

Mid-Peninsula High School

# CONNECTIONS

MAGAZINE :: SUMMER 2022





The first year at a new school for any Head of School is usually a whirlwind. Meeting hundreds of people, learning the history of the school, and trying to understand its culture and “special sauce” is challenging, energizing, and sometimes exhausting. Thanks to the generosity of the Mid-Pen community, my entry process was filled with personal interactions, helpful insights, and incredible support that I found inspiring.

After the graduation ceremony for Mid-Pen’s Class of 2022, I found myself thinking about the research I used back in graduate school by Edgar Schein, who wrote about how powerful and meaningful strong cultures can be for individuals and groups within organizations.

Schein’s theory is that organizational cultures are formed and developed based on the “shared learnings” that flow from the challenges they face, and from how people problem solve to adapt to those challenges. Culture, he says, is seen at three levels:

- *Artifacts*—the visible, audible displays that one experiences on campus, such as the school building itself, what we choose to put on the walls, how we design public spaces, etc.
- *Espoused values*—the values and practices that are written and spoken about, such as a mission statement and core values
- *Deeply-held assumptions*—in our case, about what students need from teachers to thrive, what we believe about the power of growth mindsets, and other assumptions that often go unspoken yet undergird all of our practices

The strongest cultures are ones where the espoused values and the deeply held assumptions actually align. As we honored the Class of 2022 I had a moment while listening to our students speak when I realized the incredible strength and resilience of Mid-Pen’s culture. After all, this is a class that experienced Mid-Pen before COVID, with the academic and social

struggles that came with being in high school during a pandemic. After nearly two years of online or hybrid learning, how did these seniors reclaim what they found meaningful at Mid-Pen?



The *artifacts*—their presence in and out of classrooms, their engagement with their teachers and younger students, and the time they spent in relationship with each other—were visible, audible, and deeply felt by all of us. They held *espoused values* in common—that everyone deserved to be known for exactly who and what they are and accepted for it. More than that, our newest alumni *assumed and believed* that each one of them was worthy of the support, patience, and love they received during their time at Mid-Pen by their families, the staff, and each other. It is that assumption that provided the glue that held them during the challenging and joyous times alike.

Graduation ceremonies are often viewed as endings, their finality resting on the presentation of diplomas and the dramatic tossing of the mortarboards. Of course, a high school graduation ceremony is also a new beginning for our students as we witness the manifestations of shared values and beliefs. That’s why we call it *commencement*.

I feel so lucky that this class let me get to know them so quickly, and that their legacy will be the resurrection and nurturing of our school culture as we head into a new school year. Thanks to them, and to all of the alumni who came before the Class of 2022 who had a hand in creating the recipe for the Mid-Pen special sauce. 🍷

In gratitude,

Karen Eshoo

## CONNECTIONS

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## Supporting Student Wellness with Dragon Workshops



Alan Cameron’s Core class shows off their best silly poses for the school yearbook.

When school counselor Wendi Wells speaks about social connectedness, she’s not referring to Snapchat, Instagram, or TikTok. She’s talking about personal interactions in real life, “IRL” in teen speak. As Wendi looks to the 2022-2023 school year, helping Mid-Pen students build in-person connections and relationships will be critical to Dragon wellness.

“Human beings, as a whole, are still experiencing major ripple effects of the pandemic,” explains Wendi. “As mental health practitioners looking back at that time period of isolation, we’re starting to see the long-term effects of mental health decline in teens as a result of that isolation, missed social connections, and tech addiction.”

Mid-Pen’s dedication to student well-being has always been at the heart of the school. This fall Mid-Pen is introducing a year-long program called Dragon Workshops—a dedicated time each week to build social connections while teaching students about holistic wellness, stress management, and self-care. “We’re focused on building community around putting relationships first,” says Wendi. “Whether it’s peer-to-peer or students with their teachers, we’re building a strong sense of community to support the overall wellness of the students.”

Dragon Workshops will be held each Wednesday, when students will meet for 35 minutes by grade level, by Core, or in an all-school meeting.

The program will include lessons on executive functioning, career and college exploration, financial literacy, and issues of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students will also learn about digital wellness and how to use technology as a relationship builder. “It’s about connecting mind, body, and spirit—all the things that help us take care of ourselves and each other,” says Wendi.

Because teenagers are still developing physically, mentally, and hormonally, there’s no quick fix in helping teens recover from the pandemic. “It takes intention, patience, and compassion—fostering and modeling compassion and gratitude. We all need to be partners and support teenagers at a challenging time.” 🐉

### How can families best support the teens in their life? Wendi shares five tips:

- Always Be Curious (ABC) with your teen.
- Be a listener, not a lecturer.
- Make intentional connections.
- Support movement, especially outside, where teens can detach from technology.
- Prioritize sleep in their lives.

## DragonWeek Returns to Mid-Pen

For two years, Mid-Pen students and staffuly waited patiently for the return of DragonWeek. The school’s inaugural intersession took place in 2020 right before the pandemic, and this year’s learning adventure was worth the wait!

DragonWeek 2022 was held the week of April 4, right before spring break. Students selected from nine staffuly-led offerings—from launching rockets to writing songs, welding to solving a crime—that they could take just for fun. While some courses were primarily held on campus, others involved field trips around the Bay Area to visit museums, craft and tech centers, and even a coroner’s office and morgue.

Olivia Baker '24 was on campus as part of an A/V Club experience where students learned how to produce school events, including lighting design, electrical, sound mixing, and stagecraft. “It was cool to learn about all the equipment that we have and how the pieces work, and how to put on a show and utilize everything,” she said. The A/V Club quickly put their new skills to use to create the stage setup, lighting, and special effects for the school’s Night of the Arts musical and drama performances in May.

Dragons in Alan Cameron’s senior elective history course traveled abroad to Ireland, with stops in Dublin, Kilkenny, the Wicklow Hills, and Connemara. They blended history, culture, and experiential learning while visiting locations that they had learned about throughout the school year—and created Mid-Pen memories to last a lifetime.

“Many of these kids have been in class with me since they were in ninth grade,” said Alan. “This trip is something they’ve been looking forward to for four years.”



“We laser cut fins, and 3-D printed nose cones,” said Matthew Tanner '25 (left), who learned how to build and launch a rocket. “It was amazing.”

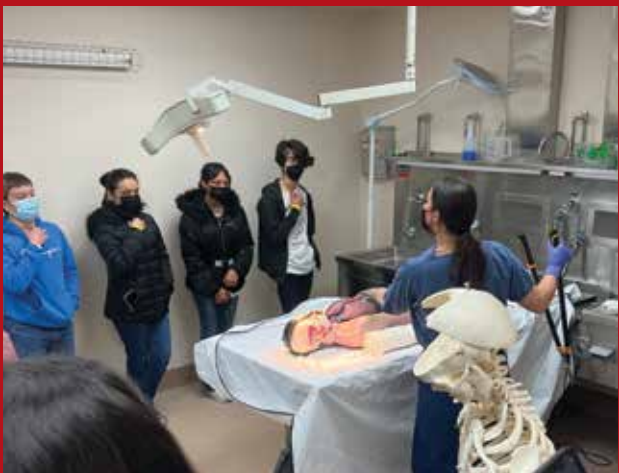
Devin Crouse paints the rocket fins before launch day. Below, from left to right, Finn Collart '23, teacher Corey Huttanga, Ethan Reyes '25, and Ruth Schar '25 conduct a sound check.





Mid-Pen seniors, above, pose in Ireland as part of DragonWeek 2022. Below, clockwise from top right, Cammie Haas '22 heats metal during a blacksmithing class. Students get a lesson conducting an autopsy at the San Mateo County Coroner's Office. Tabitha ten Cate '25 creates digital art in augmented reality.

With other school trips canceled the past two years because of the pandemic, this particular class wasn't certain they would be able to travel. "The moment we decided we could make this trip, they went nuts," he said. "They worked hard in my senior elective class—it's a college-level class and very challenging. They earned this trip and were able to have fun, see the places they learned about, and enjoy the natural beauty. It was a great experience." 🐉



## Celebrating Mid-Pen Faculty

Several staffulty members are marking career milestones.

### 5 Years

ASL teacher **Francis Phiri** instills in students an absolute love for language, the beauty of language, and the importance of using your entire body to communicate. “When we interact with Francis and each other, the atmosphere is so full of radiant energy,” said Katie Gonzalez ‘24. “It’s fun to learn from him; he adds a special touch as a teacher, and supports us in both language and our lives.”



**Jameson Swanagon** embodies the combination of expertise and compassion that is found in the Mid-Pen mission. When you marry his vast musical knowledge with the passion he has for his students, the result is a remarkable teacher. “I always look forward to Jameson’s class,” said Yuri Cass ‘23. “He’s one of the most caring teachers I’ve ever come across, and he inspires me.”



### 10 Years

Students can’t get enough of **Alan Cameron’s** history classes, and they can’t get enough of Alan. He is incredibly well read, well spoken, and is someone who brings the subject alive in a way that intrigues the students. “Alan brings so much passion and energy to class,” said Quin Birkeland ‘23. “You can tell every day how much he loves history, and how eager he is to teach.”



### 15 Years

After 15 years at Mid-Pen, **Nicola Willits** will be teaching math at the Charles Armstrong School in September. Students at Armstrong will discover what Mid-Pen students have known all along: there is nothing Nicola won’t do in her quest to get her students to like math—and maybe even love it—as much as she does. Students know that she always has their best interests in mind and strives to make them feel comfortable in the classroom so that they can make mistakes. “Nicola is very kind and open, and is always available to help her students,” said Milo Buckner ‘23. “I appreciate that she isn’t afraid of telling me very directly what to do.”



### Tara Theobald-Anderson’s

teaching is defined by their passion for the subject and the care they put in both preparing their lesson and helping every student in their class. “Tara pulls information from many different sources so we have an expansive understanding of the material,” said Ada Sussman ‘23, a student in Tara’s Gender Studies English and Gender Studies classes. “They look at every situation from a very empathetic perspective, so we’re really able to understand the scope of all the issues we study. It’s a really unique and special experience.”



### 20 Years

**Anne Marie Schar**, Mid-Pen’s Director of Technology, supports people in any way that they need. She never starts from a place of “no” and is always looking for a way to get to “yes.” “Teacher or student, whatever their tech needs are, Anne Marie will make it happen—and she does it all with her characteristic wit and generosity,” said Head of School Karen Eshoo.” 🍷





## 40 Years

**Laurie Miller's** 40-years anniversary at Mid-Pen shows her love for the school, staff, and classroom. "We're all so lucky that she derives joy from her job, because we get joy from her presence," said Head of School Karen. "She's so skilled in the classroom—she makes it look easy—and she brings her 'A game' every single time."



Dave Richardson retired from Mid-Pen in 2020 after 40 years at the school, and worked alongside Laurie. He believes her longevity comes from a trait she learned early on: always be amused at what's going on around you. "Laurie can laugh at anything and I enjoyed that mentality, he said. "She's got another 20 years ahead of her because of it."

Rachel Vogel '20, currently an English major at Reed College, lists Laurie's Socratic seminar class as the one she used the most in transitioning to college. "It really primed me with the skills to analyze text in college, to look at text line by line and deeply understand it. The advance composition class that followed...she sat us down and taught us how to write essays. That definitely helped me my freshman year in college." 🐉



Above, a collection of Laurie's school ID cards and photos are pinned to a bulletin board at the back of her classroom.

## Welcome Mid-Pen's Newest Faculty Member

**Lesly Vazquez** is Mid-Pen's new art teacher. She took over for Michelle Boire, who left in December 2021 to pursue other projects. A Bay Area native, Lesly grew up in the school's neighborhood and is thrilled to teach in her community. Lesly studied film photography in Guadalajara, Mexico, where she lived for three years after high school. She returned to the Bay Area to attend the College of San Mateo and then UC Berkeley, where she graduated in 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in Art Practice. At Mid-Pen, Lesly hopes to help spark a passion for art in her students and provide them with warm and caring guidance for their creative growth, self-expression, and journey with art. 🐉



## Class of 2022 Are All Smiles in Jubilant Graduation Ceremony

**O**n the morning of May 28 as “Pomp and Circumstance” accompanied the Class of 2022 down the aisle to their seats, the swell of emotion that rippled through the crowd was palpable. As much as that emotion was about the milestone event, it was also about the many challenges—personal and pandemic—those 34 students had overcome to reach that day.

“All of the struggles you’ve had, and all of the support and love your teachers and families have given you, have been worth it,” Head of School **Karen Eshoo** told the seniors in her welcome. “Hold that with you. Know you are worthy of the love and support that have been showered on you.”

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“All of the struggles you’ve had, and all of the support and love your teachers and families have given you, have been worth it,”

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Relatives and friends came from across the country to attend the outdoor ceremony, which took place on Mid-Pen’s field. Unlike last year when masks were required, this year’s graduation allowed guests to see the smiling faces of the Class of 2022. Those who were unable to attend in person could watch the graduation ceremony via livestream.

As part of the ceremony, four senior speakers shared stories of their own challenges and growth.

In an honest and vulnerable speech, **Henry Gale** described the social and emotional difficulties he faced growing up and the challenges he had being diagnosed with a mild form of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). For years, he said, he felt out of place and isolated among his peers.

“At Mid-Pen, while I wasn’t at the front of the class in terms of participation, I was always brainstorming ideas in the background,” said Henry. “Sometimes I shared my insights, but other times I had trouble expressing my thoughts. Even though I had more confidence in my body and ability to speak than I did a couple years ago, I still felt out of place.”

He recounted reading Franz Kafka’s “A Dream” as a first-semester senior in Laurie Miller’s Socratic Seminar. In the short story, an artist dreams of writing on a gravestone with an ordinary pencil. Every letter is clear, beautifully made, deeply carved, and of the purest gold. But the artist stops, and when he writes again after a moment’s hesitation, the letters are gray and dull, lacking the gold vibrancy they once had.

## SENIOR AWARDS



This year’s Founder’s Award was presented to **Jennifer Sanchez**. The school’s highest honor, the Founder’s Award is given to the

senior who best exemplifies the founding principles of Mid-Peninsula High School: growth and change, achievement, determination, and character.

**Nyla Byers** and **Collette Zubizarreta** shared the Douglas C. Thompson Award for Inspired Growth, given to the senior who has demonstrated the greatest personal and/or academic growth during their time at Mid-Pen.

The Leonard W. Ely Community Award was awarded to **Yness Riedel** for her contributions to the well-being of the school and/or outside community.



**Karina Sanchez** and **Jess Spence** received the Senior Award for high academic achievement.





For Henry, the story reminded him of the imperfect parts of ourselves: “Our flaws make us who we are; we all have our ups and downs,” he concluded. “And you know what? That’s OK.”

**Yness Riedel** recalled struggling to read in elementary school. “I didn’t know where to start or how to put the different sounds together,” she recalled. “I could see everyone else reading and understanding, but I was stuck. Every time I was pulled out from my classes for extra help, I was made to feel I was not truly a part of my classroom community. Moving into high school, I knew the world wasn’t going to be kind due to my dyslexic way of learning. However, while applying to different schools, I found Mid-Pen. I didn’t know it then, but I was surrounded by a community of people that I would come to see as family.”

**Jennifer Sanchez** shared that Mid-Pen allowed her to embrace new interests and discover new sides of herself. “Before coming to Mid-Pen, I would have never freely spoken Spanish in the halls, spoken at student panels, or played basketball all four years of high school,” she recalled. “I was able to do these things because Mid-Pen gives people the freedom to try new things, despite not having any prior experience.”

**Logan Levine** spoke of facing the challenge of making responsible choices as an adult. “I think we’ve been given an exceptionally valuable framework to make our choices already: our school values,” Logan told their classmates. “Respect, kindness, acceptance, and responsibility can help us make all of our future choices, and I know these values will guide me. I will strive to make the respectful choice, the kind choice, the accepting choice, and the responsible choice, and maybe, somehow, that will transform me from a child into an adult.”

**Erin Whittaker '93**, who six years ago returned as Mid-Pen’s basketball coach, was the alumni speaker. He told the graduating seniors that “Mid-Pen is a place that will continue to support you long after you’ve graduated. It’s a place worth coming back to and supporting as well.” 🐉



## By Kurt Lange, Athletic Director

**A**fter a short winter season of basketball, spring brought renewed energy to our athletics program with an entire season of co-ed track and field, co-ed tennis, and boys volleyball. Students were able to play without masks, which allowed teammates, coaches, and spectators to fully enjoy watching our Dragons participate and seeing their lively expressions during activities.

### BOYS BASKETBALL

**Coaches:** Erin Whittaker '93 & Kurt Lange

After playing a limited, 13-game schedule last year because of COVID-19, our boys and girls basketball teams were looking forward to getting back on the court to play a full pre-season and league schedule. The Omicron variant dashed

those hopes again and caused our hoops teams to play a shortened season. The boys team showed their strength against rivals Kehillah, Mountain View Academy, and East Palo Alto Academy. Senior Noah Takatsuno averaged a team-high 17.4 points per game.

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

**Coach:** Kurt Lange

Our girls season was all about expansion—our team doubled in size, and players' skills also grew with each game. The team played well versus Kehillah Jewish High School and East Palo Alto Academy, and we can't wait to see them on the court next year.



Noah Takatsuno '22 goes up for a shot in a match against Kehillah Jewish High School.





### CO-ED TRACK & FIELD

**Coaches:** Alan Cameron & Kurt Lange

Spring saw the Track and Field program return to Mid-Pen with an incredible season. Coaches Alan Cameron and Kurt Lange instructed students in various disciplines, including distance running, sprinting, shot put, hurdle, and long jump. The Dragons performed well this season, finishing in the middle of the pack in a competitive PSAL season. While there were many highlights, the Dragons were incredibly excited to see Bryce Lawson '24 and Julia Oram '23 qualify for CCS. Bryce won the PSAL long jump and finished in third place in the 100-meter dash. Julia finished second in the PSAL high jump.

### CO-ED TENNIS

**Coach:** Raul Salazar

Our co-ed tennis team once again enjoyed an exciting and successful season with a roster of nine players. Although head coach Bryan Jeong could not return this year, Raul Salazar stepped up and made the season happen. Practices were well attended by our Dragons, and the team showed much improvement throughout the season. We played five matches this year, three against Kehillah and one each with Pinewood School and Woodside Priory. The Dragons played really well, winning about 50 percent of all singles and doubles matches. Many of the contests were extremely close. Perhaps the most memorable match took place in our season finale at Woodside



Priory, which saw our only senior, Alex Cai, win his last singles match for Mid-Pen. Ironically, he defeated his cousin, who attends Priory. Well done, Alex!

### BOYS VOLLEYBALL

**Coaches:** Franc and Alec Salazar

This past spring, we were able to have a boys volleyball team for the first time in many years at Mid-Pen. Even though the roster was small, with seven players, our team showed marked improvement under the guidance of Franc and Alec Salazar, who also run our girls volleyball program. We played only two matches, both victories and both against Kehillah. We hope to bring our program into the league in another year or two. 🐉



McKenna Gustavson '24 leaps with perfect form during the 100-meter hurdle.

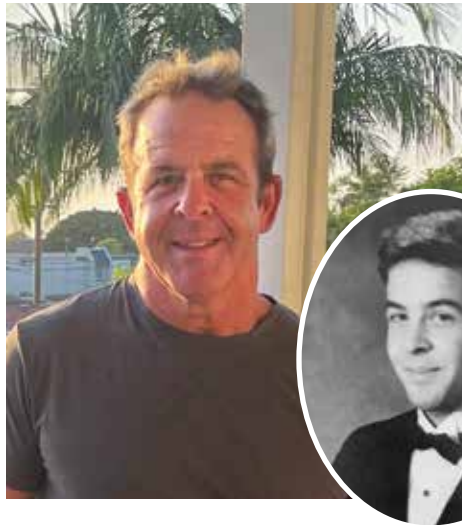
**MIKE MILLER '91****Forging His Own Path to Success**

**M**ike Miller '91 still remembers the first time he met his Core teacher, Kurt Lange, nearly 35 years ago. Mike was sitting in a chair while Kurt, who was just beginning his career as Mid-Pen's PE teacher and athletic director, sat on a desk with his legs splayed out awkwardly.

"Kurt looked really silly," recalled Mike, "so I asked him why he was sitting so strangely. He said, 'I guess I'm just nervous.' I was floored. No teacher had ever been that open and honest with me."

That first meeting during Core class started a three-decade-long relationship. Kurt became Mike's mentor and friend, and together they started Mid-Pen's first baseball team.

Mike is now an entrepreneur, salesperson, and business owner in Southern California. He and Kurt still talk and text regularly, and Mike says it was Kurt who helped him believe in himself and set him up for success in life.



"He was the first teacher who accepted me for who I was. What we did together for those three years means more than anything in my life. If it weren't for Kurt, I don't know where I would be today."

By his own account, Mike had an idyllic childhood growing up in Palo Alto. In school, however, Mike struggled to read and write. He remembered in third grade when the teacher was handing out spelling books, and he didn't get one because he struggled to

keep up with the class. To avoid embarrassment, he told his classmates, "I'm so advanced that the teacher is getting my book from the junior high."

Mike eventually enrolled in the Charles Armstrong School, where he received help for his dyslexia.

As Mike approached the end of elementary school, his parents divorced, thus beginning many years of shuttling from parent to parent and school to school. By the time Mike entered Mid-Pen in the fall of his sophomore year, he had attended ten different schools.

**Matthew James '87** writes that he recently retired and moved from the Bay Area to Ventura, CA.

Congratulations to **Mike Barkoff '04** and his new wife, Amanda Cox, who were married on April 30, 2022. Guests included mascots from their favorite Bay Area sports teams, including the 49ers, the Sharks, and the Giants. Mike is an account manager at AT&T Cybersecurity and calls San Mateo home.



In May, **Kendall Anderson '12** graduated from the University of San Francisco with her Master's in urban and public affairs. She wrote her thesis on human trafficking intervention in aviation and is now working at Justice At Last, a non-profit law firm representing survivors of human trafficking.



**Aidan Lloyd Tucker '18** just graduated Williams College magna cum laude with highest honors in economics and computer science. In addition, he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and recently started work as a software engineer at Dropbox.

**Anouk Butler '20** writes, "I am currently at the University of Oregon (UO) pursuing two majors in linguistics and popular music studies. I have become quite involved in "Hui 'O Hawaii Club" (UO's Hawaii club) and participated in the club by dancing in the 47th annual luau this past spring. Joining the club has been a great experience and originally was a way for me to show appreciation for my mother and her family's cultural ties. Overall, it has been a great way to be around people with similar interests, and I have pursued more hula dancing/styles of Pacific Islander dancing. UO has been a great fit for me, and I have met some really wonderful people thus far. With a linguistics degree, I hope to pursue a career in this field, most likely assisting children in schools



"I was in an awful place at that time," he reflects. "But even though I had all these learning disabilities and people telling me I was stupid, I always knew I would be a success. Kurt helped me see that."

After Mid-Pen, Mike attended San Diego State University. "I should never have gone there—or even been allowed to go to college," he said, reflecting on his first year when he spent much of his time partying and surfing. At the start of his sophomore year, he walked into his first class in a huge lecture hall filled with students and no empty seats...and immediately left the room.

Two weeks later, Mike dropped out of college and was surfing in Costa Rica. He spent the next year and a half surfing and skiing while doing odd jobs to pay the bills. Eventually, he enrolled in a training program with commercial real estate firm Sperry Van Ness, "even though my only real job before that had been delivering papers."

To this day, Mike does not have a college degree—and it hasn't prevented him from pursuing successful careers in real estate and, later, sales. When he moved on to work at a telecommunications company, he became a top salesperson making multi-million dollar deals with clients like Princess Cruises and Verizon.

Despite his successes, Mike knew that working a desk job could never be a long-term career, no matter how lucrative. Partly because of his learning challenges, he has always been drawn to help people who were bullied, had developmental

with speech therapy. In addition, I hope to incorporate some methods of music to assist in language production and retention."

**Dawson Kinnamon '20** is a student at Cañada College in Redwood City and looks to major in communications or history. "I plan to transfer from Cañada to a four-year university to obtain a bachelor's degree," he writes. "College is definitely fast paced, but for the most part, it's what I expected. My advice for the Class of 2022 is to work hard, strive to step out of your comfort zone, and follow your passions!"

**Kiarra Plaza '20** recently finished her first year at Santa Barbara City College, where she was living in a dorm with classmates **Audrey Harris '20** and **Katrina Drury '20**. "I'm studying psychology and I love it!" she exclaims. "College is definitely much harder than high school, but it has been a great experience meeting new people and learning new things. My advice to the class of 2022 is to be open to new experiences!"

disabilities, or were marginalized. His compassion for others led him to create a home healthcare business.

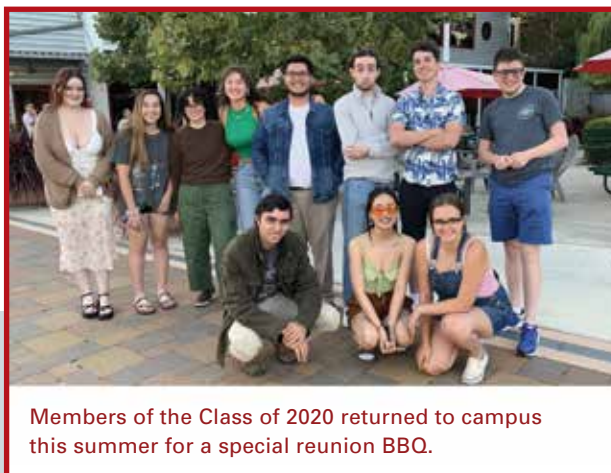
In 2006, Mike's wife's grandparents hired a full-time independent caregiver from an ad. When her grandmother passed away, the caregiver stayed on to take care of her grandfather. All was well until several months later when the caregiver's brother and cousin backed a truck up to the house and stole almost everything.

"I wanted blood," Mike said. "My wife's grandparents had no money, and the stolen things only had sentimental value, but it was the principle."

He spent months researching in-home care and then launched Home Care San Diego, an agency to provide senior citizens with support in their homes. Mike strives to maintain a company that puts its clients and their families first.

"I love working with the greatest generation; they deserve the best care possible."

Mike lives with his wife, Barbara, and their three children, ages 18, 19, and 21, in Cardiff by the Sea. 🐉



Members of the Class of 2020 returned to campus this summer for a special reunion BBQ.

**Ryan Shee '20** completed his second year at Louisiana State University, where he studies information systems and decision sciences. This STEM-designated program explores the relationships among technology, business processes, people, and organizations. "Louisiana has been a wonderful place to live," he writes, "and I've attended many sports events, including this year's National Final Four March Madness and some Pelicans' basketball playoff games."

## TWO LITTLE WORDS



The summer issue of *Connections* serves as an opportunity to say “thank you” to the many supporters of Mid-Peninsula High School. This past year continued to be one of incredible challenge and also incredible accomplishment, made possible only because of the collective hard work, dedication, and support of the entire Mid-Pen community. A few of the many achievements we are proud of this year include:

- A nationwide search that resulted in Karen Eshoo joining us as our permanent Head of School.
- The return of Mid-Pen traditions like the all-school prom, school plays and concerts, and Night of the Arts—all without a single case of COVID-19 resulting from these gatherings!
- Community commitment to our school core values to protect the health of Mid-Pen’s students and staffuly throughout the year.

During a time of continued uncertainty, we stayed strong—together.

Thanks to the generosity of the Mid-Pen community, we once again had a strong



fundraising year, receiving a total of more than \$1,335,000 in gifts to both our annual and capital campaigns from nearly 300 donors.

The **Mid-Pen DragonFund** brought in a record \$354,270. The cornerstone of the school’s annual fundraising efforts, each year the DragonFund touches every student and teacher at Mid-Pen by supporting everything from faculty professional development and our no-cut athletic teams to drama productions and class trips. Many thanks to



A student ensemble entertains guests at DragonFest.



this year's DragonFund chair Krishna Yarlagadda P'23 and the half dozen parents who volunteered during our fall and spring phonathons.

After a year in the virtual world, we were back to celebrating in person at **DragonFest**, with the pandemic-appropriate theme "Mask-a-Rade." Undeterred by the rainy evening, more than 160 guests turned out for what we were all craving—a fun and safe celebration of the strength of the Mid-Pen community. The pictures on these pages provide a glimpse of the energy and excitement of the event, which was held in March at College of San Mateo's beautiful Bayview Dining Room overlooking San Francisco Bay. The event netted \$111,000, and just as important was the great time had by all who came to support Mid-Pen's students and teachers. Chair Andrea Potischman P'23 and her team of extraordinary volunteers truly did an exceptional job creating a memorable evening.

Additionally, we raised \$117,400 in support of the school's flexible tuition program and received contributions totaling \$15,100 for various restricted purposes including the **Douglas C. Thompson Fund**, which provides financial assistance for students to participate on class trips, and the new **Dominic Vogel Fund**, which will provide funds to bring performing artists to campus to lead master classes for students in our music and drama classes.



The remainder of gifts received this year were to the school's **Think Big Be Bold Campaign**. Under the leadership of the tireless Mike Gordon P'22, this campaign is raising funds for the renovation and expansion of our Willow Road campus, including the addition of several new classrooms and a dedicated performance space. Working with our architect, Cynthia Munoz at Stoecker and Northway Architects, we are in the process of finalizing plans for an 8,500 square-foot extension to our current facility and expect to begin the permitting process soon. This is an exciting time for Mid-Pen, and in the coming months we will be sharing much more with you about the campaign and our building plans, which together promise to transform our campus.

Your support of Mid-Peninsula High School is an investment in young people at a time when the world needs the next generation of strong, ethical, educated young citizens to step up. I have never been more convinced that the world needs schools like Mid-Pen—a place that provides students the security and space to develop the confidence and strength with which to approach their future.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and all the Mid-Pen students, faculty, and staff, thank you for your continued support of this important mission.

**Debbie Vielbaum**  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

## DRAGONFUND GIFTS

### INDIVIDUALS

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 Eloisa Nava-Vazquez  
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 John Northway & Lisa Grote





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 Brent Tolosko & Deborah Marshall  
 Andres Tong & Ramona Moritz  
 Aneea Toomajian  
 Henry Trevor & Elizabeth Werter **5**  
 Andrew Tucker & Shandon Lloyd **5**

### THE DOMINIC VOGEL FUND FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



Dominic Vogel '20 attended Mid-Pen for all four years of high school, starting in 9th grade. He was passionate about music; a talented guitarist, he performed in the school's music ensembles throughout high school. Later in his high school career, he took to the

stage and showed himself to be a fine actor as well. After graduation, he attended Willamette University. Sadly, just before the start of his sophomore year in college, he died by suicide on August 21, 2022. He was 20 years old.

In Dominic's memory, the following donors made gifts to the school in the support the performing arts programs that Dominic loved. Because of the outpouring of generosity, the school has established a permanent fund in his name that, starting in 2022-2023, will bring musicians, actors, directors, and other teaching artists to the school to lead master classes for Mid-Pen students in music and drama.

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Anonymous (2)       | Debbie Harrison       |
| Nyla Adams          | Martha Jamison        |
| Liam Bailey         | Baran Kayim           |
| Phil Busick         | Cameron McCallum      |
| Christopher Caproni | Deroy Murdock         |
| Ronda Chowaiki      | Carole & Roy Nickolai |
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| Alan Lee Follett    | Henry & Maria Vogel   |
| Cameron Frankley    | Julien Yacek          |
| Marshall Haines     |                       |
| Jane Harrison       |                       |

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 The JP Morgan Charitable Gift Fund  
 The Mid-Pen Parents Association  
 Oracle  
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 Silicon Valley Bank  
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Vanguard Charitable  
 Wells Fargo Bank

## DESIGNATED GIFTS

*The following donors requested that a portion of their gifts be restricted for specific purposes.*

### Class Trips

Lisa & Detlef Braun

### Music Program

Daniel Ogburn & Kim Rosenberg

Evan Rosenberg '20

### Theatre Program

Janet Ague-Kennedy

## THE JOHNSTON SOCIETY

Beloved science teacher Larry Johnston dedicated more than 35 years to Mid-Pen, teaching almost right up until his death in 2015. Over the years, he inspired hundreds of Mid-Pen students, who often imitated his distinctive style.



Larry loved his Mid-Pen students, and he loved to travel. When he died, he left a bequest to help ensure that all students, regardless of financial need, are able to participate in Mid-Pen's travel program, which takes students to places as far afield as Ecuador to learn Spanish or Great Britain to study British history.

At the time, Larry's was the first bequest the school had ever received. The Johnston Society was established in his memory to recognize those donors who have named Mid-Pen as a beneficiary of a planned gift. Such gifts might include a bequest, gifts of life insurance, naming the school as a beneficiary of a retirement or other account. Planned gifts of any amount qualify and membership is purely honorary, meaning there are no dues, obligations, or solicitations. The greatest benefit derived from making a lasting contribution to Mid-Peninsula High School's long-term prosperity.

## JOHNSTON SOCIETY MEMBERS

Matthew James '87  
 Lawrence P. Johnston\*  
 Merrilee Harris  
 Dolly Paterson  
 Anne Marie Schar

\* deceased



**RESTRICTED GIFTS**

*The following donors requested that a portion of their gifts be restricted for specific purposes.*

**The Douglas C. Thompson Fund for Class Trips**

- Lisa & Detlef Braun
- Laurie Miller & Van Whitis
- Mark Minkowski & Diana Minkowski
- David Spence & Tracy Winton
- Kristin & Linton Young

**Flexible Tuition Program**

- The Eucalyptus Foundation 5
- The Hurlbut-Johnson Charitable Trusts 10
- Meta Inc.
- Mike Speiser
- Mary Speiser

**THINK BIG BE BOLD CAMPAIGN**

*The most significant fundraising initiative in the school's history, the Think Big Be Bold Campaign will transform our Willow Road home, with the renovation of our current classrooms and the addition of a new building housing classrooms and a new performance space. Thank you to the*

*following supporters whose generous gifts and pledges received in 2021-2022 have helped bring our campus renovation and expansion a big step closer to reality!*

- Phil Abrahamson & Dana Shelley
- Kendall Anderson
- Mark Anson & Mary Hayes
- The Myrtle L. Atkinson Foundation
- The Benevity Community Impact Fund
- Tim Biglow & Carolyn Biglow
- Steve Bowling & Gabriella Bowling
- Lisa Braun & Detlef Braun
- Dean Chu & Wilma Chu
- Jim Dern & Susanne Dern
- Cathleen Foster & Michael Foster
- Andrew Galligan & Patricia Galligan
- Quin Garcia & Theresa Strawn
- Michael Gordon & Loren Gordon
- Merrilee Harris
- William & Cristina Harris
- Anthony Li
- Keith Lucas & Lisa Lucas
- Janette & Jaap Mandema
- The Marek Family

- Christopher Maxcy & Daniele Levy
- John Northway & Lisa Grote
- Joy & C. Larry O'Rourke
- Neal Potischman & Andrea Potischman
- Gregorio Prieto & Maria Hernandez
- Tim Reichert & Lorinda Reichert
- The San Francisco Foundation
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- Taube Philanthropies
- Henry Trevor & Elizabeth Werter
- Debbie Vielbaum & Gary Vielbaum
- Anna Waring
- Brian Wood & Gina Wood

**HONOR AND MEMORIAL GIFTS**

- Clevoria Wycoff-Byers*
- Harriett & Cleveland Wycoff
- Julia '21 & Devin Crouse '25*
- Christopher & Deborah Crouse

- Andrew Dollente '19*
- Thomas & Maureen Dollente
- Jane Fung*
- Lester & Ava Wollman
- Cookie (Marlene) Miley*
- Dan & Sandra Miley
- The Mid-Pen Staffuly*
- The Mid-Pen Parents Association
- Maya Mulleneaux '17*
- Gary Mulleneaux & Amy Christen
- John Northway & Lisa Grote*
- J.D. Northway
- Joy O'Rourke*
- Anne & Matthew Lynde
- Dominic Phillip Vogel '20*
- Raymond & Janelle Gale
- The Marek Family

- 5 5 or more years of consecutive annual giving
- 10 10 or more years of consecutive annual giving
- 15 15 or more years of consecutive annual giving

The list of donors includes gifts received between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. We have made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of this report. We sincerely apologize for any inadvertent errors or omissions. Please contact the Development Office at henry@mid-pen.org with any corrections.



Mid-Peninsula  
High School

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



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