

# THE MARKER

THE MAGAZINE OF MARK DAY SCHOOL





*Mark Day School* discovers and nurtures what is finest in each child in a vibrant, inclusive learning community. Innovative and full of heart, Mark Day School strives to develop well-rounded critical thinkers in a challenging program that fosters academic excellence and responsible world citizenship.

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# LETTER FROM THE HEAD

JOE HARVEY

Dear Mark Day School families and friends,

As I write, the sounds of a dozer and excavator pervade the campus. The former administrative buildings have been demolished and trucked away, and as we turn from demolition to construction, the crew is hard at work preparing the site for the beautiful and functional new Learning Commons, Creativity Lab, Amphitheater, and Quad. The prep work that goes into creating a strong foundation is often unremarkable (though there will be pilings that go 35 feet into the ground) and is, in the end, often invisible--but is so important to the stability and durability of the spaces that rise above it. Without witnessing this activity, it is often difficult to connect what is happening below the surface to the structures that depend upon it.

So, too, with our work here at Mark Day School. The foundations we help our students to build take years to fully develop and have widespread and long lasting impacts in our graduates' lives. Put simply, at Mark Day School we nurture in our students the hunger to dig deeply. It is here that students learn to be critical thinkers, to be excellent readers and writers and public speakers, to be the leaders who reach across difference with empathy and reciprocity. We do so by striking a balance: staying on the very forefront of educational

research and holding true to the approaches that our experience teaches us are most effective. This thoughtful innovation has long been our practice when it comes to how we live our mission to foster academic excellence and responsible world citizenship. For example, at Mark Day School the tinkering and making movement began at least as far back as 2001, when our Assistant Head for Educational Design & Innovation Bonnie Nishihara returned from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the birthplace of the fabrication lab movement in schools, and brought with her Lego robotics and other elements that we still use today.

In the pages that follow, you will find more examples of how the school continues to stretch and grow in pursuit of our mission. I look out over the construction site and am reminded of all the good work--often seen by just one or two--that goes into nurturing what is finest in each child in today's ever changing world. Enjoy the pages that follow, and please find a way to get back to campus soon.

Joe Harvey

Head of School



# What's Happening @ Mark Day School?

The 2015-2016 school year has been full of exciting new developments and cherished traditions. From a long-awaited visit from our partner school in Beijing to the spirited basketball game between 8th grade and faculty, here's a recap of life on campus.



**Family Fun Run**

Over 400 people participated in a wonderful morning filled with community, goofball costumes, serious running, and lip-synching; over \$7,000 was raised for the Girls' Scholarship program at our partner eSibonesweni.



**Fall Play: Chateau La Roach**

Taking place in a small American lakeside hotel, the play was a ridiculously silly treat of mistaken identities, slapstick, exaggerated characters, outlandish situations, and ludicrous dialogue.

**Pan-American School Visits Mark Day**

A delegation from our partner school in Costa Rica, Pan-American School, came to campus. They joined Mark Day students in the Open Lab, English, Mandarin, and more, and participated in fun games.



**Beijing Delegation Comes to Mark Day**

In late January, a delegation of 71 students and 12 adults from our partner school, Beijing No. 2 Experimental Primary School (Er Xiao), visited the Mark Day campus. It was a valuable cross-cultural opportunity for the whole community, which included a special assembly, classroom learning, and a spectacular performance of Swan Lake and a traditional Chinese dance, followed by a Chinese food dinner.

**Construction Kickoff Assembly**

We came together as a community for the last time in the amphitheater and quad to say farewell before construction began on our new Learning Commons, Creativity Lab, Amphitheater, and Quad.



2015



**KYP Visits Campus**

The delegation from partner Kliptown Youth Program in South Africa visited campus, where they taught and learned alongside our students and faculty in classrooms. They also entertained students, parents, faculty, and staff at assembly with traditional songs and dancing and stayed with Mark Day School families.



**Happy 35th Birthday, Mark Day School!**

Mark Day School celebrated its 35th birthday. Since it opened its doors in September 1980, the school has graduated more than 1,200 students.

**School-wide Chess Championship**

172 students from kindergarten through 6th grade participated in Mark Day School's 36th annual school-wide Chess Championship.



**Holiday Winter Giving**

The holidays were a time of giving back. Students donated toys, retailer gift cards, and Safeway cards for Adopt-a-Family during December and gloves, mittens, scarves, and knit hats to the Ritter Center in January.



**Passport Day to the Middle East**

Together, we explored the wonders of the Middle East and learned how this region is connected to our very own school. It was a day filled with diverse cultures, languages, authentic cuisine, friendship, and unity. Students visited the spice market, danced, and played music.



**8th Grade vs. Faculty Basketball Game**

The faculty and staff squared off against the 8th graders for this exciting tradition. The women's game ended in a tie, and the male faculty won a hard-fought battle against the students.



2016



# Remembering John Pistel

Mark Day's Head of School, 1983-1987

John Pistel passed away on October 10, 2015 at his home in Amherst, MA. As written in the Daily Hampshire Gazette obituary, "John graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School, Class of 1965, and Amherst College, Class of 1969, with a degree in American Studies, and then earned his master's degree from Fairfield University in Connecticut. He taught English at Grayland Country Day School in Denver, CO. John was then appointed Head of the Middle School at Colorado Academy in Denver, and then became Head of School at Mark Day School."

Brenda MacLean, mother of Heather '84 and Matt '86 and a past trustee, shared that, "John often recounted the moment he was met at the airport on his first visit to the school and was able to identify us by spotting our son wearing the school's yellow shirt with the skylion. Little did we know then that ours would be a friendship that would last well over 30 years."

Stu Brown, father of Kathryn '83 and Jonathan '89 and a past trustee who was on the Search Committee that hired John Pistel, remembers him as mission-focused. "John was at the Board's first off-site retreat...[He] arranged for a facilitator, who led us through the process of crafting the first mission statement." Through John's leadership, the school was accredited in 1984 by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and was given full membership in the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS).

Music teacher Richard Navarrete recalls John as being "a college basketball player who fouled out of every game he played, yet it was always touching to see this very tall man be so caring and gentle with our Lower School students."

The Mark Day School community extends our condolences to John's wife, Gaye Bounty Pistel, son Adam Andrew Pistel of New York City, and daughter Katherine Grace Pistel of Watertown, Connecticut.

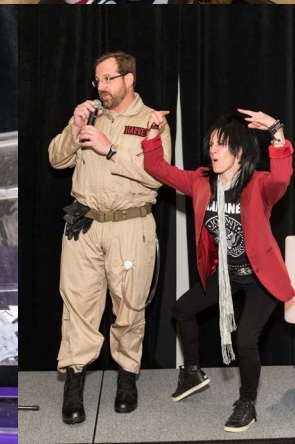


## The Future's So Bright

Mark Day School's Annual Spring Fundraiser



A school tradition since 1981, Mark Day faculty, staff, parents, and relatives attended the Mark Day School Dance Party and Auction on April 2 at the Peacock Gap Clubhouse. Funds raised will help cover critical expenses like teacher salaries, professional development, and a portion of tuition assistance. Thanks to our co-chair Kathryn Freeman and everyone who attended, donated, volunteered, and showed their moves on the dance floor!



## In Memorium

### James McClure '85

James (Jim) McClure passed away on February 5, 2015. He attended the school for 7th and 8th grade.

### Erik Roner

Erik attended Mark Day School 1982-88. Last September, he was tragically killed during a skydiving accident in the Lake Tahoe area, where he was part of the Nitro Circus, an MTV show centered around freestyle motocross rider Travis Pastrana and his crew of extreme sports athlete friends. He also hosted the TV show "Locals" on sports network Outside Television. He leaves behind a wife and two children, his parents, Becky and Lars Roner, and siblings.

### Max Snyder '06

Max passed away on October 2 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Max was a well-loved member of Mark Day School, and a leader in the Seattle University community, where he touched the lives of many students, faculty, and staff. He founded and led the Seattle University Cycling Club and participated in student retreats and a variety of other facets of campus life.



# Farewell

It's bittersweet when a member of our community retires.  
We wish them well and will miss them dearly.



**Diane Bredt**  
**Upper Division Science Teacher**

For the past 27 years, Diane has been known for her high standards, incredible work ethic, passion for science, commitment to hands-on, student-centered learning, and constant reevaluation of her curriculum and teaching approach to ensure that Mark Day's Upper Division students benefit from today's best thinking about science education. She has also been an outspoken proponent of our sustainability leadership group. We will miss her kindness, thoughtfulness, and sense of humor. Though she is leaving her post as science teacher, she will continue to be part of our community as a resource for homeroom teachers to advance our science program in grades 3-5.



**Wendy Broderick**  
**Director of Admissions**

Wendy has spent almost 20 years as part of our community. In addition to serving as Director of Admissions, she has been PA president and VP of the Board of Trustees, and chaired two strategic planning committees. As Director of Admissions, Wendy was integrally involved in every step of the school's name change and served as part of the 2014 Strategic Planning Committee. Wendy is an outstanding mentor and welcomes everyone who shows up at her office door. We have all been the beneficiaries of the incredible work that she has done in bringing mission-fit children and families to Mark Day School.



**Marti Jessen**  
**Support Teacher**

Marti arrived at Mark Day School in September 1981--just a year after the school was founded, and has been a support teacher in 2nd and 3rd grade ever since. Marti has helped to supervise Outdoor Ed trips to the Marin Headlands and Walker Creek. She also served as co-teacher and Lower Division Coordinator. Marti's distinctive smile and ready laugh are the outward signs of the positive, can-do attitude that she consistently exhibits. Always ready to lend her amazing support, Marti has been a valued member of the Mark Day School community.



**Elissa Lozier**  
**2nd Grade Teacher**

This year marked Elissa's 31st year of teaching 2nd grade at Mark Day School. Elissa has always focused on her love for her students, and for the remarkable growth that she sees in them through just one year of school-work and development. Elissa was a critical proponent in bringing Guided Reading, Bridges Mathematics, and Handwriting Without Tears to Mark Day's Lower School program. She is voracious in seeking professional development and growth, exploring project-based learning, teaching practices that empower creativity, and more. She has been the primary carpool caller for many years, helping the line flow quickly and safely.



**Teresa Monagle**  
**Learning Specialist**

Since 1985, Teresa has served in the role of learning specialist for a range of grades, primarily (but not limited to) the Lower School. She genuinely cares for each and every student as she works to build their skills and their confidence. Teresa has consistently been thoughtful and flexible about adjusting her schedule to meet the needs of her students and colleagues. As the structure of learning support services has shifted over the past few years, Teresa has been an excellent team member in helping to advance our practices in working with students with learning differences and their families.



## Elena Dennis Visits Campus

The connection between Mark Day School students and our community continues beyond graduation. Our alumni inspire us in many ways as they make positive contributions to society, meet challenges with enthusiasm, and achieve miraculous feats. We look to honor that inspiration through our newly created Mark Day School Alumni Recognition by celebrating their work, community service, and personal accomplishments.

The first recipient of this honor was Elena Dennis, class of 2011. Our Alumni Recognition committee agreed that Elena truly embodies Mark Day School's mission and philosophy in all that she does--particularly how her beliefs, convictions, experiences, and endeavors mirror our Seven Pillars of Character, including our unofficial eighth pillar of philanthropy.

As a commissioner on the Marin County Youth Commission during high school, Elena campaigned for food justice and worked toward the reduction of teen alcohol and drug abuse. While a student at Branson, she started Camp Cauliflower, a summer culinary camp to teach kids about healthy cooking and nutritious food choices. Working with a local agency and Novato Unified School District, she found a kitchen space and garden access and saw her vision become reality. With the realization that this type of hands-on experiential camp should be available to every student, regardless of the ability to pay, Elena started a successful Kickstarter campaign to raise critical funds to ensure the camp was free to underprivileged participants. Also, in February 2015, Elena was recognized by the Marin Human Rights Commission's Martin Luther King Jr. award for service.

On January 15, 2016, we were honored to host Elena on campus. She spoke at morning assembly about how perseverance and passion are powerful driving forces in achieving goals and dreams. During a talk with the Upper Division mentor groups, Elena elaborated on her commitment to continuing her work with underprivileged students while maintaining her educational goals. She also visited classrooms, bringing a healthy homemade smoothie and asking students to guess what was in it (pineapple, spinach, hemp seeds, blueberries, and coconut milk). Naturally, the students were astounded that a drink with spinach in it tasted so good! Lively discussions ensued, with students sharing their own smoothie recipes and healthy lifestyle choices.



### Elena in the News

In July 2014, Elena's Camp Cauliflower was featured in the Marin Independent Journal as the culmination of her years-long endeavor to understand culinary art and nutrition.

*"Elena is described as passionate, motivated and dedicated and has proven to be an influential member of the Marin County Community." -- The Human Rights Commission*



# GP SF 2016

Grandparents and Special Friends Day

Mark Day's annual tradition took place this year on April 29th. It was an exciting and heartwarming day of tours, performances, and welcoming new and returning members to our community.

Joe Harvey kickstarted Opening Assembly by welcoming grandparents and special friends to our campus

Kindergarteners practiced public speaking by saying their new year's resolutions on the big stage

Students performed an excerpt from the Spring Musical Into the Woods

Students gave tours of classrooms and showed off recent projects

Drumming with Artist-in-Residence Thando Bezana

The Art Show was a big hit

3rd graders performed "Gogo (Grandmother)"

## TEACHER FEATURE

### Lisa Becker

First grade teacher Lisa Becker began working at Mark Day School 26 years ago, in its second year of existence, as director of the After School Club. She has since taught over 500 students and currently serves as the Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees and is a member of the Garden Council.

#### Why did you choose to become a teacher?

I love the idea of engaging with students and helping them immerse in their learning experiences. Giving children the tools and strategies they need to be life-long learners is very exciting. I love those magical moments when a child learns to read, writes a story, engages in mathematical thinking, and develops a sense of self within a community. It is so rewarding to encourage my students to wonder and observe, as well as to be creative thinkers.

#### In your 26 years of teaching at this school, what has remained the same?

We have always been a school that is full of heart and one that embraces our Seven Pillars of Character. From the beginning, we have been thoughtful in how to best be a diverse and inclusive community and how to be innovative in our curriculum development and the way we teach. We have always been encouraged to seek out professional development and collaborate amongst our colleagues.

*"For me, our school has always exhibited the feeling of 'full of heart' while also nurturing the whole child."*

#### Which first grade project has been your favorite to teach?

I love our Redworm and Vermicomposting project. It is a wonderful project-based learning unit during which the first graders do research to create and publish nonfiction books that teach others about these interesting creatures. This year, we had a new goal--to share our published books with our global partners in South Africa, Costa Rica, and China.

#### What is something about you that Mark Day families might not know?

For the past eight years, my husband, my mother, and I have run a nonprofit computer program for children in a rural area of Tanzania.

#### What has been the most notable moment or achievement in your teaching career so far?

Helping to guide and develop our formal Social Emotional Learning program, as well as to be part of four delegations to South Africa--soon to be five this summer.





# Innovation at Work

by Sophie Shulman

Since 1991, our current campus at 39 Trellis Drive has helped Mark Day School thrive; however, in recent years, its limitations have become too apparent. The current campus transformation project sets out to create vibrant common learning spaces for students of all ages that will improve learning and facilitate community life at Mark Day. This project has been years in the making, from the needs assessment in 2013-2014 to moving offices to temporary portables in the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. Whether an enrolled student, a parent, or an alumna, an attachment to the current campus is to be expected. What will change? What will remain the same? Here's a breakdown of what to expect in 2017.







## Agile Learning Spaces

The new Learning Commons and Creativity Lab are designed to be agile, student-centered learning spaces that are responsive to the needs of learners and teachers. In the Creativity Lab, students will be able to create with their hands and minds, test new ideas in real time, and learn to make their way through problems large and small. It will encompass the Think Tank, where students will use large-screen displays, whiteboards, and soft seating for brainstorming and critique; the main floor where experimentation and prototyping happens, using power tools that drop down from

the ceiling, bins of popsicle sticks, micro controllers, glue guns, LED lights, and more; and the Workshop area, where students will use a variety of digital fabrication tools and traditional shop tools to take ideas and bring them to life. The Learning Commons is our new library space designed to help students explore our new world of information, media, and interconnectedness. Not only will these spaces accommodate use by individual students on a drop-in basis, they will also welcome small groups of students, classes, entire grade levels, and more. The combination of an open floor plan and furniture on wheels will allow teachers and--most importantly--students to reconfigure the spaces to fit their needs. The spaces will facilitate collaboration, noisy prototype building and quiet reading in the same period, and research or deep thinking in the next.

## Outdoor Classrooms

An essential part of our vision for campus is to better integrate indoor and outdoor spaces and to create high-quality outdoor learning environments. The new building is designed to let in the sunshine and natural light, while maintaining the highest standards for energy efficiency. The walls of the Learning Commons and Creativity Lab that face the campus heart are large floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors that, when open, will allow learning activities to spill onto the quad or the second-floor balcony, and the fresh air to spill in. An enclosed outdoor Maker's Court has also been designed--adjacent to both the Creativity Lab and the Art Studio--as a space for outdoor design and tinkering activities and storage of large-scale projects in progress.



## Campus Heart

Our amphitheater and quad aren't just the heart of our campus--they're the heart of our community. They are filled with memories of courageous acts and spontaneous moments that, over time, have shaped our patterns of behavior, our interactions and relationships, and our sense of community. For 25 years, they're places where Mark Day School students and their families gather after assemblies and teachers pass one another bustling to and from the faculty room. The amphitheater is where kindergarteners are led down the aisle and where eighth graders walk for the last time at graduation. The redesigned amphitheater and quad will sit in the same location, but will be rotated 180 degrees so that the audience faces into the center of our campus. The seating layout will curve around the central performance area, and a gently sloped landscape will provide "stadium style" seating with better visibility across all rows. With a completely new layout, including seating for students at lunchtime, the renovation will turn today's underutilized grassy quad into a hub of activity.

## A New Front Door

It was an intentional choice to situate the new Learning Commons and Creativity Lab at the front of the campus, where it will welcome visitors and beckon them in. Rather than greet visitors with administrative offices as before, the new building is designed to immediately reveal who we are and what we value by placing student learning front and center, visible through windows that will show glimpses of learning in action--quiet reading and active storytelling in the Learning Commons, messy design and tinkering work in the Creativity Lab. The new learning spaces are also centrally located for easy access by students from all three of the academic wings.

To keep up-to-date on construction and to make a gift, visit [markdayschool.org/WeCreate](http://markdayschool.org/WeCreate)

*"We are inspired by the \$5.4 million that has been committed to date toward our \$6.5 million fundraising goal. To bring this vision to reality depends on the support of the entire Mark Day School community. We encourage everyone to invest in We Create to give students, faculty, and staff a visionary new platform for the future of teaching and learning at Mark Day School."*

**--Terry Powers and Shalu Saluja, Campaign Co-chairs**



# Evolving Pedagogies

by Dave Hickman, Head of Upper School

We are all constantly learning. Whether we are students, teachers, or parents, every experience is an opportunity to grow and evolve. This notion is rooted in pedagogical thinking at Mark Day School. Consistent and meaningful professional development helps faculty understand current educational brain research, strengthen and expand the repertoire of pedagogies, and implement the school's programmatic vision. Faculty and administrators are constantly evaluating curriculum to ensure that learning is effective and impactful. Whether it's updating assignments or implementing new projects, tremendous thought goes into the process to ensure students are gaining the most from these educational opportunities. The following are three projects that have evolved over time to become what they are today.

In 5th grade, students learn about Jamestown during a project-based learning unit that blends literature, history, art, and drama. In the project's inception, students developed a persona of a colonial character, wrote a fictitious, first-person account of that person's life, and performed in costume for an audience. To introduce greater collaboration, faculty added teamwork to develop scripts, design backdrops, and enact dramatic scenes.

This year, the faculty wanted to preserve these elements while integrating literature and drama components more deeply. The historical fiction novel *Blood on the River* was introduced as the basis for students' dramatic scenes, characters, scripts, and backdrops. Collaboration continued to be a strong thread that weaved the different components of this project together. Students worked in groups to create a series of 12 original scenes featuring historical details of early 17th century Jacobean and Powhatan culture. They wrote, designed sets and costumes, and worked with drama teacher Tori Truss to improve stage presence. Throughout, the creative spark that makes the experience a traditional favorite was kept intact as a driving force for the project. It culminated in a public presentation of a fully integrated stage production.





# Microscope Design

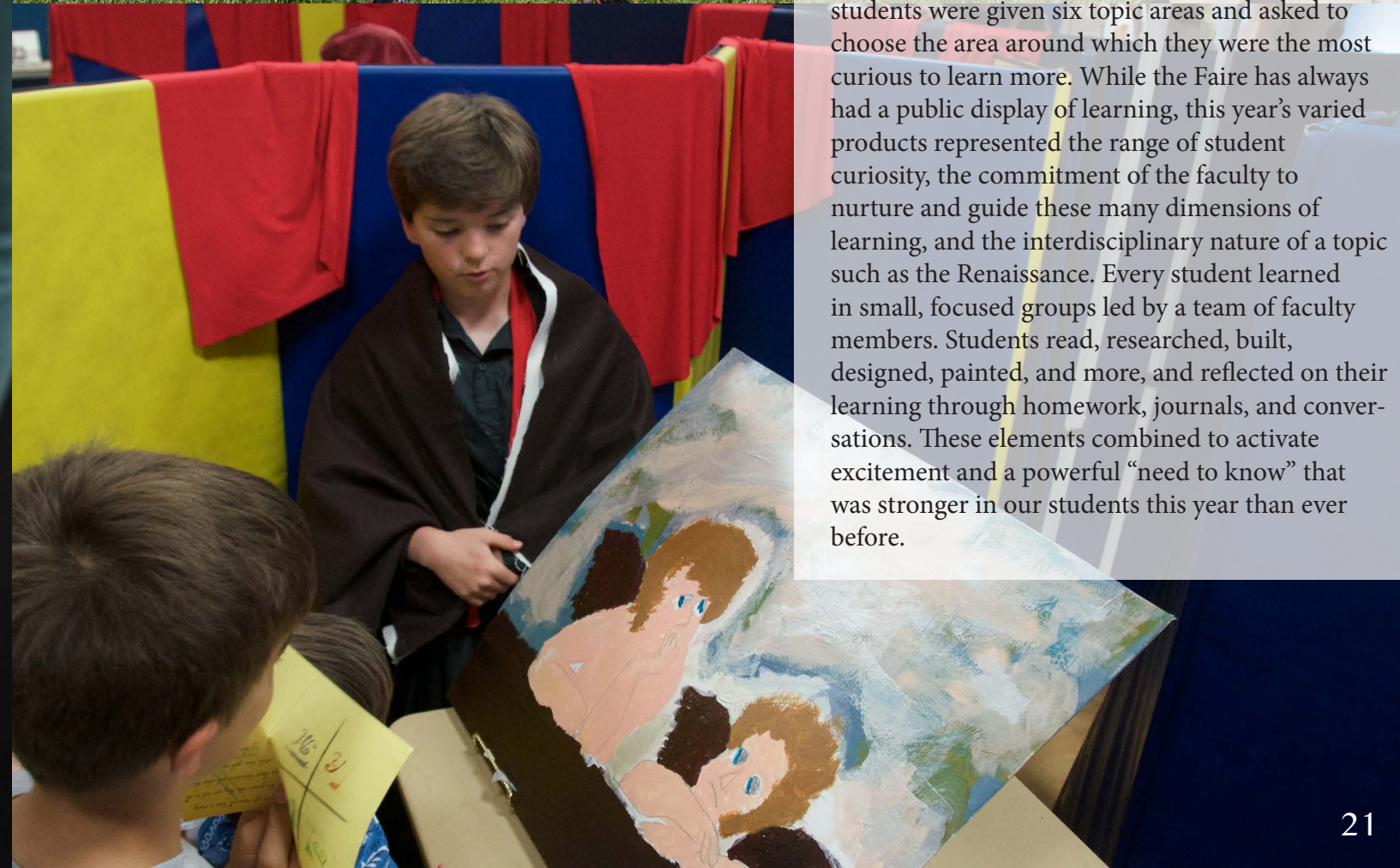
New this year, the Microscope Design project created a rich learning experience that incorporated a hands-on understanding of compound microscopes. The compound microscope took 400 years to develop, but Mark Day students only had a few hours. Tinkerer-in-Residence David St. Martin and science teacher Diane Bredt worked closely together to develop an effective way to achieve the learning objective in this limited timeframe. He developed laser-cut lens mounts and PVC holders so students could focus on the important elements of microscope design and gain an appreciation for the hurdles that early investors and scientists had to overcome. Through the hands-on setting of tinkering, student understanding of science concepts around focal length and magnification deepened and increased, ultimately enhancing learning objectives. Future iterations will include providing students with more pre-made components and spending more time on the concept of focal length to enhance the academic curriculum around microscopy.



# The Renaissance

A long-time favorite, the 7th grade Renaissance project is a “deep dive” experience in which the regular schedule of departmentalized classes is replaced with a week-long, in-depth study of the Renaissance period. Each change to the project has enabled students to delve more deeply into a particular aspect of the Renaissance and share the public products of their work at its culminating event. In earlier versions, students researched a chosen topic, created and shared posters of their learning during a “museum tour,” and played a character from history in a “living museum” presentation for an audience. Some also performed music or dance.

In the next iteration (2011-2015), the “performance” was changed to an interactive Faire. The change this year to a mini-course “academic elective” model allowed faculty to work in collaborative teams to design a diverse range of choices. Based on the belief that when students can exercise choice, they are engaged at a deeper level, students were given six topic areas and asked to choose the area around which they were the most curious to learn more. While the Faire has always had a public display of learning, this year’s varied products represented the range of student curiosity, the commitment of the faculty to nurture and guide these many dimensions of learning, and the interdisciplinary nature of a topic such as the Renaissance. Every student learned in small, focused groups led by a team of faculty members. Students read, researched, built, designed, painted, and more, and reflected on their learning through homework, journals, and conversations. These elements combined to activate excitement and a powerful “need to know” that was stronger in our students this year than ever before.





# Home *Returning*

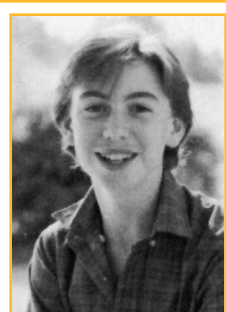
Alumni talk about what it's like coming back to Mark Day School - as faculty and staff

## *Diane Boodrookas* Class of 2006, Associate Director of Admissions

I have no memory of life before Mark Day School. Like many younger siblings, I came on campus to bring my brother to Mark Day School each day for several years before finally starting Kindergarten myself. Many alums can relate to the feeling of being completely at home here. Familiarity transports me back to childhood: the smell walking into Lower Division, the rush of relief hearing Mr. Orwig blow his whistle to end a run, or sometimes just a feeling in the air.

Before settling into my new role as Associate Director of Admissions, I had a few worries. Would the teachers who taught me during my most awkward phases hold the past against me? When I walked onto campus, would they see the 6th grader who did not turn in her homework? Or would they remember that time I got in trouble during electives? Of course not. They welcomed me back to the family. They remembered me for who I was at my best and they learned who I have become--the person they helped shape.

Each day, I am reminded that as I have been growing, Mark Day School has been, too. Now I can sit in the faculty lounge and perform the 12 Days of Christmas--the most unattainably grown-up things I could have imagined as a student. As I watch 4th graders embark on their "bridge project" with million-dollar budgets for glue and balsa wood and later test their strength, I remember the makeshift weigh station we created during the pilot project in 2001; we didn't have enough dumbbells to break the strongest bridges, so our smallest classmate crawled into a basket to add her body weight. Through experiencing similarities and differences like these, my connection to the school is deepened as together, we strive to be our best selves, building on what began here so many years ago.



## *Chad Forrester* Class of 1986, Media Specialist

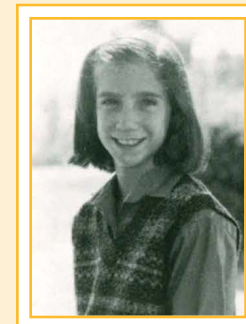
Working at Mark Day School as an alum makes me feel part of a continuum. I work alongside both teachers whom I learned from as a student and those whom I taught as a teacher. My son is a student here now, and through his eyes I see the school as a newcomer, yet also remember the school as it was in the early years.



## *Sophie Shulman* Class of 2002, Director of Communications

On December 1, 2015, my first day as the new Director of Communications at Mark Day School, I parked my car in a space marked "Reserved for Faculty/Staff." It was the first of many bizarre moments returning to campus as both an alum and a member of the staff. Among the familiar--like passing my old locker and the amphitheater in which I sat for countless assemblies--were new experiences like calling my former teachers by their first names (particularly calling Mr. Orwig "Ray") and new sights like the current campus renovations. My favorite so far, though, has been peering out my window and seeing the yellow shirts of students running in PE.

There is no doubt that I feel more invested in this place than any other organization for which I've worked--because I'm an alum and because this new inside view confirms how special this place is. I knew I was prepared academically and emotionally for high school and beyond, but now I understand how much forethought is put into the curriculum, professional development, new programs, and so much more. I knew that running every day in PE was keeping me in shape, but now I know it set the standard for a lifetime of staying fit. I'm grateful for this opportunity to reinforce my connection to Mark Day School and, at the same time, advance my chosen profession--and have a lot of fun along the way.



## *Wendy Morris Levine* Class of 1989, Director of Development

As an alumna, working at Mark Day School has been a joy personally and professionally. It is such fun to see what remains the same--science fair projects in Upper School, the Yosemite trip, assemblies, and students who really love to learn. It's inspiring to be on the other side to see the dedication that teachers bring to their students each and every day.

## *Jordan Young* Class of 2006, Support Teacher

"When did you start working here?" I've been asked that question many times. "Since I was five years old," I usually say. Mark Day is an environment that is both academically challenging and unwaveringly supportive. Since the time I started in kindergarten, I've left twice for a period of two years each during high school and college. Coming back felt natural. I was already part of the community. I already knew some of the behind-the-scenes work.

I figured the hardest part of coming back to work here professionally would be reprogramming myself to call my former teachers by their first names. But I was wrong. I went to meetings and professional development events, helped with project planning and preparation. Together with the other faculty and staff, I am constantly searching for ways to improve the lives and learning of our students.

It's also been fascinating to see the projects and units develop into what they are today. Looking back on my life as a student here, I sometimes wonder how my teachers organized and taught their lessons without Smartboards or laptops or iPads. YouTube hadn't even been created until three years after I graduated. Adjusting to these resources has been amazing to watch. When I was in 4th grade, we went on the Coloma Trip--but we didn't wear costumes, experience a mining day, or participate in a hoedown. The consistent evolution of our school and the community that welcomed me as a student and a colleague has been part of what makes this school so great. I feel lucky to work in a place that has been home for most of my life.





# tiny Tinkers

Design Thinking in the Lower School by Thad Reichley and Sophie Shulman

It's used at Google to achieve a simple, aesthetically pleasing search engine. It's used at Apple to transform the way we interact with technology. It's called design thinking, a user-centered methodology that draws upon logic, imagination, intuition, and systematic reasoning to solve complex problems. And Mark Day Lower School students are already applying this methodology in classrooms and the Open Lab. The following projects are two examples of how our students apply the design thinking process to solve problems.

## Bubble Blast

The Bubble Blast project has been in effect for a few years to enhance a 1st grade science lesson about the states of matter. This year, Tinkerer-in-Residence David St. Martin worked with 1st grade teachers Lisa Becker and Geneva Conway to revise the project and introduce younger students to the process of iteration.

### EMPATHIZE

After looking at different forms of bubble wands and materials, 1st grade students imagined creating their own bubble wands. During this fantasizing stage, students learned to identify their own needs as bubble wand users and imagine the problem in need of a solution.

### DEFINE

During this stage of design, students had to rethink their imaginative bubble wands to fit realistic parameters. Considering the materials available, students addressed the project's driving question: "How will I create a bubble wand to make \_\_\_\_\_?"

### IDEATE

Together, students brainstormed ideas about other materials they could use to create a bubble wand. They also determined if they wanted a wand that produced big or small bubbles, sketched out their new bubble wand ideas, and explained why they chose that design.

### PROTOTYPE

With a little help from Mr. St. Martin, students created prototypes using materials such as electric drills, saws, vices, and glue guns. They started simple, visiting various stations with different materials.

### TEST

When their prototypes were ready, students headed straight outside to test them. They then completed a recording sheet indicating how their first wand worked and identified changes that needed to be made. Students continued the iteration process until they had a functional bubble wand they were satisfied with.



## Design Team Challenge

Beginning in March, students in grades 2-8 were invited to the Open Lab during lunch to tackle real-world problems presented by the faculty and staff. Brought by 2nd grade teacher Cathy Sedlock, the first of these challenges was to create a unit that would hold her students' headphones without tangling the cords.

### EMPATHIZE

"The 2S class needs a neat, easy way to store our iPad headphones," said Mrs. Sedlock in a video shown to the Design Team Challenge students. "When we store them, they get all tangled up and then we can't untangle them." This video helped students understand the problem and empathize with Mrs. Sedlock's problem.

### DEFINE

After watching the video, students discussed the parameters involved. Space was limited in Mrs. Sedlock's class, so the final product had to be small. How can that space best be used? What about materials, durability, and cost? In this case, the materials available were limited to what existed in the Open Lab.

### IDEATE

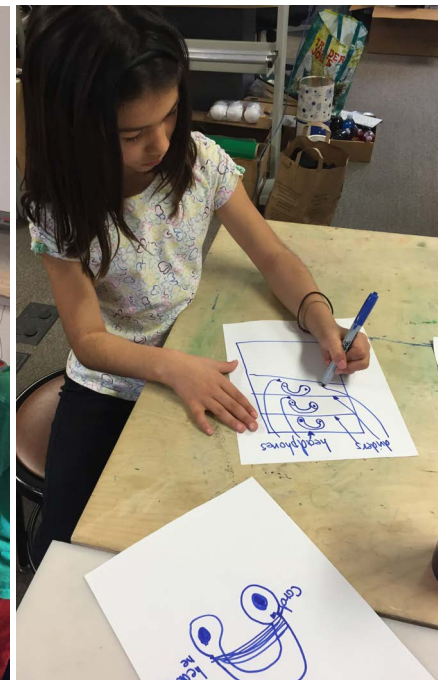
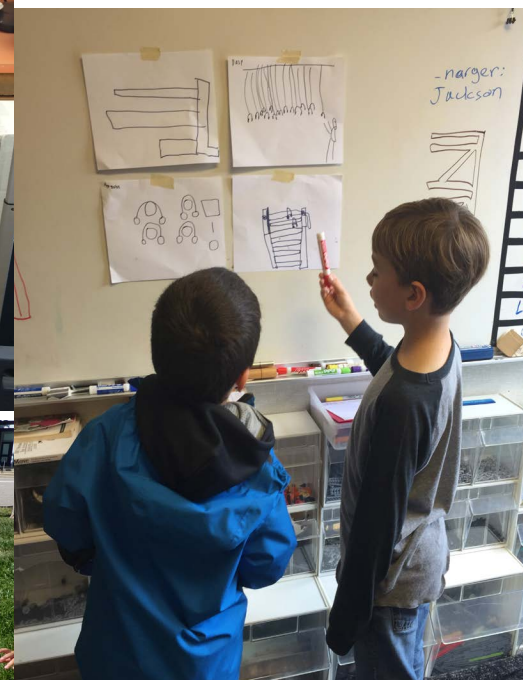
Students sketched out drawings of their ideas individually, then taped them to the board. During a "gallery walk," students viewed each other's proposed solutions and gave positive feedback. Noticing similarities and generating more ideas, they narrowed down the sketches to four and discussed them further. "This process helped them get out of their own heads, open them up to new ideas, and move them away from thoughts like 'this is my design,'" explains Tatian Greenleaf, Associate Director of Technology.

### PROTOTYPE

Using simple materials to create a quick model, students built a prototype that represented a hanging mechanism inside a plastic crate. Yellow pipe cleaners stood for a stronger metal hook. "The purpose of this stage was to solve the most obvious problems and weed out the ideas that didn't work," says Mr. St. Martin.

### TEST

The testing phase involved bringing the prototype to Mrs. Sedlock for her feedback. Did it meet her needs? Was it what she envisioned? Students then took this feedback to the Lab, where they either tweaked their design or went back to the drawing board.



"Exposing kids to design thinking and tinkering in the Lower School is extremely powerful because it taps into their natural curiosity, empowers them to find solutions to complex problems, and gets them used to the idea that failure is a natural part of the design process."

-- Thad Reichley, Head of Lower School



# What is Indexed Tuition?

by Joe Harvey

As a school committed to diversity, including socioeconomic, we strive to make a Mark Day School education available to all qualified students, regardless of their family's ability to afford the tuition that the school charges. Inextricably linked to diversity is inclusion, or the opportunity for each and every student and family to feel full membership in the life and community of the school. Guided by the 2014 Strategic Plan, we have been examining the potential for an Indexed Tuition program to help make Mark Day School a more inclusive experience for all.

After extensive research by the Board's Indexed Tuition Task Force, careful discussion by the Board, electronic communication, and in-person opportunities for parents to discuss Indexed Tuition, I am pleased to announce that the Board voted unanimously in May to launch Indexed Tuition in the 2017-2018 school year.

## What exactly is Indexed Tuition?

The term "Indexed Tuition" is a way to describe a system that includes the current concepts of "tuition" and "tuition assistance." It does not change the amount of tuition that a family pays, nor does it change how what we currently call "tuition" is set each year. The difference is in the language--instead of saying, for example, "Tuition is \$30,000 and your family's tuition assistance award is \$10,000," the communication is, "Your family's Indexed Tuition is \$20,000." In place of a current differentiation between those "on tuition assistance" and those not, all families are somewhere along the index, with the "top of the index" tuition set in the same way as it always has been. When considering this language change, it is important to remember that no one's tuition currently covers 100 percent of the cost of educating a student. Approximately 10 percent of annual tuition is covered by contributions from the endowment, the True Blue Fund, and Parents' Association fundraising. This remains the same with Indexed Tuition.

## Will my tuition go up because of this change?

No. The top of the index does not increase any differently than annual tuition increases have historically occurred. Anyone may apply to pay tuition below the top of the index; the process for applying is exactly the same as the one we currently use to calculate tuition assistance.

## Do other schools have this approach?

Yes. In our research, we have discovered a range of school practices among local and national independent school peers, such as Marin Country Day School and Lick Wilmerding High School in the Bay Area and The Duke School in Durham, NC.

## How does tuition assistance currently work at Mark Day School?

Mark Day School has been strongly committed to socioeconomic diversity since its inception. Tuition assistance has been part of the school's operation budget since its founding, and Mark Day is one of the few Bay Area K-8 schools that awards full tuition assistance. This year, 23

percent of students receive tuition assistance totaling more than \$1.7 million. Our school affirms its commitment to socioeconomic diversity by allocating up to 14 percent of tuition and fees to tuition assistance. Families currently have two tuition assistance options: the financial aid program offers grants to qualified families from \$4,000 to just over \$29,000 per child depending on demonstrated financial need; and the tuition support plan (TSP) offers \$4,000 per child for families with incomes that are too high to qualify for traditional financial aid but who need and qualify for some tuition relief. We address the need of current families, including those whose financial situations have changed, before allocating support to the need of new families.

## Why is Indexed Tuition being explored?

For our school, Indexed Tuition is a small but important evolution in how we talk about tuition assistance. Terms such as "financial aid" and "tuition assistance" too often suggest that the school is acting charitably toward those who participate in these programs. But the purpose of tuition assistance goes far beyond that. Mark Day School has always believed that diversity is a prerequisite for

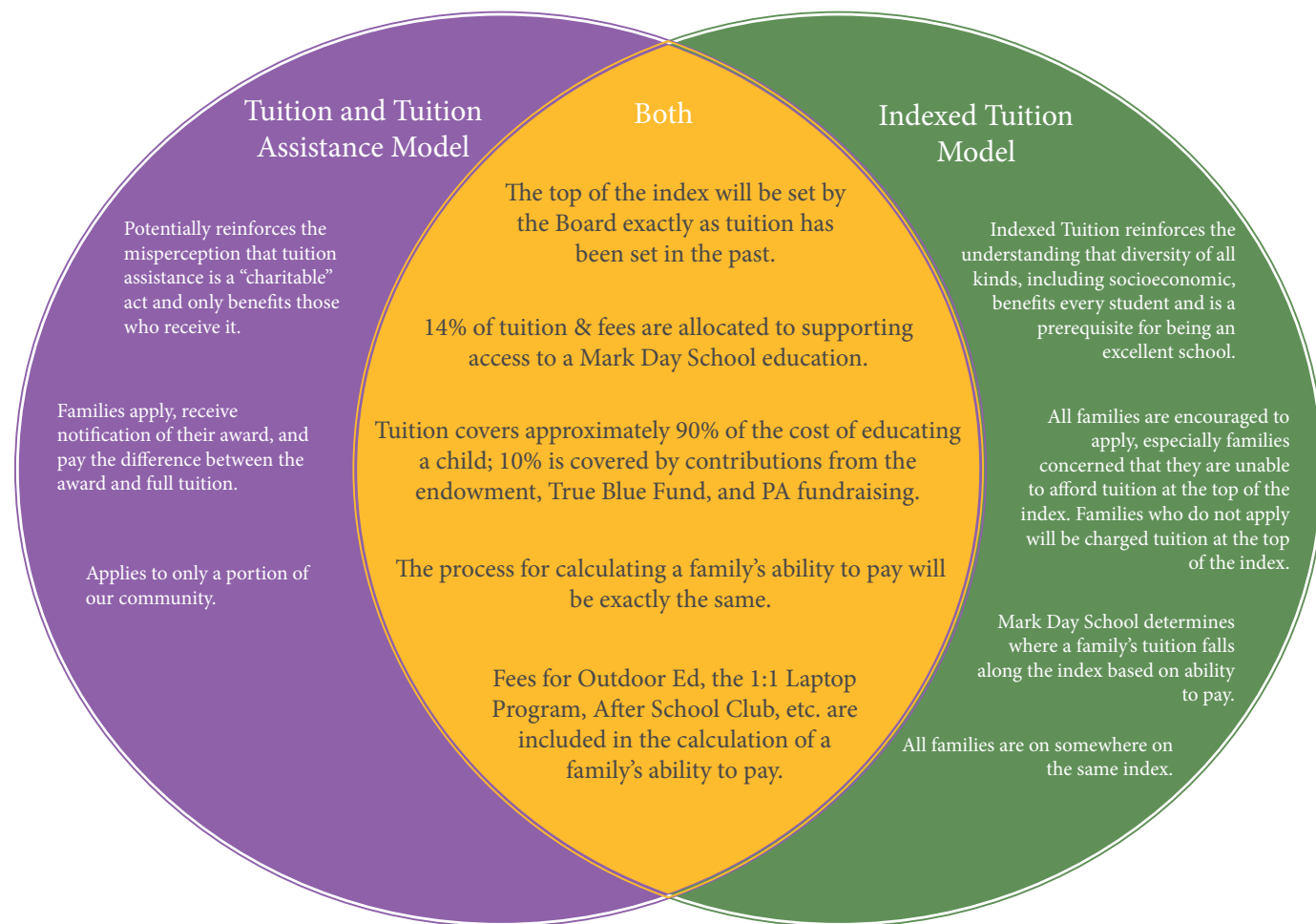
excellence and that our entire community benefits by having families from various backgrounds in our school community. In fact, this value goes back to the very founding of the school. Indexed Tuition is a more inclusive way to describe the practices we already follow in calculating tuition assistance and budgeting for the year.

## Once Indexed Tuition is adopted, what will change?

The difference is that every family will be somewhere on the index, and accordingly, we dispense with the notion of assistance for some when every family makes sacrifices and tradeoffs to invest in education. Adopting Indexed Tuition does not change the crucial role that philanthropy, including the True Blue Fund, plays at Mark Day School. As you know, tuition does not cover the true cost of educating a student; it is philanthropy that fills the gap and helps to create this remarkable school.

If adopted, Indexed Tuition would be a more inclusive way to describe the practices we already follow.





#### How will you calculate tuition for my family?

Mark Day School currently utilizes School and Student Services (SSS) by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) to process and determine each student's tuition. This remains the same with Indexed Tuition. Income, assets, and family size are all considered in the SSS calculation. Many independent schools across the country use SSS to determine a family's ability to pay.

#### What will Indexed Tuition cover?

Currently--and in a transition to Indexed Tuition and fees--tuition at the highest level pays for approximately 90 percent of the cost of educating each student. The difference is realized through the True Blue Fund and various fundraising activities and endowment income. Fees for Outdoor Education, the 1:1 Laptop Program, After School Club, and others are currently included in the calculation of a family's financial aid. That will continue to be part of the calculation of tuition and fees and the overall Indexed Tuition and fees that a family is responsible for paying.

#### How will this impact the school's budget?

We hope that we are meeting all of the financial need that exists in our community now to ensure socioeconomic diversity and accessibility to a Mark Day School education. Our budget allocates approximately 14 percent of gross tuition and fees (excluding contributions from other sources such as the endowment and annual fund) to support Indexed Tuition and fees, in line with our Strategic Plan and with prior budgets. This change in language may help us to discover additional need that exists within our community, and our fiscally responsible Board will set aside funds from the Operating Reserves in case unmet need emerges from our current community. As always, we address need in the current community of families before allocating support for the need of new families.

Head of School Joe Harvey discussed Indexed Tuition at the Heads' Coffee on April 22. If you have further questions about Indexed Tuition, please contact Mr. Harvey.

## PREPARING MARK DAY GRADUATES FOR THE WORLD

BY JOE HARVEY



Anya Kamenetz, an NPR journalist covering the latest in education, writes in *Fast Company* about the four things that humans can still do better than computers. To paraphrase, the first three are (1) diagnosing a disease, (2) discovering and exploring, and (3) making a sandwich.

The first has to do with solving problems in an unstructured situation, as opposed to following a determined set of rules to solve a problem--something that a computer can do much faster than a human. Humans outshine computers when completing tasks such as creating a unique argument about a Shakespearean play, writing a new iPhone app, and building a smokeless, more efficient stove that is safe for children to use. The second is about learning new information and deciding what is relevant and important--especially when the rules are not completely determined. Finally, making a sandwich: in other words, working on varied, complex tasks in three-dimensional space.

Educating children not just to survive but to thrive in a world where computers will take on an increasing number of tasks is where Mark Day School shines. Since our founding, the school has prepared students to be problem-solvers and deep conceptual thinkers, explorers and creators, and sandwich makers. (Well, not sandwich makers--but to learn via hands-on education involved in visual and performing arts, in Lego robotics beginning as early as 2001, in the 7th grade Renaissance project going back even further,

and in the exciting work happening in a newer venture, the Open Lab.) Building students' skills in those areas is a hallmark of the school, intertwined with our understanding of and commitment to a challenging academic environment.

This fall, the entire faculty set out to more clearly articulate those "metacognitive" skills that Mark Day has long developed in our students, including growth mindset, self-understanding and direction, community mindset, collaboration, curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity. When we set out to develop this list, we intentionally focused on our mission and on the school's long-term commitment to preparing students for high school and a lifetime of learning and growth. These skills are not new, but they are worthy and challenging. They have been indispensable for Mark Day School graduates for the past 36 years and will continue to be for the next 36 beyond. In her

*Since our founding, the school has prepared students to be problem-solvers and deep conceptual thinkers.*

article, Kamenetz writes, "...what's left for humans, after the robots have conquered everything, is low-skilled physical jobs and highly skilled, complex mental jobs." We must prepare children for "conceptual understanding and problem-solving." Mark Day School is already on board--and has been since our founding.

This commitment dovetails well with the fourth skill that Kamenetz names: giving a hug. In other words, being human. Recognizing and managing one's own emotions, dealing with adversity, bridging difference to work well with others, having empathy--these very human skills will only be more important with each new technological advance. As the world grows more complex, interconnected, and interdependent, our children will be called to draw on all of their skills not just to succeed in the culture and economy that we have today, but to shape and lead the sustainable cultures and economies that will emerge in the future. It is in these early years that we help to prepare them to do it well.



# Reflecting Back

## Where are Mark Day School graduates now?

### Class of 1995

Congratulations to **Liz Skyler** on her role as Anne Boleyn in the West Coast premiere of this production. The play runs April 14-May 8, 2016. [www.marintheatre.org](http://www.marintheatre.org)

### Class of 2000

**Phillip Markle** is living and working in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NYC. He moved to NYC from Chicago when his one-man show "Sparkle Hour" was awarded a spot in the International Fringe Festival. Since, he established a new improv teaching theatre and conservatory partnered with The Annoyance in Chicago. For over two years, he's been Artistic Director and running the whole theatre.

### Class of 2002

**Megan Feffer** (formerly Thorpe) is an Accountant Supervisor at Spectrum, a scientific communications, in NYC. She works with brands like Olay, Pampers, and Tide to bring life to the upstream science that goes into the products people use everyday and help find ways to communicate it. Her life is filled with infographics, animations, and interactive PDF toolkits.

**Charlotte Huus-Henriksen** moved from Bozeman, Montana to Lund, Sweden in August 2014. Last fall, she finished her Masters of Science in Environmental Management & Policy from Lund University's International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics. She now lives in Malamo, Sweden and works for IDEA Food AB as a Sustainability Developer.

### Class of 2004

**James Brenner** has launched his online platform Peleus Political, a public source of expert-level, real-time political predictions and analysis.

After living in Boston for six years, **Michelle Markle** applied to the University of Pittsburg Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN (Nursing) program, where she graduated Magnum Cum Laude and established a peer-to-peer mentoring program. She is currently working in the UPMC Shadyside Medical-Cardiac ICU as a Registered Nurse.

**Emily Shulman** is currently in her second year at UC Berkeley School of Law. This summer, she will spend 10 weeks in Japan as a Summer Associate with Morrison Foerster. In September, she will tie the knot in Sebastopol.

### Class of 2007

**Aviva Kamler** launched the app Shelf Cosmetics, which tracks the favorite beauty products of users and their friends. She was recently featured on NBC News. Also, last semester, she launched a growing brand ambassador program of 20 women who learn about marketing, HR, and the socially conscious side of the business.

### Class of 2008

**Julia Smith** is in the National Tour of Mamma Mia, which runs for several more months and will be in San Jose and Modesto at the beginning of June. She is in the ensemble every night and serves as the understudy for the role of Sophia. [www.mammamiaontour.com](http://www.mammamiaontour.com).

### Class of 2009

**Andrew Carothers** and sister **Caroline** ('12) founded The Wave Company ([wavecompany.co](http://wavecompany.co)). The company manufactures high quality water bottles and 20 percent of profits go to charities that help clean up the oceans.

**Eva Geisse** is studying in Tanzania with the School for Field Studies, where she focuses on wildlife ecology and management, as well as Tanzanian environmental policy. She is about to start her individual research project on grey crowned cranes.

Three members of the class of 2009 met up in London while studying in Europe during spring semester. **Jackson Poole** is studying in London, **Isabella Salmi** is studying in Stockholm, and **Annie Warner** is studying in Dublin.

### Class of 2012

**Celeste Hoytt** choreographed and danced for the San Marin Arts and Technical Arts production of "Stories in Motion." She also sang as a "crow" and a "puppy" and danced as a "jitterbug" in San Marin High School's musical production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

**G.J. Hoytt** performed the lead of San Marin High School's musical production of *The Wizard of Oz* as the Tin Man/Hickory and competed in the school's Mock Trial as prosecuting attorney and earned an "outstanding performance" award. G.J. was accepted as one of 11 students selected internationally to attend Stanford University Summer College Academy, a 6-week intensive college-credit course in "Debating the Ethics of War."

**Michelle Ullman** graduated from Marin Academy and finished her 10-year course of study in violin at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Last summer, she was a biomedical research intern at the Buck Institute for Research on Aging, and the summer before that she completed a scientific research internship at phytochemistry at the Saint Petersburg State University in Russia. She is thrilled to be attending the University of Chicago as a freshman in the fall.

**Rebecca Strull** is a teen leader volunteering several hours each week to prepare meals for homebound people with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.

### Class of 2013

**Lindsay Noah** was chosen by the US Rowing Junior National Team to compete at the World Rowing Junior Championships in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She rowed seven seat in the Women's 8+ and won a bronze metal behind Italy's silver and Germany's gold.

### Class of 2014

**Ethan Strull** is a commissioner on the Marin County Youth Commission.

Stay connected.  
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# Looking Ahead

## Headed to High School Class of 2016

Cate (1)  
College Prep (1)  
Drew College Prep (1)  
Marin Academy (11)  
Marin Catholic (4)  
Marin School of Environmental Leadership (1)  
Marin School of the Arts (2)  
Redwood High School (2)  
Rocklin High School (1)  
San Domenico (2)

San Rafael High School (1)  
Santa Catalina (1)  
Sir Francis Drake High School (1)  
Sonoma Valley High School (1)  
Tamalpais High School (1)  
Terra Linda High School (1)  
The Branson School (6)  
The Marin School (1)  
The Urban School (1)  
University High School (1)

## Can't Wait for College Class of 2012

Geoffrey Abrams: University of Portland  
Avik Banerjee: UC Irvine  
Alexis Brugler: Lafayette College  
Alysa Buckler: Chapman University  
Caroline Carothers: Tulane University  
Aidan Cumming: Kenyon College  
Allie Chuljian: Tulane University  
Jared Colin: Northwestern  
Michael Dunne: Southern Methodist University  
Dini Eisele: Tulane University  
Jessica Gallo: Loyola Marymount  
Andrea Garcia: Skidmore College  
Julian Goudey: UC Santa Cruz  
Sam Greenspan: NYU  
Cali Hetfield: Rhode Island School of Design  
Celeste Hoytt: University of Miami  
G.J. Hoytt: Arizona State University

Michelle Jakab: Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo  
Jake Luria: Tufts  
Patrick Mayrisch: Fordham University  
Claire Morrison: University of Indiana, Bloomington  
Robert Murray: Seattle University  
Jason Oliver: Bowdoin College  
Ian Oprende: Wake Forest University  
Thomas Peterson: Santa Rosa JC/UC Davis  
Nicole Rizzuti: Syracuse  
Kendal Rogers: Carroll College  
Tucker Roy: University of Vermont  
Mia Simon: Colorado College  
Rebecca Strull: Middlebury College  
Michelle Ullman: University of Chicago  
Douglas Vetter: Dartmouth  
Zach Welsh-Retzlaff: Chapman University  
Patrick Warner: Bowdoin College  
Dylan Woodhead: Stanford  
Audrey Zhao: University of Washington, Seattle

Alumni Reunion  
December 2015



Don't miss the  
Alumni Reunion  
December 11, 2016  
Terrapin Crossroads





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