

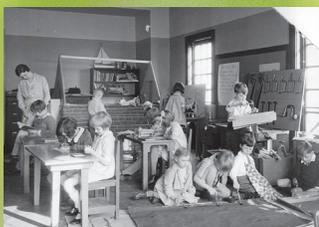
SPRING 2021

# Old Trail

MAGAZINE

## CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

Like today, Old Trail in the 1920s attracted the best and brightest.



## ALUM TOM EATON III '92

"It's surreal to see [Anna] walk the same halls."



# Old Trail

MAGAZINE

## Old Trail School Spring 2021

Old Trail Magazine is published twice a year for alumni, families, faculty, staff and friends by the Old Trail School Marketing and Communications Office. Feedback and suggestions should be addressed to the editor via email at [pwarner@oldtrail.org](mailto:pwarner@oldtrail.org). Please send address changes and class notes to the alumni coordinator at [jgabor@oldtrail.org](mailto:jgabor@oldtrail.org).

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## Mission

Old Trail School is a vibrant educational community focused on academic excellence. We develop intellectually curious, independent thinking students who emerge with a passion for discovery, critical thinking and collaborative learning. Our graduates are well prepared to become responsible global citizens who achieve in high school, college and life.

## ON THE COVER

Old Trail School student Cailyn Hua '23 connects her classroom study of famous environmentalists to nature observations performed in the Forts and Tunnels area on campus.



Old Trail makes the most of its resources by integrating Cuyahoga Valley National Park into the curriculum. Opened in 2020, the Merryweather Outdoor Classroom allows students to gain the advantages of being outside without sacrificing critical learning opportunities.



“Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn so that we see ourselves as we really are.” *Arthur Golden*

It would be easy to look back and simply focus on the incredible adversity, unprecedented challenges and extreme isolation we endured when I think of the last year at Old Trail School. But I choose to take a different approach. For me, when I reflect on the past several months, I see remarkable strength, overwhelming adaptability and a finely tuned picture of who we really are.

One hundred years ago our school was established, based on the pioneering vision of two men who simply believed the educational experience for children could and should offer more. They built the foundation of Old Trail on the philosophy that students needed to learn and grow from their own experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of and make more meaningful connections to their world. The history of our school represents the collection of thousands of individual contributions from decades worth of remarkable students, faculty, school leaders and supporters, alumni and more. Their collective work led us to a place of solid footing where even extreme adversity could not strip us of who we are, but rather strengthen our core.

The past year proved to be demanding in ways we never could have imagined and forced us to push past our conventional boundaries of what we thought was possible as administrators, educators, students and families. From our quick pivot to distance

learning last spring to our return to campus in the fall, we remained nimble as a community and exhaustive in our commitment to delivering the continuity of educational experience that our students demand.

Our determined faculty completely reinvented their instruction and our students—our incredible students—faced the challenge of learning in this new and ever-changing landscape head-on with courage and resiliency. I will never forget their unwavering spirit, undeniable desire to be in school, and the joy they brought back to our campus upon their return. Our students are why we exist and their needs will perpetually drive Old Trail’s vision and purpose.

As I think about the future and how this time will be remembered in the history of our school, I can’t help but appreciate the juxtaposition of a global pandemic falling on our centennial year. Add to it the most recent deep and thoughtful reimagining of our school’s brand and you have quite a collision of soul searching and reflection.

What is left, however, is a newly found sense of self and a clear path forward, steeped in our past and confidently addressing the future.

In this next century, we will continue to deliver on our mission and respond to the most modern needs of society to prepare our students for the world they will encounter, rather than the one we did. We will honor our founders’ vision of providing an exceptional educational alternative—a deeper, more meaningful learning experience—for the next generation of Old Trail students and beyond.

Old Trail and its core values of respect, responsibility, goodness and service will always be deeply embedded within each of our students, serving as the bedrock to their success in education and life. This is a high calling we have taken, but we see ourselves as we truly are and move into this next century with confidence, clarity and fidelity as we steward our beloved school. I continue to be grateful to be on this journey with you and celebrate our school as we embrace our next chapter.

All my best,

Sarah Johnston  
Head of School

**What is left, however, is a newly found sense of self and a clear path forward, steeped in our past and confidently addressing the future.**



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# 1 CELEBRATING

**Old Trail School is celebrating a significant milestone—its centennial.**

**O**ne hundred years that encompass a remarkable history of foresight; idealism; trials and tribulations; doubts; incredible success; several campuses; and, most importantly, the lives of thousands of children impacted, influenced and nurtured by its care and passion that have shaped and impacted our community and beyond. It is our history.

## A NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Old Trail owes its existence to its founders, two incredible men and a cast of supporters and pioneering parents who believed in the grand experiment of creating a new learning environment. This environment would courageously diverge from the rote memorization and standardized practices that were common in public school systems at the time and instead emphasize the importance of each individual child to think, create, reason and understand themselves in a larger, more significant, context.

**To start a school in Akron that would educate in a way contrary to the norm was both unusual and a risky financial endeavor.**

The founders, Dr. William C. Geer and Dr. William A. Parks, were both visionary and realists. As Old Trail's first president, Dr. Geer was known as the "guiding light" of the school and it was his inspiration that formed the foundation for all that would follow a century later. This milestone feat would not have been possible, however, had it not been for the indefatigable spirit of Dr. Parks, who—as the school's second president and board member of eight years—refused to compromise Old Trail's high academic standards and commitment to the whole child when the financial viability of the school was very much in doubt early on. Dr. Parks proved himself a tireless champion, at times even walking door-



to-door to raise money and convincing wealthier individuals in the region to support "just one more year" of Old Trail.

Like today, Old Trail in the 1920s attracted the best and brightest educators. Many came from different parts of the country to teach at a school that was quickly establishing a reputation with its unique and innovative curriculum and philosophy of instruction. These teachers, too, sacrificed, and agreed to reduced pay or to go without pay on occasion of financial stress to ensure the school's future.

## DREAMING BIG

After the exciting and doubtful early years, enrollment, which was often a struggle, began increasing, and Old Trail found itself on more stable footing—finally

able to dream big. For many, the move to the Fairlawn Heights campus in 1926 was a symbol of the school's future—permanence, stability, innovation and child-focused. This was also the campus that educated countless girls and young women who graduated from Old Trail when it was an all-girls high school. These women were trailblazers in countless ways and went off to Smith, Radcliffe, Wellesley, Harvard, Ohio State and other colleges across the country. Their love for Old Trail remains, and they often discuss and laugh about their favorite teachers, friends and experiences that shaped them.

Old Trail's move to Bath proved to be just as consequential. Although the transition preceded the creation of what would become the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the school's place in the Valley immediately impacted its students and the OTS experience. The natural world



surrounding campus facilitated a special experience where the ideas of the founders were emphasized, and students thrived. In more than 40 years at its current campus, countless capital improvements have enhanced what it means to be at Old Trail. The Harrington Center, the Sisler McFawn Hall, the Harrington-McLaughlin Athletic Center, the Merryweather Outdoor Classroom, the nature-based playscapes, and the improvements on the farm are several that speak to the legacy of our founders, their vision and the unflagging support of the Old Trail community.

Celebrating a century is also a moment of reflection, a moment of pause. Undaunted leaders, devoted parents, gifted and dedicated faculty, alumnae and alumni, grandparents and friends of the school have contributed to ensuring the school's success, and many more will continue to do so into the future.

As we celebrate Old Trail's remarkable history, our gratitude is owed to the individuals who believed in and advocated for the school when it needed champions and supporters who had the boldness to try something new. These individuals ensured a remarkable and dynamic school would thrive as a child-centered institution in our community.

An old prospectus from the school states: "Old Trail's basic teaching concept of stimulating the child to learn and grow from his or her own experience in doing by providing leadership and encouragement to the pupil or student with the minimum of compulsion, regulation and regimentation has proven its great worth throughout the years as a most effective method in the development of the individual person."

**One century later, these same experiential learning ideals remain at the heart of the OTS experience. Happy birthday, Old Trail. Here's to another 100 years of unparalleled and unforgettable student experiences that take children farther. ○**





# Telling Our Old Trail School Story

By David Hassler, Director of the Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University and current OTS parent

“My voice at Old Trail is always heard. That’s why my poem is one hundred years old.” OTS student Felipe Moreira, class of 2027, wrote these lines and shared his voice to the OTS Centennial Community Poem project last spring, along with over 400 other students, faculty, alums and family members.

As Director of the Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University and an OTS parent, I was thrilled to have this opportunity to help Old Trail commemorate its 100 year history through the memorable language and leaping thought of poetry. Working with

Associate Head of School Joe Vogel and a committee of passionate teachers, I began by writing a sample model poem, entitled “Tell Our Story,” with three prompt questions to inspire students, faculty, family members and alumni to give voice to their experiences at Old Trail and of our shared values. We mailed out cards designed with the model poem, prompts, and website address to families and alumni, so that people could either write their creative lines on the card and send it back or share their voice through the interactive project website.

Drawing from these hundreds of contributions, I selected lines from only about 40 contributors to script a centennial community poem entitled “Raise Our Voices,” which will be installed this spring as a beautiful and functional “poetry bench” designed by Kent firm

Each + Every and fabricated by local artist Sean Mercer of mercer-WORKS.



All the poetic and thoughtful responses we received from the OTS community were truly heartening and can be viewed on the website gallery at: [communitypoems.org/old-trail-school-community-poem](https://communitypoems.org/old-trail-school-community-poem).

Prior to the COVID-19 restrictions last spring, I had planned to visit the school in person many times beginning during National Poetry Month in April to lead writing workshops with students, faculty and staff. Indeed, we had planned for a fun writing activity

for Grandparents/Special Person’s Day. Yet what we had planned to be simply a creative celebration of the school’s centennial, became also a testament to the resolve and resilience of the OTS school community during the COVID-19 pandemic, as we found new ways to creatively connect with and inspire one another. Thanks to the efforts and creativity of the OTS teachers, we were able to facilitate many of these writing workshops remotely and many of the teachers incorporated the community poem opportunity in their online classes.

“Together we are united even when we are apart,” wrote a second grade class. We hear in the community poem the joy of the students, the gratitude of the parents, the affection of the teachers and staff, and the wisdom of alumni as they reflect on the foundational and

transformative seedbed experiences of their OTS education.

The inspiration for the bench and its design came from the unique and fertile learning environment of Old Trail School within the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and its proximity to the winding Cuyahoga River. Each + Every’s Alex Catanese and Nate Mucha designed the bench with Corten steel and white oak for its durability, aesthetic quality and functionality. It features the scripted community poem cut into the steel as it meanders, rises and falls. Known as “weathering steel,” Corten steel is often used for bridge building and sculpture. As it ages it becomes more beautiful and forms a protective coating that makes the cut letters of the poem more readable.

The arts tell our stories, who we are as a community and where we are going. Through the many diverse voices in this poem, we can see how our individual stories fit into a larger OTS story—and how our individual lives are intertwined into a larger human and environmental story. It is my hope that the poetry bench will offer us a moment of pause to reflect on our Old Trail experiences, inspire us to continue to “raise our voice” for this remarkable school and for the greater good in our communities, and create a space for future OTS students to gather and connect with one another for years to come. ○

# RAISE OUR VOICES

1920-2020  
CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF OLD TRAIL SCHOOL

**“Our students raise their voices to ask bigger questions and go on to scale greater obstacles.”**

**SARAH JOHNSTON, HEAD OF SCHOOL**

My voice at Old Trail is always heard. That’s why my poem is one hundred years old. A hundred years ago, in 1920, a group of parents came together to form a new school near the center of the city. In the year Band-Aid was invented Old Trail kids began studying, writing, and learning respect, responsibility, service and goodness.

**FELIPE MOREIRA, CLASS OF 2027**

I am from the Covington Old Trail School in West Akron, where our voices went on to influence our community and make a difference in the world.

**LYNNE HARVEY MOUNT, CLASS OF 1961**

I fondly recall being a student, an alum, mother of four, foreign host parent of three, wife of board president, and grandmother of one—all with great joy and pride.

**ELLEN FREITAG HAY, CLASS OF 1946**

I am from the Old Trail gymnasium that was a Quonset hut, from something new called a “supermarket” and something magical called a “TV.”

**FREDERICA FOX WINTER, CLASS OF 1949**

I am from a special place of misty morning fields and sunrise-dappled bricks, from a new campus in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

I am from life-long friends, some for over fifty years, from seven years of wonder and knowledge.

**CATHERINE SEIBERLING POND, CLASS OF 1980**

I am from Mrs. T’s fifth-grade softball games, Skeeter-dog and a “skeeter buggy” car.

I am from playing jacks on the window box and being one of Blackbeard’s dead wives in a French play.

**KIM PIERCE GILLENWATER, CLASS OF 1965**

I am from the autumn breezes across the fields, corn husks and dark river flowing, cold blue and gray sky, clouds rolling by as buses move in winter snows.

**ROB PALUMBO, CLASS OF 1980**

Planted in our beloved national park, my voice is a seed sprouting, reaching its branches to the sky, opening its leaves towards the bright sun.

**CAROLINE GORDON, CLASS OF 2020**

My voice is skipping and laughing on the ukulele and violin.

My voice is climbing and dancing at Spring Fling and the 100th Day of School.

My voice is like a trumpet at the Halloween Parade.

**YOUNG FIVES - CLASS OF 2029**

My voice rings like the bleat of a goat.

My voice speaks for what is right, laced with knowledge and kindness.

**CREEK SMITH, CLASS OF 2024**

My voice is echoing down the halls to lunch, laughter spreading from one person to another.

**ELLE SWOOPE, CLASS OF 2023**

My voice is booming.

I want the whole world to hear it.

**JP PACE, CLASS OF 2022**

I am from the sledding hills, warm furry hats, and cold plastic sleds, from laughter and screams heard by everyone.

**NOLA MARSHALL, CLASS OF 2021**

I am from Friday evenings with adolescents sweaty from dances and dodgeball, predawn Sundays with luggage and excitement for middle school adventures.

I am from two graduations, holding tissues, wishing I could hold back time, yet knowing that Old Trail is a home where my family will always belong.

**LARISSA KOSMOS, PARENT**

I am from the river valley with railroad tracks. The train whistles blow around the school walls of brick and massive doors, where children chatter, their voices chirping like birds.

**WILLAKENZIE ARCHER, CLASS OF 2022**

Together we construct forts out of bushes and logs during recess and create wood block sculptures in art.

**NICK ROSS, CLASS OF 2025**

Illustration by Alex Catanese (Each + Every)

I am from the booming, joyful, never-ending chatter in the halls,  
to the focused, determined minds in the classroom.

**JOSH NOVAK, CLASS OF 2022**

Together we hear the quiet.  
We see the invisible.  
We learn about the unnoticed.  
We give strength to the weak.  
Together we fight for the underdog.

**SHARON JONES-WINFREY, TEACHER**

Together we learn and become  
better versions of ourselves.

**NYAH FARAH, CLASS OF 2022**

*My voice is a dance, I move with grace. The tempo of the song is my heartbeat.*

My voice is encouraged by my Old Trail family.  
Together our voices speak like an orchestra,  
each voice an instrument.  
Together we play from the book of Essential Elements  
and from the pages in our minds.

**ALEX ZHANG, CLASS OF 2024**

I am from the lush green vegetation that blooms  
to welcome us back to school, from the shouts of excitement  
as an eighth-grade science experiment works its magic.  
I am from the smack of hands  
as we applaud each other's successes  
and cheer each other on through our mistakes.  
I am from a place where I can always  
seek comfort or look back and smile.  
Where I am from has inspired and motivated me  
to get to where I am now.

**ZOË NELSON, CLASS OF 2019**

I am from the colorful student paintings displayed in the halls  
and the precise touch that is used to make clay teapots.

**ROJAUHN PAKDEL, CLASS OF 2020**

Together we are citizen scientists here in our park.  
We embrace beauty, wonder, knowledge, and facts.  
Here, we show gratitude by leaving only footprints.

**JODI JOHNSON, TEACHER**

I am from classroom 407, surrounded by eager fourth graders,  
from a pillow window that lets readers explore new worlds.

I am from a classroom where kindness is valued,  
and love is unconditional. Welcome!

**SUSAN ALEXANDER, TEACHER**

*KENDALL KASPAREK, CLASS OF 2027*

I am from classrooms where the teachers  
are like wafts of wind pushing me to learn.  
Together, we can pull up the flag in the morning  
like all the kids before us.

**ADELINE SEINK, CLASS OF 2024**

My voice tells me to speak up,  
to stand up for what is right.  
My voice tells me to be bold,  
to make a difference.  
Together we can learn with open minds.  
Together we are a team,  
looking out for each other.  
We can achieve anything.

**SHAASHWATIYAA BALAMURUGAN, CLASS OF 2024**

Together, we make history every day.  
Our curiosity and determination  
make this world a better place.

**CARRIE BROWN, TEACHER**

My voice is stronger  
when aimed high to join with others,  
my words more powerful  
when echoed from the nestled hills,  
my dreams tied with yours  
in a fire of knowledge  
that lets our spirits soar.

**MARTHA LOAR, TEACHER**

My voice is like a river  
flowing to a waterfall.

**NATHAN HOWARD, CLASS OF 2024**

My voice speaks in the language of hugs.

**KATE BACA, CLASS OF 2023**

Together we share stories,  
tell jokes and tease each other.  
We try to run in the halls and get yelled at together.  
We cheer together, we groan together.  
We sit on bean bags together.  
We celebrate birthdays together.  
We are the fifth grade. Together.

**SOPHIA KORMAN, CLASS OF 2023**

My voice is like the woods  
sometimes quiet, sometimes loud,  
but with that same pull that seems to say,  
"Come in, come in."

**KIRAN MURTHY, CLASS OF 2023**

My voice rests inside of me like a beam of light,  
waiting to get out. I breathe in golden sunbeams.  
We are strong, my Old Trail family. We are the light!

**ALEX NEWMAN, CLASS OF 2020**

My voice is an embrace welcoming  
all who enter my classroom  
like a canopy of trees protecting you from the storm.  
You are safe. You are cared for. You are loved.

**TERESA MCCOMBS, TEACHER**

Together we learn, share, and play  
in harmony with one another.

**LUCY NEMEC, CLASS OF 2021**

My voice was a seedling,  
just starting to grow  
with a small vocabulary—  
bigger, louder, faster, better.  
My voice is ready now  
to move on to middle school,  
still growing, aiming to be a tree.

**DAPHNE VROBEL, CLASS OF 2023**

I am from Grandparents/Special Person's Day,  
viewing with wonderment our children learning.  
I see teachers with hands molding like clay  
what students will one day become,  
both in the world and as human beings.

**DON AND JEAN DEAN, GRANDPARENTS**

I am from inspiring parents and teachers long gone,  
but not forgotten, woven into my mental fabric,  
a legacy never lost.

**RUTH RUSTON HOFFMAN, CLASS OF 1958**

The few of us who are left  
remember Old Trail fondly  
as the place we began to grow  
into responsible adults.

**SUSAN THOMAS RYAN, CLASS OF 1949**

*Together we are one hundred years strong.  
We make dreams come true.  
Together we are united even when we are apart.  
SECOND GRADE CLASS, 2026*

# THOMAS EATON III '92

*The intellectual curiosity cultivated at Old Trail School propelled Tom Eaton III into a career that took him around the globe. Now that he's back in Akron, Tom is thrilled to give his daughter, Anna '28, the same education that played such a formative role in his life.*



Tom is serving his first year as Old Trail's board president, continuing a family legacy that began a century ago. Tom's great grandfather was Dr. William A. Parks, one of the founding fathers of Old Trail, and many of Tom's ancestors attended the school. While Dr. Parks helped begin OTS 100 years ago, Tom is helping shape the next 100 years.

Tom attended Old Trail for K-8 and graduated from Walsh Jesuit. The well-rounded education offered at OTS broadened Tom's perspective and planted in him a hunger for and curiosity about the world. After earning his bachelor's degree from Mount Union, he worked for Goodyear for 18 years, spending half of that time as an expat in Paris, Brussels and Johannesburg. Tom met his wife, Courtney, and Anna was born while they were living in Brussels. After his assignment in Johannesburg ended, Tom joined his wife and daughter back in Akron.

Upon returning, Tom purchased his

father-in-law's company, Rafter Equipment Corporation. Entrepreneurship provides the kind of flexibility and challenge Tom wants at this point in his career. The seeds of those aspirations likely were planted during his years at OTS.

**“Old Trail offers a customized educational experience—you are able to make it what you want to make it; they'll guide you wherever you want to go.”**

Tom has since acquired a second manufacturing company in Akron and is a partner with Lock 15 Brewing Company.

Tom dreamed of sending Anna to Old Trail; now that they're back in Akron, he could make that dream reality. “It's surreal to see [Anna] walk the same halls. It even smells the same!” laughs Tom. “Some of the teachers I had are still teaching at Old Trail. Watching Anna learn how to swim from the same teacher that I learned how to swim from is really something”

Two educators in particular made an impact on Tom at OTS. Former Head of School Peter Wilson “made you feel like he knew you and that you were a part of the fabric.” Mike Duff, the director of the Middle School, “was tough, but it always felt like he was doing what was best for you.”

“What would my great grandfather say if he could see what was happening today? I think he'd be really amazed,” says Tom. “We are all standing on the shoulders of giants, and we want to move forward in a meaningful way. I'm excited to take on that challenge.”

# NANCY (SCHOONOVER) RHINEHART '53

*Nancy (Schoonover) Rhinehart is confident she would not have had the same opportunities in life if it wasn't for Old Trail School. Back in the 1950s, Old Trail offered scholarships for area students to attend the all-girls high school. Nancy's eighth grade teacher at the little country school in North Hampton saw her potential and encouraged her to apply. At the time, Nancy didn't know anything about Old Trail. She had planned to join a friend at Hudson High School after eighth grade, but when she won the scholarship, her mother urged her to enroll at Old Trail.*

While Nancy had always been one of the top students in her class, Old Trail challenged her in all of the best ways. “I found out I wasn't as smart as I thought I was,” Nancy shares. “The scholastic competition was very good for me.” One of her math teachers encouraged Nancy to take her learning a step further. “Nancy, he told me, there are times



when I ask a question and I see that no one in the class gets it, but you do. I need for you to ask a question to lead the discussion so these other girls can learn along with you.” Nancy hadn't thought about learning this way before.

Among fond memories of going to dancing classes at the Western Reserve Academy (“It was how we met boys, and I liked boys”), Nancy recalls trekking across campus under a covered portico to the Quonset hut left from the war they used as a gymnasium on the old campus.

**Nancy's education at Old Trail catapulted her into a scholarship to Smith College and onward, to become one of the first female engineers at BF Goodrich, where she designed aircraft tires.**

Without the scholarship to Old Trail, Nancy's life trajectory would have certainly looked different. Challenged by other bright students and encouraged by teachers to step out of her comfort zone and assert herself in the classroom all contributed to preparing Nancy to succeed in a competitive and male-dominated field.

Nancy is thrilled that Old Trail continues to make a way for students like her who can't attend on their own. Throughout the years, the school has continued to change for the better, and its mission is one that Nancy is proud to support. “I hope to see them last another 100 years!”



# Embracing the Outdoors



## ECP AND PRIMARY PLAYSCAPES

Through the generosity of countless donors, our new Early Childhood Program and Primary School playscapes were completed during the summer of 2020. These incredible new spaces foster imagination, give students the opportunity to connect with the natural world, develop important social and cognitive skills, and allow the children to simply have fun!

The playscapes were designed to make use of existing topography and natural materials to create an open-ended outdoor play area for children to make discoveries and interact with their environment. Through the use of tree stumps, logs and rocks, these innovative play areas offer a wide range of opportunities to stimulate creativity, encourage healthy risk-taking and spur development in our youngest learners.

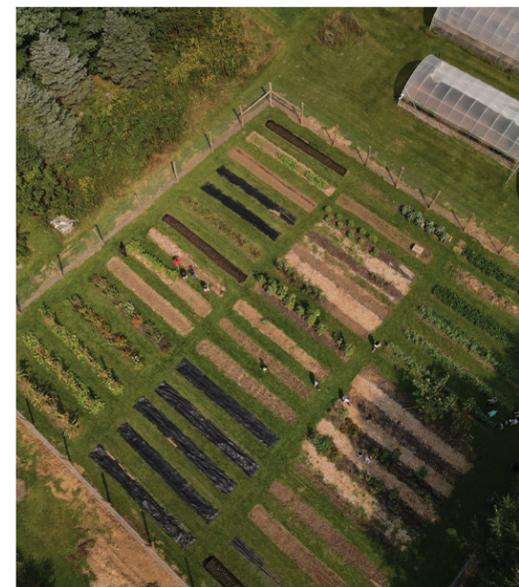
“Traditional playgrounds prescribe a certain activity to a specific space—you go down a slide, you go up the stairs, you climb up the climbing wall and so on,” said ECP and Primary School Director Amanda Irwin. “In such traditional structures, students are given an idea of what to do and where to do it by the adults who designed the space. In contrast, our natural playscapes allow students the ability to use their creativity and imaginations to create their own activities in a way that’s authentic to them.”

The reimagining of the playscapes was spearheaded by lead architect Michelle Mathis of

Learning Landscapes and executed locally by the Ohio-based architect Dan McClarren of Impullitti Landscaping and A. Crano Excavating of Akron. We are grateful to the Davey Expert Tree Company for donating material and labor to complete the spaces for our students.

**By providing an environment that is student-led and full of opportunities for exploration, children are naturally led to guess, test, rework and explore.**

It’s another example of how our beautiful setting in the national park embodies the values of our community and gives students a safe place to learn inside and out. ○



## LEARNING FARM

Ongoing capital improvements have continued at the farm as a result of a generous donor who cares deeply about Old Trail, the farm and our unique place in the national park. New locust split rail fences were installed during the fall and the greenhouses underwent a significant refurbishment with the installation of new film, the replacement of rotted wood and the repair of all doors during the winter break.

In addition to looking so much more appealing than the electric wire they replaced, the new fence posts are unique in that they measure 12 feet in length—4 feet underground and 8 above. The fencing includes more than 2 feet of woven wire beneath the surface to prevent groundhogs and other unwanted guests from getting into the garden. The posts themselves, which are composed of the hard, strong and heavy wood of the black locust tree, are built to stand the test of time and may very well last until Old Trail’s next century mark! ○

# Connecting to the Natural World

## MERRYWEATHER OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Despite challenges brought on by the pandemic and a harsh winter season, construction on the revolutionary Merryweather Outdoor Classroom, which spanned several months, was completed last summer.

Although health and safety guidelines precluded guests from regularly visiting the site, glances from Ira Road have begun to tell the story of the important role the state-of-the-art facility will play in the school's future. The space is both architecturally stunning and designed to serve the needs of students and faculty to learn about and explore the natural world.

Old Trail's pedagogy has long been rooted in experiential learning and, given its special location in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the school's increased emphasis on nature-based education and the many student-focused benefits associated with it—including the development of 21st century skills like problem-solving, creativity and communication, and improved physical and mental health—creates a natural match.

This project would not have been possible without the generous support of Tom Merryweather and countless other donors. Tom, and these donors, supported the school's vision for offering unique and transformative programs that emphasize the school's place in

the Valley in ways that prepare students to learn at school and for life.

With our students spending significant time outside during the fall and early winter of 2020, the Merryweather Outdoor Classroom has already become a regular hub for teaching, collaboration, inspiration, mindfulness and even sled riding! Even so, faculty from all divisions have just begun to scratch the surface of the many possibilities the space will be able to provide once the pandemic has safely passed.

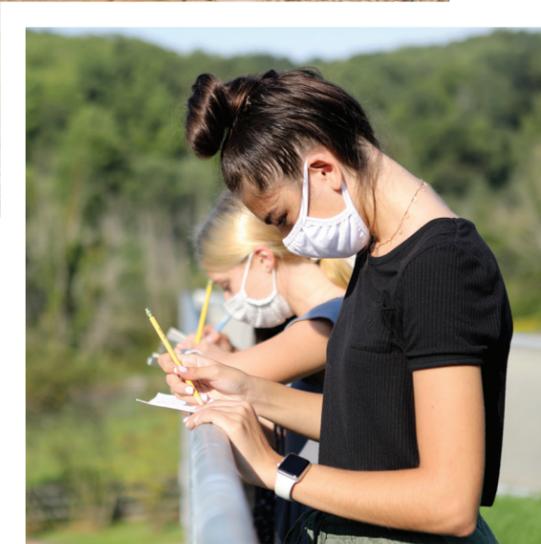
To spur this thinking and lead the integration of the outdoor classroom and the natural environment of our campus into next year's curriculum and student

experience, ECP teacher Erin McNamara has stepped into a new role as Old Trail's director of nature-based education.

Erin will have a visible presence next year working with students of all levels in a myriad of ways. Her classes will be taught in the outdoor classroom, which will be used as a springboard for exploration of other outdoor spaces on campus, such as the Learning Farm, the forts and tunnels area, and our own hiking trails and streams. Through collaboration with faculty and outside collaborators, Erin will help us develop unique and compelling programs for students of all divisions, who will have regularly scheduled time at the facility. As Sarah Johnston said during the groundbreaking, "Today is a significant day

in the future of our school. It is a day that symbolizes the forward momentum and the enhanced connection to our place in the Valley and all it has to offer."

Plans have also been discussed to use the facility for special events, including Feast from the Field, a movie night for families, musical performances, school community gatherings and celebrations, retreats, and possibly even graduation ceremonies. But at its core, the 2,000-square foot structure and surrounding space represents a significant addition to the outdoor education programming at Old Trail, an exciting reframing of the student experience, and a dynamic connection to the school's place in the national park. ○



**We look forward to hosting a dedication ceremony for the Merryweather Outdoor Classroom with our students during the 2021-22 school year.**



The world will forever remember the year of 2020. At Old Trail, we will never forget the unwavering spirit of the Class of 2020. Head of School Sarah Johnston closed her remarks this way:

**“The spirit of your class has nothing to do with what is happening in the world. Rather, it has everything to do with your personality, talents, humor and uniqueness. You leave today different than when you started at Old Trail. You leave with a stronger sense of self, resilience, knowledge and deeper relationships with each other. As you go forth into your next chapter, remember you will always be in our hearts and will be our treasured class of 2020.”**

# Old Trail School

with an outdoor

# celebrated its

graduation ceremony on campus

# unforgettable

on June 2, 2020.

# Class of 2020

**D**espite heavy rain that threatened the event all day, the skies cleared up just before the evening’s pageantries began and the sun shone brightly down on our guests of honor and their families. It was a fitting sendoff for our resilient and determined graduates who left campus prepared to go farther in high school, college and beyond because of their time at OTS.

The ceremony was a memorable scene for a number of reasons. As families arrived, Old Trail faculty and staff lined the parking lot to cheer on our graduates as they paraded through to their assigned parking spaces. It was an abundant display of affection and appreciation for a courageous group of young adults who had weathered so much. Families then watched the ceremony from their vehicles and celebrated with a chorus of car honking as each student was called up to receive his or her diploma.

There was much to celebrate. Despite multiple setbacks—from canceled class trips (both domestic and abroad) to canceled traditions (Spring Fling, the spring musical, Cedar Point, etc.) to the closing of campus for the final three months of school—each time the Class of 2020 recentered, reengaged and creatively reimagined ways to make life better for their classmates and others. Middle School Director David Chottiner summed up the collective group’s resolve this way during the ceremony:

“You’ve enriched your communities by feeding health care workers, you’ve taken charge of Student Council events and suggested ideas and plans for the entire school. You continued Trail to Service with a Virtual Walk-A-Thon, you’ve made face masks for our entire OTS faculty and staff. You’ve been remarkably present in your classes, approaching them with sincerity and seriousness from that first day. You staged a Zoom musical! You’ve even begged for extra Spanish lessons! Not once have I heard you say, ‘Why us? Why now? Who cares?’ Not once. In my wildest dreams, I could not have asked for an eighth grade class to manage this upheaval with such grace, positivity and determination.”

## CLASS SPEAKER AWARD

Brennan Christian

## BRIAN GIANCARLI AWARD

Liam Workman

## ALUMNI AWARDS

Alex Newman

Sydney Davis

## HEADMASTER’S SPIRIT AWARDS

Casey Bullock

Emily Levanduski

## VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Stephen Kosco

Ava Palfi

## HIGH ACADEMIC HONORS

Paige Dix



## Community Fridays and House Visits

Although teaching and learning dominate what happens each day at Old Trail during a typical in-person school day pre-pandemic, there is also so much more that happens in-between. Critical social development and moments that foster our sense of community occur daily during class changes, lunchtime and recess. With the school closure in March 2020, our school community lost so many of those important moments due to the virtual environment that the moment necessitated.

Our sense of community and the close relationships that form as a result form the foundation of the Old Trail School experience. To help students feel more socially connected, we developed an online series called Community Fridays during the school closure in 2020. On each Friday in May, teachers and staff members volunteered to offer age-appropriate, virtual sessions that filled

the entire school day. The classes were typically short (30 minutes to an hour) and featured a range of topics from enrichment (book clubs, STEM, writer's guild, etc.) to exploratory ("Plan a Fairy Garden!", "Music and Movement") to just plain fun (American Girl Doll, board games, making slime). The sessions were optional and allowed students to build their own schedules, based entirely on their interests, while also providing some much-needed child coverage for many of our families who were working remotely from home at the time.

By far, the most popular session was "Let's Make a Deal," which was hosted by our gregarious Middle School Director David Chottiner. Each week, students engaged in friendly competition—often scrambling to find random household items or answering wacky questions—to win an assortment of fun prizes. For the biggest winners, members of the school's



leadership team would personally drive to households to deliver the prizes. And while the prizes themselves may have been commonplace (Chick-fil-A or pizza delivery, for example), it was hard to place a value on the human connection that resulted during a time when the world was so isolated.

The parent of a child who won a house visit wrote: "We cannot tell you how much it meant to our family to see all of your faces tonight. Our children were so excited all week in anticipation and they were absolutely ecstatic to see all of you outside our home. It brought tears to our eyes when we saw everyone pull up to the house. We are beyond grateful to each and every one of you for taking your time to do something so special for our children. We know how hard you are all working and it meant the world that you took more time out of your day to bring so much joy to our family."

## Faculty Farewell

After three long months of exclusively virtual interactions, Old Trail students were able to see their teachers in person once again during a joyful Faculty Farewell in early June 2020. For the majority of students, it was their first time back on campus since March and the live interactions provided much-needed, healing relief for our school community, which had not been together for so long.

For nearly two hours, families processed through the OTS parking lot in their vehicles for the opportunity to say goodbye for the summer to their beloved faculty, who in return showered them with affection and encouragement. It was our way of thanking our remarkable students and their parents for their patience, understanding and trust during such a difficult year and a fitting way to celebrate the OTS community one last time.



## Teacher Appreciation

In May 2020, the Old Trail School Parents Association and several students surprised our faculty by showing up to their homes with an appreciation sign and bag of goodies. Teachers were overwhelmed to see these familiar faces in person and not via Zoom! In this way, our students and teachers concluded the school year on a positive note and were left feeling hopeful for the upcoming year.

Middle School Spanish teacher Marival Quesada said,

**"I couldn't even talk because I was so emotional! It was incredibly moving, and I was deeply touched. It was the best part of my month to finally see them in person."**





**D**uring an end-of-year meeting on Zoom with Old Trail School faculty and staff last June, Middle School Spanish teacher **Marival Quesada** was named the 2019-20 recipient of the **Catherine Silver McNamara Award**.

Each year, the OTS community submits nominations for the Catherine Silver McNamara Award, which is presented to a faculty member or administrator in recognition of his or her outstanding service to student achievement. Marival, who is the chair of Old Trail’s World Language Department, is currently in her fourth year at OTS and is known as an incredibly skilled and compassionate educator who is beloved by her students and colleagues.

“Marival gives her all every day and then some, and has taken risks and pushed the envelope with pedagogy to ensure amazing results for our students,” said Head of School Sarah Johnston. “I am very honored to watch her in action and believe she embodies the best of teaching practices on a daily basis. There is a real sense of gratitude for what she has brought to our school and students.”

Thanks to Marival’s leadership, the World Language classrooms at OTS have evolved in response to research on language acquisition and best practice so that every student can find success. Spanish classes are executed with comprehensible input in mind—the idea that language learners must be provided with spoken and written messages in the target language that are easily understood through highly interactive lessons. In this way, grammar-based practices are replaced with genuine engagement in the target language.

“Marival is loved by students because of her ability to make each child feel that they can be a ‘rock star student’ if they desire to be,” continued Sarah Johnston. “She not only espouses acceptance of the diversity of students but puts acceptance into practice on a day-to-day basis.

Marival encourages students to meet high standards (both in her class and outside of class) with warmth and confidence.”

**The Catherine Silver McNamara Faculty Award was established by the family of Catherine Silver McNamara ’70, following her untimely death in 1983.**

## Living Our Core Values Through Service

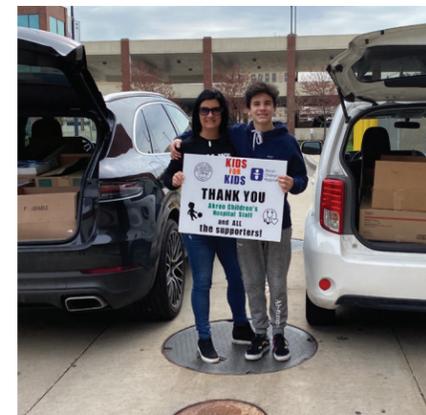
Last April, **Hayden Voth ’20** created a fundraiser to benefit a local business and the courageous healthcare professionals who are risking their lives on the frontlines every day. For his fundraiser, he chose Rizzi’s Ristorante & Pizzeria in Copley and Akron Children’s Hospital.

“Our community, our state, our country and the whole world are going through hard times,” he said. “Instead of focusing on the negative, I want to be positive and work to help people in this time of need. My classmates and I are truly blessed. In this time of struggle, we can all try to help others. So many small businesses are going through hard times.”

In just a matter of weeks, Hayden hit his fundraising goal of \$3,000! Hayden used the money to purchase meals from Rizzi’s, then delivered the food to Akron Children’s Hospital.

“Our physical selves should be isolated, but our thoughts and ideas should be the opposite,” he said. “So many small businesses are going through hard times. The least we can do, as young and helpful students, is to aid these struggling families and their businesses.”

Thank you, Hayden, for reminding us that kindness is a choice and that there are many creative ways to make others feel appreciated and supported.



# Class Notes

## 1 9 4 6

From **Charlotte Enyart Staiger**: “I am very happily settled at the Concordia Independent Living Facility. I spend my days in leisurely pursuits. The COVID pandemic has put quite a damper on any extracurricular activities that would have been happening around our area.”

## 1 9 5 1

**Sally Shively Healey** shares that she returned to California after living in Arizona for 22 years.

From **Nancy Anderson Shepard**: “I still cherish my wonderfully happy days at the ‘old’ Old Trail. The aim was to give us educated hearts; service as well as learning was stressed; my academic foundation was excellent. It led to college, family, career, volunteer work and contented old age. I credit the school in great part for how I lived my life and who I am.”

## 1 9 5 2

From **Jane Fields**: “I’ve lived for many years in this large, friendly co-op building in Manhattan’s Upper West Side, supposedly ‘the most liberal place on earth.’ My local political club had me writing ‘Do vote!’ postcards to Georgia,

for example. Anyway, I live with four non-political cats, who are a lot of company while COVID keeps us isolated. People are pretty serious about masks in this part of the city. I’ll let other people get into an elevator after me in my building, but many residents keep anyone else out. Hope 2021 calms down! But it’s a nice place to retire.”

## 1 9 5 8

**Nancy Smith Carlson** shares that she retired from teaching 14 years ago. “At 80 years of age, I am grateful for my health and have been my ill husband’s caregiver for years. We are grateful we traveled the world when we were younger and grateful that we are able to remain in our home.”

From **Roberta F. Jackson**: “Like a lot of people, not much exciting news. Since we’re now in Florida for the winter, we do get to play pickleball and ride our bikes. I have sewn one quilt top for Quilts of Valor, an organization that donates quilts to veterans. I’m about ready to start a crib quilt for Comfort for Kids. That, and some reading, keeps me occupied. Sarah B. O’Reilly arrives on Wednesday to claim a two-month rental. It will be good to be together. Hope everyone from ‘58 is doing fine!”

**Sarah Mabry O’Reilly** shares that she retired after 44 years in the estate sale business and is enjoying the time to travel and be at leisure. She spends a few months each winter in Florida and connects with a few old classmates there. “If Lake Geneva or Fort Myers are on your agenda, get in touch and we’ll share a glass of wine.”

## 1 9 6 0

From **Beth H. Brissing**: “We are well and enjoying life. We have five children between us. Four are married, with three living in Denmark with seven grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. We spend at least three months in Denmark in our home there. My two sons have five children between them and are expecting the first great grandchild on this side of the pond this spring. Wishing all my old classmates well.”

## 1 9 6 1

**Mary Ann B. McDowell** shares: “We are now Floridians and enjoying it.”

## 1 9 6 4

From **Betsy Reed Strubbe**: “Special thoughts of OTS, always! Jon and I have been married for 51 years with two sons and one grandson!”

From **Judy Burger Ziefel**: “Doing okay in Windsor, Colorado, during the pandemic with my husband of 51 years.”

## 1 9 6 9

From **Susan “Rosie” Rosenthal**: “I graduated from OTS in 1969 and still have great friendships from my years there! I moved back to Ohio for a few years after college, but then moved to Boulder, Colorado, where I lived from 1985-2015. Although I have a bachelor’s in English literature (from the

## Alumni Recognized

**Congratulations to Andrew Novak ’04 on being recognized by the Greater Akron Chamber as a recipient of the organization’s “30 for the Future” award.**

The annual award honors young professionals (ages 25-39) whose stellar contributions impact their industries and the Greater Akron Region. Andrew, who was a recipient of Old Trail’s Alumni Award in 2019, is a 2008 graduate of Walsh Jesuit and 2012 Graduate of Miami University’s Farmer School of Business with a bachelor’s in marketing.

In 2016, Andrew co-founded Summit Sports & Social in downtown Akron, which provides adult recreational sports leagues to young professionals in the region. The organization received a \$155,000+ grant from the Knight Foundation and Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition in April of 2019 to build a brand new four-court sand volleyball facility downtown (The Canal Courts), connecting the Towpath Trail and opening up space to the public outside the organization’s programmed activity.



University of Northern Iowa), I became a registered nurse in my 40s and worked in orthopedics/neurology at Boulder Community Hospital/Health for over 20 years. I retired to Phoenix, Arizona, in 2015, where I enjoy a healthy and active outdoor lifestyle.”

## 1 9 7 0

**Nancy Broers** thanks Old Trail for providing “such an excellent foundation which has supported me throughout my professional life in Washington, D.C.” Nancy was the Director of Music/Physical Education and Director of Field Education at Capitol Hill Day School from 1975-84, Director of Operations and Senior Account Executive at Washington Inc., a special events firm and destination management company from 1984-2000, and an events planner for Exxon Mobil from 2000 until her retirement in 2015.

## 1 9 8 1

From **Brad Oglesby**: “I have recently retired from teaching (high school French), a career sparked by the love of languages I discovered at Old Trail. I am proud to be among the last senior class to graduate from the Upper School. There were 11 students to receive diplomas in 1981.”

From **Amy Freitag**: “I lead the J. M. Kaplan Fund, a NYC-based family philanthropy that supports social justice, climate change mitigation and heritage conservation. My partner and I have three children and live in Montclair, New Jersey.”

## 1 9 8 3

Since graduating from Miami University in 1991, **Evan Karnoupakis** has split his career between business and education, earning an MBA from the Wharton School and an MAT in integrated mathematics from Kent State University. While working as an educational consultant, he initiated

the relationship between Old Trail and Stan Hywet that led to the signature program regularly featured in the Old Trail magazine. He also recently co-authored the best-selling book from O’Reilly Media, Inc., *Blockchain Success Stories: Case Studies from the Leading Edge of Business*. He currently resides with his wife and three children in Peninsula, Ohio, where they enjoy attending the Howe Meadow Farmers’ Market.

## 1 9 8 4

**Thomas Burkhardt** shares that he is the Founder/CEO of mPowered Credit Union Core Processing Software and currently has two kids attending OTS.

## 1 9 8 7

From **Jill Hamaker**: “I am a personal financial representative living in northeast Ohio. Love to travel!”

## 1 9 9 1

From **Julie (Warren) O’Brien**: “I am a Kindergarten teacher and preschool director in south Florida. My husband and I have a 6-year-old son, Odin, and four cats.”

## 1 9 9 3

From **Erin Mullin Shank**: “I keep in touch with Jessica Rohlik and Nicole Liambeis. I also had the pleasure of running into Emily Newhouse twice in the airport last year!”

## 1 9 9 6

From **Rita Tustin**: “I am a general manager and a mom. My youngest just started at OTS for Kindergarten.”

## 1 9 9 7

From **Andrew Doyle**: “Hey OTS, I’ve journeyed west since college at

DePaul University, and currently reside near Gig Harbor, Washington, with my wife, Amelia, and our golden retriever, Barry. Keeping busy during COVID at a software startup, fishing the Puget Sound and exploring the Olympic Peninsula.”

1 9 9 8

From **Sarah Elizabeth Halter:**

“I graduated from medical school in 2013. I’m now a family physician associated with the University of Washington. I live in Seattle with my husband, Carlos. We moved out here in 2015 and got married in 2016. I run half marathons when there isn’t a global pandemic.”

1 9 9 9

From **Andrew Haile:**

“I am currently an assistant attorney general in the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General.”

2 0 0 1

After graduating from Walsh Jesuit High School and then Villanova University, **Tiffany Vanjo (Villalba)** has lived in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Lafayette before settling for the past six years outside of Chicago. She is the field marketing manager for Molson Coors Beverage Company, where she has worked for the last eight years. While she loves her work, her biggest joy is her family. Tiffany married Justin Vanjo in 2014 and they have two children, Giovanni (3) and Viviana (1). She continues to get together with her Old Trail friends.

2 0 0 2

**Emily Clark** shares that she is currently living in Phoenix, Arizona.

2 0 0 4

After graduating from Walsh Jesuit High School and The Ohio State University, **Nicholas Villalba** continued his studies and graduated from Guelph University as a doctor of veterinary medicine. While at Ohio State, Nick met his future wife, Michelle (who is also a veterinarian). They married in 2016, have lived in Canada, Columbus and now have settled in Hudson, Ohio. Nick’s practice is in Aurora, while Michelle practices cardiology in Copley. They have one dog, two cats and a new baby daughter, Valerie, who is four months old and is the apple of her daddy’s eye.

From **Julia Liston:** “I moved back to northeast Ohio at the beginning of 2020. I now work at a law firm in downtown Cleveland and my husband and I just bought a house in Lakewood.”

2 0 0 5

From **Haley Preston:** “I am living in Eliot, Maine, and working as the Associate Director of Admission at Berwick Academy.”

2 0 0 7

From **Rosalie Woolf:** “After getting my bachelor’s in international studies from Allegheny College (2015) and my master’s in international relations at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland (2016), I moved to Washington, D.C., and have been working at the Institute of International Education (IIE) for four years. IIE is a non-profit organization that manages more than 200 study abroad programs worldwide, with the aim of fostering global connections, cultural and linguistic exchanges, and creating a more peaceful world through these experiences. I work as a program manager on the Department of Defense-funded programs, including the Boren Awards, the English

for Heritage Language Speakers program, and The Language Flagship. The Boren Awards and The Language Flagship programs focus on sending American citizens abroad to enhance their skills in critical languages and gain firsthand experience in the cultural environments of the country of interest. The English for Heritage Language Speakers program is targeted for American citizens who are native speakers of critical languages and wish to improve their English from an ILR 2 level to an ILR 3 level. These scholars already have a bachelor’s degree, some with master’s, PhD’s, JD’s, etc., and often enter the program with diverse backgrounds and professional experience. They graduate the program and go on to pursue careers in the federal government within the realm of national security.”

From **Tessa DiTirro Cronauer:**

“After graduating from The Ohio State University in 2015, I have been working as a reporter/anchor in the television news industry. I am currently in year three of reporting at WKRC Local 12 in Cincinnati, Ohio. I got married to Christian Cronauer on October 17, 2020. Christian is a funeral director who graduated from Brecksville Broadview Heights Local Schools and John Carroll University. We are starting our lives together in Cincinnati with the hope to be back in northeast Ohio in 2021!”



Tessa DiTirro Cronauer '07 and husband, Christian

## From Classmates to Colleagues: Alumni Paths Come Full Circle

**Raj Patel, MD '04 and Jacqueline Graham, MD '06 shared the halls of Old Trail for several years during their childhood. Jackie was at OTS for six years while Raj attended from preschool all the way through Grade 8 graduation. Neither could have predicted how their professional paths would one day become intertwined again many years later.**

After going their separate ways—Raj to Western Reserve Academy and Jackie to Hawken School—their shared interest in the field of dermatology brought them back together, first as students at Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED), then as residents at Geisinger Medical Center in Pennsylvania. Last summer, both Raj and Jackie accepted positions as dermatologists at Akron Dermatology.

“Whether it was having the Bath Fire Department teach me about fire safety, seeing and learning about boa constrictors in Mrs. Morgan’s science class, adventures to Indigo Lake with Mr. Yannarella, or having a famous after-school swimming birthday party with Mrs. Novak and Mr. Pintola, I will never forget these or countless other memories,” Raj said. “Experiences like these at Old Trail set the stage for my commitment to service and the sciences.”

After high school, Raj attended Emory University, where his interest in the healthcare system blossomed. He graduated in 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in health economics. After being reunited with Jackie at NEOMED, Raj completed his intern year at Summa Health System. He and Jackie went on to Geisinger Medical Center in Pennsylvania for dermatology residency, where Raj served as chief resident in his final year and received The O. Fred Miller Golden Curette Award for caring for each patient with equanimity, compassion and kindness.

Raj said he was attracted to the field of dermatology due to its integration of general medical care, procedures and pathology, and the ability to build lasting relationships with patients to manage their dermatologic conditions.

Jackie recalls OTS as a special place that helped shape her future. “I attribute numerous wonderful childhood memories to Old Trail, which still feels like home and where my friends and teachers feel like family,” she said.

“I particularly loved the class trips and many outdoor opportunities such as the Walk-a-Thon, ski club and the eighth grade canoe trip—despite our canoe being tipped over!”



**“The engaging classroom and out-of-classroom experiences truly sparked my passion for science.”**

Throughout college and medical school, Jackie dedicated much of her time to community service involvement, particularly with medical educational projects, childhood camps and working with underserved communities. She was inducted into Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) and the Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS), which recognizes students who are exemplars of compassionate patient care and who serve as role models, mentors and leaders in medicine.

Jackie chose dermatology as a specialty because of her interest in helping patients’ quality of life and self-esteem, the ability to have longitudinal patient relationships with a variety of age groups, the visual aspect of the field, and the combination of interesting underlying medicine with the chance to perform procedures. ○

2 0 0 9

After graduating from Walsh Jesuit High School and the University of Akron, **Anthony Villalba** has continued his studies in psychology. He has earned his Master of Arts degree and is working toward his Ph.D. in adult development and aging. He is currently teaching undergraduate studies at the University of Akron. Along with previous publications, he recently had an article published in *Frontiers in Psychology* as first author, and is continuing with his research. While Anthony loves to teach and conduct his research, he relaxes by bass fishing and has competed in numerous national bass fishing competitions.

2 0 1 1

**Virginia Swift** began a new job as advancement coordinator with the Preservation Society of Charleston, the nation's first community-organized preservation organization, which celebrated its centennial in 2020.

2 0 1 3

From **Duncan Ostrom**: "A lot has happened since I was a student at OTS. After attending Western Reserve Academy, I went to Tulane University, where I graduated in three years with a bachelor's degree in cell and molecular biology. I am currently teaching multiple biology classes and coaching both the riflery team and the JV boys volleyball team at Western Reserve Academy. It is nice to be back where I grew up and am thriving in my teaching position. Shout out to Skye Harwood '13 who told me I would be a good teacher back in fourth grade. I'm looking forward to our 10-year reunion that's fast approaching."

**Michael Malen** is a senior at Denison University, where he will be graduating this May with an economics degree.

To this day, Michael is still best friends with classmates he met at Old Trail. His mother shared that OTS provided Michael with the foundation necessary to thrive upon graduating.

2 0 1 4

From **Sophia V. Rose**: "I am currently enrolled at Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University where I will complete my Bachelor of Science degree in nursing in 2022. This summer, I was offered a position at the Cleveland Clinic in their operating room as a nurse extern. I am looking forward to being back in my hometown, while also making a difference in the lives of people around me! I truly miss Old Trail. I would not be the person I am today without the foundation and learning that I gained inside those walls."



Sophia V. Rose '14

2 0 1 5

**Joshua Kesling '15** is attending Oregon State University's Honors College, where he is studying natural resources conservation, with an emphasis on freshwater ecosystems. "With the honors college, I am beginning to research freshwater habitats along coastal formations, such as sand flats and dunes. Old Trail left an impeccable mark on my academics, well-being and overall communicative intelligence. I will always have a beautiful connection to the school blanketed by the hills of Ira."



Joshua Kesling '15

2 0 1 6

**Preston Malen** is currently a freshman in college at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida, where he was accepted with a generous academic scholarship. He is thoroughly loving the college experience. The Florida weather is a big bonus too! He plans to major in psychology and will graduate in the spring of 2024.

2 0 1 7

**Sean M. Brown** is a senior at Saint Ignatius High School, where he is a National Merit Finalist and member of the National Honor Society. Additionally, Sean has studied classical piano for 13 years and has been a piano student/performer at the Cleveland Institute of Music for almost a decade. His college plans include the pursuit of a double major in mathematics and piano performance. He is an Eagle Scout who replaced steps on the Furnace Loop Trail in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park for his Eagle Scout project. This trail is used by OTS students on their way to the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC). Sean and his parents, David and Rita Brown, continue to be grateful to all of his wonderful teachers at Old Trail School!



Sean M. Brown '17

2 0 2 0

**Alex Newman** advanced to Regionals after placing first at the National Association of Teachers of Singing State Competition (NATS) in the Opera category this winter. Alex is a freshman at Western Reserve Academy, where she is involved in the play "The Dining Room" and just completed a film project with a role in "All I Want is a Fair View." Alex enjoys making new friends,

honors dance, choir, baking club, yearbook club, REACH club, field hockey and working hard at her grades. She thanks EVERYONE at OTS for their encouragement and support over the years. Her family feels OTS is the very best place to raise a child. They are grateful for the 10 years Alex spent at Old Trail and want to extend a special thank you to Mrs. Ramos for her support and guidance toward Alex in music and voice over the years!

From **Caroline Gordon**: "I am a student at Western Reserve Academy and the Cleveland Institute of Music. I am a flute major in the pre-college program at the Cleveland Institute of Music. I am studying to become a performance major in college at a conservatory."

**Charlie Malen** is thriving at Archbishop Hoban High School where he played on the freshman football team last fall and plans to continue playing. He thinks the transition to his freshman year has been easier than anticipated because of the solid academic foundation he received at OTS. Charlie remains close with his OTS friends!



Left to right: Michael Malen '13, Charlie Malen '20, and Preston Malen '16

**Everyone has a story after they leave Old Trail School— share yours by contacting Constituent Engagement Manager Jodi Gabor at [jgabor@oldtrail.org](mailto:jgabor@oldtrail.org) or by calling 330-666-1118 (ext. 306).**

**The Old Trail School Magazine editorial staff also welcomes submissions and suggestions for feature stories. Please contact Director of Marketing and Communications Paul Warner at [pwarner@oldtrail.org](mailto:pwarner@oldtrail.org) to submit your idea.**

## Memorial and Honor Gifts

**IN HONOR OF ROY AND KARIN ALLEN**  
Mr. and Mrs. Rodd Sanders

**IN MEMORY OF CHARLES AND RETTA BILLOW**  
Mr. and Mrs. Roy Allen

**IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH MICHAEL BLANDA '10**  
Mrs. Audrey Vogel  
Drs. Joseph and Michelle Blanda

**IN MEMORY OF JOAN CARLSON '49**  
Mr. and Mrs. Roy Allen

**IN HONOR OF VIRGINIA FOX**  
Mrs. Frederica L. Winter '49

**IN MEMORY OF CHRISTINE FREITAG '52**  
Ms. Amy L. Freitag '81  
The J.M. Kaplan Fund

**IN MEMORY OF BRIAN GIANCARLI '77**  
Mr. James B. Cole '77

**IN MEMORY OF COLTON HUDSON '07**  
Dr. Robert Hudson & Ms. Audrey DeLong

**IN HONOR OF ANNIE SEIBERLING MELL '73**  
Mrs. Sandy Humenny

**IN MEMORY OF ANNE PETIT**  
Mr. and Mrs. Keith L. Bryant  
Mrs. Nicholas Hubiak  
Mr. and Mrs. Phillip W. Hoffert

**IN MEMORY OF JEAN PRESTON**  
Mr. and Mrs. Karl S. Hay (Ellen Freitag '46)  
Mrs. George T. Parry  
Mr. Thomas Merryweather  
Mrs. Nicholas Hubiak  
Mr. and Mrs. Rick Rogers

Mrs. John E. Martin (Sybby McEldowny '52)  
Mr. Jerry F. Whitmer  
Mr. and Mrs. John Childs  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bender  
Mr. and Mrs. Joe D. Henninger  
Mrs. Susan (Bruggemeier) Kruder '49  
Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Amer

**IN MEMORY OF KATIE PRYBYLA '11**  
Sarah C. Forhan '11

**IN MEMORY OF MINDY REMINGTON**  
Mr. Michael Gallagher  
and Ms. Parisa Damavandi '86

**IN MEMORY OF JULIE SCHWEIER**  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wilson  
Mrs. Nicholas Hubiak  
Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Rich

**IN MEMORY OF HELEN AND JAY SHULAN**  
Drs. David '69 and Mollie Shulan

**IN HONOR OF ANNE (ESTELLE) SMITH '55**  
Mr. Joe Vogel

**IN MEMORY OF OLLIE TOWNSEND "MRS. T."**  
Mr. and Mrs. Randall Gillenwater  
(Kimberly Pierce '65)

**IN MEMORY OF JEANETTE OSTROV WEIL '31**  
Mrs. Susan (Weil) Sorger '58

**IN MEMORY OF JUDGE JAMES WILLIAMS**  
Mrs. Nicholas Hubiak

**IN HONOR OF LIAM WORKMAN '20**  
Mrs. Ramona Hutchison



# Extraordinary growth in extraordinary times.

## A MOMENT OF REALIZATION

Head of School Sarah Johnston and Associate Head of School Joe Vogel spent two days in conversation with National Association of Independent School colleagues in February 2020 and left the association's annual meeting with one thing on their minds: The virus was going to dramatically impact the nation, Ohio and the Old Trail School community.

Old Trail immediately started to reenvision nearly every aspect of delivering its program by planning and resourcing a fully remote learning model. Joe Vogel remembers, "We had a very short time to make very serious decisions. It was a feeling of high pressure, but also confidence—we could make this work. What came to be was an incredible display of nimbleness and creativity." Vogel then began serving as an academic dean, working closely with the division directors to preserve academic integrity and quality. In anticipation of a statewide closure, on March 12, 2020, Old Trail announced the school would distribute technology, train faculty and make the transition to

distance learning over the next four days. From March 17 until the end of that school year, learning took place in synchronous and interactive Zoom classrooms and SeeSaw workspaces—and underwent constant refinement. The school's Distance Learning Plan outlined age- and division-appropriate goals, guidelines, schedules and technology. Every day, faculty reflected on the art of teaching, divisional directors reinvented and applied proven approaches, and community members found space and time to support one another.

The summer was spent planning for the simultaneous in-person and remote learning models the start of the 2020–21 academic year would require. The school established cohorts—small groups of six to eight students—to minimize virus spread, reimagined class schedules and spaces, designated teachers to provide synchronous learning for students at home, implemented daily health checks, and enhanced cleaning and ventilation. Says Vogel, "We built on what we learned in the spring and tapped educational resources to ensure every student would have a meaningful learning experience."

**"Old Trail's response was amazing and quick. There was constant communication and full synchronous learning from the beginning. And, even better, there were no gaps in my daughter's education or experience. We couldn't have asked for more."**

WILL HOLLAND, CURRENT PARENT



Old Trail School's Director of Technology, Sharon Winfrey, works with a student in person this past fall.

COVID-19 demanded new teaching models and technology, as well as resiliency and adaptability. This past year has been a collection of moments unlike any other in Old Trail School's 100-year history. These moments would challenge our school and, ultimately, strengthen our relationships and our commitment to providing the best learning experience for students.



Sarah Johnston delivers pizza to the home of Elle Swoope '23 as a prize for one of many competitions during the school's virtual Community Fridays. When our community reflects on the past year, it's moments like these that stand out.

- February 28** OTS begins formal preparedness and planning efforts
- March 12** OTS announces campus closure, effective March 13
- March 13–18** Distance learning faculty training and student orientations
- March 30** Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine extends school closures until May 1
- March 30** OTS shares the Distance Learning Plan
- March 31** Distance learning begins
- April 20** School closure order extended through June
- June 4** On-campus, outdoor graduation ceremony for Class of 2020
- July 2** State regulations received for in-person instruction
- July 23** OTS's Return to Campus Plan approved by health officials
- July 27** OTS shares the Return to Campus Plan
- August 23** Designated distance learning deans announced
- September 3** First day of in-person and distance learning

## APPRECIATION FOR OUR PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

“As far as technology, we were already prepared. We did not fumble finding the tools to support our teachers. We researched, tested and solved. It really was the human factor that was the most outstanding. We all worked together,” notes Director of Technology Sharon Winfrey. Others describe Sharon as the always present, thoughtful and confident centerpiece of Old Trail’s distance learning implementation. She and her team worked with division directors to identify age-appropriate technology, then trained faculty and offered countless hours of one-on-one technical support to remote faculty and students.

Old Trail’s physical and technological resources were essential, but it was individuals like Sharon who made 2020, and continue to make 2021, a success. Leadership team members balanced the professional and personal needs of their staff, and teachers recreated their classrooms in their homes and then, again, in Old Trail’s outdoor spaces.

## A CHANCE TO SEE MORE OPPORTUNITIES

“As an independent school, we can be agile and creative in ways public schools cannot, and will strive to fulfill our mission to your children in this anomalous time,” Sarah Johnston told the community in an email. Despite the immense challenges of the spring pivot and the fall, Old Trail was determined it would not break the continuity of care and education that

OTS families value. This intentional and consistent conviction helped focus conversations and guide decisions throughout 2020.

All agreed that Old Trail would work harder and go further for each student than other schools. Teachers created kitchen experiments, hosted nationally recognized guest speakers and produced *The Wizard of Oz* remotely, all so students could learn through the experiences so crucial to embed meaningful knowledge and critical thinking. The school maintained teacher mentorships, offered social and emotional support, and established distance learning deans to serve as students’ advocates to make sure each child felt known, heard and valued. Teachers used our 62-acre campus and outdoor learning spaces more than ever to gain the health and safety advantages of being outside without sacrificing critical learning opportunities. Faculty and staff visited every graduating student’s home and hand delivered prizes to Community Friday winners to remind all of the foundation of care that permeates our entire community.

Put simply, we know these are the most important years for children’s development and future, and years that cannot be revisited. Our teachers kept students fully engaged and not only mastered our typical academic content, but exceeded it. Our entire community gained skills that will prove invaluable. ○

## Old Trail School

Dear Old Trail Community,

It is a privilege to oversee philanthropic gifts to Old Trail and work with my colleagues in the development office to help create transformative and meaningful learning experiences for our students. Every gift matters and impacts the school greatly.

The OTS Fund, our most important fundraising effort each year, is a collaborative effort that enables Old Trail to fulfill its mission and benefits every student, in every classroom, every day. This fund is vital to the school’s daily operations and supplements our annual operating budget. Because of the generous support of parents, grandparents, alumni and friends of the school, Old Trail has transformed the lives of countless children for 100 years. A spirit of giving has defined our school since its inception.

No gift is too small, and the sum of all gifts allows us to address areas of greatest need and make the biggest impact on these critically important years of our student’s cognitive and social-emotional development. When learning becomes meaningful, its impact ripples for a lifetime.

If you have already supported The OTS Fund this year, we are incredibly grateful. If you haven’t, please consider making a gift today—every gift matters.

With gratitude,

Joe Vogel  
Associate Head of School



# Old Trail School

2315 Ira Road, P.O. 827, Bath, OH 44210



**I am from the Covington Old Trail School  
in West Akron, where our voices went on to influence  
our community and make a difference in the world.**

**LYNNE HARVEY MOUNT, CLASS OF 1961**