traditions, from asking our caterers to give us a "chef's parade" every Friday at lunch to getting sprayed by the fire department on career day. These traditions are peppered in between our rigorous academic classes, diverse elective classes, and constant community building that comprise our summer program for motivated middle schoolers from across Santa Fe.

For the past two summers, Breakthrough had to forego many summer traditions to prioritize health and safety in the pandemic. In 2020, all of our program took place online, with shrugging substituted for knee-bending during a game of picnic so as to be seen on a Zoom camera. In 2021, we were able to run an in-person program with many precautions, substituting the fire-department spray-down for a visit from a helicopter on Brennand field to avoid soggy masks.

While there were many activities that were joyously welcomed back this summer, there were also some learnings and new traditions gleaned from the pandemic. We learned that the Breakthrough spirit is strong enough to withstand physical distance, and that our students and teachers are master adapters to new circumstances. We also learned that introducing pool noodles into any game of tag--socially distanced or not--is always a fun idea.

Traditions are part of what make Breakthrough the special place that it is, and as our program enters its 19th year of existence, we will continue to keep the old and create the new! If you are interested in learning more about our program and seeing more moments from our summer, follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!