

Mid-Peninsula High School

# CONNECTIONS

MAGAZINE :: WINTER 2020



Mid-Pen Turns 40: A Timeline, page 7

RESPECT :: KINDNESS :: ACCEPTANCE :: RESPONSIBILITY



# LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Ever since I arrived at Mid-Pen in July of 2017, I've imagined what the birth of the school must have looked like. The story that has been passed down to me is that two public school educators, Herman Ohme and Phil Bliss, had the courage to open a school after Proposition 13 severely slashed public school budgets. Herman and Phil wanted to make sure that students who learned differently and who needed more support had a place to learn and thrive. The school opened with three students in Herman's living room in 1979.

That fundamental narrative is compelling, and as a former English teacher, I'm still curious about the different stories, people, and details within that narrative. While I've learned more about our history in broad strokes, I still want a vibrant account of all the small details that add up to a deeper understanding of Mid-Pen's first days in 1979. Exactly what did Herman's living room look like? What did the first students do to pass time between lessons? Were people still wearing bell-bottoms as punk sensibilities emerged at the end of the 70s? When did the first Sony Walkman appear? We may never have answers to these questions, but I enjoy contemplating these details.

Forty years from now, my successor may wonder about Mid-Pen in 2019. Social media and other forms of technology will probably preserve some of the details from the present day over the decades to come. Still, I know that what feels significant to me every day at Mid-Pen may very well seem unimportant or inconsequential by the time 2059 rolls around. What stories would my successor want to know about me and the school?

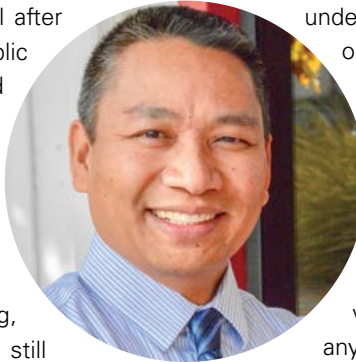
Perhaps the Mid-Pen Promise Strategic Plan would be the historical event that defines this era. We are making significant, mission-appropriate changes that

will allow us to evolve and adopt best practices to serve our students for a different future. Five years from now, once we fulfill the Mid-Pen Promise, we will have more interdisciplinary offerings, more students from underserved communities will have access to our school, and a new building will allow teachers to develop new programs for all of our students. I hope that these big-picture transformations will resonate over the coming decades.

What about the small details of life today at Mid-Pen? Will people remember that we had a number of dogs on campus on any given day in 2019? Will they see pictures of our current mascot, Dungee the Dragon, and find Dungee quaint or confounding? Will they know that teachers took students to Los Angeles, Greece, Scotland, Argentina, and Zambia in 2020? It's fun to think about how moments from this school year may look to the Mid-Pen community in the future.

If I could wish for a lasting legacy from today, I would want people to look back at us and see the courageous steps we took to ensure a strong future for our school. Every day, we look after students and hold them in our care. From offering them robust learning support on our campus and taking them abroad so that they can learn about a shrinking and more complex world, my colleagues and I care deeply about the next 40 years of our students' lives and not merely the four years they spend with us. At every graduation, I have a strong, abiding faith in what Mid-Pen alumni will do throughout their lives. It has been a deep honor to be part of this wonderful institution for the past three years, and I'm eager to see more Mid-Pen dreams come true in the years to come. 🐉

  
Phil Gutierrez



## CONNECTIONS

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## Living Like a Local in Spain

*By Karina Sanchez '22*

On a hot summer day, seven Mid-Pen students gathered at the top of La Alhambra and looked down at the beautiful city of Granada, Spain. As we looked out at the city filled with Spain's rich history, I realized how lucky I was to be experiencing this moment.

Every year, Mid-Pen offers a 10-day Spanish language-immersion trip to a Spanish-speaking country. In the summer of 2019, Spanish teacher Jon Austin and school counselor Wendi Wells took us to Spain. The purpose of the trip was for students to learn about Spanish culture and to strengthen their Spanish-speaking skills in the most interactive way possible.

We spent the first half of the trip exploring the cities of Madrid and Granada. Being able to order some of Spain's most delicious foods in Spanish made me aware of the importance of learning languages.

Not only did we get to visit famous landmarks and museums of the country, but we also got an insight into life as a local. After several days together, we parted ways with our classmates and each went to stay with our host families in Sevilla for the second half of the trip.

I stayed in my host family's beach house. They were very welcoming and made me feel as if I was part of their family. I am fluent in Spanish and generally resort to English because that is what most of my friends speak. My host family didn't speak any English, so this was a great opportunity for me to speak only in Spanish and to widen my

vocabulary. My host family also taught me many things that most tourists would not have learned, such as the best restaurants in the area, Spanish card games, and popular slang.

At times during my stay with the host family, I felt vulnerable because I was in a foreign country, all by myself, speaking only in Spanish. Looking back at it, I think this was one of my favorite parts of the trip. I gained a sense of independence, became more confident with my Spanish, and became closer with my classmates on the trip.

I hope Mid-Pen continues to offer these trips as they are a wonderful way of applying what students have learned in class to real life, and they inspire students to keep learning new languages. 🇪🇸





## Mid-Pen Enjoys the Benefits of a Late School Start

When Mid-Pen implemented a late start to the school day back in 2001, it knew it was doing something different. But this particular "different" will be the new standard for California state high schools. In fact, it's now the law.

On Sunday, October 13, 2019, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a new law that requires all state middle and high schools to delay their start times. High schoolers in public schools can begin classes no earlier than 8:30 am.

The law, which must be implemented in all state schools by 2022, comes after ample research that clearly shows early start times are detrimental to the sleep of teens, which in turn impacts their overall health and well-being. In 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics even recommended schools delay their start times, noting "insufficient sleep in adolescents as an important public health issue that significantly affects the health and safety, as well as the academic success, of our nation's middle and high school students."

Mid-Pen's school start time of 9:30 am was put into effect as part of a conditional use permit by the City of Menlo Park when the new campus was being built. The city required the late start time in an effort to limit congestion on Willow Road. Little did they know that Mid-Pen was following early research already calling out the connection between early start times, sleep, and teens.

"We decided to get ahead of it because we knew it was beneficial [to the students] to start later," said Dave Richardson, Mid-Pen's Academic Director and College Advisor.

We asked Mid-Pen students how they felt about the new law; they overwhelmingly agreed that a late start time is much needed and benefits them in myriad ways. Whether using the extra time to finish homework or play video games, students love starting school at 9:30 am.

The most common perk of the late start? The ability to get more sleep. Many Mid-Pen students commute to school, and the extra morning time means they don't have to worry about waking before the sun comes up. Many Dragons are aware of making sure they receive the recommended eight hours of sleep each night. With after school activities, they can go to bed early and wake up with time to complete their studies. Mostly, they say they just enjoy having a slower morning, free of a stressful rush to get to school.

"I'm in a better state of mind, more relaxed," said one student. "I have more time to be ready to be present." 🐉







## Student ASL Interpreters Create A Play Within a Play

When Mid-Pen student actors took the stage for their fall performance of the romantic comedy “Almost, Maine,” one audience was treated to a play within a play as two Mid-Pen Dragons interpreted the nine-act John Cariani play in American Sign Language (ASL).

Lainer Poland and Julia Weaver are juniors at Mid-Pen and study ASL. They were thrilled to interpret the play for their ASL instructor, Francis Phiri, when he attended the Saturday night performance.

“Their expressiveness is pretty incredible,” said Mid-Pen Drama and English teacher Caitlin Berka. “They are acting all of the parts, they become all the characters.”

Julia, who is in her fourth year studying ASL, interpreted the play in real-time as she heard the lines delivered. Lainer, a third-year ASL student, prepared for the play by taking notes and transcribing lines with words closest to signs.

Lainer also watched Stratford Playhouse videos of the scenes so she could practice signing during the performance. The two spent many hours dividing their roles and practicing some of the more difficult scenes from the play, sometimes even rehearsing with cast members as they ran their lines.

For Lainer, the second scene in the play, called “Sad and Glad,” was her favorite to interpret. “I love signing the male role in that part because there is so much humor in that particular scene—and it’s humor that is not implied,” she said. “It’s humor in the words, and I can get it in sign language and enjoy it while I’m signing it. But I have to be careful because I can’t laugh.”

The ASL interpreters both wore navy blue shirts for the performance, Lainer explained, to ensure that their hands were highly visible in contrast to their clothing.

Not only must they contain their amusement at the play as they interpret, but they also maintain a high energy level. While the different characters came on and off the stage during each scene, Julia and Lainer didn’t stop moving until intermission when they had a quick 15-minute break. They immersed themselves in their interpretations, expressing the actors’ emotions in their movements.

What’s the biggest challenge in taking on so many roles and interpreting for such a long period of time?

“Probably the time, energy and just... the thought that has to go into everything because you have to think about so many different aspects,” explained Julia. “You need to think about, am I covering the facial expressions, the movements of the people on the stage, the tones that people use, the emotions that they are trying to convey—are we getting all that? Because we’re kind of putting on our own play in our corner, but we also want to make sure we’re not being too distracting.”

Another ASL interpretation challenge occurs when unspoken moments happen on stage. “Like when the actor speaks in a sentence that trails off,” said Julia. “What translates on stage...it’s implied to the audience but it doesn’t translate in ASL. I sign the unspoken so it’s not ambiguous. A lot in Deaf culture is about clarity and understanding.”

Both students were eager to interpret the play for their ASL teacher, Francis. He had been away from school on paternity leave, and it was the first time he would see the fruits of their labor.

“That’s the most exciting part of this experience,” said Julia of interpreting for Francis. “I looked forward to it the most.” 🐉



Juniors Julia Weaver (L) and Lainer Poland (R), are a dynamic duo in ASL.



## Dragons Don't 'Like' Instagram's Latest Experiment

The most-liked photo on the social media app Instagram is an image of an egg.

Really. An egg.

The image was posted last January 4 by user @world\_record\_egg with the caption: "Let's set a world record together and get the most liked post on Instagram. Beating the current world record held by Kylie Jenner (18 million)!"

The user turned out to be an advertising creative, and he did break the world record. The egg has more than 59 million "Likes" and the account boasts 7.6 million followers. Because the account is public, anyone logged into Instagram can click the heart icon, letting the account owner know that a user or follower likes the content posted.

And it's that little heart icon—and the public's ability to see how many "Likes" an image receives—that is currently a hot button, no pun intended, of debate.

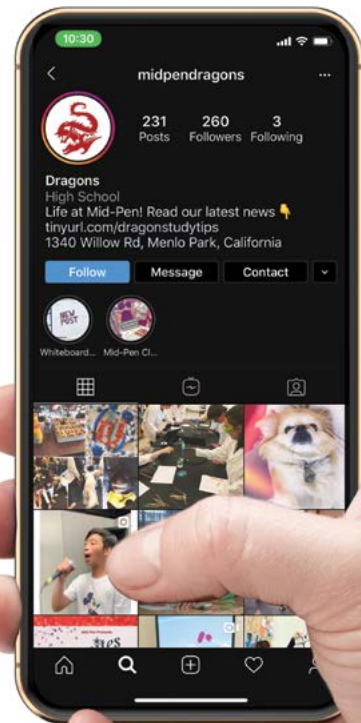
Instagram recently announced that it plans to test removing Likes from public view. What does this mean? For certain users in the U.S., only the account holder will be able to see how many times a post is Liked,

information that will be hidden from other users.

In an interview with Bloomberg News, Instagram exec Adam Mosseri said, "The idea is to try and reduce anxiety and social comparisons, specifically with an eye towards young people."

A 2018 study conducted by Pew Research Center asked 743 teens, ages 13-17, about their social media and technology use. Seventy-two percent responded that they used Instagram. A later study asked teens about their experiences on social media. Of the 743 teens surveyed, 37 percent indicated that a negative of social media is "the pressure to post content that will get lots of likes/comments."

Mid-Pen uses Instagram and its parent company Facebook to provide a snapshot of daily life at school. Our Instagram account is geared towards students, parents, and alumni, and they regularly engage with our posts and stories.





@MIDPENDRAGONS

If no one could see your Likes, would you post more or less often?

MORE

36%

LESS

64%

Since Instagram's pilot of hiding Likes is geared towards "young people," we decided to check in with our young Dragons to see how they felt about the news. We used Instagram stories to poll our followers.

- ♥ Asked if they were glad Instagram was removing Likes from public view, 74 percent of respondents replied no.
- ♥ Do our Instagram followers pay attention to how many likes they receive? 54 percent said yes.
- ♥ Sixty-four percent of our respondents said they would post less if no one could see how many likes they received, but 95 percent of users said they would continue using Instagram even if Likes were eliminated.

One Mid-Pen student best assessed Instagram's pilot of hidden Likes as a step in the right direction, but not as useful as the company thinks. "I think it wouldn't be as effective since you can still see your likes," the student said. "You can still be affected by the numbers of people liking it [a post] even if you can't see other likes."

Mid-Pen uses Likes and other Instagram-provided Insights as feedback on what content resonates with our audience. Hidden Likes don't impact us as a school, but we understand how it can affect businesses and influencers who rely on public attention to increase the popularity of their brand or cause.

It should be noted that Instagram Insights is only provided to Business and Creator accounts. A recent NBC news story reported that many teens are switching their private personal accounts to these Business/Creator accounts so they can have access to metrics. We encourage families to have open discussions about responsible, healthy social media use, what social media "likes" really mean to their teens, and the drawbacks of having a public-facing account.

If you're wondering about the egg account, later posts weren't so impressive to users; a recent video of an animated egg received 769,000 likes. 🥚

Follow



Being a part of Mid-Pen is being a part of #DragonLife. You can always see what's happening on campus by visiting us online!

See our daily school updates on  
Instagram and Facebook  
@midpendragons

Visit us at [www.mid-pen.org](http://www.mid-pen.org) for stories  
and to watch our new video series,  
A Mid-Pen Minute.





When Sony introduced the Walkman in 1979, the company began with a vision: to give consumers access to their music wherever they were. We could listen to our favorite songs over and over on the bus, in the gym, on the trail...at least until the tape snagged on the cassette heads and turned into a ribboned mess.

Three years later, Sony gave us the CD Discman; cassettes were replaced by compact discs, which offered more longevity and enhanced sound...at least until scratches on the plastic discs caused songs to skip. In 2001, Apple changed our lives with the iPod, which later made way for the iPhone. Fast forward to

2020, when all of our music is housed in a virtual cloud. We wirelessly manage our music on smartphones, with melodies so crisp they might as well be live.

Though the delivery mechanism has improved with each iteration, the goal of portable music technology has always been consistent: to provide us with music whenever we want and wherever we go.

The story of Mid-Peninsula High School, also founded in 1979, reflects a parallel journey. It, too, began with a vision: to create a school focused on the needs of its students.

Starting with just three students in a Palo Alto living

# 40 YEARS

**1979**

The Sony Walkman is introduced.

**1980**

Mid-Peninsula Education Center is founded with three students and located in Dr. Ohme's living room.



**1981**

First Mid-Pen Dragon mascot unveiled at graduation.

**1980**

School campus moves to Ross Elementary in Palo Alto.

**1981**

Mid-Pen's course of study is approved by the University of California and California State University systems.

**1979**

Phil Bliss, the principal of Cubberley High School, and Herman Ohme, Ph.D., one of the school's counselors, form a partnership to market educational services, which have been eliminated due to Proposition 13.

**1980**

Mid-Pen wraps up its first school year with 30 students and one graduate.

**1982**

Phil Bliss becomes the Head of School of what is now formally called Mid-Peninsula High School.







room, co-founders Herman Ohme and Phillip Bliss had one simple goal: to put students first. Understanding that every student has different learning styles and educational needs, they embarked on a quest to create a high school where the entire staff, composed of exceptional educators, connects with each student. Where teachers instruct with compassion. And where learning is intentional and collaborative.

"You have to understand that our headmaster at the time [Phil Bliss] embarked on an incredible experiment," said Mid-Pen veteran teacher Laurie Miller, who joined the school in 1981. "Mid-Pen was just a lump of clay and we were the sculptors. Every decision was made by

consensus...with all staff contributing and agreeing. That led to an incredible amount of commitment and love." [Read more about Laurie on page 9.]

The timeline on the following pages spans 40 years of Mid-Pen milestones and memories. We've changed campuses, grown in enrollment, added new course offerings and programs, and so much more.

But it's what you don't see on the timeline that matters most. In the quick-paced, hustle and bustle of Silicon Valley, our tight-knit Mid-Pen community feels like family. And we remain true to the original intention of our founders: Our students still come first. 🐉

# OF MID-PEN

**1983**

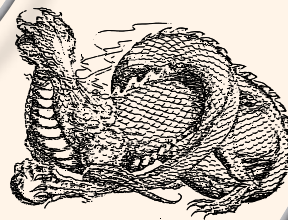
Mid-Peninsula High School receives an accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

**1984**

Mid-Pen leases space at Garland Elementary School in central Palo Alto.

**1988**

Mid-Pen is granted membership to the California Association of Independent Schools.

**1993**

Mid-Pen changes Dragon logo.

**1996**

Chloe Kamprath is appointed Head of School.

**1989**

First Dragon alumni reunion.

**1990**

Boys baseball wins Catholic/Private School Athletic League Championship.

**2000**

Construction of the new Mid-Pen campus begins.

**2001**

Mid-Peninsula High School moves to 1340 Willow Road in Menlo Park.

**1982**

Sony introduces Sony Discman.





## LAURIE MILLER

English Teacher

Dragon since: 1981

### Why Mid-Pen?

I had always taught in more alternative settings in New York, so when I moved to California, Mid-Pen was such a great fit. This school is such a huge part of me because I truly helped to build it. No other school could have given me that opportunity.

### Favorite book to teach?

Every few years I do seem to be drawn again to the play, *Our Town*. It seems like nothing is happening at first because students are so used to being plugged in and getting everything thrown at them in a nanosecond, and they don't really "get" it. Then they slow down and figure out that 95 percent of enjoying life really is about the simple things, like a good cup of coffee!

## 2001

Apple introduces the iPod.

## 2002

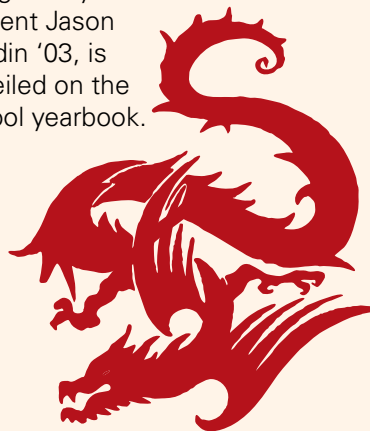
Mid-Pen adds music program.

## 2002

Dr. Douglas Thompson joins Mid-Pen as Head of School.

## 2003

The new Dragon logo, designed by Mid-Pen student Jason Sandin '03, is unveiled on the school yearbook.



## 2003

Mid-Pen joins the National Association of Independent Schools.

## 2004

Mid-Pen creates its first formal Strategic Plan.

## 2004

25th Anniversary Alumni Reunion.

## 2005

Mid-Pen boys varsity basketball team makes national headlines by ending Eastside Prep's 96-game winning streak.

## 2005

Mid-Pen Parent Association is formed.



## HEIDI SCHIESSLER

Assistant Head of School

Dragon since: 1991

### Why Mid-Pen?

It's definitely a connection with the students. At Mid-Pen, to really be able to get to know students and their parents is, for me, a luxury. And it's what the definition of teaching is about—you can't deliver on teaching someone without the connection.

### Favorite Mid-Pen tradition?

The Senior Dinner. It's a time for students to reflect on their years here, to say their thanks, their goodbyes, to be able to put their experiences at Mid-Pen in this kind of neat little package and share it with all of their classmates....you feel so good about them going out into the world.







## DAVE RICHARDSON

Academic Director  
& College Advisor,  
Government Teacher

Dragon since: 1980

### Why Mid-Pen?

I had the opportunity to take a teaching position in a public school district outside the Bay Area before I joined Mid-Pen. While this job was a safe choice with the security of a long career, the opportunity to work at Mid-Pen was more appealing. I was able to stay in the Bay Area where I was comfortable. More importantly, Mid-Pen was an opportunity to create a new school that was unique for its time: small, with a flexible curriculum, an emphasis on personal and academic counseling, and student-centered.

### Teacher or college advisor?

I enjoy both roles, but I don't think that I could be an effective college advisor without that connection to teaching. Although there are many challenges being a college advisor, there is one major advantage to the position: education is an extremely delayed gratification profession, but as a college advisor, I get to share the immediate joy of a student being admitted to a college that is a great fit for the student.



**2019**

Apple introduces the iPhone 11.

**2019**

Mid-Pen introduces The Mid-Pen Promise, its strategic plan for the next five years.

**2017**

Phil Gutierrez is named Mid-Pen's fourth Head of School.

**2011**

Facebook becomes neighbors with Mid-Pen when it moves into Menlo Park on former campus of Sun Microsystems.

**2011**

Varsity boys basketball has a 14-0 season and wins Central Coast Section Division V Championship.

**2006**

First DragonFest is held, raising \$20,091 for the school.

**2016**

Apple introduces wireless AirPods.



**2020**



Mid-Peninsula  
High School

*Celebrating*

**40 YEARS**

# FROM THE FIELD – THE TERM IN SPORTS

**By Kurt Lange, Athletic Director**

All Mid-Pen teams play in the Private School Athletic League (PSAL).



## Soccer

**Coach:** Raul Salazar

**League Record:** 3-6-1

**Highlights:** Seventeen players on the team. Finished fourth in league play and very competitive against the second and third-place teams, losing 1-0 to Pacific Bay and 2-1 to SF Christian.

**Awards:** All-League First Team: Andries Castellano '21, Taylor Young '21. All-League Second Team: Stefan Minkowski '22, Phillip Wollman '21. Honorable Mention: Sebi Strachan '21, Ian Grossenbacher '20.



## Cross Country

**Coach:** Alan Cameron

**Highlights:** Growth season with eight runners, including four freshmen, one sophomore, two juniors, and one senior. All runners improved through the season and achieved personal records.



## Varsity Volleyball

**Coaches:** Franc Salazar, assisted by Alec Salazar

**League Record:** 2-8

**Highlights:** Finished fifth in the league ahead of SF Christian, an improvement over the 2018 season with no league wins.

**Awards:** All-League First Team: Addi Stone '22. All-League Second Team: Val Rendon '20. Honorable Mention: Anna Gordon '22.



## JV Volleyball

**Coach:** Alec Salazar

**League Record:** 5-5

**Highlights:** Best season of any Mid-Pen JV team. Narrowly missed winning their first match of the season against a strong KIPP/San Jose team.





## Mid-Pen Alum Ryan Michaels Follows His Country Music Dream

When Mid-Pen alum and country singing star Ryan Michaels '95 talks about "Hail Mary"—a song he co-wrote with his singing partner and wife, Shannon Haley—he says it's about "overcoming adversity" and the challenges the duo faced as musicians. But as he reflects on his time at Mid-Pen, the song could just as easily be about his journey through high school.

"School was always extremely difficult for me. All I wanted to do were the things I was most passionate about—making music and playing sports," Ryan said. "I had a very hard time focusing on anything else which generally led to me flunking out of school and being written off by many as a troublemaker or as someone who just wasn't that smart."

Ryan found support and mentoring from Mid-Pen's Assistant Head of School, Heidi Schiessler, and he turned his passion for music into a career. He also credits Athletic Director and PE Coach Kurt Lange for supporting Ryan's love of sports and pushing him to be better, on and off the field.

Ryan went on to study Music Business at Belmont University in Nashville, where country music dreams are made. After college, he decided to stick around—a fortuitous decision because he met his wife, Shannon, who just happened to grow up in Los Altos, Calif.

Now, the two are known in the industry as *Haley & Michaels*, and their music is making them shine

bright on the country music scene.

Ryan was back in Dragon territory on Monday, October 7, 2019; Haley & Michaels performed live during halftime at Levi Stadium in Santa Clara, when the San Francisco 49ers took on the Cleveland Browns. It's fitting that the song they performed was "Hail Mary." In football, the phrase refers to a last-ditch, long pass thrown by the losing team in the last seconds of a game. If successful—a rare feat—it's a dramatic, exciting win.

Both Ryan and Shannon are life-long 49er fans; the team even produced the song's music video, which takes place inside Levi Stadium. *The New York Times* recently wrote about their experience collaborating with the 49ers on the music video for the song, and their upcoming halftime event.

The single gained traction after it was used in the Netflix original film "Walk. Ride. Rodeo." Since the film's release in March, the song has 1.5 million streams on Spotify. The duo was signed by SONY ATV under its new label, Hickory Records, and released a new album with the same title, "Hail Mary." They even performed their song on NBC's "The Today Show."

"My time at Mid-Pen and graduating high school, which felt impossible, has stuck with me and is an important part of shaping me today," Ryan recalled. "Without it, none of the things going on in my life now would be happening." 🐉

**Allison (Alesyn) Duncan Lattouf '88** earned her PhD in communications studies from Southern Illinois University in 2018. "In addition to my job as a lecturer at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, I accepted a promotion to be the course director of the foundational required writing-intensive course in Communication Studies that all of our majors must take. We offer 10 sections of this course each semester, and therefore I teach it and supervise the faculty and graduate student instructors that teach with me. I am responsible for all aspects of running the course, assessment of student work and the program at the departmental level, and the professional development of the instructors of the course."

**Michelle Behling '89** recently moved to Eugene, Oregon, and is enjoying "trying to have a new adventure and a new life."

**Jakki Spicer '89** says, "After 13 years back in the Bay Area (after 16 years in Massachusetts, New York, and Minnesota), my husband, 13-year-old, and I moved to Oban, a little town in Northwest Scotland. It is beautiful and quiet and we're so enjoying the change of pace. Let me know if you're ever out this way!"

**Carter Raff '91** stopped by the school this past summer. He is the founder and owner of Raff Distillerie in San Francisco's Bayview district, which produces Bummer & Lazarus Gin, Emperor Norton Absinthe, and Barbary Coast Rhum.



**Quinn Maloney '18**, right, was on campus to rock out with friend Dominic Vogel '20 and others performing in the 2019 Fall Concert.

**Brian Warren '07** writes, "I currently live in Stagecoach, Nevada with my girlfriend of seven years and her oldest daughter and our grandson (lol). I'm currently 30 years old, and I own my own home on an acre where I enjoy sitting on my porch and watching the wild horses while I'm not at work as a battery tech at Batteries Plus Bulbs, where I sell AGM batteries for boats, RVs, vehicles, and anything that has wheels."

**Alexander Shultis '08** is a student at Harvard. "Still plugging away towards my goal of a PhD in physics and a job with NASA research," he writes.

**Stacie Foreman '15** graduated from Cañada College 2018, earning her AS-T and AA in kinesiology. She is currently pursuing her bachelor's in kinesiology at Cal State East Bay. "In the past four years since graduating from high school, I have committed to working full time and being a full-time student. Since high school, my goal still remains the same: getting my bachelor's and masters and working as an occupational therapist."

**Emmett Rodriguez '16** is a dancer with San Jose's New Ballet. "I have been working as a dancer and finding new ways to engage our community with my art form. I have also been able to teach community outreach classes to help give low-income students a chance to discover dance and enhance their creativity."

**Casey Schaeffer '16** reports that "a lot has changed in my life over the past few years! After leaving Mid-Pen, I started at Foothill College where I bounced around from major to major with no idea what I wanted to do. That changed in 2018, when on a whim I signed up for an Archaeological Field School in Ireland through the anthropology department at Foothill. For an entire month, I got to excavate the 14th-century Ballintubber Castle, and over that time I fell in love with the field of archaeology. After returning from Ireland, I became an active member of the anthropology department at Foothill. I helped clean animal bones to expand our osteology collection, re-catalog boxes of Native American remains, and I even participated in multiple archaeological survey projects around the bay. After graduating in June from Foothill with an AA in anthropology, I went to Cangahua, Ecuador, where I excavated an indigenous structure. The area we were working in was a place of resistance against the Inca, and we were looking for evidence that might give us insight into how they were able to resist such a powerful force for as long as they did. The architecture that we found turned out to be unlike anything ever found in Ecuador, so there is still a lot more work to be done to figure out what we were looking at!"






I am currently attending my dream school, The College of William & Mary, where I am majoring in anthropology with a concentration in archaeology, along with minoring in history. My current plan after graduation is to work in cultural resource management for a few years and then eventually head to graduate school!"

**Hana Dvorak '17** is a junior at California College of the Arts double majoring in ceramics and glass. "I'm currently working on a series of seven Dragon sculptures. When I'm not making art or doing homework, I teach martial arts at Golden State Tae Kwon Do"

**Cooper Loundy '17** writes with some advice for Mid-Pen students: save. "Saving money is difficult for people of all ages. I learned to save my money after a very traumatic event, and our family of five had to survive

on my \$500 for a whole month, with one car, and the never-ending thought that we were going to be evicted from our house." Coming through that difficult time, Cooper says, has made him a stronger person. "Inspired by Kurt Lange to take care of my body and to enjoy the outdoors, I now bike an average of five miles a day, along with twenty sit-ups, weight-lifting, and about two miles of walking/running. In the beginning of my freshman year at Mid-Pen, I weighed 215 lbs. Now at age 20, I weigh 174 lbs. Recently I bought my first car with money I had saved up over the past six years. When I was a freshman, I said I would never learn to drive; when I was a senior, I said I would never learn to drive; when I was in my second year of college, I said I would never learn to drive; now here I am, with a car and my driving license that I got two months ago. I passed on my first try with only three minimal errors."



*save THE date*

Mid-Peninsula  
High School

*Celebrating*  
**40 YEARS**

**Saturday, May 2, 2020**

***Parents and students, alumni  
and families, alumni parents***

**Plan to join us for Mid-Pen's  
40TH ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION AND  
ALUMNI REUNION**

**We'll gather on the Mid-Pen  
campus to commemorate 40 years  
of Dragon life, with food trucks,  
games, and activities for Dragons  
and their families. Later in the  
evening, meet us for our all-class  
reunion at an off-campus location.**

***Stay tuned for details!***





Mid-Peninsula  
High School

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*Parents of Alumni: If your Dragon no longer maintains a permanent residence at your home, please notify the Development Office at 650-321-1991 or [alums@mid-pen.org](mailto:alums@mid-pen.org). Thank you for helping us keep our alumni records current.*



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