

WINTER 2022

Old Trail

MAGAZINE

REMEMBERING PETER G. WILSON

Peter's indelible spirit lives on in each of us and in every Old Trail student—past, current and future.



ALUMNI ALEXANDRIA COUCH '12

"We're existing in a moment where a price that we pay for monumental change is hypervisibility."

Old Trail MAGAZINE

Old Trail School Winter 2022

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

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Mission

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

ON THE COVER

A process drawing submitted by Old Trail School graduate Alexandria Couch '12 for the "We Are" project, sponsored by Downtown Akron Partnership. Couch, who is pursuing a Master in Fine Arts at Yale University, is our 2021 Peter G. Wilson Rising Star Award recipient. **Read more on page 31.**





We show gratitude
by leaving
only footprints.



Five years ago, we launched a strategic plan for Old Trail that focused on four core tenants: (1) distinctive culture, (2) transformative student experience, (3) teaching excellence, and (4) sustainable future.

From this work, more than 21 strategic initiatives were created to address each quadrant and we remained on target, despite the many and unpredictable challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shortly after the start of school this fall, I watched from my office window as new music teacher Adam Thiel led a group of Grade 3 students across the parking lot and up the steps leading to the Merryweather Outdoor Classroom. It was an astonishing sight to observe with Mr. Thiel strumming on a guitar slung over his shoulder and the children singing to the tune of “Way Down Yonder in the Paw Paw Patch” as they marched eagerly along on another sun-filled, fall day on campus.

Their destination was the Learning Farm where edible education teacher Kathy Sapienza was waiting for them with an array of shovels, watering cans, wheelbarrows and loads of compost. After learning about the historical significance of Ohio’s only native fruit tree and its once powerful impact on Native American culture and trade, the children planted a row of paw paw trees just beyond our greenhouses.

Because of their effort—which I promise more closely resembled fun than “work”—future generations of Old Trail third graders will be able to see and taste fruit from the paw paw trees as they learn the traditional American folk song from Mr. Thiel.

Over the course of our school’s rich history, OTS has evolved and grown in many profound ways, but, at the same time, its foundation has remained steeped in the teaching and learning philosophy of which it was founded. As I think about the planting of our new paw paws, I can’t help but think that our school’s pioneering, founding fathers would have been proud to learn about this multidisciplinary, deeper learning experience that is so distinctively Old Trail more than 100 years later.

Recognizing the critical importance of global education in an increasingly interconnected world system, we formed the OTS Center for Global Understanding, which guides our Early Childhood Global Explorers program and the new Middle School Global Explorers elective. Additionally, the groundwork was completed on three new international experiences for our students that will be launched once it is safe to do so.

With generous support from a former OTS family, the Middle School Fellowship in Creativity: Scholarly Thought and Creativity Beyond the Classroom was also formed, offering our seventh and eighth grade students the means to pursue an independent study in the area of their choice, while being supported by a faculty mentor. Additionally, the Learning Services department was completely reimaged and new specialists were retained to more effectively provide both enrichment and support to our

diverse student population, benefiting children of all grade levels.

Lastly, the stunningly beautiful Merryweather Outdoor Classroom now serves as the launching pad for our school-wide, nature-based and experiential learning curriculum that further accentuates our unique distinction as the country's only independent school located within a national park while unlocking the wonder of the natural world in children.

This comprehensive list of initiatives associated with the strategic plan serves as a testament to the remarkable contributions and support of so many associated with our beloved Old Trail School.

With nostalgia we look back to our founders and their bold vision of creating a school that would challenge children to think, create, reason and understand themselves in a larger, more significant context. We honor them by continuing to blaze our own path forward to graduate students who are poised to lead and self-advocate with the critical-thinking skills, creativity and empathy they will need to thrive in their world.

All my best,



Sarah Johnston
Head of School

Fall 2018	Established new global curriculum
Fall 2018	Formed strategic partnership with Countryside to manage the OTS Learning Farm
Summer 2019	Established new faculty on-boarding program
Summer 2019	Completed renovations of Meyo Library, Marne Carabell Library Courtyard, outdoor sports courts and pool windows
Summer 2019	Restructured Learning and Support Services
Fall 2019	Implemented new performance benchmarks to enhance math curriculum
Fall 2019	Launched the Middle School Fellowship in Creativity
Winter 2019	Created the Center for Global Understanding
Fall 2020	Constructed the award-winning Merryweather Outdoor Classroom
Fall 2020	Completed construction on reimagined ECP and Primary School playgrounds
Fall 2021	Nature-based and experiential learning curriculum introduced



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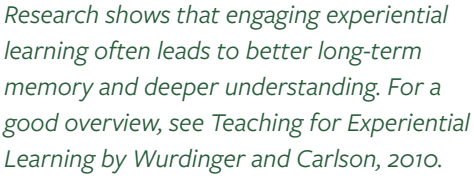
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Alexandria Couch '12

Alexandra Wilson '90

Laura Billow Preston



Think of the last time you really learned something new—something you still know how to do.

What did it take? Someone you trusted to guide you. An openness to trying something. Time to practice. The perseverance to keep going. To truly learn something, it takes being fully immersed: reading, listening, writing, moving, feeling.

As adults, this type of learning happens less and less frequently. We've already mastered skills that have become our careers and hobbies, or we're able to draw on past memories to inform new challenges and assignments. The knowledge we've acquired came from experience.

Head of School Sarah Johnston says, "Old Trail crafts its entire education around this word: experience. It's how we create learning that lasts and how we give students the strongest foundation possible to continually draw from and build on."

Students are constantly building on foundational elements of their education. Every year of math, science, art, history and English should be so memorable that the lessons continue to serve students year after year, as well as throughout high school, college and their careers.

That's why Old Trail frames its curriculum around hands-on and immersive learning: it's proven to produce the highest recall and provide context around content.

Old Trail dives into content with depth and excitement that would not be possible at most schools. Campus resources, faculty specialists and partnerships with outside organizations all provide opportunities to increase student engagement. For example, Grade 8 students in Old Trail's

Global Explorers middle school elective participated in a Global Education Benchmark Group video conference to discuss sustainable development with students and teachers from across the world. In another partnership, Grade 5 students worked with the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center to test the quality of the Cuyahoga River as part of the EarthEcho Water Challenge.

To learn deeply means students truly understand the content. Just as in our adult careers and community work, students should be able to apply knowledge across conversations and assignments. To build these capabilities, Old Trail ensures children learn holistically. For instance, after learning the traditional American folk song "Way Down Yonder in the Paw Paw Patch," Grade 3 students planted paw paw trees of their own on campus so future students could see living examples of Ohio's only native fruit tree. Grade 7 students, while studying the Holocaust in English class, worked with a visiting playwright to explore art and music from the ghettos and camps and then critique poetry together that the students had written.

Experience. It makes learning more meaningful. It makes academic concepts more memorable. It produces the values and qualities in Old Trail students that are most desired by 21st-century employers and industry leaders: a creative, entrepreneurial mindset; a global perspective; an empathic and positive outlook; and persuasive and effective communication skills. Yes, it makes a difference. ○

Read on to discover more about deeper learning through experience at Old Trail.

ENCE THE



Creativity Beyond the Classroom

Finding innovative ways to fuse students' creativity and intellectual curiosity with their passions has long been at the heart of the Old Trail School experience.

From this focus, Old Trail's Middle School Fellowship in Creativity was created in 2019 to offer Grade 7 and Grade 8 students opportunities for enriching, yearlong independent studies in an area of their choice with the support of a trusted faculty advisor. It is part of the school's commitment to providing transformative student experiences that distinctly promote experiential learning and creativity.

"Old Trail is devoted to creating interactions, experiences and opportunities that ensure that all students have the means to pursue their interests and passions," said Fellowship in Creativity Director Marival Quesada. "The areas of study chosen are as varied and interesting as the students who chose them."

Although the disruptions caused by COVID-19 prevented many students from the first fellowship cohort from finishing their projects, three fellows were able to complete their work.

The quality and diversity of their projects serve as a testament to the intent of the fellowship: creativity and intellectual curiosity.



As the capstone experience of her fellowship, Lauren Stephens '21 presents her mural display, titled Stand, to a group of students last March.

"The design of my mural reflects the beautiful and unique culture of our school. I feel that Old Trail is so inclusive in all aspects and my mural represents that."



>> LEARN MORE

Scan here or visit
oldtrail.org/creativity
to see and hear the
completed projects..

Keith Hancock '20: **"Four Seasons in Four** **Minutes: A Year at Old Trail** **from Summer to Summer"**

Keith envisioned a string quartet piece entitled "Four Seasons in Four Minutes: A Year at Old Trail from Summer to Summer." Keith's "Four Seasons" takes a page from Vivaldi's Four Seasons in that the fall and spring themes share similar melodies. Because Keith's composition chronicles the school year, it starts at the tail end of summer and cycles back to summer at the end. The composition came together during the early months of the pandemic (the spring of 2020), bringing music to life during a time of isolation.

Alexandra Newman '20: **"Welcome to Old Trail"**

Alex was always a constant ambassador for Old Trail and engaged people outside of the community on why Old Trail was her home. Combining her love of the performing arts, storytelling and Old Trail, Alex produced an engaging video about the arts at Old Trail for prospective families to view and understand the important role art plays at OTS.

Alex commented that as an eighth-grade student, "the Fellowship in Creativity was a perfect way to express my passion for the arts. I enjoyed the close partnership with my school mentor, and being able to create a project that focused on musical theatre. While working on the fellowship, I was able to research and gather knowledge to help me take my interest further."

Lauren Stephens '21: **"Diversity at Old Trail** **School—A Mural"**

After a significant amount of research, thought and conversations, Lauren spent months creating a mural that represents the many faces of Old Trail, makes a bold statement about our larger community and honors the core values of the school: responsibility, kindness, service and goodness.

"When working on my fellowship project I felt a sense of power," Lauren reflected. "To have the ability to showcase something important to me, a passion of mine, to a community, is a gift itself. I was overjoyed by the success of the project, not just because of the finished look but also the journey I took to reach that point. It is one of my proudest accomplishments in my Old Trail career."

Lauren's mural is permanently displayed in the Harrington-McLaughlin Athletic Center hallway. ○



Returning to our Roots

“To raise a nature-bonded child is to raise a rebel, a dreamer, an innovator... someone who will walk their own verdant, winding path.” —Nicolette Sowder

In the early 1980s, a Harvard University biologist named Edward O. Wilson proposed a theory called biophilia: that humans are instinctively drawn toward their natural surroundings.

Converging evidence suggests that experiences in nature aren't just enjoyable but can also have a profoundly positive impact on young children, boosting academic learning, personal development and environmental stewardship.



“Nature is an assured respite from our modern world stressors while providing our sense of well-being and much more,” said Erin McNamara, Old Trail School’s new director of experiential and nature-based learning. “Contact with nature can enhance creativity, bolster mood, lower stress, improve mental acuity, improve productivity, cultivate social connectedness and promote physical activity. As children observe, reflect, record and share nature’s patterns and rhythms, they are participating in a process that promotes scientific and ecological awareness, problem-solving and creativity out of authentic, firsthand experiences.”

Uniquely positioned in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Old Trail School has long offered its students a distinctive opportunity to engage in nature since its move to Ira Road in 1967. As the nation’s only independent school located in a national park, OTS and its community have daily access to abundant resources, unparalleled experiences, and a beautiful setting to call home.

“Our students have shown an inherent, profound interrelation to their environment during our time together,” Ms. McNamara said. “First graders are diligently nurturing propagated plants, observing the root growth, delighting in the tightly curled new bud or leaf. Our youngest learners fill their pockets (and mine) with treasures from the trail.



Fourth graders are awestruck by the ability to create their own reliable compasses, testing them in the field.”

On any given day, small groups of children can be seen and heard, led by Ms. McNamara, in open fields, on winding trails and at the learning farm on campus exploring and deepening their connections to nature.

“It is my highest motivation that in these small moments we are planting the seed of stewardship,” Ms. McNamara continued. “These small moments may lay a foundation for a future population that sees wonder in nature and advocates for our place in preserving and enjoying all our planet provides. By unlocking the wonder of the natural world in children, opportunities abound.”

The installation of the award-winning Merryweather Outdoor Classroom in 2020 represented an expansion of the school’s commitment to experiential and nature-based learning. The facility serves as Ms. McNamara’s classroom as well as the launching pad for her Nature class, which is offered to all Old Trail students once per cycle.

Guiding Growth in All Areas



Physical education and athletics have long been viewed as important elements contributing to the overall education of well-rounded, Old Trail School students. But with limited time during the school day, finding space for both programs to thrive has often been a challenge.

After decades of trying to collapse a robust athletic program into the traditional daily school schedule, Old Trail made the strategic decision last summer to move all interscholastic sports to a more conventional after-school time slot. The impact was two-fold and felt immediately as our athletes received a more team-oriented experience with classmates who shared their passions while students benefited from a more comprehensive physical education curriculum that dove deeper into health and wellness, fine and gross motor development, and skill exploration during the day.

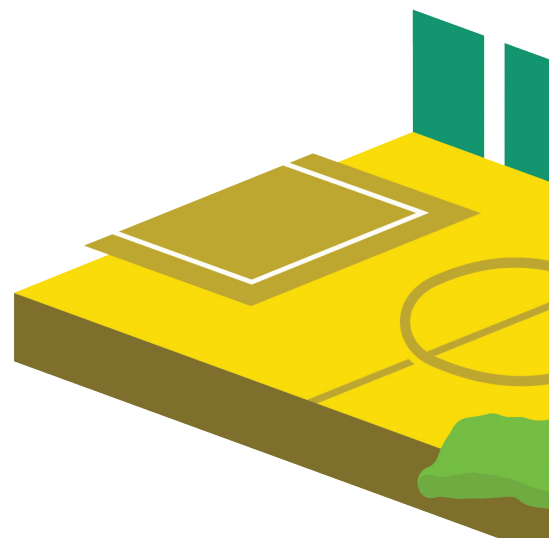
“COVID presented many challenges for Old Trail, yet one of the bright spots was the emergence of an integrated and cohesive physical education program separate from athletics,” said Middle School Director David Chottiner. “By allowing these two integral parts of our program to exist simultaneously has been to the benefit of students, their health and wellness, and the overall success of our athletic teams.”

In the fall, more than two-thirds of seventh and eighth grade students competed on sports teams that included Boys Soccer, Girls Tennis, Girls Field Hockey and Boys and Girls Cross Country. Augmenting the already sizable athletic teams, sixth graders were invited to join cross country as individual competitors.

“The after-school practices made for a dedicated group of soccer players that didn’t mess around,” said soccer head coach and PE teacher Ronald Teunissen, who led the Buffaloes to a 9-1 record. “The commitment was close to

100% in both games and practices, including the entire team showing up and winning the invitational tournament at University School.”

Freed from the requirement to coach sports during the school day, the PE department has reinvented its middle school curriculum. Throughout each term, students rotate with mixed groups of grade-level peers to three different areas of physical education.





“While academic success is what all schools aspire to, there is more to a student’s eventual triumphs,” said PE faculty member Kathy Novak, who was also the Girls Field Hockey coach this fall. “It is their understanding of the balance of sound nutrition principles, health and wellness, along with the correct amount of physical activity, that will ultimately lead to a longer and more productive life.”

The winter season began just before Thanksgiving, and now includes multiple basketball teams for boys and girls between fifth and eighth grade, as well as a swim team. ○



ELECTIVES

Middle school electives offer students the opportunity to discover and pursue their passions from a list of enriching and diverse experiences that rotate each trimester. Here are some of the many options offered in Trimester 1:

GLOBAL EXPLORERS

Students discover what it means to be a global citizen, traveling to far-off places and experiencing the vibrant cultures of the world without ever leaving the classroom. In addition to lively discussions about the people and societies that create, shape and influence global policy, students watch music videos from many different countries, view foreign films and examine global news clips.



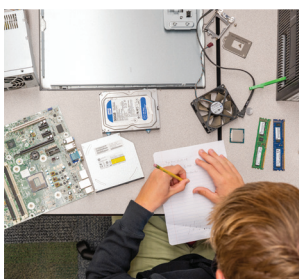
MOCK TRIAL

Students conduct several mock trials, both criminal and civil, and each student serves as an attorney and as a witness during the course to experience both roles. Students investigate the charges, gather evidence, plan how to present to the jury and actually conduct the trial for a volunteer jury of peers.



WEB AND APP DESIGN

Programming is fundamental to the understanding of a hyper-connected world. In this elective, students learn how to design and code websites and apps by using block coding, javascript, HTML and CCS.



Other Trimester 1 electives included Crater Science, Cross-Stitch, Dancing, Drawing and Painting, Lab Assistants, Nature Study, Power On: Computer Hardware 101, Stagecraft and Trail to Service.

Feeding Cultural Curiosity

As Old Trail's doors open for bleary-eyed students and shuffling parents to begin the day, the AVI Food Services team is already hitting their stride in the kitchen.

As the aroma of another freshly prepared meal fills the hallways, the sounds of crisp vegetables being chopped, delicious sauces being mixed in bowls and morning banter can be heard. With a daily menu as diverse and enriching as the hundreds of students it serves, the deliberate and thoughtful approach to preparing lunch at Old Trail is anything but ordinary.

At OTS, food is so much more than merely a substance to feed the body. It is a window into another culture and connects us in powerful ways. And for students, it is also the most anticipated social setting of the day, allowing them to laugh, share moments of joy, reflect and talk freely as they savor and enjoy another home-cooked meal. Eating together—whether sitting in the dining room, a camping chair in the front circle or on the Centennial Community Poem Bench—brings us together in meaningful ways.

FROM FARM TO FORK

Unlike most schools, Old Trail benefits greatly from its 11-acre, on-campus farm and its incredible partnership with Countryside, a non-profit organization that is committed to building a thriving local food community by connecting people, food and land in and beyond Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Through this innovative collaboration, Countryside grows the produce to meet the needs of the OTS kitchen while using the space as a training ground for their apprentice farmers through an initiative called the “Farm Project.”

It's possible that no one appreciates this arrangement more than Food Services Director Stefanie Tuma, who works closely with Countryside to coordinate the purchase of seeds for spring plantings, then keeps a close eye on what will be harvested. Through this connection, menu offerings are guided by the vegetables that

are available at the time and crops are harvested at their peak condition.

“Produce from our farm looks and tastes so different from items purchased from the store,” Tuma said. “Sometimes the vegetables are oddly shaped or might not look ‘picture perfect,’ but I always tell children, ‘the imperfection of fresh produce makes for a perfect dish.’ Having access to fresh produce gives me the confidence and knowledge that I am giving our students the best-tasting and healthiest options possible.”

Produce harvested from the farm includes garlic, parsley, tomatoes, basil, squash, Brussels sprouts, corn, cucumbers and zucchini, just to name a few. And at the end of the day, leftover scraps are taken back to the farm in the form of compost to help nourish the next harvest—creating a sustainable food system.





CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

On a particular day during the fall, students were presented with options that could have been found at a typical ramen shop in Tokyo with a station that included soba noodles, teriyaki chicken, sesame tofu, rich broth and toppings of fresh scallions. On the following day, the same station served homemade gyros and falafel with fresh tzatziki sauce.

This dramatic daily transformation is typical at Old Trail where lunch offerings are intentionally diverse culturally and challenge children to step outside of their comfort zones with their alluring aromas. By sampling the Korean beef station, a bowl of pho soup or selecting an item from the grilled Mediterranean flat bread bar, students learn that food is a passport to different cultures and parts of the world.

“I believe food has a story and each dish has an important story to share,” Tuma said. “When we understand the history or culture behind a certain dish, we can start to understand the people behind that culture. That’s why food is so important. It not only nourishes our bodies, but educates us, shows love and brings people together.”

As we reflect on the importance of food at Old Trail, our community is blessed with offerings that are fresh, sustainable and educationally focused. ○



Being from Louisiana, tell me a little bit about what makes Cajun food so important to you?

I would have to say all the memories it holds. It brings me back to all the family gatherings and holidays spent eating jambalaya, red beans and rice, and Natchitoches meat pies. In Louisiana, and anywhere in the South, wherever you go, somebody wants to feed you. It doesn’t matter the time of day or if you said you just ate. That’s how we showed our love and hospitality. Cajun or Creole food took time to make and eat; this made you slow down, relax and enjoy the food. Cajun cooking is all about using what is available and using local ingredients, which makes some dishes an adventure. You didn’t always know what was going to be in your gumbo!

How does access to fresh produce harvested from the Old Trail Farm impact your work?

While training to be a chef, you’re taught to use items that are fresh and in-season. Then, when you get out into the real world, you find out just how difficult that can actually be! Very few schools have access to fresh, right-out-of-the-garden produce as we do. Being able to use vegetables that are harvested at the correct time can take your dish from standard to outstanding.

Tell me about a favorite recipe you cook at Old Trail and why?

Before COVID, Joe Vogel and I talked about our shared love of food from other cultures and about the importance of exposing young children to food from different parts of the world. Just as this was becoming a point of emphasis, COVID interfered and our dining room was shut down. With the return to campus last year, we began to slowly reimplement the program in a limited capacity.

This year, the diverse offerings are more noticeable. Of all the dishes we have been able to introduce, my favorite is Butter Chicken—an Indian classic. Although it’s not Cajun or Creole (we haven’t had a chance to do that yet, but it’s coming!) I personally love it and the students really enjoy it also. Speaking of Cajun food, I can’t wait until Louisiana comes up on our international food day, so I can share the foods that I grew up with and hopefully inspire the students to fall in love with the food and culture I truly love and miss.

Ilodi Family Nigerian Jollof Rice with Chicken and Fried Plantains

Current recipe serves 8 adults



INGREDIENTS

CHICKEN

2 pounds chicken drumsticks
½ large onion, diced
1 (2 inch) piece fresh ginger root,
peeled and thinly sliced
2 cubes chicken bouillon,
crushed
2 cloves garlic, diced
1 tablespoon curry powder,
or more to taste
1 teaspoon herbes de Provence
Freshly ground black pepper
1 pinch cayenne pepper
1 cup water

RICE

3 tablespoons vegetable oil
½ large onion, diced
1 (14 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14 ounce) can coconut milk
1 teaspoon herbes de Provence
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
½ teaspoon ground black
pepper, or to taste
3 cups parboiled rice
(such as Uncle Ben's®)
1 (10 ounce) package frozen
mixed vegetables (carrots,
corn, peas)

PLANTAINS (OPTIONAL)

4 ripe plantains, peeled and cut
diagonally into 1/2-inch slices
½ cup canola oil for frying

**You can substitute coconut
milk with plain water. This is
another variation of jollof rice,
with less calories.*

**You can also finish cooking the
chicken either on the barbeque
(grill) or fry in oil until crispy.*

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1

Place chicken drumsticks in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add ½ onion, ginger, crushed bouillon cubes, garlic, curry powder, 1 teaspoon herbes de Provence, black pepper and cayenne pepper. Mix well. Cook until chicken starts sticking to the bottom, about 5 minutes. Pour in water, mix, cover the pot and bring to a gentle simmer; cook for 15 minutes. Remove from heat.

STEP 2

Transfer chicken to a baking dish using a slotted spoon. Strain cooking liquid through a fine-mesh sieve. Reserve 1 ½ cups liquid. Discard solids.

STEP 3

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).

STEP 4

Bake chicken in the preheated oven until no longer pink in the middle and the juices run clear, about 30 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part should read 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).

STEP 5

Heat 3 tablespoons vegetable oil in a large pot over medium-low heat and cook ½ onion until soft and translucent but not browned, about 5 minutes. Add tomato sauce; cook and stir until slightly thickened and infused into the oil, 5 to 7 minutes.

STEP 6

Stir reserved chicken broth, coconut milk, 1 teaspoon herbes de Provence, salt and pepper into the pot. Bring to a simmer; add rice. Cook, stirring often, until rice is almost tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Add frozen vegetables and continue cooking until rice is tender and creamy, about 5 minutes.

STEP 7

Heat ½ cup of canola oil in a nonstick pan over medium heat. Add plantains and fry on both sides until golden and crispy, about 2 to 3 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels. Garnish jollof rice with fried plantains and serve with chicken.

Jollof rice from West Africa was served this fall and will become part of Old Trail's monthly lunch rotation. The recipe provided by the Ilodi family, including Dominic '26 and John '29.



Class of 2021 Eighth Grade Commencement



With blue skies and sunshine framing a picture-perfect, early summer evening, we celebrated the 49 members of the Old Trail School Class of 2021 in front of families, faculty and friends on June 4, 2021.



It was the second consecutive year that the eighth grade commencement ceremony was held outdoors due to health restrictions. However, given the beautiful and tranquil environment in which the numerous accomplishments of our graduates were recognized, the outdoor setting has become a welcome adjustment born from the pandemic that has enhanced what already was an esteemed ceremony at OTS.

Following the opening processional, the program included an invocation by Dr. Ronald Fowler II, a welcome from Associate Head of School Joe Vogel and remarks by class speaker



Pictured from left to right: Connor Pittinger, Katie Sweeney, Anna Poulos, Isabella Haslinger Johnson, Emma Miklos, Claire Hua, Lauren Stephens, Tyler Snyder and Mitchell Smith

CLASS OF 2021 AWARD WINNERS

Class Speaker:

Lauren Stephens

High Academic Honors:

Claire Hua and Isabella Haslinger Johnson

Brian Giancarli Award:

Emma Miklos

Volunteer Award:

Tyler Snyder and Katie Sweeney

Headmaster's Spirit Award:

Connor Pittinger and Lauren Stephens

Alumni Award:

Mitchell Smith and Anna Poulos

Lauren Stephens '21, who beautifully captured the story of the OTS Class of 2021. And any story about these graduates would be incomplete without first acknowledging the many difficult challenges they were made to endure due to the pandemic. This non-exhaustive list included being grouped into class cohorts; dealing with quarantines and isolations; shifting from in-person to distance learning and back seamlessly; accepting the cancelation of athletics, musical performances and treasured class trips to keep our school community safe; and more.

"There was so much uncertainty at that time and we didn't know if we were going to overcome the challenges we were faced with," Lauren spoke. "But I proudly stand here today, telling you we have. We have undergone experiences that most people never would have dreamt of, let alone conquered. We can take this experience and use it to better ourselves and further our success in the future."

The evening continued with the presentation of individual awards and an inspired musical performance of *Prayer*, Ernest Bloch from *Jewish Life #1* on the cello by Claire Hua '21. Middle School Director David Chottiner addressed the class one final time before awarding students their diplomas.

"I'm not immune to the rhetoric so many are repeating about this being a 'lost year;' that you've missed out on so much over the past 15 months that you've basically lost a year that you should have had," Mr. Chottiner said. "But I'm hoping that you all will join me in reframing our memories of this year. Whether we wanted it to look like this or not, this was the structure the world forced upon on, and you all—we all—did the best we could to adapt to these once-in-a-lifetime circumstances."

"And each of you found different ways to adapt, to adjust, to cope," he continued. "And my goodness, you have

certainly not lost. You've thrived in this reality. So, as you look back at your time at Old Trail, and specifically of your eighth grade year, please make sure to remember the triumphs that came with the adversity: the triumph of learning in this environment; the triumph of creating new friendships and deepening older ones; and the triumph of knowing that all of you made it through."

The matriculation list for the Class of 2021 included nine secondary schools, including Western Reserve Academy (18), Walsh Jesuit High School (18), Hawken School (4), Revere High School (4), Highland High School (1), Hudson High School (1), Laurel School (1), National Inventors Hall of Fame STEM High School (1) and Our Lady of the Elms School (1). ○



Rachel Rich was named the recipient of the 2020-21 Catherine Silver McNamara Award during a special after-school meeting in front of faculty and staff in September. This is a truly coveted honor as nominations are submitted by families as well as peers.

“Rachel IS the Early Childhood program at Old Trail,” wrote fellow ECP teacher Teresa McCombs. “She is a gracious and knowledgeable leader who guides our program, staying true to our past while always looking forward to the future. She makes every child feel like they are so special and dear to her, because they are.”

A leader in her field, Rachel quickly forms powerful and lasting relationships with her students and their families. From the

moment children enter their classroom, they feel loved and cared for as individuals and as learners. As a teacher, she is talented, passionate and approaches each day with joy.

Wrote one parent: “Mrs. Rich has gone above and beyond to connect with our family, make our son feel comfortable and love school, and has played a huge role in helping us feel connected to the OTS community as a first-year family during these unprecedented times.”

Despite having taught for more than 16 years in the Early Childhood program at Old Trail, Rachel said she continues to be fascinated by the way children grow and develop. She is driven by the motivation to help each child discover their best selves.

“From my very first year at Old Trail, I knew that the privilege of teaching here went far beyond the beautiful campus and supportive community,” she said. “I continue to be inspired by the creativity

and passion of my colleagues, and I am grateful to work with amazing teachers who challenge me every day. And of course, the beautiful window in my classroom doesn’t hurt!”

The Catherine Silver McNamara Faculty Award was established by the family of Catherine Silver McNamara ’70, following her untimely death in 1983. Through this annual award, Catherine’s late father and Old Trail School Trustee Emeritus, R. Bruce Silver; her late mother and former Old Trail School librarian, Peggy Silver; her sisters, Margie Silver Allen ’68 and Patricia Silver ’72; her husband, Robert McNamara; and brother-in-law, Peter Allen honor Catherine by recognizing a member of the Old Trail faculty or administration for outstanding service to student achievement, which “has played such a meaningful part in our lives, and which continues to make Old Trail a truly exceptional school.”

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING DESIGN

In recognition of excellence in design and execution of architecture, the Akron Component of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) recently presented Peninsula Architects a 2021 Merit Award for the local firm's remarkable Merryweather Outdoor Classroom design.

While presenting the award, AIA of Akron described the project this way: "The Outdoor Classroom for Old Trail School takes the sodded roof form into an innovative direction, in particular, the image that presents a floating green space where the roof is potentially a walkable surface that blends into the overall landscape is particularly compelling. The project is sustainable and uses mass timber as a structural system and what appear to be durable and tasteful fixtures that make the space useful and comfortable. A simple and strongly diagrammatic solution that provides a flexible and varied activity space for the students and faculty of Old Trail School."

In addition to serving as the gathering point for all of Erin McNamara's experiential and nature-based learning classes this year, the outdoor classroom has already been used in so many valuable ways by our school community—from a place to gather for Family Movie Night to a performing arts stage at Halloween Hullabaloo. We are excited to continue using this dynamic 2,000 square-foot facility in new ways to enhance the OTS experience in the future.



Merryweather Outdoor Classroom Dedication

In front of the student body, faculty and staff, we had the honor of hosting family members of Tom Merryweather for the dedication ceremony of the Merryweather Outdoor Classroom on October 12.

Mr. Merryweather was the lead benefactor of the award-winning, 2,000 square-foot facility that has transformed the Old Trail campus and expanded our commitment to experiential and nature-based learning. Our special guests included Mr. Merryweather's daughter, Betsy Stuyvesant; his son, Tim Merryweather; and Tim's wife, Denise. Also speaking at the dedication was Erin McNamara, our new director of experiential and nature-based learning, whose work has been enhanced tremendously due to the facility.

The ceremony kicked off our first ever Community Assembly at the Merryweather Outdoor Classroom, which was led by this year's OTS Student

Council President Thomas Casey '22 and featured recognition for our cross country and tennis teams and the singing of our alma mater.

It was invigorating to be outdoors and to use the outdoor classroom in this way. We are incredibly grateful to the Merryweather family for helping us reframe the student experience at Old Trail and allowing us to deepen our unique connection to the national park through this facility. ○



Centennial Community Poem Bench

Last spring, installation was completed on the school's newest signature landmark, the Centennial Community Poem Bench, which sits in the outdoor space between Firestone Hall and the Marnie Carabell Library Courtyard. Made of Corten steel and white oak, the bench features a scripted community poem, *Raise Our Voices*, cut into the steel as it meanders, rises and falls in a way that is designed to mimic the natural ebb and flow of the nearby Cuyahoga River.

The inspiration for the poem and creation of the bench was the result of a collaboration with Kent State University's Wick Poetry Center, which collected and incorporated voices from OTS community members that spanned several generations—from Fredrica Winter (Fox '48) and our current grandparents to this year's kindergarten class—to create a poem that honors Old Trail's first 100 years.

In addition to being another aesthetically pleasing and distinctive structure on campus, the bench—which is a testament to the important role Old Trail has had on the lives of students, parents, grandparents and friends of the school—is often used by students as a space to reflect on an outdoor lesson, share a lunch together or simply take a break from outdoor activities. ○



Burton D. Morgan Hall

As an extension of our celebration of Old Trail's 2020-21 centennial year, Burton D. Morgan Hall was transformed over the summer to commemorate the school's illustrious past and remarkable faculty, who have impacted the lives of so many in Old Trail's first century. New hanging panels tell the OTS story through a series of curated photos and quotes from alumni. A section devoted to the school's founders, Dr. William Geer and Dr. William Parks, pays tribute to the visionary and pioneering individuals who steered and sustained Old Trail throughout its formative years.

The lifeblood of any learning institution is its faculty. Under the title of "Lighting the Fires of Knowledge: A Journey Alongside Our Students", the names and images of teachers who have shaped the lives of countless students for more than 20 years at Old Trail are proudly honored in a reimagined exhibit. Lastly, a new display was created to recognize the current and past recipients of the Catherine Silver McNamara Award, an annual honor presented to a teacher or administrator for outstanding service to student achievement. ○

Ohio Crowns New Chess Champion

Old Trail fifth grader **Arjun Soni '25** was first introduced to chess when he was just four years old. At first, he played only with pawns before slowly expanding to other pieces.

It didn't take long for his curiosity to take hold. He joined a chess club shortly after to practice and better understand the game. When he got older, he began to study chess theory—including opening knowledge, tactics, strategy and endgame technique—and embraced becoming a student of the game.

As he grew, so did his skill and passion for playing chess. Arjun quickly discovered this combination gave him a distinct advantage when he started playing increasingly challenging competitive matches. Trophies and medals would follow next as his ascent up the individual rankings began. In the fall, this remarkable climb would take him all the way to the No. 1 position in the state of Ohio for his grade and age.

Today, Arjun, who plays chess daily and can mentally map out future sequences eight to 10 moves ahead, continues to be fascinated by chess theory and remains a committed student of one of the most famously difficult games to master.

“I love the excitement of chess,” Arjun said. “For some people, they see chess as a boring and long game. I think of it as short and exciting because to me it feels like 30 minutes, even when it’s been five hours. When I play chess, I always feel nervous, but I don’t let that get into my head,” Arjun said. “I just relax and think as I usually would in a calm situation.”

Arjun has given much to the game and often finds his mind drifting to ways of improving strategies to win a match or refining tactics to better command the board. But chess has also given much in return. Through chess, Arjun says he has learned a lot about himself and credits the game for helping him foster mental resilience, critical thinking, creativity and discipline.



“Through his math classes at Old Trail, Arjun has developed skills in problem-solving and critical thinking that help him recognize patterns and quickly identify solutions that extend to chess,” said Old Trail math specialist Luke Varner. “His persistence in and appreciation for multi-step solutions, along with his ability to process problems quickly, make Arjun an avid chess player who excels at a high level.”

And of equal importance, Arjun still finds joy in playing. It’s the familiar rush of pre-match anticipation that initially drew him to the game, keeps him coming back and drives him to improve. ○

Student Essay Published in Anthology

When Old Trail student **Skye Nguyen '23** was in fifth grade, she and her classmates were asked to write about someone who inspired them as part of a class assignment. After receiving some feedback from her teacher, OTS alumna Gindy Smith '72, Skye landed on the story of her grandfather's courageous escape from Vietnam before the fall of Saigon.

Last summer, Skye, who is now in Grade 7, had the honor of having the essay selected for publication for *Far From Their Eyes: Ohio Migration Anthology*, a book containing stories, poems and artwork by Ohio immigrants from around the world. She is the youngest author to be included, with submissions received from individuals ranging in age from 9 to more than 60.

"It just makes me happy that I get to share my grandpa's story, since he hasn't really told it to anyone else, including my dad, until recently," Skye said.

In her essay, Skye writes about her Vietnamese grandfather, a retired physician and cancer survivor, who she said inspires her to be strong and brave. Skye's grandfather was an army doctor during the Vietnam War who fled the country on a U.S. Navy ship with her six-month pregnant grandmother while Saigon was bombed in 1975.

Skye credits Mrs. Smith, who has since retired from Old Trail, for being highly supportive and helpful when helping her edit her essay. The following excerpt details her grandparents' journey to America:

"They brought only a small duffel bag to America with some clothes, a watch, cigarettes, and film with pictures from their wedding. They had no money. On the ship, there were no baths, and they ate army rations. During all the time on the ship, my grandpa spent his time trying to help anyone who looked sick, since he was already a doctor."

"When my grandpa first arrived in America, his starting impression was that it was humongous, and that the people were very compassionate and considerate. They were taken in by the Diamonds, a sponsor family, in Hershey, Pennsylvania. A sponsor family is a family that takes refugees into their home until they can find a place to stay. Describing the Diamonds, he said, 'They were poor, but had good hearts.'"

Telling stories of immigrants is important, Skye said, because it gives others a better idea of who immigrants are as people, and what they've been through.

"America is an incredibly wealthy country," she said. "And we should share our resources with immigrants and refugees in need. And America needs these people because they bring new ideas and perspectives into America."

Far From Their Eyes: Ohio Migration Anthology can be purchased at Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Kobo, Scribd, Indigo and other major retailers. ○



Dear Alumni,

As we approach the midway point of the 101st year at Old Trail, I can't help but reflect with tremendous pride and gratitude on what has been a truly remarkable start of school. From hosting our first ever Family Movie Night to the return of Feast in the Field, the inaugural Halloween Hullabaloo and our Jingle & Mingle fundraising social, what an incredible first few months it has been! Our school community is strongest when we are together and I'm so thankful for these moments to gather, connect and strengthen our bonds once again.

As graduates of Old Trail, you should take pride in knowing that we continue to instill in our students the values and qualities that are most impactful in today's world: a creative, entrepreneurial mindset, a global perspective, an empathetic and positive outlook, and persuasive and effective communication skills. Wherever life has taken you since your days at OTS, I hope you always look back fondly and know that you are always welcome to visit your Old Trail home.



ALUMNI DAY

In that light, I'd like to personally invite you and your classmates to join us at **Alumni Day on April 12, 2022**, to tour campus, meet with Head of School Sarah Johnston, enjoy a specially prepared lunch and take in a musical performance. It would be especially wonderful to have a robust presence from our Class of 1972, which will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. More details about Alumni Day will arrive as the date approaches. In the meantime, please mark your calendars.

ADDITIONAL SPRING EVENTS

We are excited to announce two new events this May that focus on connection. Trail to Table will feature small-group, outdoor dining experiences at the homes of OTS community members. Additionally, a spectacular outdoor centennial celebration is being planned for later in the month. More details about both events will be provided soon. We hope you will be able to join us to celebrate Old Trail and the remarkable OTS community.



CLASS NOTES AND STAYING CONNECTED

This spring, we will once again be featuring the Class Notes section of our magazine. Please spend a few minutes and let us know what you've been up to by sending an email to Jodi Gabor at jgabor@oldtrail.org. Additionally, a new networking platform called Alumnifire was recently created for OTS alumni. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to join your classmates in this exclusive virtual community by creating an account at oldtrail.alumnifire.com. I am looking forward to seeing your profile soon!

Thank you again for your continued support of Old Trail, the OTS Fund and the hundreds of students who call OTS home each year.

With gratitude,

OLD TRAIL SCHOOL FUND

The OTS Fund has a profound impact on the school and the students in our care. Because of your generous support, together we raised \$419,000 from 415 gifts last year to far surpass our goal of \$326,400.

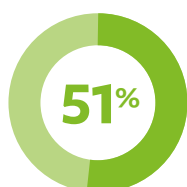


Thank you for supporting Old Trail School through your generous gifts to the OTS Fund.

On the following pages, we recognize all donors to the OTS Fund for the 2020-21 year. If your name is incorrect or does not appear, please contact Jodi Gabor in the development office, jgabor@oldtrial.org or 330.666.1118 ext. 306. We are grateful for your support of the OTS Fund and Old Trail School.

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THE 1920s SOCIETY

The 1920s Society recognizes individuals that have included Old Trail School in their estate planning. These gifts, past and future, support the school in profound and countless ways.

If you are interested in joining The 1920s Society or considering a gift to Old Trail School, we would love to discuss this with you or your financial advisor. Please contact Joe Vogel at jvogel@oldtrail.org or 330.666.1118 ext. 482.

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In the fall, Grade 5 students traveled to the Towpath Trail in Peninsula to test the quality of the Cuyahoga River as part of the EarthEcho Water Challenge. With direction from our partners at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center, the children tested samples for pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature and turbidity.

The data collected was entered into an international database to record real-time information about our local water resources. Collectively, the shared global data was used to produce a comprehensive water quality map of the world. We are proud to participate in the EarthEcho Water Challenge and engage our students in real-world science, cultivate awareness of water quality issues and inspire community-based action to protect the world's water resources.

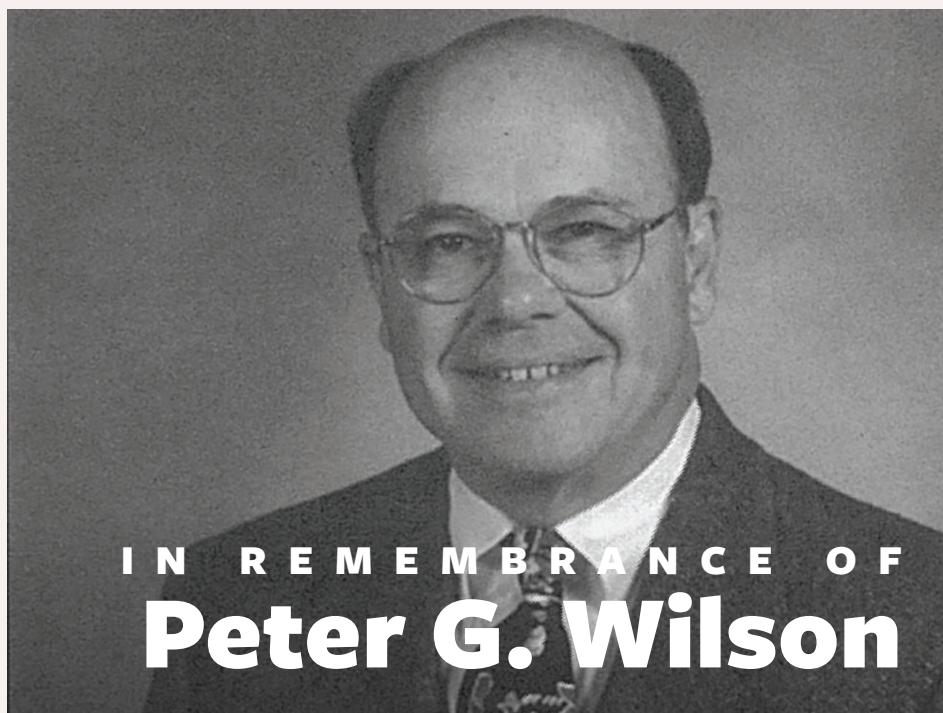


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 Mr. Michael Single and Dr. Kelly Siman
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Skillicorn
 Mr. Benjamin Smith
 Mr. and Mrs. Dick Smith
 (Gindy Chenoweth '72)
 Mr. and Mrs. Adam Snyder
 Ms. Christine Snyder
 Ms. Christy L. Solis

Mr. and Mrs. Aditya Soni
 Mrs. Susan Sorger (Susan Weil '58)
 Mr. and Mrs. Joe Spain
 Mr. and Mrs. Mark Spatz
 Ms. Sarah Spradling
 Mr. Brian J. Steere '95
 Drs. Kirk Stiffler and Saira Ismail
 Mr. and Mrs. Brian A. Stockwell
 Mrs. Anne Swegan
 Mr. and Mrs. Doug Swift
 Mr. Ronald Teunissen Van Manen
 and Ms. Sarah Fulton
 Mr. and Mrs. Steve Thompson
 Mr. and Mrs. William Tobin '76
 Mr. and Mrs. Josh Trook
 (Katherine Crane '92)
 Mr. Derek Tucker and Ms. Michelle Camou
 Mr. and Mrs. Eray Tulay
 Mr. and Mrs. Louis C. Turner
 (Lee Robinson '55)
 Ms. Alysa L. Ulstad (Alysa Granata '04)
 Mr. Michael VanBuren
 and Ms. Erin Dickinson
 Ms. Megan Vasu
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Vereecken
 Ms. Meghan Vidan '05
 Mrs. Audrey Vogel
 Mr. and Mrs. George Von Mehren
 Mr. and Mrs. Howard Walker III
 Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin Walter
 Dr. Shengyong Wang
 and Ms. Xiaowei Teng
 Mr. and Mrs. James C. Wasser
 Mr. and Anthony Weigand
 Mr. and Mrs. Gary W. Weimer
 Ms. Lucinda F. Weiss '67
 Mr. and Mrs. Park Welker
 Mr. and Mrs. Dan Whitehill
 Ms. Keira Williams '02
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wilson
 Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wilson*
 Mrs. Sharon Winfrey
 Mrs. Frederica L. Winter
 (Frederica Fox '49)
 Mr. and Mrs. Tim Wyman
 Mr. and Mrs. Amish Yajnik
 Mr. Samuel Yannerilla
 Mr. Jim Zunt and Ms. Larissa Kosmos

* Denotes deceased



It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of former Old Trail School headmaster Peter G. Wilson on September 3, 2021, the date of his 85th birthday. Peter left behind an incredible legacy built on kindness, integrity and dedication to his love of education.

Peter first arrived at OTS in 1981 to begin his tenure as headmaster. During his time, he stabilized the school—increasing enrollment from 275 students to 530; oversaw the construction of the Meyo Library and renovations of Alderfelder and Burton D. Morgan halls; continued to refine the OTS curriculum; and built a lasting endowment that our community continues to benefit from today.

“I believe it is only with time and the benefit of perspective that we can truly understand the degree to which we are shaped by the people in our lives,” said Board President Tom Eaton III ’92. “Peter made an indelible mark on me during those formative years at OTS, as I know he did on countless others in our community. He was a great example of how to lead and treat others with humility and grace. To quote Benjamin Franklin, ‘To the generous mind the heaviest debt is that of gratitude, when it is not in our power to repay it.’ Farewell Mr. Wilson; you will be missed.”

While the Old Trail community mourns this tremendous loss and offers deepest condolences to his wife and best friend, Lois, and the entire Wilson family, we know Peter’s indelible spirit lives on in each of us and in every Old Trail student—past, current and future. ○

KATIE KEITH DETTLING ’95, P ’31

Mr. Wilson was not only the steadfast headmaster for my entire nine years at OTS, but an influence far beyond. First and foremost, he was an important champion in my unusual pursuit of career as a professional ballerina. Mr. Wilson saw the value in pursuing a passion, even at just 11 years old, and was so supportive in those important early years. This support laid the foundation for 20 years employed as a performing artist, but just as importantly, the foundation to now serve other young people through owning a ballet school in the very same community!

MOLLY (VOLLMAN) MAKRIS ’95

Mr. Wilson was a warm and kind headmaster. I transferred to Old Trail halfway through first grade and at first was an incredibly nervous child, but he always made me feel comfortable and like Old Trail was my community. I remember his smile and his friendly winks. He helped to create a learning environment at Old Trail that has been an inspiration to me throughout my career in education and academia.

GALEN (JOHN) MAYNARD ’92

Mr. Wilson played a special role in my time at OTS and his darkroom kindled my lifelong love of photography. The time I spent in his class working with a pinhole camera, developing 35mm film, and learning how to use the tools in the OTS darkroom are among some of my fondest memories of my time at Old Trail.

Memorial and Honor Gifts

IN HONOR OF ROY AND KARIN ALLEN

Mr. and Mrs. Rodd Sanders

IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH MICHAEL BLANDA

Drs. Joseph and Michelle Blanda
Mrs. Audrey Vogel

IN HONOR OF CARRIE BROWN

Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Nackes

IN HONOR OF CAROLINE DEPEW

Mr. and Mrs. David Chottiner

IN MEMORY OF GAVIN DOMM

Mr. and Mrs. William Newhouse

IN HONOR OF VIRGINIA FOX

Mrs. Frederica L. Winter

IN MEMORY OF CHRISTINE FREITAG

Ms. Amy L. Freitag
The J.M. Kaplan Fund

IN MEMORY OF BRIAN GIANCARLI

Mr. James B. Cole

IN MEMORY OF JOYCE HAMAKER

Mr. and Mrs. John Rohrer

IN MEMORY OF COLTON HUDSON

Dr. Robert Hudson
and Ms. Audrey DeLong

IN HONOR OF ANNIE SEIBERLING MELL

Mrs. Sandy Humenny

IN MEMORY OF RORY O'NEIL

Mrs. Nicholas Hubiak

IN MEMORY OF ANNE PETIT

Mr. and Mrs. Phillip W. Hoffert

IN MEMORY OF JEAN PRESTON

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Amer
Mr. and Mrs. Joe D. Henninger
Mrs. Susan L. Kruder

IN MEMORY OF KATIE PRYBYLA

Sarah C. Forhan

IN MEMORY OF MINDY REMINGTON

Mr. Michael Gallagher
and Ms. Parisa Damavandi

IN HONOR OF DEAN RUFF

Mr. and Mrs. David Chottiner

IN MEMORY OF JULIE SCHWEIER

Dr. and Mrs. Ian Dresner
Mrs. Nicholas Hubiak
Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Rich
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wilson

IN MEMORY OF HELEN AND JAY SHULAN

Drs. David and Mollie Shulan

IN HONOR OF ANN (ESTELLE) SMITH

Mr. Joe Vogel

IN MEMORY OF OLLIE TOWNSEND "MRS. T."

Mr. and Mrs. Randall Gillenwater

IN MEMORY OF JEANETTE OSTROV WEIL

Mrs. Susan Sorger

IN MEMORY OF JUDGE JAMES WILLIAMS

Mrs. Nicholas Hubiak

IN MEMORY OF PETER WILSON

Dr. and Mrs. Donald Barich
Mr. and Mrs. Jack H. Brookhart
Mrs. Marilyn Buckey
Mr. and Mrs. Norman Carr
Lonnie, Sophie and Alexander Curtis
Mr. and Mrs. John Debo Jr.
Ms. Jennifer M. DiPiero
Mr. and Mrs. John Heaps
Mr. and Mrs. Joe D. Henninger
Mr. and Mrs. Phillip W. Hoffert
Keith and Dettling Families
Mrs. John E. Martin
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew T. McGinnes
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Murtha
Mrs. Shannon Nelson
Dr. and Mrs. John Novak
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick J. Palumbo
Mrs. George T. Parry
Karen and Dave Patterson
Mr. Jonathan Pavloff
Dr. and Mrs. Loren Pool
Mr. and Mrs. Chip Preston
Mrs. Delores Quinn
Mr. and Mrs. David F. Raynor
Mr. and Mrs. Jason Silver
Mr. and Mrs. Walton Silver
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Snively
Mr. and Mrs. Terry Squire
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Turpin
Mr. Jerry F. Whitmer
Mr. Scott J. Wolfe

IN HONOR OF LIAM WORKMAN

Mrs. Ramona Hutchison

Endowed List

THE BECKWITH-COLLINGS FAMILY FUND

Ms. Karen Beckwith

BRUCE AND PEGGY SILVER ENDOWMENT FUND

Akron Community Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. R. Bruce Silver

THE GEORGE T. PARRY SPEAKERS SERIES FUND

Abigail V. Anacki '10
Alexandra E. Anacki '06
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew P. Anacki '05
Mr. and Mrs. Paul G. Anacki
(Elizabeth Parry '81)
Mrs. Dennis B. Haslinger
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Haslinger '79

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The Columbus Foundation
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UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT FUND

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JSF EXCELLENCE ENDOWMENT FUND

The Glenmede Trust Company,
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Hudson Community Foundation

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Mr. and Mrs. Bradley Bowers
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Mr. Peter Farah and Dr. Jennifer Caldwell
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald M. Harrington
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Johnston
Mr. and Mrs. William Landers
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Light
Mr. and Mrs. David Little
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Mandel
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Marty
Mr. Stephen Archer and Dr. Priya Maseelall
Mr. and Mrs. John McKenzie
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Newman
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Parkinson
Mr. and Mrs. Chip Preston '81
Mr. Michael Smith
and Mrs. Jill Penrose-Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sutton
State Library Board
Bureau of Workers' Compensation
Community Foundations Inc.



Alexandria teamed up with another local artist to create stunning portraits blended with expressions of the region's character that are displayed throughout the city of Akron, appearing on banners, METRO RTA bus shelters and in the outdoor art gallery at Lock 3.

The project was called "We Are" and the collaboration was facilitated by the Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP) to celebrate the downtown area as a place for all people.



ALEXANDRIA COUCH '12

PETER G. WILSON RISING STAR AWARD

Alexandria is a 2020 graduate from Myers School of Art at the University of Akron, receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting, drawing and printmaking, and the recipient of the 2018 High Arts Festival runner-up prize in the 2D visual arts category. She is currently pursuing a Master in Fine Arts at Yale University with a focus on painting and printmaking.

What is the inspiration for your artwork?

In my personal practice, the work is deeply inspired by the sudden shift of my own and other black experiences from margin to center. We're existing in a moment where a price that we pay for monumental change is hypervisibility. I create figures that attempt to re-center themselves in the narrative of their own existence. I like to think that they confront viewers and question the intentions of their gaze on their moments of intimacy. I think a lot about this sort of contemplative suspension between familiarity, routine, assimilation and evolution.

In my more public work, I draw heavily on the idea of community and where diversity and cultures cross and connect to create something rather beautiful. I like the work to reflect the values and the strengths of the community it's placed in so learning a

lot about the history of the area or drawing from my own personal, lived history remains very important.

When did you first discover you had a special talent for art?

I've been drawing pretty much my whole life. My mom is an artist as well so it seemed like a natural and encouraged course to follow. I would say it's less of a talent maybe and more of just a long-term devoted passion to experimenting and making things.

Can you please tell us about a piece or project that you often think about or are especially proud of and why?

I'm particularly proud of my mural with Land Studio in Cleveland this past summer. I designed a large temporary installation for the Cleveland Public Square that was up for a few months titled "Where We Meet in the Middle" that I received a really



positive reaction to. Being able to see people's reactions to murals first hand and being able to have meaningful dialogue with the community about their lives and interpretations of the art was very fulfilling.

What impact did Old Trail have on you as a student and as a person?

Old Trail is a treasure trove of incredible resources and learning opportunities that I hadn't had access to up until the point of my attendance. Attending OTS for just seventh and eighth grade was a bit of a culture shock but a very enriching one that definitely served as a catalyst for some of the ongoing values in my current practice. Some of the biggest take-aways are a continuous search for knowledge, service and exploration. OTS truly has some of the most amazing educators I've ever had the luck of crossing paths with and it's through their constant encouragement and support that I built the confidence to pursue art as a legitimate career. ○

The Peter G. Wilson Rising Star Award is presented to an Old Trail alumnus who is under 30. The recipient has shown professional and community leadership and exhibited an appreciation for Old Trail School. The Award is named in honor of Peter G. Wilson, former Old Trail Headmaster. Nominees must have attended Old Trail School, contributed to their community and/or to the betterment of others, earned the respect of Old Trail alumni and exhibit a continued loyalty to Old Trail School.

ALEXANDRA WILSON '90

LINCOLN GRIES
DISTINGUISHED
ALUMNI AWARD

Alexandra Wilson is the medical director at The Center for Avian Exotic Medicine in New York where she has worked for 14 years caring for the medical and surgical needs of birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and small mammals. She received her Bachelor's degree in Neuroscience from Oberlin College in 1998 and her veterinary degree from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2005. She was named medical director at The Center in 2020.

Dr. Wilson has many interests and projects that she is passionate about. She is a consulting veterinarian for the Wild Bird Fund, NYC's premiere wildlife rehabilitation and education center, and the Animal Care Centers of NYC. She has worked closely with the ASPCA and local law enforcement on cases involving exotic animal welfare, including testifying in court as an expert witness. Dr. Wilson lectures locally and internationally with World Animal Protection and participates in the training of veterinarians, veterinary students and veterinary nurses on the care and welfare of exotic pets and wildlife. She is also an adjunct professor of Veterinary Technology at LaGuardia Community College.



Leslye Smith (Studiosmith)

When did you realize that you wanted to be a veterinarian?

I actually decided to become a veterinarian a bit later in life. I graduated from college and was working in a research laboratory when I decided to make a career change. It took several years of working and going back to college to finish the prerequisite coursework for veterinary school.

What makes caring for exotic pets both rewarding and challenging?

Helping animals and their owners is equally challenging and rewarding. Most exotic pets are not easy to care for, something people often don't think about when they acquire them. We see a lot of preventable suffering and neglect in an exotic pet practice.

How did Old Trail impact you as a student and as an individual?

I spent seventh and eighth grade years at Old Trail, and they were very different years from those at my previous schools. I felt more engaged and challenged academically, physically and artistically there than I ever had before. Luckily, that trend continued for the rest of my education. ○

The Lincoln Gries Distinguished Alumni Award is presented to an Old Trail alumnus who has made an important contribution or given extraordinary service to others in some field, as a professional or as a volunteer. It is named after Lincoln Gries, a former parent, board member and board chair who provided exemplary service to Old Trail School. Nominees must have attended OTS, contributed to their community and/or to the betterment of others, earned the respect of both Old Trail alumni and future Old Trail students, and shown a continued loyalty to Old Trail School.

LAURA BILLOW PRESTON

HONORARY ALUMNI AWARD

Laura Preston's connection to Old Trail predates her remarkable 21 collective years as a parent of three OTS graduates; Haley '05, Annie '08 and Tether '14.

Thinking back on her childhood, Laura recalls using the pool at Old Trail as a member of her AAU swim team ("I thought it was such a cool place!") and had a number of family members attend the school, including her husband, Chip '75, her father-in-law, Ernie '49, as well as many aunts and cousins. Haley, who was named to Old Trail's Board of Directors prior to the 2021-22 school year, is a fourth-generation board member in the Preston family. Laura has given back to the school in countless ways over many decades. From holding several positions on the Executive Committee of the OTS Parents Association to helping to coordinate Old Trail's After Care program to co-chairing Old Trail's Centennial Steering Committee and everything in between, her passion and love for Old Trail runs deep.

You have chosen to serve Old Trail in so many ways. What does the school mean to you?

Old Trail means so many things to me. Old Trail has been such a huge part of my daily



Jason Miller (Pixelate Photography)

life as a wife, mother, volunteer and employee; I have enjoyed every moment of it. It is such a special place. I would say that Old Trail for me is all about personal history, connections and obviously the great education our kids received. I am so grateful for the connections that I still have with the friends I worked with on the auctions, and, back in my day, the auction was a big event with a hundred or more volunteers. As an employee, I loved my colleagues and have a lot of respect for the teaching profession and the wonderful people who helped raise our children. I also met so many great families during my time in the After Care program that I otherwise would never have known. I love running into students and stay in touch with quite a few of them.

Having three daughters who graduated from Old Trail, what impact did OTS have on their lives?

The earliest impact I saw on our girls' lives resulting from their time at Old Trail is their ability to respect the value of a community and the value of friendships. To be a good citizen of a community and respect that everyone is different. They all still have a handful of close friends that they have known since preschool. Old Trail also taught them to be accountable for their behavior, both inside and outside of the classroom. That accountability has made all three of them very hard workers. They also have a strong connection to nature which was developed through their experiential opportunities the school provided. ○

The Alumni Association Honorary Alumni award is presented to a person who has made an important contribution or given extraordinary service to Old Trail School. Nominees must have contributed significantly to the welfare of Old Trail (parent, trustee, volunteer or benefactor), deserved the respect of both Old Trail alumni and future Old Trail students and shown a continued loyalty to Old Trail School.

Old Trail School

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



**“Old Trail crafts its entire education
around this word: experience.
It’s how we create learning that
lasts and how we give students the
strongest foundation possible to
continually draw from and build on.”**

**S A R A H J O H N S T O N
H E A D O F S C H O O L**