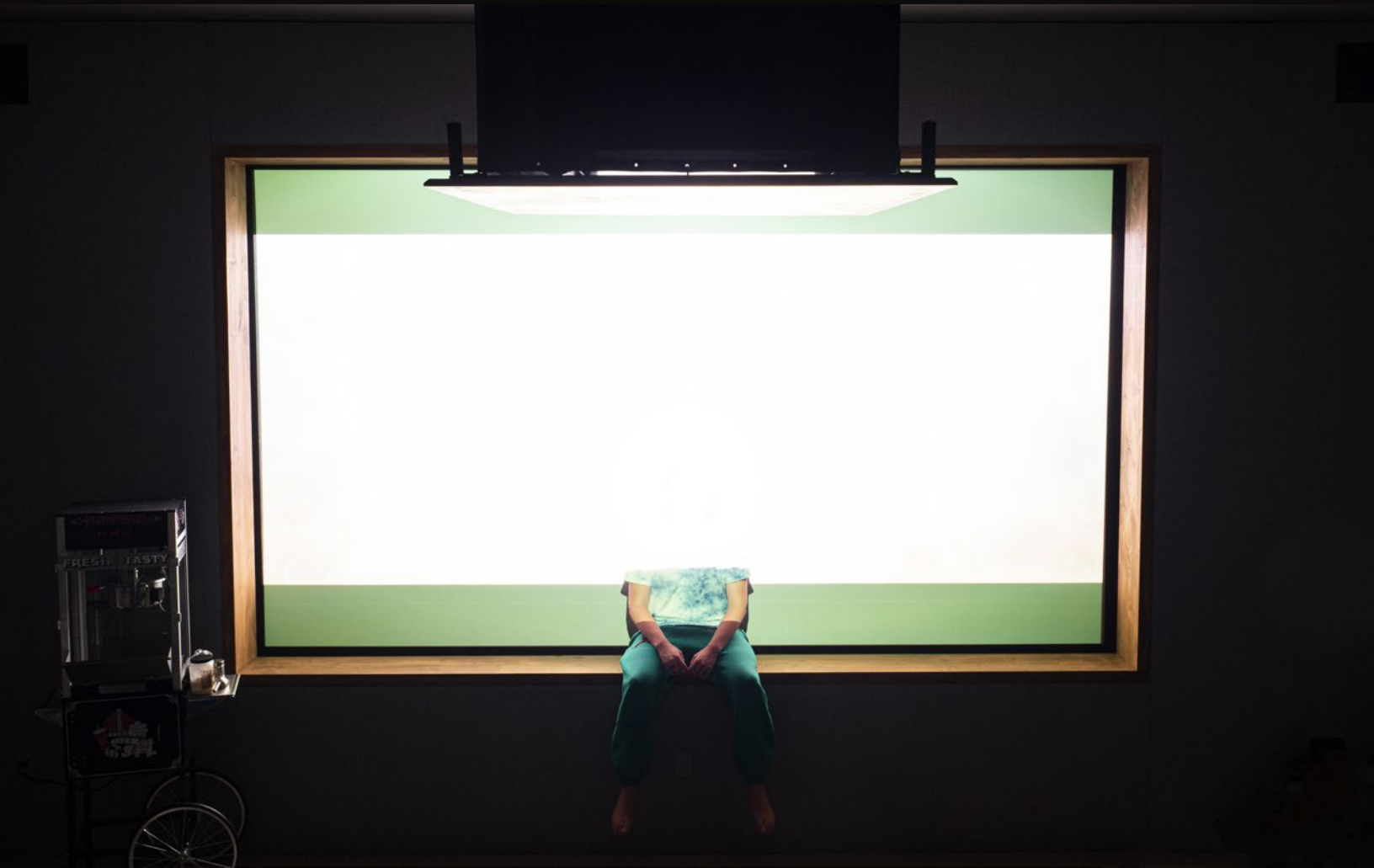


# NEXUS



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**MARIN**  
**ACADEMY**



VANGUARDS  
TRAILBLAZERS

CHARLES



CHANGEMAKERS

21TH CENTURY LEARNERS

“

The world is intersectional. Helping to mitigate climate change will also prevent so many children from being forced out of their homes after the kinds of unprecedented hurricanes and floods that devastated Central America this year. Which is to say, immigration justice is everywhere and connected to everything.

Alberta Born-Weiss '16

Page 48



"Horizon" by Elsa S.

”

#### COMMUNITY IMPACT

"As members of the MA community, we are asked to make sense of this moment in history and accept the responsibilities posed by education in a democratic society. The past year has pushed us to focus on systemic inequalities rooted in our society and indicted our democracy's lack of integrity in its ability to serve ALL people equitably.

Amidst a global pandemic, the ongoing fight for racial justice, climate crisis, and the recent presidential election, we are tasked with re-evaluating our institutions and how they are serving our democracy. "

Conference on Democracy 2021 Student Organizers

“

Never lose hope and don't let yourself feel discouraged from your dreams.

Camila Carrera '14

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# CHANGEMAKING IS IN OUR DNA

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BY TRAVIS BROWNLEY, HEAD OF SCHOOL

**O**ur world has changed, the last year propelling us further into a future marked by unknowns. The pandemic ongoing, inequality deepening, the climate crisis accelerating, constant political turmoil, there are days when we wake up feeling lost and alone. And yet, as Emily Dickenson offers:

"Hope" is the thing with feathers —  
That perches in the soul —  
And sings the tune without the words —  
And never stops — at all —

We at Marin Academy have a gift and a responsibility to innovate for the greater good. Changemaking is in our DNA, fundamental to our mission of challenging each other to accept the responsibilities posed by education in a democratic society. We are dedicated to cultivating a deep-rooted sense of empathy and providing the resources and opportunities to take action. Whether pushing our school to question, examine, and take responsibility for our missteps or dedicating our lives to supporting migrant children in detention at the border, we, agents of change, must be tenacious but flexible and collaborative. Perhaps most importantly, we need to be courageous and to remain undaunted.

In this issue of NEXUS, we follow our last issue's exploration of Marin Academy's intentional shift towards an equity-driven, competency-based education and share insights and stories of students, programs, and alumni that inspire us. We are honored to be a part of their journey. The size and complexity of the challenges we face in 2021 dictate our need for new voices and changemakers of all kinds.

I hope you enjoy this edition of NEXUS, where we celebrate the pathfinding Class of 2021, the generosity of our visionaries in the Annual Report, the Wildcat trailblazers, and the vanguard artists that come together to make our beloved school. I sincerely hope that you will join us in renewing our commitment to challenging ourselves and staying compassionate and curious.

Warm Regards,



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# BRIZENDINE VISITING SCHOLARS

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- › How is teen mental health being affected by the pandemic?
- › How food can help us better understand the past?
- › What tools have teens developed to cope with COVID?
- › What is the relationship between food identity and food justice?
- › Will the pandemic produce long-term impacts on today's teens?
- › What tools can we develop to improve our racial literacy skills?

**T**hese were just a few of the questions the History and Human Development departments sought to answer in 2020–2021 through the funding provided by the Brizendine Visiting Scholars Program. Over the course of the academic year, the program brought a total of 13 experts to campus to meet with students and faculty over Zoom.

In March, Human Development teachers Sanjai Moses and Nicole Stanton hosted an evening program that built upon the foundational pillars of their mental health curriculum. They organized an innovative dialog between professionals and students that allowed the professionals to gain a better understanding of teen experiences during COVID and allowed students to learn how their experiences fit and did not fit with national norms.

The expert panelists were:

› **Dr. Christine Garcia**, Clinical Psychologist and Director at Edgewood Center, which offers the full continuum of behavioral health services.  
[edgewood.org/team/christine-garcia-psyd](http://edgewood.org/team/christine-garcia-psyd)

› **Dr. Aralynn McMane**, Director, Global Youth & News, which is based in Paris and recognizes teen journalists.  
[globalyouthandnewsmediaprize.net](http://globalyouthandnewsmediaprize.net)

› **Dr. Jason Nagata**, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at UCSF, who specializes in eating disorders in boys and men and LGBTQ+ health.  
[profiles.ucsf.edu/jason.nagata](http://profiles.ucsf.edu/jason.nagata)

› **Dr. Michael Torres**, Therapist at Kaiser and in private practice, who specializes in teen depression and substance abuse.  
[drmichaeltorres.com](http://drmichaeltorres.com)

The students spoke with considerable candor about the "the loss of motivation" and "lack of purpose" they felt because of the mandated isolation. They noted how hard it was to experience "less energy" and to have trouble sleeping because "I'm trapped in my room all the time." Students also realized how much they missed in-class discussions compared to those over Zoom, and how much anxiety the lack of separation of home and school created. But their message had positive elements too. The teen panelists commented on the ways in which the pandemic "made my close friendships deeper," "allowed me to develop new interests," and "helped me to know myself better."



Dr. Christine Garcia



Dr. Aralynn McMane



Dr. Jason Nagata



Dr. Michael Torres

Dr. Garcia noted how much resiliency she has seen in teens and their response to COVID and ventured that there will be a long-term reshuffling for teens about what is really important to them. The development of self-identity and the ways teens process emotions will be different because of the pandemic. Dr. Nagata commented on the ways in which increased screen time has affected teen body image and reported that UCSF had seen a dramatic rise in the number of students with eating disorders as a result. Dr. Torres predicted that teens will emerge from the pandemic with a greater clarification of the self and that there will not be long-term negative mental health consequences, only positive ones. And Dr. McMane urged all students to speak their truth and document their experiences through writing.

This programming allowed students, teachers, and outside experts to witness both the complexity and the richness of the pandemic. It is an event that has shaped everyone—perhaps teens most of all.



Bryant Terry, photo by Celeste Noche

During the last week of school, the History Department organized a half-day program about food history, food identity, and food justice. The day began with a keynote conversation between department chair Candace Chen and noted chef **Bryant Terry**. Terry began by talking about some of the major food influences in his life: the rap song "Beef," by KRS-One, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, "How to Eat to Live" by Elijah Muhammad, and Dick Gregory's *Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat: Cookin' With Mother Nature*. These works led Terry to become a vegan, and he has since dedicated his life to diversifying industries, promoting equity, and celebrating food. He said, "Eating is about pleasurable experiences and food is for enjoying. But food is also visceral, cerebral, and political." The dominance of "industrial food means that making food from scratch is an act of resistance to late capitalism." Terry also urged students to "find your own path and be focused on your own vision," rather than be tied to preconceived notions of success.

After Terry's keynote, students and faculty broke up into groups for two rotations of concurrent workshops and presentations. These sessions were led by accomplished individuals in their respective fields:

- › Edible Expressions: Food Art Through the Ages, Dr. Heather Hoag, Environmental Historian, University of San Francisco
- › Flavorways Of Identity: Writing About Food and Identity, Noah Cho, Teacher, MCDS and Writer for *Catapult*
- › From Corn Gods to Corn Capitalism – A Very Brief History of Zea Mays, Dr. Melanie J. Miller, Bio-Archeologist, UC-Berkeley
- › Then & Now: Sharing My Culture Through Food, Anthony Salguero, Chef, Popoca-Oakland
- › Uncovering Lost Restaurants, Alexandria Brown, Author, *Lost Restaurants of Napa Valley*
- › What's on Your Meat Pie? Exploring Chinese American Homestyle Foodways Through Community Cookbooks, Dr. Kelly Fong, Asian American Studies, UCLA
- › Walking Backwards into the Future: Reviving Traditional Agriculture In Hālawā Valley, Moloka'i, Dr. Jillian Swift, Environmental Archaeologist, Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawai'i

The History Department also dedicated part of its funding to work with clinical psychologist **Dr. Howard Stevenson** of the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Stevenson met with the department in February to talk about interpersonal racial stress and how to develop strategies for managing it. The department was so impressed with Stevenson's approach that MA invited him to come back to speak to the entire student body in May. Stevenson also met separately with students of color and with the History Department in June in a follow-up workshop.



Dr. Howard Stevenson

For questions about these events or the Brizendine Visiting Scholars program generally, please contact **Derek Anderson, Library Director**.

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# SI, SE PUEDE

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## At Marin Academy's Conference on Democracy Dolores Huerta Inspires Activism



**O**n April 29, Marin Academy students, educators, alumni, and parents sat transfixed as Dolores Huerta, civil rights pioneer and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, ignited the activist in each and every one of us. Huerta brought an intersectional vision to her dynamic keynote address on civic engagement during MA's annual Conference on Democracy. As an American labor leader who, with Cesar Chavez, co-founded the National Farmworkers Association, Huerta recognized early on that the specific needs of workers varied depending on their diverse identities.

"Her lifelong pursuit of workers', immigrants', and women's rights and the courage she has had as a leader is inspiring to me. She has embodied her call to action of 'Si, se puede' in so many ways, including often being the only woman, or the first woman, to be in various organizations or leadership roles at the time. She is a groundbreaker and inspires me to be one too," **Chiara S. '22**, one of the conference's student organizers shared.

"Dolores Huerta reminds us that reforming democracy takes work every day on the individual level. Everyone has the space to recognize their own personal privilege, commit to making

“

**Every moment  
is an organizing  
opportunity,  
every person a  
potential activist,  
every minute a  
chance to change  
the world.**

Dolores Huerta

”



positive changes, and uplift the voices of others. When we gather together with a shared purpose and get organized, we can change the world." Chiara continued, "Conference on Democracy throws students into discussions and interactive sessions that allow us to investigate the state of our democracy and grapple with issues like voter suppression, police brutality, and the growing climate crisis. My hope is that we can all come away from the day feeling empowered to make a difference in our communities."

Although Conference on Democracy, founded in 2004, was virtual this year, Marin Academy's student leaders and organizers dedicated themselves to bringing together civic leaders and change-makers to shed light on systemic inequalities rooted in our society. The conference invited students, parents, alumni, and community members to identify meaningful ways to increase the sustainability of our democracy on an

individual, local, and global level. From behavioral economics, neuroscience, and voting rights, to youth activism, and ethical listening, participants were challenged to listen, learn, and initiate change in an environment of collaboration.



*Chiara S. '22, one of the conference's student organizers*

“

**Dolores Huerta  
reminds us  
that reforming  
democracy takes  
work every day  
on the individual  
level.**

Chiara S. '22

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# GO FORTH!

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## Congratulations to the Class of 2021!

**T**he Class of 2021 embraced this year with inspiring courage, empathy, and compassion. Our seniors embarked on their final year at Marin Academy under a cloud of uncertainty. The pandemic forced us all to pivot, flex, and reimagine every aspect of school life. Yet, our seniors found a way to provide ingenuity, creativity, and compassion to provide a beacon of hope and support for the other students.

They welcomed the Class of 2024 with signs of encouragement plastering the walls in every building when they were finally able to return to campus: "Welcome to MA," "We've got this," "Embrace the Challenge. Adapt," "We're here for you." These messages remained, reminding us that we are a community bound by our commitment to each other and the world at large. The year went on, and the Class of 2021 refused to be deterred by a changed and often virtual senior year. They inspired us with art, dance, music, and theater performances. Athletes trained for months without knowing if they would even be able to compete. They charted a path and showed us new ways to share, celebrate, and lead.

When @dearacademy challenged us all to strive for a better Marin Academy and acknowledge our mistakes both as individuals and as an institution with a deeply held commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the members of the Class of 2021 raised their voices and urged reflection and change. Our student IDEQ leaders came together with advisors, faculty, and administration and found new avenues for growth. As our graduates go forth into the next chapter of their lives, we honor their power and leadership to face challenges, rise up, and create change. Congratulations to our pathfinders, the Class of 2021.





## HEAD'S CUP

The Head's Cup was established in 1987 to honor the centering values of Marin Academy inspired by the school's first Headmaster, William McCluskey. The graduate receiving this cup best exemplifies the ideals of the school while nurturing and demonstrating a deep moral commitment in all that they do. In their relationship with peers, the faculty, and the administration, this student has shown strong attitudes of mind and character.

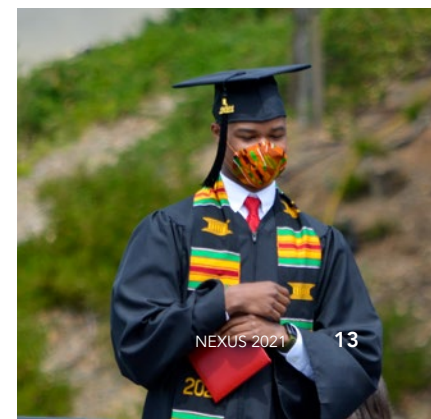
This year's recipient, **EDER RUIZ**, is known for many things: his intellectual scholarship, his persistent commitment to social justice through his role as an IDEQ leader, and his resilience. His courage is evident in his actions. Eder has been focused and tireless in his commitment to make the world a better place and to make Marin Academy a stronger and more inclusive community.



## ZUMBRUN AWARD

In memory of Danielle Plumb Zumbrun and in recognition of her keen appreciation of nature and her sense of responsibility as a caretaker of the earth, this award recognizes outstanding student leadership in the outings program.

This year's Zumbrun recipient, **ZARA KIGER**, has an enthusiasm for the outdoors that is genuinely contagious. Not only does she sign up for outings early and often, she always brings a friend or three. She was the most active participant during early quarantine, going for responsibly distanced runs and hikes with peers. She brings her joy and engagement as a leader every day.



## And They're Off...

American University  
Arizona State University (Main Campus)  
Barnard College (3)  
Boston University  
Bowdoin College  
Brown University (3)  
Bryn Mawr College  
California Polytechnic State University  
(San Luis Obispo) (5)  
California State Polytechnic University  
(Pomona)  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Chapman University (3)  
Colby College  
Colgate University (2)  
Colorado College (4)  
Dartmouth College  
Davidson College  
Duke University (2)  
Emory University  
Fordham University

Hamilton College (2)  
Haverford College  
Lewis & Clark College  
Macalester College  
Middlebury College  
Northeastern University (4)  
Occidental College (3)  
Oregon State University  
Oxford College of Emory University  
Pepperdine University  
San Diego State University (2)  
Santa Clara University  
Scripps College  
Smith College  
Swarthmore College  
Syracuse University  
The New School  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Trinity College Dublin  
Tulane University of Louisiana (8)  
University of California (Berkeley) (2)

University of California (Irvine) (2)  
University of California (Santa Barbara) (2)  
University of Colorado Boulder (5)  
University of Miami (3)  
University of Michigan  
University of Oregon (2)  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Redlands  
University of Rochester  
University of San Diego  
University of South Carolina  
University of Southern California  
University of St. Andrews (4)  
University of Virginia (Main Campus) (3)  
Vanderbilt University  
Vassar College  
Wake Forest University (2)  
Washington University in St. Louis (4)  
Western Washington University  
Whittier College  
Yale University







# TRAILBLAZERS

## Go Wildcats!

**S**ports require nimble and flexible athletes, but the starts, stops, and many twists and turns of last year demanded those traits in new ways. We are grateful for and recognize and celebrate all our athletic teams, student-athletes, coaches, volunteers, parents, and anyone who made last year a success for MA Athletics. Although there weren't any tournaments or championships, our athletes and coaches found new ways to connect, compete, and engage. In fact, while the landscape shifted, one thing did not: teamwork and care for community took center stage.

Marin Academy's Most Outstanding Sportspersons for the 2020—2021 year were the student-athletes of the Class of

2021. With a full quarter of their high school athletic experience sidelined by the pandemic—from March of their junior year through spring of their senior year—the student-athletes of the Class of 2021 persevered. Our senior student-athletes remained steadfast in their commitment to MA athletics and embraced their roles as leaders of the younger Wildcats.

**Georgia Brown '21** and **Jacob Young '21**, were both recognized by the Marin Athletic Foundation for their excellence in athletic involvement, scholarship, leadership, deportment, and participation in the school community. **Ella Hyman '21** was honored for playing 10 seasons of sports in her 4 years at Marin Academy.





## Shout Out to Our Wildcats

Boys Cross Country  
Girls Cross Country  
Boys Tennis  
Girls Tennis  
Girls Volleyball  
Boys Water Polo  
Girls+ Water Polo  
Boys Basketball  
Girls Basketball  
Boys Soccer  
Girls Soccer  
Baseball  
Golf  
Boys Lacrosse  
Girls Lacrosse  
Boys Swimming  
Girls Swimming  
Boys Track & Field  
Girls Track & Field  
Mountain Biking Club



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# CROSSROADS REFLECTS ON 20 YEARS

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## Fostering Leaders Dedicated to Equity

**O**n a hazy October afternoon, Marin Academy students and Crossroads middle schoolers logged on to a virtual classroom for more than just an afternoon tutoring session. Despite frequent challenges with technology, internet connections, and the long days on Zoom and Google Classrooms, these students knew they had an opportunity to be together, a chance to build bridges, and a moment to connect. Crossroads Director, **Abby French**, spent the afternoon popping in and out of breakout rooms and tutoring groups to find one example after another of joyful learning. Tutors led students in laughter-filled games of Kahoot to test their knowledge of a topic or prepare for an upcoming quiz. Groups engaged in critical conversations after watching KQED news clips. They used virtual whiteboards to dig deeper into their understanding of algebra. They discussed their academic and personal goals in a school year vastly different from anything they had previously experienced. They worked through challenges and celebrated successes. Each session ended with a moment for "props," an opportunity



for the Crossroads community to share appreciation for each other. Words like fun, hard work, persistence, support, growth, and accomplishment frequently floated around the digital classroom.

Founded in 2001, Crossroads was created to address issues of educational equity and the opportunity gap in the San Rafael community. Crossroads is an academic support and enrichment program that partners with Davidson and Venetia Valley middle schools to work with 7th- and 8th-grade students, many of whom will be the first generation in their families to attend college. Crossroads strives to create a space where students can fully realize their

potential and develop a lifelong love for learning. The program's founding Director, **Rey Fernandez**, reflects on the vision that inspired the program twenty years ago, "We asserted that talent and potential are equally distributed, but opportunity isn't, for a host of systemic and historical reasons. I'd spent a lot of time meeting with community-based organizations and school leaders in the Canal, and it was clear to me that Marin Academy could facilitate connecting curious and dedicated youth with opportunity, and that's where the name Crossroads came from."

Marin Academy student tutors and fellows design curriculum, teach classes,



"It was clear to [Crossroads' founding Director, **Rey Fernandez**] that Marin Academy could facilitate connecting curious and dedicated youth with opportunity."



and mentor middle-school students with support from the Crossroads leadership team. The relationships that form between the MA students and the Crossroads students can be life-altering. **Zara Kiger '21** described leading a class with classmate **Jazmin Moreno '21** to build community and strengthen the relationships amongst a small group of girls from Crossroads. "We spent our first class 'vision boarding' and creating boards of all our dreams, aspirations, and goals. It was truly an amazing bonding experience. We all shared stories about our lives and heard about each other's experiences at school, but also we all got a glimpse into each person's hopes for the

future." Zara continued, "Crossroads has shown me that each and every person has something to offer, and the people I met in Crossroads helped me grow deeply as a person. Participating in Crossroads as both a tutor and fellow has made me a better listener, teacher, and leader."

Inspired by her four years in the program, Zara shared that "the work of Crossroads is so important because issues of education equity and gaps in opportunity continue to persist in San Rafael, in all of Marin, in all of California, nationally, and globally. By giving support and mentorship to young middle school students,

Crossroads allows students to reach the potential they have within themselves. Any student can learn to be a leader and truly make a difference in this world and in the lives of others *if* they are given support, mentorship, opportunities from others." Twenty years later, Rey Fernandez's vision for Crossroads is perfectly reflected in the voice of a recent alumna.

**Rebekka Dagher '12** first began as a Crossroads student who then attended Marin Academy and served in Crossroads as a tutor and fellow. "Crossroads, and all programs like it, is a mutual investment with the community. When Marin Academy

provides vital funding and enrichment for Crossroads students, these students can develop crucial skills in social-emotional development, decision-making, and study skills. They begin to recognize their value, understand the opportunities available to them, and feel supported throughout. With these lessons in their repertoire, the students are then eager to give back to their community. Crossroads helps to build our students up so they can be the leaders and role models for their families, peers, neighbors, and future students in their community." After six years in the program, Rebekka went on to become the Director of Aim High at Marin Academy and a bilingual speech-therapist in Berkeley Public Schools. She

continues, "My time as a Crossroads student helped prepare me to become a leader. My own Crossroads tutors had helped me gain the self-esteem needed to help others and made me eager to do so. Being able to lift up students who reminded me of myself was a tremendously valuable experience that helped me grow into myself throughout my four years at MA."

Now in the face of a global pandemic, our community and our nation have seen educational inequity grow and the chasm of opportunity deepen. Current Crossroads Director Abby French sees our 20th anniversary as an opportunity to dig even deeper and recommit to the vision that inspired

Marin Academy to create the program in 2001. Mission-driven, collaborative, and biased toward action, Crossroads is much more than a tutoring program. Crossroads challenges each person to accept the responsibilities posed by education in a democratic society and continues to inspire alumnae like Rebekka and Zara in their work towards a more equitable future.

## Authors and contributors

**Abby French** has been the Director of the Crossroads Program for the past eight years. Before joining Marin Academy, Abby spent her summers at MA as a Director and teacher in the Aim High Program. She has a master's degree in bilingual education and also teaches Spanish at Marin Academy. She can be found on the dance floor, cooking, enjoying an art museum, or in the great outdoors with her friends and family in her free time.

**Rebekka Dagher ('12)** is a former Crossroads student, tutor, fellow, and a Marin Academy alumnus. She currently works in Berkeley as a bilingual speech-language therapist during the school year and is a site director with the Aim High for High School program during the summer. She can be found rock climbing, taking up random hobbies, or learning far too many new jokes in her off-time.

**Zara Kiger ('21)** is headed to New Hampshire in the fall to attend Dartmouth College. She is passionate about biology, neuroscience, psychology, and sociology and hopes to continue to learn with the interdisciplinary perspective she garnered from her time at MA. She was active in student leadership, IDEQ, and was a leader of Mixed. From her experience with Crossroads and other programs at MA, Zara shares, "I know that whatever I end up doing, I want to work to address forms of existing inequality in society."



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# SEEDS OF CHANGE

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## Marin Academy Community Addresses Food Insecurity in Marin

Marin Academy families, faculty, and staff had arrived to collect packaged seeds, soil, and containers to grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs at their own homes. Organized by **MA Gardening for Food Security**, a collaboration of MA's Climate Action Council, Community Action, and Marin Academy Parents' Association, the event was the first of many at MA to address

**C**ars lined The Circle, bringing an unusual amount of activity to campus on a Saturday morning last November. Masked

the overwhelming demand on food banks in Marin County. In March, the seedlings would be brought back to MA to be transplanted into the MA garden and eventually distributed to local families in need.

Led by students **Ashley M. '22** and **Negin G. '22**, with support from MA gardener **Gina Neri** and MA teachers **James Hughes**, **Liz Gottleib**, and **Mark Stefanski**, MA Gardening for Food Security was created in response to increasing food insecurity in Marin County. Defined as a "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods or uncertain ability to acquire these foods in socially acceptable ways" by Healthy Marin, food insecurity is exacerbated by poverty and unemployment and is associated with chronic health problems in adults and children.

The pandemic has further intensified food insecurity in Marin and across the country. Today it is estimated that 12.2% of Marin County suffers from food insecurity. "In the garden, I learned how much work goes into getting produce planted, harvested, and cleaned so that people can enjoy it. By looking at the work that MA community members, including the Marin Academy Parents' Association, are doing to plant and transport food to places in the Bay Area, I am inspired to help out more to reduce the effects of inequality within the Bay Area. Awareness needs to be raised to combat this issue, which impacts such a large portion of our community," shared **Tyler H. '22**.

The program began by filling Marin Community Fridges, which offered a

place for anyone in the community to access fresh and healthy food. As the program expanded, it began partnering with Marin Community Clinics (MCC) in San Rafael and Novato, one of several organizations serving food-insecure families in Marin County. Through the MCC and MA partnership, they began providing live plants to families. Recognizing the potential issues that could occur based on assumptions about the food and dietary needs of the community they were working with, the program members worked together to survey MCC participants to ensure that MA volunteers produced and provided the foods that would be most appreciated and used in their daily lives. As a result, participants received herbs, bok choy, tomatoes, melons, cucumbers, soil,

containers, and instructions on how to grow the plants. Each Wednesday, some 350 cars would come through for food at the San Rafael site, and another 350 arrived at the Novato Health Hub each Thursday.

Aligning with MA's commitment to engage students in real-world topics and to learn by doing, students in MA's Environmental Science class participated in produce production, analyzed the data, and drew connections to other subjects they had been learning about. In addition to working in the MA garden to sow, harvest, and process food, students learned about local organizations, policies, and programs addressing food security and insecurity, identified what actions and steps they could take



One Health Hub participant shared, "The plants were amazing and wonderful. When we got home we planted them immediately, and in a short time they already started to sprout fruit and it was really cool to see. It's been saving us money to grow our own vegetables and fruits at home, and it's been a really cool process. It's shown me a lot about caring for the little things and is a source of relaxation when my mind gets too busy with academics or other personal issues."



Student leader and environmental science student **Ashley M. '22** reflected on her experience: "It was really exciting to get to see this project through. It's an amazing project, and I look forward to continuing with it."



to address food security and insecurity locally, and documented their learning and experiences. **Aden A. '22** shared, "The first connection that comes to mind for me is how racial inequality intersects environmental justice, as we read in *Alien Land Ethic*, earlier this year. This sort of connection between land justice and food justice also connects to what we have explored in history class this year, through our observations of the legacy of America's past in modern times." Classmate, **Rinchen H. '22** offered, "One of the connections I see between this unit and my US History class is the different factors that lead to segregation. In history, I learned about redlining and how denying black people mortgages in the 20th century has caused a major wealth

gap that perpetuates the synonymy of racially and economically segregated neighborhoods."

In April, at MA's Conference on Democracy (COD), students, faculty, and staff discussed how local organizations are responding to the problem of Marin's food insecurity, how the MA gardening program is part of this response, and how to become part of the solution to local food insecurity. As a result, MA Gardening for Food Security was invited to join the Marin County HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Collaborative. HEAL's mission is to increase CalFresh enrollment in Marin, provide access to food for hungry people when they need it, and improve systems around

the built environment. Environmental science students will join HEAL's monthly meetings to find out how they can contribute going forward. This collaboration with HEAL is a terrific opportunity for MA Gardening for Food Security as they persevere in their goal to ameliorate food insecurity in Marin.

Born in a global pandemic and inspired by student leaders and changemakers, this project is just beginning to grow. MA Gardening for Food Security will continue to provide opportunities for MA students, faculty, and the Marin Academy Parents' Association to expand our positive impact on the San Rafael community and greater Marin County.

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# COMMUNITY OUTREACH WITH MAPA

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## Expanding our Community Impact with Marin Academy Parents' Association

**D**espite being unable to host their typical in-person events, the Marin Academy Parents' Association (MAPA) offered many opportunities for the MA community to connect with local neighborhoods and organizations throughout the school year.

Once a month, families were invited to make lunches for St. Vincent de Paul's free dining programs. Participants gathered in their own homes and connected via Zoom while preparing bag lunches for St. Vincent's. In total, they produced over 1,400 lunches for vulnerable San Rafael residents.

Additionally, MAPA collaborated with MA's Climate Action Council and Community Action to launch **MA Gardening for Food Security**, a project to address food insecurity suffered by families in Marin County. As part of this project, packages of seeds, soil, and small growing containers were given to MA

families to grow vegetables and herbs at their own homes during shelter in place, either in existing garden spaces or indoors in their kitchens. The harvested food, including lettuce, beans, kale, cilantro, bok choy, and tomatoes, was distributed to local families in need through existing non-profit organizations, including the SF-Marin Food Bank, Marin Community Fridges, and St. Vincent de Paul.

MAPA plans to continue to expand their community outreach efforts with monthly community engagement events and their involvement in MA Gardening for Food Security. The Freshman Community Action event for the fall will include additional activities to connect with our local population, such as making seed balls with the Marin County Park Rangers to assist the local parks in propagating native species, making cards for homebound seniors through Whistlestop and Meals on Wheels, and even creating toys for dogs and cats at the Marin Humane Society.

The mission of the **MARIN ACADEMY PARENTS' ASSOCIATION (MAPA)** is to create a welcoming and inclusive community by providing programs and activities that enhance school life for students, faculty, staff, parents, and guardians.



MAPA collaborated with MA's Climate Action Council and Community Action to launch **MA Gardening for Food Security**, a project to address food insecurity suffered by families in Marin County.



# CHANGEMAKERS

# ALUMNI

Dear Alumni,

The 2020—21 school year was filled with virtual greetings, meetings, and events, but thanks to technology it didn't slow us down and actually added some new possibilities for us.

Our Marin Academy Alumni Board immediately got to work. We restructured our Board into committees: recruitment, networking and mentoring, fundraising, and events, all with an overarching lens on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The 14 amazing alumni board members brought their passion and MA spirit to our virtual table, meeting after meeting.

Alumni stepped up and volunteered in countless ways this year. **Natalie McCall '01** organized a book club where we read *The Black Kids*, by Christina Hammonds Reed. Another alum, **Candace Hamilton '00**, helped us launch a BIPOC Mentorship Program for current students of color to be mentored by MA alumni of color.

Our recruitment committee focused on growing our Alumni Board and increasing diversity in all ways: class years, gender, and race. Our networking and mentoring committee focuses not only on the BIPOC Mentorship Program, but working to better utilize **The MA Circle platform** ([themacircle.com](http://themacircle.com)) for alumni to easily connect with peers. If there is one thing I have learned this year it's that the MA Alumni community is one big family, and alumni are more than happy to lend a hand.

Get involved; the possibilities are endless—from doing a Q&A, to being a guest speaker, to helping plan the reunion. Reach out to me at [hsammons@ma.org](mailto:hsammons@ma.org) for more opportunities to participate.

Your continued love and passion for Marin Academy truly makes the school the strong, independent school that it is today.

To learn more about the Alumni Board and other ways that you can get involved, visit [ma.org/alumni](http://ma.org/alumni).

**Heather Sammons**  
Director of Alumni Engagement



## 2020—21 Alumni Board

**Preston McCaskill '01** (President)

**Ben Amen '04**

**Zoë Brunelle '04**

**Brian Goldman '03**

**Ari Goldstein '14**

**Rebecca Hurwitz '14**

**Jason Lee '07**

**Scott Mollett '99**

**Brittany Ouyang '07**

**Jonas Schaefer '96**

**Adrian St. Francis '09**

**Brandy Varnado '05**

**Adrian West '93**

**Eric Wiesen '93**

## Save-the-Date

**Saturday, April 30, 2022**

4:00 — 7:00 p.m.

The MA Circle  
1600 Mission Avenue  
San Rafael

## All Alumni Reunion!

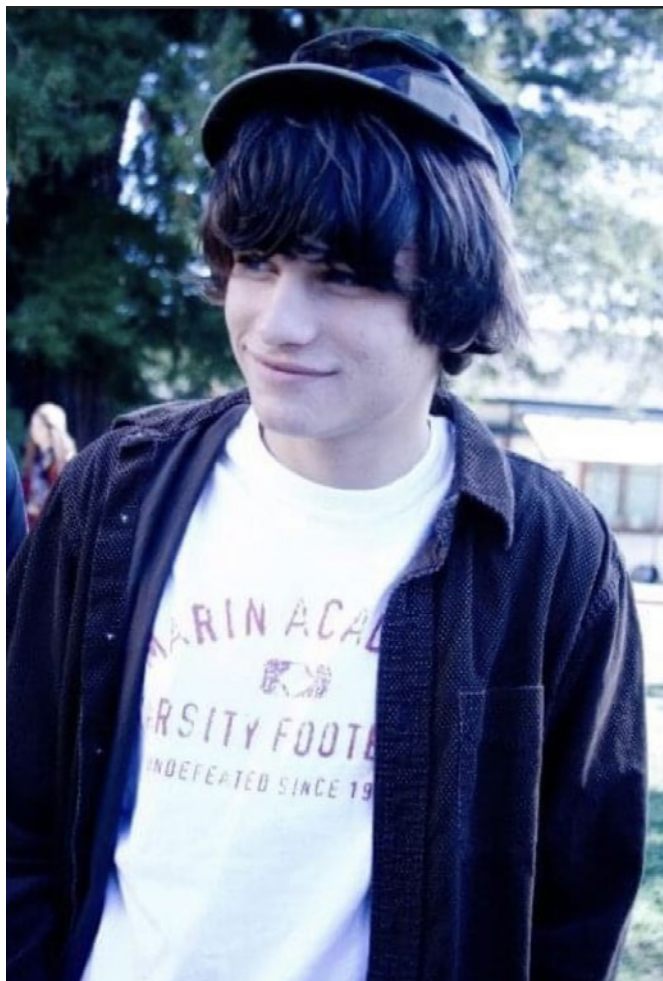
This year we are switching things up and will be celebrating reunion in the Spring! It will be a time to reconnect with classmates and the school when we are hopefully free of COVID restrictions and fire season!

In April 2022, we look forward to welcoming all classes back to campus for a reception under the lights in the Circle. If you would like to get involved as a class representative to help promote reunion, please reach out to **Heather Sammons, Director of Alumni Engagement, at [hsammons@ma.org](mailto:hsammons@ma.org)**.

## Past, Present & Future

### A Parallel Awakening

By Leslie Alden '75 and Trevor Cohen '08



*Note: In writing this article, not only did we connect about MA and our parallel work on the climate crisis, but we became instant friends! We're grateful for this opportunity to share some of our conversations, ideas, and experiences—a snapshot of different eras in MA's story and the impact that our experiences at the school have had on our lives and careers.*

— Leslie and Trevor

### Separated by 30 Years

In the Spring of 1972, Leslie Alden's admissions interview at Marin Academy was a conversation with the founding Head of School, Bill McCluskey. As they walked around the campus, still resembling the old Military Academy, he asked, "What do you imagine for a new school? What is your vision for the future?" That question would have a lasting impact on her life and career path.

When Leslie arrived on the very first day of school, the entire school, including the bus driver, the maintenance crew, the students, and all the teachers, fit into a single room in Foster Hall. Leslie shared that

at the time the school was so small, "everyone tried everything—school plays, the swim team, you name it—and the weekend outdoor trips and mini-courses. The important part is that we started. There is bravery in just starting." As an experiential school in the early 1970s, students worked out many issues among themselves. "That process encouraged us to be open-minded, to question, to challenge, to push boundaries, to be fearless without even knowing that we were being fearless." Leslie stayed active at MA for decades, she co-founded the Alumni Association, served on the Board of Trustees, and even participated on the sub-committee that hired Bodie Brizendine, the Head of School when Trevor Cohen entered MA in the fall of 2005.

Although it was thirty-three years after Leslie graduated, Trevor was drawn to Marin Academy because of those same founding principles. He was inspired by the teachers and classes that tested how you thought, not just what you knew. Trevor discovered outings and mini-courses that went deep into the wilderness. There were novel opportunities to develop passions and interests, to audition for a play, and then perform on stage for the first time in front of the entire school. Though the size of the student body had quadrupled and elements of the school's structure were different, the core spirit and traditions remained.



Photo by Andrew N. '21

## Parallel Awakening and Action

In 2006, Trevor was taking AP Environmental Science, when *An Inconvenient Truth* came out. "That really freaked me out. It was clear that if we didn't start doing something immediately the

consequences would be dire." Though they didn't know it at the time, Trevor and Leslie were both in the audience when soon-to-be MA parent Michael Pollan gave a talk on *An Omnivore's Dilemma*, which chronicled the unsustainability of the US food system.

At the same time, MA started composting food from the cafeteria to grow veggies in the garden. Through both education and action, the school would show Trevor a glimpse into what a sustainable future might actually look like. "MA made it clear that it was possible to reinvent our relationship with the planet."

Around the time Trevor was first awakening to our environmental crises, Leslie was working to radically accelerate the transition to clean power. That same year, she helped start Marin Clean Energy (MCE), an organization that would revolutionize the growth of renewables in California. MCE is now

on the cusp of providing half a million residents with 100% clean power. The movement for clean energy has continued to grow, and today there are 24 similar non-profit community energy programs serving over 11 million customers.



Eleven years later, while researching his book, *Bright Green Future*, Trevor would interview the same organization, MCE, and ultimately feature the concept of "community choice" as a powerful tool for cities to take back control of the energy system for the sake of people and the planet. Amid the overwhelming threat of climate change, Trevor's book, *Bright Green Future*, asks us, "What does the future of our dreams actually look like?" and gives real-world examples of how communities are reimagining society to be in alignment with nature.

Leslie continues to work with climate leaders throughout the Bay Area, California, and at the national level. In 2017, she brought together a group of environmental leaders and formed the Marin Climate Action Network. "The premise was this: In a small county with an incredible wealth of resources, how can we get everyone involved in taking action to stop climate change?" Encouraged by Paul Hawken, she'd eventually take this concept further, founding DRAWDOWN Bay Area, to scale regional solutions to the global climate challenge by bringing together business, community, and government agencies to share best practices and resources.

"We have to stop putting greenhouse gases up into the atmosphere, and start drawing down legacy emissions from the last 200 years. And we have to do that now."

## "What's your vision for the future?"

That was the question that Bill McCluskey asked Leslie during their stroll on campus back in 1972. Today, Trevor and Leslie are still asking that question of themselves, their communities, and of the systems that shape our modern life. We live in an era where we can't avoid this question any longer; we must act—the good news is that solutions to our environmental crises already exist. We don't have to wait for a miracle intervention or a new and extraordinary technology to save us.

One of the most important realizations is knowing that we as individuals do not have to "solve" climate change. We can find the one area that speaks to our vision of the future, whether it be energy, food, transportation, or conservation. And then we can get involved in organizations and campaigns that are already working in that area to create a better future for people and the planet. There is a role for everyone to play, no matter your vision or skill set. Best of all, you'll find joy in being part of a community finding your collective power to change the future.

As E.B. White said, "I wake up every morning determined to change the world and also have one hell of a good time."

Trevor's book *Bright Green Future* provides a road map for anyone to begin envisioning a truly sustainable future and get involved in actually building it. Leslie's DRAWDOWN Bay Area website is the connective hub for governments, non-profits, and businesses to rapidly collaborate on implementing existing solutions.

"Trevor, I want everyone to buy—and read!—your book, *Bright Green Future*. I really love the way you end each chapter with, 'Keep Exploring.' I'm stealing that for our website!" exclaims Leslie.

Trevor, chuckling, "And I want everyone to visit the DRAWDOWN Bay Area website and download the Climate Action Now app—and use it!" It's a deal.

Trevor and Leslie leave you with this quote from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe:

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."



*Bright Green Future* by Gregory Schwartz, Ph.D. and Trevor Decker Cohen chronicles a renaissance at the edge of a crisis. Learn more at [brightgreenfuture.com](http://brightgreenfuture.com)

For more information or to get involved with regional solutions to climate change visit DRAWDOWN Bay Area at [drawdownbayarea.org](http://drawdownbayarea.org)



# CHARTING THE COURSE

## Class Notes

**75** **Leslie Alden** shares, "The Big Pivot: I left my job as a District Rep and Legislative Aide with the County of Marin, after 13+ years, to work full time on climate solutions and business and community engagement. Aligned with Project Drawdown's science-based solutions, I co-founded a non-profit to bring community, government, and business together to share and scale best practices. Check out [www.DrawdownBayArea.org](http://www.DrawdownBayArea.org), where I am the ED and Chief Instigator. **Maria White Southworth** also pivoted during COVID, and started "Short & Sweet," a specialty baking company. She is the best baker—everything is made with love and is absolutely delicious! If you are anywhere near New Hampshire, order something @shortsweeptiebaker—you will be delighted. She decided that she'd had enough of New Hampshire's winter and sheltering in place, so she flew out California. We were so

lucky to spend a couple of days together while she was in the state. We hiked on Ring Mountain and visited the MA campus—a soccer game was in progress and it was wonderful to walk around, see what has changed but also that the spirit of the early years clearly remains strong. We also had a great visit with our friend and former MA history teacher, Charlie Little. I was also surprised and inspired by the invitation from the Heather Sammons in the MA Alumni office to partner with **Trevor Cohen '08**. We both work on climate solutions and community engagement, and have both been doing this work for years, each in our own way. We had a great time "interviewing" each other, and I am very grateful to connect with another MA alum. Though our time at MA was separated by almost 30 years, we have so much in common and there are many intertwined threads about our experiences and careers. See our story in this edition of the NEXUS." (Page 36)



Maria White Southworth '75 and Leslie Alden '75 on Ring Mountain, May 2021



Maria White Southworth '75, Charlie Little, and Leslie Alden '75



Leslie Alden '75 and Maria White Southworth '75 lounging around at MA

**Darby Grayson Sutherland** moved to Lodi, CA 15 years ago from Austin, TX to "marry my college sweetheart from UOP '77. We had been residing in Austin since 1990 and my daughter Lauren was born in 1999. She graduated this last spring with a Bachelors in Music at Texas State and is starting her Master's in Music in September at University of Texas, Austin. She is Type 1

Diabetic with Celiac, diagnosed at age 8 so, Med Ed has been a huge part of our lives and diabetes camps were a huge part of her upbringing and our summers. She's thriving now in Austin and my life in Lodi takes me often to Tiburon, SF, and Austin to see family. We also enjoy our place in Cabo and Rancho Mirage in the winters. Peace to all my MA Alums."



*Darby Grayson Sutherland '75; with her college sweetheart, Bruce Sutherland; with a surprise bouquet from her family*

79

**Mark Battat** writes, "It's the year we all turn the big 6-0. I don't feel it and I know I don't act it. Yet at the same time I love having all this wisdom and knowledge that comes with age.

I'm spending time in the Pacific Northwest for 3 months to escape the worst of the desert heat and I've had a blast discovering new places and people. In short: life is good with no complaints. "



*Mark Battat '79*

**Gina-Marie (Wubbold) Meredith** shares, "Deep in the COVID cave, I dreamed of a way out, along winding trails, wheels turning under me. I read Adventure Cycling and Gravel Grind and moved my hands slowly across the illuminating images of my favorite mountain biking mags. I planned routes, which I hoped to ride when I could be with those I love and I trained as best I could. Finally, a week ago, I loaded my bike and companions and drove into the Ochoco National Forest, about 2 hours east of Bend, OR, where gravel, tall trees, a few otters and centinal owls greeted us for 3 days of riding. Heaven, even if we did have to contend with the

smoke from so many fires in both Oregon and California. The rest of the dream will be realized as I participate in a 2-day mountain biking camp. This isn't a glossy report of just how awesome my life is; it's a declaration of deep and sincere gratitude that, at 60, after this pandemic, I have been able to do what brings me such joy. To pare it all down to what could fit on the bike and ride into the smoke-red sunset seems a fitting metaphor for what this (almost 2 years) has taught me: Stick to the Basics. Keep your glimpse wide. Don't go it alone."

**Jennifer Rakow-Stepper** says, "When I packed my suitcases to move to Vienna, Austria almost twenty-seven years ago, I had little idea that I would remain so long, raise two bilingual children, or finally—after much embarrassment about their immigrant mom—myself reach some sort of proficiency with the German language. But the last thing I expected was to become passionate about helping Americans living abroad learn they can vote in US elections and that their vote counts. I started with Democrats Abroad as a regular volunteer a number of years ago and was recently elected to the Executive Committee to lead the Europe, Middle East and Africa Region. It's fascinating and fulfilling to work with so many people living in places as far flung as Botswana, Finland, and the UAE. The best part though is to register a voter, be they a University student studying abroad for a semester or an expat who has been living overseas even longer than I have, and hear their joy when they learn that their vote created the margin that made the difference in an election—as just happened in 2020 with the Senate races in Georgia. So, if you know someone who is spending time abroad, I hope you will send them my way and if you are passing through Vienna, I'll steer you to the best café in town!"

## Educating Ourselves and Empowering Others

**Camila Carrera '14**

Program Coordinator at the Labor Center For Immigrant Justice (SF Labor Council)



› Ever since your days at Marin Academy, you've been very active in the community, always advocating for human rights and social justice. You then went on to The George Washington University where you majored in International Affairs with a double concentration in African Studies and Contemporary Cultures. What drove you into this work at such a young age?

Since I was little, I was surrounded by people who were passionate about giving back to the community. My father, Omar Carrera, brought me to the United States in the hopes of giving me a better life. I watched him do back-breaking work to support our family and I did not fail to notice the trials and tribulations of being an immigrant in this country. As a little girl, I could not be more proud and humbled as I witnessed my father go from a senior accountant at Mitsubishi in Ecuador to a janitor at Pet

Club in Marin with no apparent loss of pride. He always believed that being an immigrant was an asset and he never stopped advocating for himself or his community. He is now the Executive Director of Canal Alliance, a prominent non-profit organization that assists immigrants in San Rafael.

My mother, Erin Carrera, meanwhile is a nurse at UCSF, and the level of care and compassion she held for her patients and her fellow nurses has always inspired me to strive to be a better person for not only myself, but those around me. My parents are my heroes and I would not be where I am today without them.

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**Marin Academy  
opened my eyes to  
the world around me  
and pushed me to  
explore outside of  
my comfort zone.**

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Marin Academy opened my eyes to the world around me and pushed me to explore outside of my comfort zone. I wanted to combine my love for the diversity of cultures, peoples, languages, and societies with social justice and human rights, which is how I fell upon my major and concentrations. This eventually led me to pursue immigration law as a career.

› **You are currently working at the Labor Center for Immigrant Justice in San Francisco to improve the lives of workers, their families, and the community and to bring economic justice to the workforce and social justice to the nation. What is it about this role that you love and find rewarding?**

I can freely admit I am a success story. What I mean by that is that many people who look like me and who come to this country are not afforded the same opportunities that I have been fortunate enough to experience. I am one of not so many that was able to pursue higher education, naturalize, and feel as if I belong. This comes with an inevitable sense of guilt, which I am working on acknowledging and letting go of. It does not do anyone any good for me to feel guilty about my opportunities, but I did realize that I can give back to my community from a now empowered position.

At my job, I listen to horrendous stories that our clients have experienced both in their home countries and on their journey here. It breaks my heart every time, but it also makes me even more passionate about fighting for them. I want to help give a voice to the voiceless and most importantly I want to help them learn how to empower themselves. I have always believed that we are not supposed to 'save' anyone. As social justice workers and human rights advocates our role is to impart knowledge, resources, and tools so that communities can work together to empower themselves.

Every time I have had a hand in helping someone become a citizen, get their work permit, bring a loved one from their home country to here, or win their asylum case I am rewarded with the knowledge that they feel just a little bit more free, more seen, and more whole than before.

› **Part of MA's mission statement "challenges each person to accept the responsibility posed by education in a democratic society." As we think about what those words mean in the context of all that's happening around us, how does the role of education shape your work and the issues you cover?**

I am constantly drawing on my education when I sit down to write a column—both the education I had in school as well as through lived experience. But I'm also hoping to educate someone else in doing it. And usually, in the process, I learn something new, too. If we're not constantly trying to learn and educate ourselves, I'm not really sure what the point of living is.

› **What do you see as one of the biggest challenges in this fight for immigrant justice and how can more people understand and be educated about it?**

“

**I have always believed that we are not supposed to 'save' anyone. As social justice workers and human rights advocates our role is to impart knowledge, resources, and tools so that communities can work together to empower themselves.**

”

One of the biggest challenges in our fight for immigrant justice is misinformation and ignorance. People are not born hateful, they learn to be. Sometimes it is willful ignorance and sometimes it is being misinformed. Educating allies and advocates on the actual reality of immigration is the first step towards equity and equality. I think that sometimes people who view immigration as a bad thing, do not realize the immense benefits this country enjoys due to immigrants coming here.

People often assume the immigrants do not pay taxes (I cannot tell you how many times I have heard this argument). In fact, a report from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) points out, "the best evidence suggests that at least 50 percent of undocumented immigrant households currently file income tax returns using Individual Tax Identification Numbers (ITINs), and many who do not file income tax returns still have taxes deducted from their paychecks." In California alone,

immigrants pay over 3 billion dollars in taxes. It is so critical to know that while these immigrants paid taxes just like you and me, they were not afforded the same benefits many of us were when the pandemic began last year. Many of our clients lost their jobs, but were ineligible for unemployment benefits despite paying into it like the rest of us. Other clients had no choice but to expose themselves to COVID-19 every day to make sure we had fresh fruit and vegetables or that our children were taken care of or that our homes were cleaned. This country needs its immigrants, but we

treat them as if they are unwanted and less than. This does not make sense to me. The most important tool is at the tip of our fingers: let's make a conscious effort to educate ourselves, our community, our neighbors, and our friends and family. I imagine it would foster a much more loving and inclusive society.

“

**Educate yourself, advocate for the marginalized, and have those tough conversations with people who might disagree or not believe in the same values that you do.**

”

› **You are working to become DOJ (Department of Justice) accredited. What does that mean and what's next for you after you achieve your accreditation?**

Becoming DOJ accredited will actually allow me to represent clients on official USCIS applications. I will be able to fill out applications which I already do, but also sign my name. I would be able to take on some of the workload from our in-house attorney and thus help more people! This accreditation is partial, but if I eventually get a full accreditation I could even represent clients in court for immigration cases. This is as far as my career will be able to progress until I have my law degree, which I will be pursuing next year.

› **As a country and world that continues to fight social injustice, what can we do as individuals to help make change?**

This question is pretty simple for me. Compassion. We often assume that we as individuals cannot make an impact, but that is so wrong. A little act of kindness can go a very long way. We are all here for the same things: to succeed, support our families,

and live a peaceful life. I believe no matter what skin color you are and no matter where you come from we are all humans at the end of the day. It takes more energy to hate than to simply lead your life with love and compassion. After all, I always think about how my opportunities and experiences could have easily been afforded to someone else and perhaps I would have been the one seeking assistance like our clients. I would hope that someone would be there to help. Educate yourself, advocate for the marginalized, and have those tough conversations with people who might disagree or not believe in the same values that you do. As a society, we hold a lot more power than we think when we come together with purpose.

› **Do you have any advice for current MA students who want to become agents of change?**

Never lose hope and don't let yourself feel discouraged from your dreams. A bad test won't stop you from achieving your goals. You didn't get into your top school? That is okay. I am now 7 years out of high school and I promise that I was still able to graduate from a great university and find an amazing job with a few bad grades here and there. For those of you who might need to focus on working rather than extracurricular activities, remember that you are gaining such valuable experience. Grades, work experience, internships do not define you. Your values, passions, ethics, and character will always matter the most. We all start from somewhere, and while it may take some time, some trials and errors, I believe that we can all get to where we want to be. Impacting positive change starts within us. Believe in yourself and believe in the work you do. Anything and everything is possible.

For more information about Camila's work visit: [werisesf.org](http://werisesf.org)



**WE RISE SF**  
Labor Center for Immigrant Justice

# 81

**Anne Chaitin** writes that she is "still working in payroll at my construction sweeping job. I consider myself so very lucky to have gone to MA and the foundation it gave me to be where I am today."

# 83

**Michelle Wagner Sandusky** tells us she "retired in 2020 after a long career as a civil engineer. My husband and I have lived in the East Bay since graduating from Cal. After raising our two children in Danville, we were settling in to our empty nest for the long term. With much of our family still in Marin, everyone was having to drive too much so we decided to move back! In June we moved into a great house in San Anselmo. It is so great to be back in Marin!"

# 84

**Tracy Grant** shares, "My latest historical mystery, *The Westminster Intrigue* was published in May. My daughter Mélanie who is 9 is writing her own stories and publishing them on my blog. So great we can share writing. And I continue to work at the Merola Opera Program as Director of Contributed Giving."



Tracy Grant '84 with her "fellow author daughter Mélanie and her special friend Guena"

# 85

**Phoebe Levinger von Reis** reports, "Wild pandemic year where we attempted to move our family from California back to Italy where we had lived for two years in 2014-2016. After spending the fall there our children announced that the International school was not sufficient as a high school option (not all schools give as much as MA!). So we pivoted to relocate to Virginia where our oldest child was taking a gap year before starting university this fall. From there we looked for housing in many places and finally settled on Portland, Oregon where the trees mixed with urban interest feel like a perfect mix and the local public high school is appealing to the kids still at home. We can also drive to family in Marin as well as those here in the PNW. If you are in the area look me up on social media! So much to learn about our new city! Here's me excited about the paths in the woods near our house."



Phoebe Levinger von Reis '85 is "excited to experience Forest Park in Portland"

**Karen Davies** says, "G'day from New Zealand! Have lived here for over 15 years and I'm told I've picked up a bit of an accent. Love living by the beach with a view of the sea I share with my husband, a guide dog who didn't quite make the guide dog cut and occasionally our two young adult children. Hope to get back to the states one day soon."

# 86

**Katie (Blum) Berryhill** is "a 'professional adjunct,' teaching astronomy at multiple colleges: Los Medanos College, Chabot College, Solano Community College, and Arizona State University, mostly online even in non-pandemic times, but I'm looking forward to returning to teaching in-person in the LMC planetarium this fall (COVID-willing). Last spring I was awarded the Distinguished Faculty Award by Solano Community College. My husband and I also run our computer forensics business. Our son is transferring to UC Davis in September as a junior majoring in aerospace and mechanical engineering, and our daughter is finishing high school and applying to college this year."

88

**Anastacia (Leach) Maggioncalda** shares that she is "emerging from that odd year + and finally doing some things. I am still living in Terra Linda and working as Director, Head of Production at the Creative Studio at LinkedIn but mostly working from home still. My step-daughter Gianna is moving up to Portland to attend Pacific Northwest College of Art so I hope to make it up there a bit to visit and see anyone living up there now. My daughter Lola turns 16 next week and we are road tripping to Santa Cruz, The Madonna Inn and Pismo Beach with her friends to celebrate. She will be a Junior at Terra Linda High this year and her thing is basketball. My son Rett just turned 12 and is off at sleep-away camp for the week and starts 7th grade in a few weeks (but mostly he is making TikToks). My husband is still working in video post production and cycling all of the time. Was so lucky this past weekend when I was able to host a party in my yard so we could all visit with **Courtenay (Smith) Mahassel** and her family who are visiting from Portugal, where they now live. Was fun to also see **Taylor (Haas) Burkhart '87** and **April Sack '89** who joined with their families. A mini reunion! My dog Ewok is the best (follow him on IG) and that just about sums it up!"



Anastacia (Leach) Maggioncalda '88's dog @ewokthebrussels

89

**Will Noble** shares, "Daughter **Charlotte Noble '21** graduated from MA and is headed off to Boston for college and son William will be a freshman at UHS."

**Natira McDermott** writes, "MA inhabits a place in me that no other school does. Maybe that's because of the age I was, the

teachers I had, the classes, the sports and the outings... Total magic. I'm still living in NYC with my husband and 10-year old daughter. Loving it. I am a confidence and public speaking coach and I lead workshops on being brave. So that's pretty awesome. Sending you all love!"

90

**Jessica (Zee) Price** reports, "After almost 8 years of living in CT for my husband's animation job, we moved 2 years ago, to Kennebunk, Maine for a more chill pace of life. One of Maine's mottos is "The Way Life Should Be," and I can definitely say we agree with that most of the time...at least for the part of the state we live in. My daughter, Dakota, will be a junior in the fall, and I, like most moms, think she's truly amazing and almost completely incomprehensible. My husband, Ben, is pursuing work that actually means something to him, and I was lucky enough to take my job with me when we moved from CT. I was a work-from-home-er before the pandemic. I'm a Case Manager for a medical expert company assisting veterans and their attorneys appealing for their disability benefits from the VA. Nothing super exciting or glamorous to report about my life, but it's very George Bailey, and a work of art to me. I hope this finds everyone as well as possible for your life at this particular moment. Wishing you all nothing but the best. Look me up if you're in southern Maine."

**Luke Esterkyn** writes, "**Greg Gueldner, John McDermott '91**, and I started the band Stroke 9 in the music annex in '89 and we've been making music together ever since. We released a new album called 'Calafrio' last year and we're releasing new songs all summer. You can hear the new stuff or take a trip down memory lane with the Marin song (recorded during our senior project) on your favorite streaming service."



Luke Esterkyn '90, Stephen Heath '91, John McDermott '91, Greg Gueldner '90

91

**Galen Abbott** writes, "Hello old schoolmates, friends far and near! Hard to believe it's been 30 years since graduating. I remember it all so well. I recently made a pandemic move back to the hometown of Mill Valley, closer to my dad. I had been hailing from San Francisco where I've been actively DJing and producing events for over 2 decades. I was also performing around the world

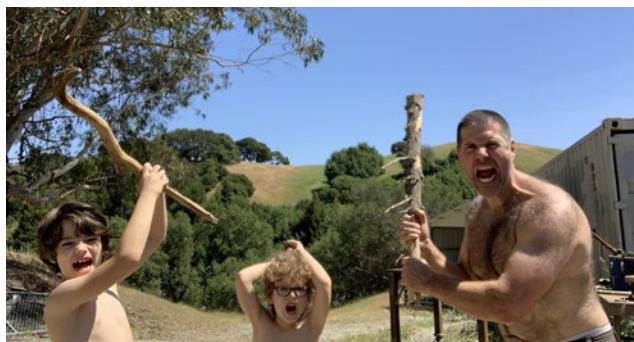
until we got sequestered back to our homes. I still keep in contact with **Braden More, Dave Sargent**, and **Christian Sommer** for semi-annual dinners. Nowadays, I'm writing music, hanging with my dog Roxy, swimming, playing tennis, awaiting to get back to music events consistently. Miss my MA family and all the nice times we had. If you're in Marin or nearby, let's grab a drink and reminisce! galenabbott@gmail.com."

91

**Dana Nelson-Isaacs** pivoted her business during the pandemic to add a professional mastermind group supporting professionals in Independent Schools. It has been rewarding to

draw on her training in marriage and family therapy, and gratifying, to be able to provide a place for people to grow during such a difficult year. **Sky Nelson-Isaacs** released his second book on science and synchronicity, titled "Leap to Wholeness: How the World is Programmed to Help Us Heal, Grow and Adapt." He also published a paper studying the physics of spacetime and quantum mechanics, titled "Spacetime Paths as a Whole." This is the culmination of over a decade of research, and he is so pleased to have his work out there being read! Sky also played music with fellow alumni **Rebecca Mimiaga '04** and **David Noble '94** to say farewell to retiring teacher Mark Stefanski. In payment, Sky received a printed summary of decades of Mark's classroom jokes to take home to their 12-year-old daughter, Eliana.

**John Walsh** tells us, "I'm still living in San Francisco with my wife and two boys (7 and 9), and running a marketing & design agency (IRON Creative Communication). I've done a bunch of work with my MA pal Josh Kamler '91 over the years. Other than that, I just published a comic book nerdery-infused sci-fi book called *The Chowderhead Crusades*, with audio narrated by Patton Oswalt. Check it out at Amazon and what not! Hope everybody is doing great!"



*John Walsh '91 with his sons ("It's possible the kids and I went a little feral during quarantine.")*

93

**Eric Wiesen** says, "What a year. Like most people, we worked from home, home schooled our kids (with some help from Zoom) and did a whole lot of dishes. Last fall

we moved (along with **Jeff Wiesen '98** and his family) to Kailua, Hawaii for six months, which was an amazing adventure and gave us an experience of living in community that we'd not likely have had absent a pandemic. We found many reasons to be thankful, and I've enjoyed staying in connection with the MA community via the Alumni Board."

**Annabelle Gibson Reber** reports, "My husband and I and our two boys (Gus, 11 and Max, 8) have been living in Jackson, WY, since last summer—it was a COVID sojourn that's turned into a semi-permanent move. The kids are going to school here and living their best lives—skiing in the winters and watching as many hours of screens as they can possibly get away with. I've been working as a Landscape Architect at a local firm and spending time in the garden, hiking, and mountain biking whenever possible. I still keep up with **Meghan Walsh Levin '92**, but miss San Anselmo and running into MA alumni around town such as **Joey Wolff**, **Amy Hodges**, **Laura Wheless '92** and **Chris Collins '92**. Hope everyone has made the most of this crazy year."

**Adrian West** "enjoyed catching up with a few classmates like **Amanda (Mehan) Sugarman**, **Ben Moglen**, and **Jim Miller** around Giving Day." He says, "Thanks to all for the support and hope to catch up with more of you in the near future. Otherwise, living the dream in So Cal, still working in investment banking and enjoying life with my wife and two sons Aiden (8) and Owen

(3) and trying to get out skiing, mountain biking and enjoying nature with them."

**Tasaday Lewis** shares, "This August marks the seventh year of my nursing career, and the end of one of the strangest times of my life. I have been a cardiac and stroke nurse since the start of my career back in 2014, which seems like a lifetime ago. Never did I think that I would work through a pandemic where one of the biggest struggles would be to try and convince people of the reality of the very illness that was killing them. Or that I would be reusing PPE due to a global shortage and the failure of the government officials whose salaries I pay for with my tax dollars to protect myself and my colleagues. I am proud of the work that I do; but it has been a struggle; exhausting and at times terrifying. This winter may prove to be an extension of last year, although I hope that people have learned from our mistakes and can better protect themselves and each other. On a lighter note, I have a 14-year-old step-daughter starting back up at school in the fall; despite being home for a year, she is coming back as a bright star; running cross-country and still rocking straight A's. Her older sister is working part-time and also looking forward to going back to school in the fall as well to finish her undergrad. She teaches dance on the weekends, and is expanding her expertise with classes all over the Bay Area. My partner and I are remodeling the house, some of it ourselves, and his company's machines are being used all over the country at various universities to test for COVID-19. I'm very proud that his design has contributed to the further expansion of testing. It's been a mixed-bag year, but we are stronger and tighter for it."

## Inclusive Peace-Building

Carrie Stefansky Huisman '02

Partnership Coordinator—Protection of Civilians Program at PAX for Peace



*Carrie with a gift from her local partners in Baghdad*

➤ After graduating from Marin Academy in 2002 you attended The George Washington University where you got your BA in International Affairs (Conflict and Security, International Politics), and Fine Art, followed by your MA at the Fletcher School at Tufts University where you focused on International Negotiation & Conflict Resolution and Human Security. You have been all around the world doing international work. Was this your calling from a young age and did your time at MA help shape your future career path?

I grew up on a farm in Sonoma—the third generation in a line of cattle ranchers and grape growers on the same property—so a career in international development was not necessarily a given. Though I suppose that's literally only half the story; my father was a refugee as a child during WWII. While he died when I was young, the family stories of fleeing Hungary and ultimately

settling in Venezuela always fascinated me. Likely it was that stark contrast of a deep sense of home on one side, and up-rootedness on the other that drew me to international work in rather unstable contexts.

While there are a lot of things I am passionate about, I've never wanted to do any kind of work other than peace-building. Even as far back as my time at MA I was captivated by international conflict—understanding both its causes and consequences. I probably retained more from what I learned about Kashmir in one lesson from James Shipman's World Civilizations class than from two full years of Chemistry. (Despite John Hicks' best efforts at keeping my attention with his exploding gummy bears.) I went on to study international affairs with a focus on conflict resolution, both for my Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and have never looked back or really wanted to do anything else.

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**I've never wanted to do any kind of work other than peace-building. Even as far back as my time at MA I was captivated by international conflict—understanding both its causes and consequences.**

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➤ **You have spent your career focused on human rights and peace-building and have found yourself living in the Netherlands. What was it about this work that has led you to a successful 15-year career in the field?**

I am so grateful for the fact that my career has allowed me to live and work in some truly amazing, if complicated places. (Though my current home here in the Netherlands is definitely the least complicated.) I have spent much of the last 15 years abroad, having worked in Sierra Leone, Uganda, Liberia, and Indonesia, and done shorter stints in a half dozen other countries from Peru to Myanmar. After a few years each in Boston and Washington, DC, I moved to Europe, but still spent 5 years traveling every couple of months to and from Iraq. I suppose I've never been particularly good at sitting still, and my career certainly enabled that.

I've delivered briefings to former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and once had coffee with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. I've had the Jamaican Prime Minister's cell phone number in my recent call list. But I've also had more than my fair share of less glamorous moments—plenty of food-borne illnesses, broken down vehicles, and brushes with violence. Most of the day-to-day is like any office job: meetings, writing reports, sifting through countless emails. On the good days, though, you get the sense that you've contributed to change that's truly meaningful. Working in and on conflict is challenging, but there's rarely a day without a sense of purpose.

Typically I'm just a facilitator or a convener—most of the "real" work happens at the hands of local organizations and communities that I aim to support. For instance, since I joined my current team at PAX more than five years ago, I've trained hundreds of members of Iraqi civil society in how to conduct survey research on the experiences of civilians in conflict, and how to facilitate constructive dialogue with authorities around local security needs. At that point I typically go home and wait for data to pour in that we can turn into infographics and advocacy messages aimed at those making international policy. But my local partners and the individuals they are interviewing live the realities of conflict every day. They are the people that need to

drive the agenda for peace, not someone like me. The farther I get in my career, the more I realize that I need to put my own ideas and ambitions aside and focus on helping civilians in these settings realize theirs.

➤ **You are in charge of coordinating the program on protection of civilians that seeks to improve the policy and practice of protection interventions globally through research, training, community engagement, and advocacy. Tell us what this entails and who do you partner with in this work? And why is PAX for peace based in the Netherlands?**

The goal of my team at PAX is to make the provision of security in conflict settings more inclusive and civilian-focused. We believe that police, politicians, and peacekeepers should all be doing all they can to understand and respond to the security priorities of all civilians, and that everyday people should be able to hold these kinds of actors accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities. This requires working at all levels, from conflict-affected communities in places like Iraq and South Sudan to the headquarters of institutions like NATO and the United Nations. It means working hand-in-hand with local civil society organizations to generate a lot of data about conditions on the ground, and then translating it into practical recommendations or military training exercises.

What makes our Protection of Civilians team somewhat unique when compared with other non-governmental organizations in the

peace-building field is that we also work directly with militaries that commit troops to international missions. One of the biggest focus areas of our work at the moment is helping militaries themselves better take into account the so-called "reverberating effects" of their use of force. How might a single airstrike in Syria or Afghanistan impact critical water infrastructure or lead to lasting environmental damage? How might years of relentless drone attacks have a compounding impact on the mental health of children? We want militaries to take not only the risk of immediate civilian casualties into account when evaluating their intervention strategies, but all of these more varied and long-lasting consequences as well. And we

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want these actors to be transparent and to respond appropriately when instances of civilian harm do occur. It's not always an easy conversation, but it's a necessary one.

PAX as an organization has a long history of peace work stretching back to the aftermath of WWII, when Europe was rebuilding itself after years of devastating conflict, and gained prominence during the Cold War when they organized protests and built alliances with dissidents living behind the Iron Curtain. In this century, PAX became more international and more focused on grassroots-level peace-building. But we never lost our activist roots. PAX remains one of the loudest voices against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, for example, and is a member of a coalition that won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 for its efforts to get an international treaty to ban the controversial weapons.

› **In your efforts to help civilians against acts of war, to end armed violence and to build inclusive peace, what has been the most eye-opening for you? And what can you share with those of us that don't know enough about these civilians?**

To be honest, it's been a really rough week. One of my key partners from southern Iraq—an incredibly inspiring and dedicated woman named Fatima Al-Bahadaly—lost her son in an act of despicable violence. Members of an armed militia kidnapped and killed him, a man of just 26, to punish his mother and to frighten other civil society leaders. Fatima is a celebrated human right activist whose organization (the Iraqi Al-Firdaws Society) works tirelessly to combat the militarization of society and to create spaces for women and youth to become leaders in their communities. Her work has unfortunately rendered her a target for harassment and violence by armed groups that operate with impunity. I've never been witness to a grief so raw.

As a mother of two young children now myself, I simply can't fathom how one could recover from so profound a tragedy. Worse yet—Fatima's story is not unique, not in Iraq and not in countless other conflict zones around the world. But these stories need to be told, even if they're painful to hear. If there's anything I've learned in my career working with people who have lived through conflict and violence, it's that none of them are all that different from you or from me. They aren't mere casualty figures from a "successful" raid, or nameless refugees flooding across borders—but living, breathing human beings deserving of dignity, respect, and a better future. So rather than necessarily sharing something eye-opening, maybe what I can do is request that each of us take the time to sit with the discomfort that governments like that of the US have a responsibility to do more to protect people like Fatima and her son when waging wars in our names.

› **What role, if any, did the COVID-19 global pandemic play in your work and what kind of hurdles have you faced because of it?**

The pandemic has affected all of us in profound ways, both personally and professionally. I was incredibly lucky that I was able to ride out the last year and a half from the safety of my home office here in the Netherlands, though it's forced me and my colleagues to fundamentally rethink how we do our work in the field. Typically I'd be flying to places like Baghdad or Juba on a regular basis to deliver trainings or meet with officials. I'd also be accompanying my local partners to speak candidly to diplomats at the UN in New York. Some of that work simply transferred over to virtual settings and was able to continue without too much disruption. But a lot of our more meaningful work—like facilitating dialogues between civilians and local authorities in places like rural South Sudan—was severely hindered by travel restrictions and the need to follow social distancing protocols. And forget Zoom as an alternative in a context like that.

The biggest unintended benefit of the whole experience is that our local partner organizations have stepped up to take on ever-greater responsibilities for managing our programming in the field. It's put us on a faster path to "localization," which is a buzzword in our industry, but is actually better in line with our mission than working the way we used to. The fact remains that until vaccines are readily available and accessible to people also in poorer countries, the pandemic will not end, and will likely only get worse. I therefore don't foresee that I'll be going back to the kind of travel and fieldwork that I've grown accustomed to over years, and my partners and I are going to continue to have to adapt creatively.

Part of doing the kind of work I do is finding the good among all of the bad, so I will also admit that the other unintended benefit of COVID-19 is that I got to spend an awful lot more time with my family over the last year and a half. My son was not yet two and my daughter was just a few weeks old when the pandemic first hit. While it meant a painfully long period of isolation from friends and family back in the States, I got in a lot of extra cuddles during multiple waves of lockdowns, which was good for the soul during a really tough time in all of our lives.

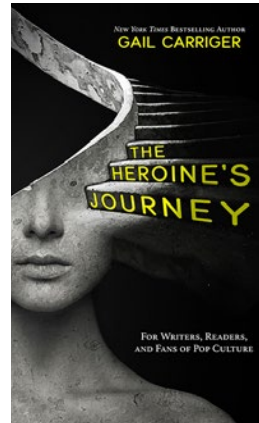
For more information about Carrie's work at PAX, visit:  
[protectionofcivilians.org](https://protectionofcivilians.org)  
[paxforpeace.nl](https://paxforpeace.nl)



94

**Tofa Borregaard** proudly reports, "I published my first non-fiction book, *The Heroine's Journey: For Writers, Readers, and Fans of Pop Culture* by Gail Carriger (pen name) and (among many other things) it draws on research I first started because of a class I took on Gothic Literature at MA in 1993."

**Christopher Cooper** expresses, "Oh how I wish I could have my children attend Marin Academy. Growing up... raising kids... living in our bifurcated world, I see so much of the influence MA has on my choices and awareness. I wish my kids to be shown the same perspectives and worldly awareness as they grow into adults. I am happily flying all over the country hearing opinions and stories from Americans of every weave. My 3 redheaded children are growing up so fast. Living into my best Now is feeling really rewarding."



Tofa Borregaard '94's first book



Christopher Cooper '94

95

**Josh Knox** got a second try at an epic Southwestern US road trip this past June after his plans for 2020 had to be COVID-cancelled. Securing a full four weeks off from work (13



Josh Knox '95' and family

years at the same place has its perks apparently), he flew with his wife Brita Dempsey and daughter Caliandra Dempsey Knox to SFO and there rented a campervan. Yosemite, Sequoia (with **Willow Regnery '96**), Zion and the Grand Canyon were highlights, but astronomy at Great Basin, slot canyons at Capitol Reef and hoodoos at Bryce Canyon were also amazing. Josh tells

us, "Caliandra (11) insisted on climbing both Yosemite Falls and Angel's Landing... together we pulled it off! Lingered COVID realities made booking the trip in January a risk, and indeed the showers were still closed in most parks... but luckily our van had bathing options!"

**Jesse Roselin** says, "connecting with friends from MA has been a major highlight during the Pandemic. I've been taking hikes and Zooming with high school friends on a regular basis. On the professional side, my 1:1 school, Pacific Preparatory, has really taken off and we are working with students all around the world. We've also had some opportunities as a family to get away on some trips—the kids loved our RV camping trip and we had fun dressing up as characters from Sesame Street at Family Camp (see picture)."



Jesse Roselin '95 and family

96

**Danielle Feldman** shares, "Tornadoes and polar vortex winters weren't exciting enough for me, so I've returned to the hills, trees, and water of the SF Bay Area. I am extraordinarily grateful for the friendships I'm rekindling and a family second-to-none that provides unending love and support."

**Adam Jaffe** is still playing tennis and has qualified for USTA Sectionals in Sacramento with a chance to play at Nationals later this Fall.

**Sydney Applegate Lang** says, "I'd like to thank my stylist, Emmylou Lang, 5.5 years old, who always keeps my hair and clothes looking funky, and my face by Otis Lang, who at the ripe age of 2.5, is keeping my facial muscles torqued and taut throughout the pandemic. I could not have made this image happen without them. See photo!"



Sydney Applegate Lang '96

97

**Lauren Eber** has been riding out the pandemic with her husband, Marty, their two kids, Lou and Sam, ages 10 and 8, their pandemic puppy, Mojo, and their trusty camper van, which has been their lifeline through it all. In addition to their weekend and vacation adventures, Lauren has been able to take her work as a litigator for WarnerMedia on the road from time to time, increasing the opportunities for the family to be in nature, putting all those outdoor skills we practiced at MA to good use.



Annie (Schowalter) O'Connor '97  
and Brendan O'Connor '97 with Nori

**Annie (Schowalter) O'Connor** and **Brendan O'Connor** are celebrating their 10th wedding anniversary this September. Thank you MA for bringing us together! Brendan runs his own architectural sheetmetal business in Bolinas, and Annie works for the Bolinas Community Land Trust creating and sustaining affordable housing in Bolinas and Stinson Beach. Both still love to play outside as much as possible.



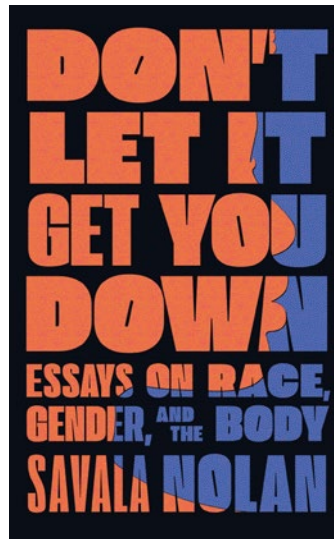
Lauren Eber '97 with Marty, Lou, Sam,  
and Mojo in their camper van, on  
Instagram as @afamwithavan

98

**Savala Nolan** shares, "I'm thrilled that my first book, a memoir in essays, was published by Simon & Schuster this July. The book is called *Don't Let It Get You Down: Essays on Race, Gender and the Body*. Reviews and reception have been wonderful, but the best part has been seeing the book in bookstores and on friends' bookshelves, and hearing from readers who've been moved by the essays. Also wonderful: getting to thank Lisa Arrastia, my English teacher at MA, in the acknowledgments for her early and abiding inspiration."

**Mollie Ireson** finished her first year of general surgery residency at Mayo in Rochester, MN, and just started at Yale for her second year of training. She understands why most people do this in their 20s, not their 40s, but is still very excited about getting to be a surgeon. She is also not heartbroken about moving South to Connecticut and would love to connect with any MA alums in New Haven.

**Sarah McDowell** writes, "Of all the things in the time of COVID I am lucky enough to be living in New Zealand for the last year with my husband and two boys. After turning away from art really since art school I have spent the last 3 years rededicated to a full time studio practice. No time like the present!"



Savala Nolan '98's first book



Mollie Ireson '98



Sarah McDowell '98 and her family backpacking in New Zealand

99

**Asa and Nicolette Prentice Mastrangelo**

welcomed a daughter, Adina Minetta Prentice, on July 15, 2021, little sister to Malcolm who is turning four. On the design front, Asa was recently promoted to Vice President at BCV Architecture + Interiors, San Francisco, and made the transition to ownership. Over a productive decade there, he has designed many hospitality, public realm and residential projects. Sailing remains alluring as ever, with the bay right next door to home in West Berkeley.



Asa Prentice '99  
and family

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**Adriana Baer shares, "Ryan Durham and I**

recently moved with our daughter Fiona (5) to a farmhouse on a few acres in Ridgefield, WA. Ryan now works for Firebrand Technologies, a publishing software company. I am still working in the theater when there is live performance to be had, but spend most of my time these days as an advocate with an organic, hemp CBD company called Green Compass. Fiona started kindergarten this fall. We have lots of room for visitors—come pitch a tent!"



Fiona (5), Adriana  
Baer '00 and Ryan  
Durham '00

02

**Ariel Mendez-Peñate** tells us, "Over the past year I've been enjoying time with my family, coaching a high school mountain bike team, and I was just recently promoted to Silver 3. Looking forward to 2021!"

**Kendra Joy Berenson** writes, "This has been a year of many changes. My partner Jeff Tiell and I got engaged and then married and we moved with our two cats to Fox Point, Wisconsin (just north of Milwaukee). We are getting settled in our new home and would love to connect with any MA alumni in the area. I have been at FSG for four years and am focusing most of my work on corporate racial equity. In partnership with PolicyLink and JUST Capital we just released the 2021 CEO Blueprint for Racial Equity."

**Alex Bloom** reports, "I live in Novato with my wife, son and dog. I'm a psychotherapist, I work with kids. Graduation was almost 20 years ago and I feel old."



Alex Bloom '02

**Thessaly La Force** says, "Hi everyone! I now work over at the *New York Times*, where I'm a features director of *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*. And I've continued to write and publish. Most importantly, I gave birth to a baby boy this June that my husband and I named Hugh La Force Heyward."

03

**Sarah Janoff-Brinn** shares, "I am starting my third year as the school counselor at MA and it's been wonderful to be back on campus! I live in San Rafael with my husband, Lior, and

my three-year-old daughter, Nora. We love spending time with friends from MA and their families!"

*Sarah Janoff-Brinn '03's daughter, Nora (far left) along with Maya and Caleb (daughter and son of Sarah Jebrock '03 and Ezra Fox '03) and little Shane (Brian Goldman '03's son)*



## Advocating for the Legal Rights of Detained Children

Alberta Born-Weiss '16

Unaccompanied Child Legal Specialist at the American Bar Association's ProBAR



➤ In 2020, you graduated from Wellesley with honors after doing an internship in Cuba. You then moved to Texas to become an Unaccompanied Child Legal Specialist at American Bar Association ProBAR (South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project). What was it about this opportunity that inspired you?

I first got interested in immigration narratives through my Spanish classes at MA. I remember watching movies as homework or on the projector in Foster Hall that opened my awareness to the stories of young people forced to immigrate to the US due to their life circumstances. During my senior year, I took a "Why War" class, which played a significant role in my decision to major in Peace and Justice Studies at Wellesley. In that class, we watched a TedTalk that expanded my definition of "peace"

to include what my college major would later tell me was peace as the lack of "structural violence"—which is to say peace as the ability to realize one's full potential.

During my junior year of college, I studied abroad in Argentina, where many of my friends were Venezuelan refugees and Colombian immigrants. I also spent about five months interning in Cuba, an island from which most of its citizens cannot leave. Those experiences helped me see that justice, or peace, is inextricably bound to the freedom of movement. While feeling ashamed in many ways of the path that the U.S. was on, I also came to realize the great privilege that I had in being able to decide where I wanted to live and felt a responsibility to stay in the U.S., ensuring that new immigrants could be as supported as possible. With my job at ProBAR, I get to be on the very frontlines of receiving immigrants—I either drive to or Zoom into one of the 19 "shelters" in my area that hold children recently detained by Border Patrol. I'm one of the first people with whom the children get to share their stories since arriving in the US, hoping that the

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**I came to realize the great privilege that I had in being able to decide where I wanted to live and felt a responsibility to stay in the U.S., ensuring that new immigrants could be as supported as possible.**

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attorneys who read my legal intakes can identify possible forms of legal relief that will prevent the children from being deported. This proximity to the children's lives in their home countries and the fact that they are still detained are two elements of this job that drew me to ProBAR rather than getting a paralegal job in a city where children settle after being released. I knew I wanted to support children in this intense moment of crisis.

➤ **From your time as a student at Marin Academy to today, you've been actively involved in social justice work. At Marin Academy, you were very active in Crossroads, and at Wellesley, you decided to major in Peace and Justice studies. What experiences drove this incredible life-long commitment?**

I attended Marin Academy due to a very generous scholarship and then was awarded the national QuestBridge scholarship to attend Wellesley College with no loans and significant financial aid. Coming from a low-income home, I worried about socializing and learning in a community where many of my peers had significantly more resources than me. However, the contrast between my "normal" and that of my peers taught me two important lessons: 1) we do not launch our lives from a level playing field; 2) I have access to immense resources through my education. As I continued to move through powerful academic spaces in undergrad, I felt a strong sense of responsibility to ensure that I used my education and networks to fight for a better life for the countless people who had not been deemed worthy of those spaces. It would be such a waste to only propel myself to success when the resources I have access to have the potential to benefit so many. There were also many moments in my childhood that led me to see suffering as an inevitable part of life, so I find comfort in stepping into it rather than pretending that injustice and pain don't exist; through my current work, I have the great privilege of accompanying children during a very painful time, and helping advocate for their access to legal resources.

➤ **In 2019, you were awarded a fellowship from The Madeleine Albright Institute for Global Affairs. Tell us a little about this experience and how it shaped your career aspirations?**

My experience as an Albright Fellow is one of the most impactful elements of my time as an undergrad. Secretary Albright is a proud Wellesley alum, and created her Institute to prepare current

Wellesley students for a role in global leadership. It entails a month-long "wintersession" in which the cohort of fellows live on campus and explore complex global issues, culminating in a policy-brief type presentation to a distinguished guest.

During my wintersession as a fellow, I studied South Africa's taxi wars, which my group and I presented to US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power. One of the greatest impacts that the brief and intense Fellowship had on my professional trajectory was the many conversations that my peers and I shared regarding "white savior" behavior and what it means to be an ally in a global context shaped by colonialism. I further explored those questions during the internship component of my Albright Fellowship; the Institute funds one global internship for each of its fellows, which I decided to complete in Havana, Cuba, with the poverty alleviation organization Oxfam.

So many facets of Cuban life are informal and in constant flux, so it was easy to learn the important lesson that expertise comes from knowing a place intimately, not just from studying it objectively from afar. I think that's part of why I love how my job at ProBAR honors and centers the children's stories—we believe them, and know we can use their knowledge of their lives at home to fight for legal relief here. It was also in Havana that I realized I could speak a sufficiently fluent Spanish to navigate professional settings in even the most urgent scenarios; the weekend before I began the internship, an unprecedented tornado ripped through part of Havana and I ended up helping translate requests for aid from the UN and other foreign governments.

➤ **Share with us what your days are like. How do you use your background and educational experiences in your role?**

My full job title is "Unaccompanied Child Legal Specialist," which means that I spend all day everyday speaking to detained children who crossed the border without a legal guardian. My duties are two-fold: I provide 2 hour-long "Know Your Rights" presentations to up to 30 kids at a time—the presentations are a legal orientation in which I try my best to use child-friendly language while explaining to the kids that they are in deportation proceedings, need to go to court, and what the role of an attorney is. The other piece of my job entails speaking individually with each child, interviewing them about every aspect of their life at home and trip to the US

“  
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”

that could help our attorneys identify a path to legal relief (aka legal grounds for the judge to not deport them). My coworkers and I often say that we are a combination of teachers, social workers and paralegals. I try my best to channel my MA teachers' attitudes while providing the Know Your Rights lessons—despite the heavy content I present, I want the kids to know that I respect them as individuals and do everything I can to treat them with the same humor and ease that MA teachers employ in the classroom. Some of these kids have been detained in the ORR shelters for months, and it's important for me to create the space for us all to be humorous and honest in the time we have together—a teacher/student dynamic I learned at Marin Academy, where I could tell my teachers deeply cared about me as a student and person.

➤ **As an advocate for detained migrant children, what do you see as the most critical issues facing this population?**

There's so much to say, this is the most difficult question to answer because it's impossible to address it all. Rather than discussing the international geopolitical push and pull factors that so many of the children identify when they tell me why they came to the US, I'll instead narrow my scope to the most critical issue in the unaccompanied children's fight for legal relief ("permission") in the US: the lack of universal representation. That's right. These children are not provided attorneys. People who have come to the US to request asylum or any other form of legal relief at the border must face the immigration judge alone, unless they hire or obtain their own attorney. Not only are they representing themselves, but they must do so opposite an ICE attorney whose job it is to convince the judge to deport them. It doesn't matter if they are children, it doesn't matter if they are unaccompanied children, nor does it matter if they speak a Mayan language as do approximately one third of the children I serve. Imagine a Marin Academy-age student coming to a new country alone and having to navigate a legal system in a language they don't understand. That's why less than 10% of unrepresented children receive legal relief. With representation, they have an almost 50% chance of winning their case.

➤ **How can others get involved and support this important work?**

One of the most important things to realize is that this is not just a border issue—these very same children who cross and are detained here in South Texas end up settling in communities across the country, including in San Rafael. Multiple times now, I have conversed with a child who, when I asked for the phone number of the person receiving them, responded with "415-...". I've seen many children go to San Rafael itself, and have written down the Canal Alliance phone number for them to seek assistance when they arrive. I definitely recommend getting in touch with organizations like the Canal Alliance, for those still in the Bay. In a beautiful example of serendipity, I still have the Canal Alliance mug I was given during a presentation to my Spanish class in

“

**This is not just a border issue—these very same children who cross and are detained here in South Texas end up settling in communities across the country, including in San Rafael.**

”

Foster Hall, which I use regularly before driving to the shelters! I think it's also important to recognize what a privilege Marin Academy education is. The majority of the children I speak to tell me they came to the US for the opportunity to go to school—even if they were pushed out due to gang violence or abuse, they still arrive here with that fervent desire to access a better education. Make the commitment to share the benefits of these resources and privileges with others! Even if you're interested in seemingly unrelated topics, the world is intersectional. Helping to mitigate climate change will also prevent so many children from being forced out of their homes after the kinds of unprecedented hurricanes and floods that devastated Central America this year. Which is to say, immigration justice is everywhere and connected to everything—the children I serve come to your communities and your public schools, and will attend court near you, likely without an attorney.

The South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR) is a project of the American Bar Association that provides legal information, pro se assistance and pro bono representation to thousands of immigrants and asylum-seekers in remote South Texas each year. Learn more at [americanbar.org](https://americanbar.org).

# 04

**Marijanna Shurtz** excitedly shares, "My husband, Mark, and I welcomed our beautiful, healthy baby girl, Ryann, into the world on December 15, 2020. We moved from the Bay Area to Roseville. I enjoy teaching prenatal and restorative yoga as well as tutoring online. We are so grateful for the blessings of 2020 and hope all is well with the MA community!"



*Zoë Brunelle '04's children Collins (1.5) and Evie (4.5)*

**Zoë Brunelle** writes, "Life is busy in Boise! Chasing after these two, working in healthcare philanthropy (this is your sign to give charitably to a local hospital caring for COVID-19 patients!), and looking forward to many upcoming reunions including two trips to the Bay. Wishing everyone good health and high vaccination rates."



*Marijanna Shurtz '04 and baby Ryann on Mother's Day*



*Cameron Weissensee '03, Dorsi Bonner '04 and son Sennan at his first baseball game*

**Dorsi Bonner** says, "My husband, **Cameron Weissensee '03**, and I welcomed our first baby in August of 2020! His name is Sennan Cabral Weissensee and we are having a blast getting to know him. I am so grateful that we have been able to connect with a few MA Alum parents with babies during the pandemic and meet up for outdoor activities. This last year has been challenging, but also full of joy. Cameron and I live in Mill Valley, work in Residential and Commercial Real Estate, and assist in transactions all over the North Bay and beyond! Hope everyone is well and if you are in Marin maybe I'll see you sometime soon!"

In 2021, **Ben Amen** added an instrument rating to his pilot's license and celebrated 10 years with his partner Tracey Treaccar at the Airport in the Sky atop Catalina Island.



*Ben Amen '04 with partner Tracey Treaccar*

# 05

**Amy Strauss** reports that, "After sixteen years away from the Bay Area, I'm back and eager to connect with my roots! So eager, in fact, that I'm returning to Marin Academy this fall (2021) as a member of the Science Department faculty. I'll be coordinating the Marin Academy Research Collaborative (MA's new-ish science research program)—if you're an alum and a scientist, find me on the MA website and reach out about connecting with the program!"



*Rebecca Hornthal '07 and Ross Pomerantz '07*

**07** **Rebecca Hornthal** and **Ross Pomerantz** share the memory that, "in 2007 our senior class voted us 'Best Hypothetically Married Couple'..."

**08** **Catherine Wilka** completed her Ph.D. in Climate Physics and Chemistry at MIT and, after a year riding out the pandemic in a cramped Boston apartment, has moved back to the Bay Area to continue her research as a postdoctoral scholar at Stanford. She had to stop competing in triathlons during the pandemic, but hopes that becomes a safe option again soon!

**Bennett Schatz** is (surprisingly) still an audio professional in the Bay Area. He is clinging to the last wisps of his fading youth by getting dumb tattoos that he will definitely not ever regret.

**Max Meyers** lives in Oakland, where he writes computer programs for work.

**09** **Fiona Ostby** shares, "I got married last October at the city office, I'm currently working on a PhD at Tokyo Zokei University, and have a graphic novel called *Space Story* coming out in June of 2022! Perhaps the most exciting thing in my daily life though is that my neighborhood has friendly outdoor cats who ask passers-by for pats."

Having stayed in NYC throughout the last year, Hannah and **Adrian St. Francis** are enjoying watching the city return to its active and vibrant self this spring. Adrian is focusing his commercial litigation practice on employment law and contract disputes, but takes every opportunity to ski, rock climb, and hike in the Hudson Valley with Hannah and their greyhound, Luna.



*Adrian St. Francis '09 and Hannah St. Francis*

# 10

**Mollie Vitale** tells us, "I'm a Casting Associate on *Star Trek: Discovery*, among other shows and films."

**Emily Pascal** graduated Tufts Medical School, last year, and was thrilled to match in ENT-Head and Neck Surgery. Dr. Pascal started her second year of a five-year residency, July 1st, as well as becoming a homeowner in May. Emily is grateful to have eluded COVID, thus far, loves taking care of a very diverse and acute patient population, is seeing many unusual medical conditions, and doing a lot of complex surgeries. Emily has also received successive "I-Care" awards for her compassion with patients.



Dr. Emily Pascal '10

# 14

**Ari Goldstein** began a new role this year overseeing public programs at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. He spoke to MA students at the 2021 Conference on Democracy on "Reckoning with a Dark American Past: What We Can Learn From Germany."



Ari Goldstein '14 spoke at the Council of American Jewish Museums conference in February 2020.

# 15

**Noah Paravicini** says, "Sup guys."

# 17

**Marielle Lyons** writes, "I graduated this past May summa cum laude from Occidental College with bachelor degrees in Sociology and Spanish. This fall, I will start my position as

community engagement assistant and Spanish support teacher at Mark Day School."

**Kathryn (Katie) Sisson** says, "I feel blessed to have survived and comparatively thrived during these "unprecedented times." I was studying abroad in Cape Town, South Africa when COVID-19 emerged, so it broke my heart to cut short my rich cultural journey. But the collective loss, isolation, and chaos of 2020 broke my heart even further, so I seized opportunities to take action. Back home in San Rafael, I relished volunteering throughout the pandemic at the Marin Community Clinics as a lead bilingual communicator for their drive-through Health Hubs. I was grateful to safely deliver essential resources to thousands of vulnerable families each week and to educate our community on COVID-19 testing, alongside an incredible team of health employees and volunteers from MA! Promoting dialogues and positive local relationships deepened my sense of community interconnectedness.

I returned to Los Angeles to complete my final (virtual) year at USC and I contracted the virus shortly thereafter in Fall 2020. I joined a clinical trial to contribute to COVID research, but suffered from the exacerbation of my chronic illnesses and was labeled a "long-hauler." Nonetheless, determined to complete my education, I grappled with the difficulties of 'Zoom University' by sustaining connections with my peers and my community. In May 2021, I proudly walked across the stage with an undergraduate degree in Health and Human Sciences and minors in Spanish and Health Care Studies.



Kathryn Sisson '17 graduated from the University of Southern California with honors in the Class of 2021

It's that time of year wherein we not only prepare to welcome new members of our community but also pause to say goodbye to those who have served us so well. We send them off with our gratitude for all they have done for MA. With great appreciation we bid farewell to the following faculty and staff:



**TEAL CONROY** has made the difficult decision to step away from her work at MA in order to spend more time with her children, after seven years of reshaping our advancement efforts. In her time at MA, Teal has served both as our Director of Leadership Giving and most recently as the Director of Advancement. Teal has brought stronger stewardship, intentional engagement and a tireless effort to develop a culture of philanthropy to the Marin Academy community, near and far. Teal's leadership has been instrumental in completing our campaign for the Science and Innovation Center and in an extremely strong start to our current campaign Going Beyond, while maintaining impressive results in our Annual Fund.

**SACHI DECOU** will be moving abroad with her husband. Five years ago she joined the MA teaching staff, filling the newly imagined role that we named in short "the maker breaker position." In her time here, Sachi brought our Design Lab on line from an empty room to a sought after space with all kinds of tools; she supported our curriculum work in so many ways, including her work with TLP, the 5 Competencies, and the Conference on Democracy to name a few. Her creativity, commitment to teaching and learning, and vast experience has benefited our school in so many ways.



**AARON FULK** is moving to Nashville, Tennessee. In his five years at MA, Aaron has deeply influenced MA's college counseling program, creating a mission-driven process that values equity, choice, self-awareness, autonomy, and self-worth as core tenets. Under his leadership, the college counseling office has expanded and increased the robust support and meaningful engagement with all members of the Marin Academy community. He has played an important role in our engagement with the Mastery Transcript Consortium and our move to competency-based learning. On a national level, Aaron served as the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee on the board of trustees for the Association of College Counselors at Independent Schools.



**STORI OATES and BILL MEYER** have decided to begin the next chapter of their lives and their work in Juneau, Alaska.

**STORI OATES** began her work at MA first as a regular and engaging sub and then as a full faculty member. From the beginning, Stori brought a passion for hands-on science, a deep understanding of the challenges and joys of research, and a commitment to bringing all students along as scientists. Her stewardship of the Marin Academy Research Collaborative (MARC) program has inspired many of our students onto the path of novel research.

**BILL MEYER** has been at the forefront of change at MA for 18 years, whether through his participation on our first Crisis Response Team, his tenure as Department Chair in History, through the creation and evolution of The Conference on Democracy, or in the development of our first Transdisciplinary Leadership program, Culture Shock.



**MARK STEFANSKI** has retired from MA after 33 years of service. His extraordinary contributions to MA have included teaching science, coaching soccer, leading Outings, 9th Grade Dean, Mindfulness Club advisor, co-founder of Conference on Democracy, MA Gardening for Food Security, Climate Action Council, and serving as the school's inaugural Thoreau Chair. He has won multiple national teaching awards for his originality in the classroom and his commitment to students. Mark, we will miss your bad jokes, and we wish you well in your retirement, "you wonderful human being."

**MYA SULLIVAN**, our Dean of Equity and Inclusion since 2018, has decided to conclude her time at Marin Academy and return to Ohio where she will become the Head of School at Welsh Hills School. In her time at MA, Mya has contributed to our growth as a community in countless ways. Whether in her focus on our mission or her equity and inclusion perspective, Mya has led from a perspective grounded in meaningful, systemic change. In addition to teaching, advising our students and student leaders of IDEQ groups, and serving on the Leadership Team, Mya has led on the Strategic Plan, served on Board committees, and represented MA in a plethora of venues. She has connected and overseen the work of our Community Action Program, Aim High/Crossroads, and our Spanish speaking family liaison.



**MARCI VELANDO**, who served as a member of Marin Academy's Advancement and Communications teams since 2018, moved on from MA in August. Marci joined MA with impressive skills in video production, graphic design, and photography. She captured beautiful stories and images for Marin Academy's social media accounts. Her social media video campaigns for Giving Day were both playful and meaningful, inspiring many to participate and give back to MA.

**While each of the people leaving us is irreplaceable, we are excited to welcome new faculty and staff who will help us build the next generation of MA graduates. Joining us in 2021—22 are:**



**ANA ANDERSON** (she/her) is thrilled to join Marin Academy as an English teacher. She started teaching at Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville, Tennessee and spent the last ten years as an English teacher and dean at Bentley School in Lafayette, California. Ana earned a BA in English from the University of

Tennessee and her MA in English from Penn State. Ana lives in Oakland with her wife and their scruffy little dog, and her favorite things are reading just about everything, trying out new recipes, and following the A's obsessively.



**SAYED SULAIMAN AZIMI** goes by Sayed (sigh-ed) or Sulaiman (su-lay-mon). He re-joins the MA community this year as the Crossroads Program Coordinator and Performing Arts House Manager. He worked as an Assistant Teacher in the MA music program in 2020—21.

Sayed is a life-long musician who loves being fit and staying active. He also loves a good laugh (or cry), eating delicious food, and is always interested in reading a good book. When not at work, he enjoys exploring new ideas and experiences, ranging from listening to someone's personal story or exploring a new hiking trail that might challenge his endurance.



**CHRISTINA (CHRIS) CHAVARRIA** (she/her) will be the new Lab Technician starting this fall. Chris graduated from Williams College in 2020, with a B.A. in Biology and a Concentration in Public Health. Most recently, she worked as a Biology teacher for 9th and 10th graders at Leadership Public Schools in Richmond (her hometown!).

Now living in San Francisco, Chris spends her free time exploring different parts of the city. On a foggy day, you can find her knitting, crocheting, painting, or curled up reading a good book with her cat Chickpea.



**CHARLENE ENGLE** (she/her) prefers to go by Char, and is joining MA as a history and English teacher. Most recently, she taught both subjects at Chadwick School in Palos Verdes, California while serving as a Head Adviser and the Head Coach of the debate team. Char double majored in International

Relations and Japanese Language and Culture at Tufts University while captaining the women's rugby team. She has also received a teaching credential from San Diego State University and has taken graduate classes at the University of California, Irvine, and the High Tech High Graduate School of Education. She enjoys dogs, reading, and eating.



**RICHARD MASLAND** (he/him) was born in Nicosia, Cyprus, and was raised in Cape Town, South Africa before landing on the west coast. Most recently, he worked with The Belldegrin Center for Innovative Leadership at the Brentwood School. Richard studied Fine Art as an undergraduate at the University of

Southern California before earning his MA in Education at Loyola Marymount University. He loves surfing and chess, building things, taking apart old cars, and collecting hobbies.



**JOANNA PAUN** is Marin Academy's College Counseling and Learning Services Assistant. She grew up in Marin and first came to the MA campus the summer before 7th grade for a camp. After graduating from Sonoma State, she went to work at Tam Valley Elementary School in Mill Valley as a 1:1 paraprofessional

special education aide, fell in love with the school setting, and decided to pursue a counseling degree. Outside of MA, Joanna was elected to the Petaluma City Schools Board in the 2018 election, making her the first Black elected official in Petaluma. She is currently serving as President of the School Board. In her free time, you can find Joanna with her four daughters and husband, reading, and drinking coffee.



**KEVIN QUINN** is excited to join the MA community this year. Most recently, he taught for two years at the Nueva School and before that spent several years living and teaching in Hong Kong. He has also taught in New York City and Connecticut. He received his BA in English from Yale University and has perhaps an obsessive love of a brilliant novel. He's also an unabashed foodie, a fact that conveniently coincides with his love of travel. Though he's getting used to the Bay, he still considers Hong Kong and Lisbon "home."



**MINDY ROSE** (she/her) is the new Director of College Counseling. Most recently, she served as Director of College Counseling at Shanghai American School, Pudong (China), and, prior to that, at Peddie School (New Jersey). She developed her craft as a college counselor at the Lawrenceville School, where she lived and worked for twelve years. Mindy earned her BA in American Studies from Skidmore College and her MA in American Studies from the College of William & Mary where her focus was on identity and racial political dynamics. Deeply influential in Mindy's career was her work in college admissions at the University of Richmond where she developed entry into the profession, its practices, and the language needed to explain its many quirks. Mindy is the proud mother of a member of Marin Academy's class of 2025 and of a rising seventh-grader. Mindy's idea of fun is thinking of college counseling like a librarian might, traveling for work or fun, soulful conversations about how we become who we are, walking about nature, and enjoying her children before they fledge.

**STEVEN SPANGENBERG** (he/him/his) grew up in Cincinnati Ohio, and after earning a BS in Chemistry from The Ohio State University, he moved to Washington DC and worked towards an MS in Chemistry at Georgetown University. Through his experiences studying Chemistry and being a Teaching Assistant, he realized that education was his calling. He has worked at West Potomac High School and most recently at The Field School. Steven, his partner Mitchell, and his cat Mason have always dreamed of moving to the Bay Area, and are excited for their move and next adventure. They planned on taking their time as they traveled across the country this summer to pursue their passions of hiking and being outdoors, making stops at The Badlands, Grand Teton, Yellowstone, Zion, and The Grand Canyon.



**AMY STRAUSS** (she/her) is a proud Marin Academy alumna ('05) and is thrilled to be returning this fall to teach science and coordinate the Marin Academy Research Collaborative (MARC)! Amy received her undergraduate degree in Biology and Environmental Studies from Whitman College and is now finishing up a PhD in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her doctoral research explores the evolution of vocal communication in songbirds, a system with many parallels to human speech and language. Amy most recently taught at Towson University in Maryland. Before that, she taught at Brooklyn College in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and worked in the Vertebrate Zoology research collections at the American Museum of Natural History. Amy enjoys sharing her love of science with others and is committed to helping build a scientifically literate, scientifically engaged public, and an inclusive and accessible STEM community. She is also a classically-trained singer, an outdoor enthusiast, and a connoisseur of spicy foods.



**KELLY THOMAS** (she/her) began July 1st as the new Associate Athletic Director. She has seven years of independent school physical education and athletic administration experience, most recently teaching physical education at Mark Day School. Kelly earned her BS in Kinesiology as well as her MS in Kinesiology from San Francisco State University, where she focused her thesis research on the influence of coaches in the development of intrinsic motivation and exercise adherence in high school student-athletes. When she isn't coaching basketball, she enjoys hiking and baking.



**HWEI-LI TSAO** teaches visual arts with a focus on drawing and painting. She has been an occasional guest teacher and teaching assistant in MA's visual arts program since 2018. She has taught painting at the College of Marin, at the San Francisco Art Institute in adult continuing education, and online. Hwei-Li's paintings and fabric sculptures have been shown at the de Young Museum, Triton Museum, Sebastopol Center for the Arts, and around the Bay Area. Her studio is in San Anselmo. She holds an MFA in Painting from the San Francisco Art Institute and an MS in Computer Science from Santa Clara University.

# VISIONARIES

Dear Members of our Marin Academy Community:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

— Margaret Mead

As you read through this magazine featuring alumni and programs that embody innovation, dedication, and activism for the betterment of society, I hope you find yourself as inspired as I do. I see it every day in my work with Travis and the Board of Trustees. MA is more than a school creating changemakers. MA is an active participant, a change agent, making positive changes in our local community and the world. I am humbled to be a member of this community and engaged in this work.

This year's Annual Report is reflective of the power of a community that truly cares particularly in times of adversity. Every gift at every level makes a powerful impact on how we can face these rapidly evolving moments with confidence. Please take the time to celebrate our loyal donors and to read the inspiring stories within. And most importantly, please accept my gratitude for your commitment.

On behalf of the entire MA community, I would also like to thank the members of the Board of Trustees who have finished their outstanding commitment and dedication to the School in June: **Rona Ashe, Berta Campos-Anicetti, Mona Couchman, Mark Sachleban, Jennifer Smorgon, Tony Stais, and Chris Torto.** You will find more about our newest Board members in this report; we are excited to welcome them.

Gratitude abounds as we focus on the future. Thank you for all that you have done and that you continue to do for Marin Academy.

With gratitude,

**Marie Lyons**

(Henry '14, Mac '17, Sam '18, George '21)  
Chair, MA Board of Trustees



# PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT

## BY THE NUMBERS

**\$2,166,160**

RAISED IN ANNUAL GIVING FOR THE  
2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR, INCLUDING

**\$2,042,590**

FOR THE MARIN ACADEMY  
ANNUAL FUND

**785**

GENEROUS DONORS

**75**

FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEERS

**440**

STUDENTS SERVED

## MA CELEBRATES HIGHLIGHTS

**14** event volunteers

**107** supporters

**\$123,570**

total raised including

**\$100,750** contributed for MA Promise

**MA PROMISE** is Marin Academy's commitment to ensuring the most talented students from all backgrounds across the Bay Area have access to a Marin Academy education.

Read more at [ma.org/ma-promise](https://ma.org/ma-promise).

"Spark" by Maya W. '22

## GIVING DAY 2021

**\$170,721** raised in 24 hours

**\$13,708** contributed for the  
MA Aquatic Center Challenge

**372** incredible donors

**21** outstanding advocates

**2004 and 2021**

(class years with highest number of gifts)

**\$50K** board challenge + **\$26K** in additional  
challenges and matches by 11 donors

**Over 100 faculty, staff, and coaches honored**  
including four special tribute videos with MA alums

# "It's the People"

Jeanne Wang (Kirsten '24)



› Your daughter, Kirsten, had a very unique freshman year due to the challenges posed by COVID-19. Can you share any observations about MA's students and community gleaned through this experience?

When I reflect on the past year, I feel privileged to have joined such a strong community that respects and listens to all members' perspectives and is very flexible in adjusting to a changing environment. I also valued the tremendous effort the administration put into gathering and analyzing data from all sources to make informed decisions to successfully lead the school through such a challenging time. As Kirsten began playing sports in March and the COVID-19 restrictions loosened, it was a joy to see her meet so many great friends and have such a positive experience with her tennis, volleyball and lacrosse teams. I was most impressed with how inclusive the upperclass students were on all her teams.

› What do you most look forward to as we begin a new school year?

As we begin a new school year, I am very hopeful that the kids will be able to enjoy each other's smiles. I look forward to students experiencing the typical interactive MA classroom setting, attending their friends' athletics events

and live performances, and enjoying a more robust social scene both on and off campus. Personally, I also look forward to the MA parent events currently on the schedule. While I have gotten to know some really great people at MA, I look forward to spending more time with them as well as getting to know many others.

› As an incoming Annual Fund Co-Chair, what inspires you most about MA? Has this evolved in any way from the time Kirsten applied to MA up until now?

In my first job out of college I worked for Bankers Trust whose slogan at the time was "It's the People." MA should adopt this slogan as it is truly the people at MA that inspire me. I have been so impressed with the administration and faculty on how they managed through this pandemic. I also personally witnessed an amazing amount of support from families in giving both their time and funds to support the school. When we finally had some year-end events that needed parent support, the volunteer sign-up spots were quickly filled. In contacting families to support the Annual Fund, I got incredible feedback. Families were very supportive of contributing to the school and working together to make it better. I look forward to enjoying this journey together with all the amazing people associated with MA.

“

The people at MA inspire me. I have been so impressed with the administration and faculty on how they managed through this pandemic.

”

## Fundraising Summary 2020—21

### › PLEDGES AND CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Annual Fund Gifts      | \$ 2,166,160        |
| Endowment Gifts        | \$ 1,000            |
| Capital Campaign       | \$ 3,798,704        |
| Other Restricted Gifts | \$ 440              |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>\$ 5,966,304</b> |



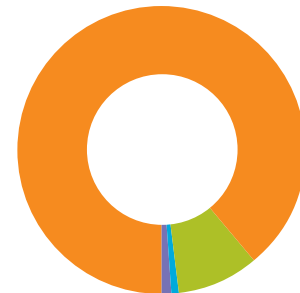
|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Capital Campaign       | 63.7% |
| Annual Fund Gifts      | 36.3% |
| Endowment Gifts        | <1%   |
| Other Restricted Gifts | <1%   |

## Operating Fund Summary 2020—21

### › REVENUE AND SUPPORT

|                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Tuition                   | \$ 22,783,800        |
| Annual Giving*            | \$ 2,349,600         |
| Interest and Other Income | \$ 216,200           |
| Transfers                 | \$ 237,008           |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>\$ 25,586,608</b> |

\* Represents gifts for current operations only and does not include any gifts for capital improvements or endowment.



|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Tuition                   | 89.0% |
| Annual Giving             | 9.2%  |
| Interest and Other Income | <1%   |
| Transfers                 | <1%   |

### › EXPENSES

|                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Salaries and Benefits              | \$ 14,751,273        |
| Financial Aid                      | \$ 3,633,810         |
| Academic Departments               | \$ 1,903,321         |
| Physical Plant                     | \$ 1,577,967         |
| Administration and Student Support | \$ 2,329,650         |
| Bond Financing                     | \$ 1,390,587         |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>\$ 25,586,608</b> |



|                                    |       |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Salaries and Benefits              | 57.7% |
| Financial Aid                      | 14.2% |
| Administration and Student Support | 9.1%  |
| Academic Departments               | 7.4%  |
| Physical Plant                     | 6.2%  |
| Bond Financing                     | 5.4%  |

# The Long-Lasting Gift of MA Athletics

Maxwell Hayman '05



› This new pool has been years in the making. What excites you most about the project?

For me, the most exciting part is that it's *finally* happening. I remember arriving at the MA pool for the first day of water polo practice the week before freshman year started. None of the freshmen had ever played water polo before—most of us just had some swimming background—so our coach, Scott, explained the basic rules, including that you have to tread water the whole time. And, since the MA pool had a shallow end, we had to be especially careful not to touch the bottom. In retrospect, it was like learning basketball on a court with a regulation, 10-foot basket on one end and one of those plastic, 5-foot-tall, Fisher-Price hoops on the other. But the older kids told us not to worry because a new pool was already in the works and would start construction soon. That will be 20 years ago this fall—so it really has been a long time in the making. And it's so exciting that we'll not only be able to finally have a regulation-size water polo setup, but also a phenomenal facility to host swim meets. It's truly a game changer for aquatics at MA.

› Do you have any favorite memories that stand out from your time swimming and playing water polo at MA?

I have so many great memories. My time on the swim and water polo teams at MA was such a wonderful experience. There

was a lot of overlap between the swim and polo teams and we trained and traveled with the girls teams too. So it became a really tight knit community and we all had a lot of fun together. Some of my best friends, to this day, were my teammates.

A few memories that stand out are: classmates bringing taiko drums to the BCL championships and pounding them at the end of our lane during relays, practices in pouring rain where we'd sprint the last laps to try and be first into the locker rooms for hot showers, long rowdy bus rides to and from the away games in the south and east bay, a water polo tournament in Maui where we were practically drowned by the Navy team in a joint practice, making announcements at assembly in our speedos before rivalry meets. It was all so much fun.

› When you think about the role that athletics has played in your life, do you have any advice for our current student-athletes?

First and foremost, being able to easily dedicate a few hours every day to a fun physical activity with your friends is awesome. As you get older, especially after college, it's not really possible. So enjoy it as much as you can!

Also, aside from a few highlights, I don't remember the scores of meets and games. But the friends I was so fortunate to play sports with at MA made high

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**It's so exciting that we'll not only be able to finally have a regulation-size water polo setup, but also a phenomenal facility to host swim meets.**

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school truly special. So focus on the people. Maybe you'll continue playing your sport in college and throughout your life, or maybe you'll find new ways to stay active over time. But the friends, and the fun you have together stay with you. In my experience, they're the real, lasting gift of MA athletics.



## New Aquatic Center Provides Exciting Opportunities for MA Students and the San Rafael Community

Marin Academy broke ground on a long-awaited, much-anticipated project this spring: a new competition-sized swimming pool. Replacing the 90-year-old pool that does not meet competition standards, the new Marin Academy Aquatic Center will be located just east of the library building and promises to promote personal growth and community-building with new and innovative programs and opportunities.

From allowing MA's water polo and swim teams to host games, meets, and small tournaments on campus to wellness classes, the Marin Academy Aquatic Center will offer something for all MA students. While we know our students will benefit, an additional driving force behind this project was the opportunities to tangibly connect with our neighbors and provide partnerships with community groups and non-profit organizations to increase community access to water safety and wellness opportunities.

Marin Academy plans to partner with San Rafael and other Marin agencies to support much-needed learn-to-swim programs and open more lanes for community swimmers—including the vibrant Tamalpais Aquatic Masters and student-focused organizations like AIM High. As Head of School Travis Brownley shared, "Marin Academy is not just in the community, we are of this community. It's been 20 years since MA started Crossroads to address issues of educational equity and the opportunity gap in the San Rafael community, and our impact continues to expand with Community Action Leadership Council, the Youth Grants Board, and Aim High. We hope to build upon existing relationships and discover new community partnerships."

To learn more about this project visit [ma.org/aquatic-center](https://ma.org/aquatic-center)

## New Board Members



**PAUL LEVITAN** and his wife, Lauren Cooks Levitan, are residents of Mill Valley, and are the parents of Joshua '25, Jonathan '20 and Jacqueline '16. Paul received his BA from Wesleyan University and his MBA from the Stanford GSB, where he served as Vice Chair of its Management Board. Paul has spent his career in the food business, leading his company, Galaxy Desserts, from inception to acquisition. He currently consults and advises entrepreneurial companies. Paul previously served on the Marin Academy Board from 2013—2020, and as a Trustee at Marin Horizon School.

**TAD BUCHANAN** and his wife Emilia live in Marin County with their three children (Michael, MA Class of '23, Reina, MA class of '25, and Jack, a rising 7th grader). Tad is interim CFO of a private, venture backed start-up in the mental health sector, and manages a portfolio of venture investments in healthcare, clean energy and mobility technologies, and enterprise software. Tad received his BA in Economics from Pepperdine University and his MBA from Boston College.



**BRIGHID DWYER '97** (she/her) graduated from Marin Academy in 1997 and was a member of the swim team and MA's first water polo team. She went on to swim at UCLA, compete in the 2000 US Olympic Trials, and graduate with a degree in Sociology. After a brief career in athletics, she earned her MA and PhD in Higher Education Administration from the University of Michigan. Brighid has been advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in athletics and higher education for more than 20 years. She has held positions at the NCAA, the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles, Delaware County Community College, UCLA, University of Michigan, and Villanova University. Presently she serves as Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion at Princeton University. Brighid still swims several times per week and can't wait to dive into the new MA pool.

**ERICA HUNT** lives in Ross with her husband, Brian, and three sons, Miles '21, Otis '23, and Arlo. Erica earned her undergraduate degree from the University of California, Berkeley. She worked as a project manager for 10 years in the tech industry, and for the past 20 years Erica has owned Order, a professional organization business where she organizes individuals and small businesses. She has served on the Executive Board of the Marin Academy Parent Association for four years and currently serves as the 2021—2022 President. In addition to MAPA, she chaired Homeless Prenatal Programs Annual Fall Luncheon for three years, volunteers at Marin Community Clinics Health Hub Pantries two times a week, is an avid gardener and baker, and cares deeply about food waste and food insecurity.





**CHRISTINA KOSMOWSKI** lives in Kentfield with her husband, Eron, and daughters Anja '23 and Ali '25. She received her undergraduate degree in Industrial Engineering from Northwestern University, where she was also captain of the varsity soccer team. Christina is currently President of LogicMonitor and holds board positions at Rapid7 (NASDAQ:RPD) and at the McCormick School of Engineering at Northwestern University. She previously served as Chief Customer Officer at Slack and Salesforce, and was a Founding Partner of Operator Collective LP. In her spare time, Christina enjoys traveling with her family and continuing to pursue her love of soccer—through volunteering with Marin FC and playing in multiple women's leagues in the Bay Area.

**FLORENCIA PARADA** was born in El Salvador and holds a Bachelor's degree in Communications from Jesuit's Central American University (UCA) in San Salvador. She moved to Marin in 1998, and her daughter Francesca graduated from MA in 2017. Florencia has consistently been involved in community engagement for the past 20 years. In 2005 she was the "Volunteer of the Year" recipient for the Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center. She was the Spanish MC for the State-wide Parent Voices "Stand for Children Day" in Sacramento from 2007—2009. She is an alumni of the San Rafael Leadership Institute sponsored by the Latino Chambers of Commerce, and was the recipient of the 2012—13 Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award from the Marin County Human Rights Commission for her advocacy and leadership work with low-income and immigrant families. Florencia is currently working at the Marin Community Clinics as the Community Outreach Manager.



**ISAURA RESENDIZ** lives in Novato with her husband Arturo and son Cesar '23. Isaura has been working for North Marin Community Services, a non-profit community service agency for more than 20 years and has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. She assists some of the most vulnerable families to strengthen relationships, reduce barriers to care, connect them with critical resources, and participate in wraparound team meetings. Her support and effective case management has allowed many families in Marin to overcome personal crises and family emergencies. These interventions have created family stability and self-sufficiency.

While her days are filled with difficult stories of challenging circumstances, Isaura receives each family with an open-heart and her full attention, treating each family or individual with the utmost dignity, compassion and respect.

Isaura has also done contract work for Children & Family Services, and in 2015 became certified as a Visitation Supervisor through Marin County's Superior Court.

## 2021—22 Board of Trustees

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**Isaura Resendiz**

**David Riley**

**Sophie Ross**

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**Kevin Thau**

**Molly Tomforde**

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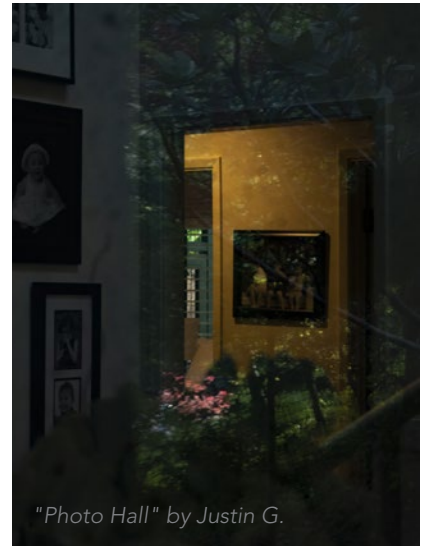
# 2021 STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

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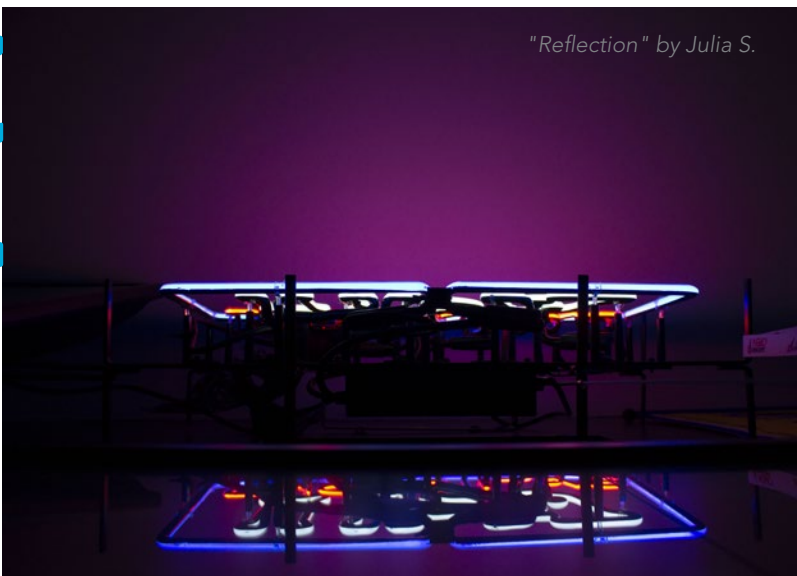
VANGUARDS



"Graffiti Room" by Ivan E.



"Photo Hall" by Justin G.



"Reflection" by Julia S.



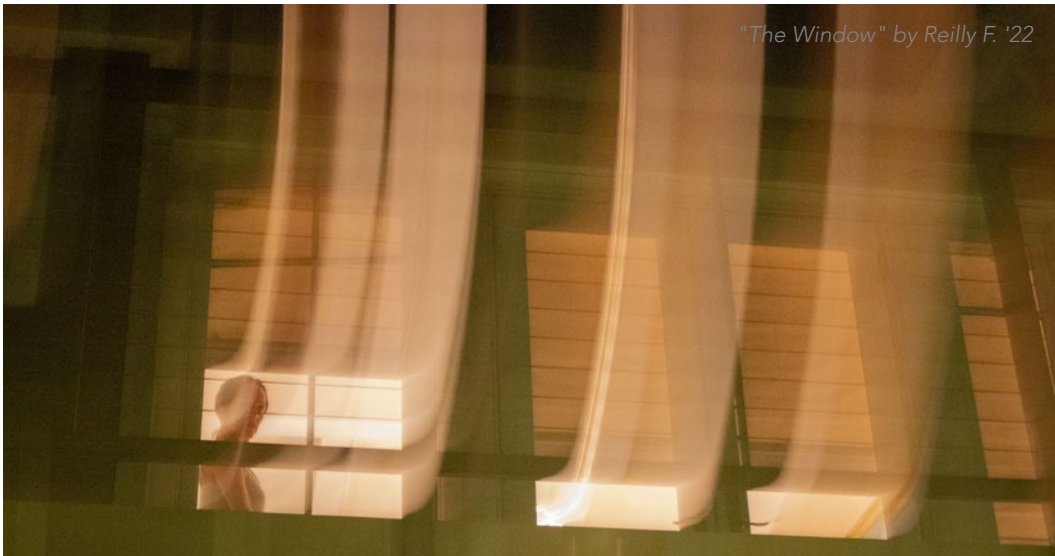
"Water Droplet Lear" by Izzy R.



"Field of Flowers" by Addie E.



"Night Lights" by George C. '22



"The Window" by Reilly F. '22



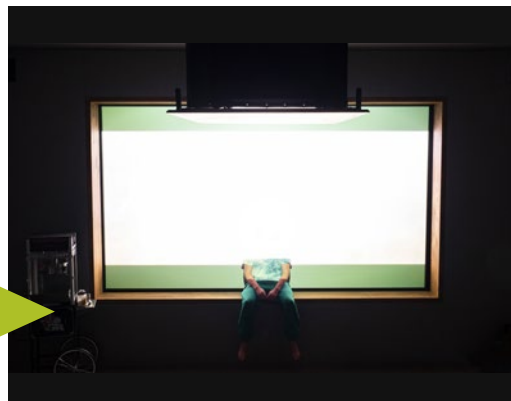
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To see more pieces from the exhibition, please visit [ma.org/arts/visual-arts](http://ma.org/arts/visual-arts)

### FRONT COVER

"Movie" by Robbie M. '21



## From the Archives

Can you identify this group of students who attended MA in 2002-03? Let us know by emailing us at [alumni@ma.org](mailto:alumni@ma.org).



1600 Mission Avenue  
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## Think. Question. Create.

Marin Academy students marry art and science, explore the meaning of space and place, and bring their visions to life through creativity and the latest technology.

Many voices are welcomed and encouraged at MA, allowing our students to cultivate the tools they need to live their lives fully, and the inspiration to contribute as compassionate citizens of the world.

