

# NEWS NOTES

PENINSULA SCHOOL  
EST. 1925

VOLUME 190

FALL 2023

## INTRODUCING ERIK CARLSON, OUR 2023-24 INTERIM HEAD OF SCHOOL

WE'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY to introduce our Interim Head of School for the 2023-2024 School Year, Erik Carlson. Erik has served as the Interim Head for many schools around California, and most recently he worked at Pluralistic School One in Santa Monica. Erik was an appointed member to Peninsula School's Board of Directors for a year in 2019, and we are excited to welcome him back to our community in this new role for the 23-24 school year! Below you'll be able to read about his views on Progressive Education, his hopes for this year, and a bit about Erik as a person (you'll never guess what his first job out of college was!).

*Welcome back to Peninsula! Can you tell me a bit about your prior experience with the school?*

I have known of Peninsula School for a long time. In the past, I was the Assistant Head of Phillips Brooks School, I was Dean of Students at Woodside Priory, and so I had known about Peninsula as one of the schools in our educational landscape. I'd actually



never been to campus until I was asked to be a trustee here. I was asked to be on the Board because at the time I was the interim Head of School at Park Day School in Oakland, and there are so many commonalities between Park Day and Peninsula. It was really an honor to be able to do a one year fill-in as an educational appointee to Peninsula's Board. I got a chance to see the board in action, work with the administration at the time, visit one school day when kids were in action, and it was just an amazing experience.

*What drew you to come back to Peninsula in this Interim Head of School role?*

I've been an interim now for a number of schools, and I just finished my interim role at a school in Southern California called Pluralistic School One. My skill set is both to be able to make Head of School decisions but

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## PENINSULA'S EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

*Joanne Walsh*

BUILT 98 YEARS AGO from the inspired legacy of founder Josephine Duveneck, Peninsula School has offered a unique and vibrant educational program for generations of children for nearly a century. Throughout this journey, our school has remained anchored by the courageous ideals from which it was built and propelled forward by the aspirations of the community and a changing world. The words of the school vision continue to lead the way, urging us to articulate how we foster "a learning community that nurtures intellectual curiosity" and where students "develop the skills and confidence necessary to become creative and compassionate contributors in the world."

Curiosity, learning and confidence. Creativity, compassion and contribution. How do we nurture these values and dispositions as we design our program? What unifying principles can guide us to realize the school's vision as we work with children? Articulating Peninsula's educational principles has been at the heart of Peninsula's programmatic team's work for the past year, defining who we are and what we stand for as a school and then building a shared understanding for the community. And I'd like to share how, over the past several months, the team has arrived at a clear, concise articulation of those principles. From conception to creation and beyond, this is how we get there.

First, the working group was assembled from staff members who applied to be part of

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ERIK CARLSON

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also to support a community in transition. Every interim role is a result of either a long time head who's leaving and they needed a breather (which is what my last job was), or an unexpected departure of head that allows for a school to really go through a full process in searching [for their next Head of School]. As a result of these circumstances, I've been trained and have lots of experience now in tapping into the emotional moment of a school in transition. Coming back, I've found Peninsula to be an extraordinary place for students and families. It's beautiful, and of all the schools I've been a part of, this is at the forefront of progressive education.

*Tell me about your past work experiences*

What's wild is I've been in the game since 1994, so about 30 years. I've been at giant schools of 1600 and small schools of 200 or less. I've been at boarding schools and day schools, faith based schools and secular

took a bus for 45 minutes to Koreatown, where I was one of maybe 25 other white students in a predominantly Black and Korean population. I loved it, I loved every bit. I loved the bus ride, I loved my math class in 5th and 6th grade, I loved learning the clarinet, and I had so many opportunities in addition to being exposed to a world that I had never known. And then I went to the school where my father was a calculus teacher and football coach which was Harvard School for Boys (now Harvard-Westlake), which was highly academic. I loved every day of that too. I loved my teachers, because my dad was a teacher so I got to see all these people in my backyard having burgers and playing poker and just being full humans. I think ultimately knowing my teachers and being known by my teachers deeply in so many ways was now what I aspired to in terms of supporting a school community – adults and students being open and welcoming to one another.

*What is it about Progressive Education that draws you in?*

I mentioned that I have been at a whole wide range of schools from traditional to progressive – when I say traditional, I mean really highly structured, there's specific classes, a specific set of standards, lots of tests to get from one place to the next – but I found myself over the course of my career continually gravitating toward more and more progressive schools. I think that each student learns differently, and each student has specific skills and demeanors that help them to feel successful, and that a progressive school can help them become their best selves. Sometimes I can get lost in a really highly structured curriculum where if you're not meeting the standard by a certain date, then there's a missing component, something wrong with you. In progressive schools, it's always a strength based approach to thinking about students. Where can they contribute? What are they best at? How can we leverage strengths in order to support areas for growth?



*Erik visits Betty's classroom during his visit last spring.*

schools, traditional curriculums and progressive curriculums. I've had this really wide range of experience, but the thing that's consistent with all of those schools is the need to meet and support the whole child. To attend to their social-emotional wellbeing and upon that build academic skills. I really appreciate the opportunity to support a school that can meet the needs of a wide range of learners and build a community among a diverse group of families and students.

*What kind of education did you have growing up, and how does it impact your work today?*

I did my elementary school at my local public and then in 5th and 6th grade I participated in the voluntary bussing program in Los Angeles. I

*Who do you look to to guide your views on progressive education?*

Interestingly, I learn from the teachers. I am fortunate to have been in amaz-

ing progressive schools, and as a leader, my job is to say "hire the best people there are" and to learn from teachers who are designing it. For me I just try to pull together all of the expertise that's already in the community to shape my views.

*What are you most excited about for this year?*

I'm excited to be a part of this moment in the school's history. We're on the precipice of a centennial. We are at a moment where the school is really reflecting on its mission and program, and so to help the school move into its next leadership, and – like kids – be the best version of itself is really exciting and rewarding.

*This is a year-long role; what are you hoping to achieve in that time?*

As an interim, my main responsibility is to prepare the community for the next leader. I want to make sure that we're responsible as a business and that we've got systems in place that help everyone do their job as well as possible, and that we have the best possible staff in order to support the kids. Preparing the community means, for me, to focus on our shared values, and help our community pull together, because ultimately it's our foundational documents and the strength of our community that will support us through leadership transition.

*Halloween is a Big Deal at Peninsula. Do you have your costume planned yet, and if so, are you willing to share?*

I appreciate going all in for Halloween. In the past I have gone as one of the pigs from the Angry Birds game, I've been a Minion, I used to have a big giant panda head (which was a little bit scary for the younger students). This year it's very likely that I'll show up as a cowboy. It was my nickname and allows me to break out some gear from my early days working as a wrangler at a dude ranch.

*You worked as a wrangler on a dude ranch?*

It was my first job out of college!

*How did you get there?*

I went to camp for 4 years at Teton Valley Ranch Camp where I learned to horse pack and backpack all through the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone. Due to that, I had this very unique set of skills in the outdoor education world. In college I was a backpacking leader and climbing leader and I always enjoyed that role. When I graduated I went to Jackson Hole to a dude ranch and used all the skills and interests that I had. I could've done it for a really long time, but you hang out with people on vacation all the time. I didn't want to do that long term, so I chose to just make it a season.

*How did you transition from a dude ranch into education?*

That transition also came from my experience being a guide. I was a bicycle tour leader for high school juniors and seniors through Europe. I got a BA in art history, so I dusted off my art history degree and not only led people on bicycles but I was their docent through museums around Europe. I just loved working with kids, and so from that moment on I realized that I *did* want to be a teacher and a coach, just like my dad. Previously I was adamant that I was not going to do what my dad did, but it came about as a result of actually having that experience.

*What was your favorite place to cycle through?*

When we were touring with the kids we were doing fun things like fountain runs, and Italy was perfect for that. I did this ride from Paris to London in one day, it's a really long ride and you have to take the



*Erik addresses staff during his visit last spring.*

ferry. My favorite places were the small roads that we explored, the little country outposts.

*Have you been on the Twisty Slide or the rope swing yet?*

No, I haven't. That's a good question, I'm wondering... where would be the play structure I'd want to visit? I think I like the ropes, I like the netting [that's under the Tree House].

*What would be the first Activity you want to participate in (clay, weaving, music, woodshop, art, pe, math, library, science, or spanish)?*

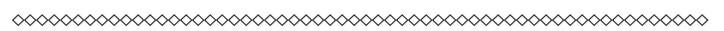
I think I'd like to do Woodshop. My dad did a lot of crafting and I inherited some of his tools, but I have no idea what to do with them.

*If you were to teach an Upper School Choice, what would you offer?*

I really love puzzles. I love jigsaw puzzles, I love sudoku, so something about puzzles would probably be how I would spend my time. In one year though I seriously have to focus, [so I probably won't have time to offer a Choice class this year].

*Final question: what do you like to do outside of work?*

I've got a great dog named Pimmsy, so we walk the dog everywhere. When I go home that's the first thing I do, I take her out to Golden Gate Park. The only other thing to say is that I am an avid Bay Area sports fan; Giants, Niners, Warriors, I rarely miss a game. I don't go often enough, which means that when I do go, I buy the best seat I can possibly find. At a baseball game I'm at the infield, Warriors and Niners towards the center.



We are so excited Erik has joined us for the 2023-2024 school year as we prepare to complete our transition.

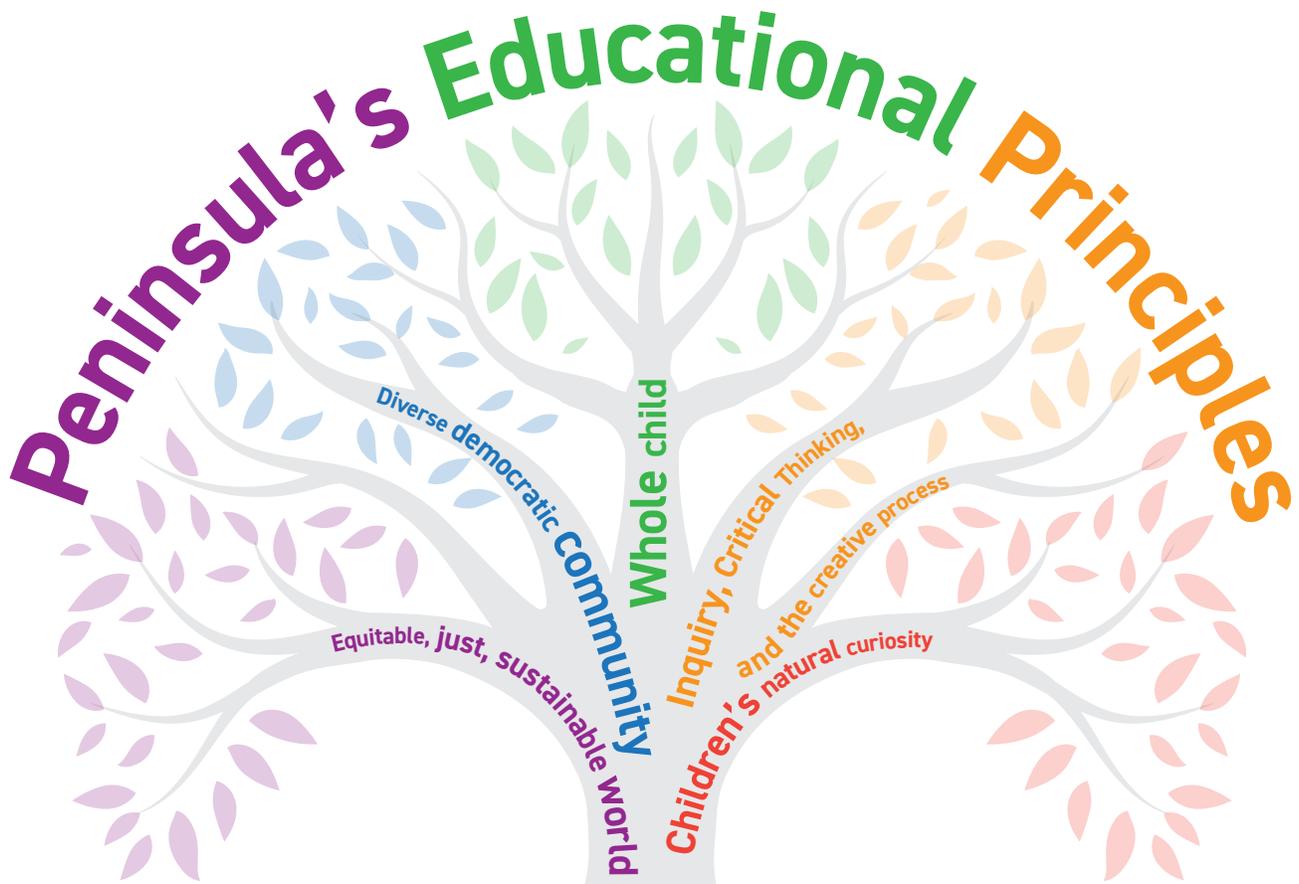


Building on children's Natural Curiosity starts in our Nursery Classrooms.

## EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

*Continued from page 1*

a programmatic team. This team shifts every two years, with the understanding that different perspectives and experiences are necessary to fully articulate our program. From there, we began with the widest scope: the overarching principles of a Peninsula education. These ideas will serve as a springboard from which further articulation can develop. We spent months in conversation and research, connecting with progressive thought leaders, researchers and practitioners, past and present, from within and outside of our school. We searched for commonalities, recurring themes and shared language, and over time the seeds of Peninsula's Educational Principles began to grow. With these first ideas in hand we brought five nascent principles to staff for feedback. Staff saw both a reflection of the program and a need for greater emphasis on creativity, restorative justice and relationship building – and for the programmatic team to return to the drawing board! Excited to develop our work we continued to grapple with the principles until they were ready to be presented to the community.



Authentic Interactions · Community · Equity · Freedom & Responsibility · Meaningful Academics · Play

Here are Peninsula's Educational Principles!

*We nurture the **WHOLE CHILD***

*We build upon children's **NATURAL CURIOSITY***

*We cultivate children's understanding through **INQUIRY, CRITICAL THINKING, and the CREATIVE PROCESS***

*We engage children as active participants in a **DIVERSE DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY***

*We amplify children's **VOICES** to create a more **EQUITABLE, SOCIALLY JUST, and SUSTAINABLE WORLD***

Peninsula's Educational Principles already live deeply within our program – they are a reflection of many voices that make us who we are today. Yet, as a newly articulated set of ideas, teachers need time to explore them as a unifying structure and connect them to their practice.



*Amplifying student voices for a more socially just world.*

As a first step, in early spring, teachers reflected on the principles with peers and explored how they connect to their program and practice. We then invited families to a Programmatic Deep Dive that illuminated how the principles shape a child's Peninsula journey. Looking ahead to the future, we plan to create additional community touch points to further explore how we bring the principles to life for children.

Our strategic plan's vision to articulate our child-centered, progressive program has begun, and yet it is only the beginning! Peninsula's Educational Principles are a living set of ideas that communicate who we are and what we value as a school. As we look ahead to Peninsula's second century, the guidance these principles provide will ensure that the core values and progressive ideals upon which the school was built over a century ago endure for decades to come.



*Sign made by Busy Fingers for the first day of school.*

## HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH IS UNDERWAY!

*By Alethea Van Hiller and Davion Fleming, Search Committee Co-Chairs*

IT'S A VERY EXCITING TIME FOR PENINSULA as we conduct our search for a new permanent Head of School (HoS). We are incredibly grateful for Mary's leadership over the past 2+ years and thrilled to have Erik on board for the 2023-2024 school year to lead Peninsula through this transition and preparation for our next permanent Head of School. We are now eagerly working to find the ideal person who will not only lead us through the implementation of our strategic plan but also launch us into another 100 years of exploration and play.

To identify the ideal leader of our community, we conducted a comprehensive survey in April, gathering insights from parents and staff about their hopes and expectations for our next Head of School. The most frequently cited skills were leadership and management experience (70%), the ability to recruit, retain, support and manage staff (62%), and expertise in progressive education (58%). As for desired attributes for our next Head of School, honesty, trustworthiness and transparency were most valued (62%), followed closely by diplomacy, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills (57%). And lastly, an approachable, accessible and collaborative Head was also very much sought after (52%). The Head of School Search Committee, alongside our search firm Educators Collaborative, are confident that our search process will lead us to a candidate who embodies these qualities and much more!

You may be wondering, "What does the search process look like and where are we currently in the timeline?" We're happy to say, the search is well underway! We officially kicked off in January 2023, but the groundwork for this process was laid much earlier. A task force researched the current Head of School landscape, reviewed notes and files from previous Peninsula searches, worked with the Finance Committee to ensure adequate budget for the search, and developed a well thought out timeline to help set the Search Committee up for success. So far, the Search Committee has officially formed, made up of nine community members including current parents, alumni parents, staff, and board. A reputable search firm, Educators Collaborative, has been selected to assist with the process, and an Advisory Committee made up of a wide variety of stakeholders has been formed to provide further input on final candidates. In the spring, in-person listening

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## THE LIFELONG REWARDS OF RISK-TAKING

by Milly Siegel

WHILE WALKING BACK TO MY OFFICE RECENTLY, I noticed a group of students edging around the Big Building. They were at a particularly tricky part, where the grip is less prominent, and a block sticks out at thigh height. If you've ever edged around the Big Building, you're probably picturing the exact spot: just next to the Rope Swing and right before you get a break at the back porch. One student was concerned she wouldn't be able to make it across that narrower point, while two of her friends encouraged her, and she lamented that two years ago, she was able to do this. Over 10 minutes, I watched as this student deliberated how she'd get past. She asked her friend on the ground to help her take her shoes and socks off to get a better foot grip. She backtracked and then tried again. Her friend on the ground tried to direct her to move her feet, while her friend ahead tried to tell her the ideal hand placement, all while supporting her with a chorus of "you can do it!" In

the end, she decided she'd hit her limit, her friends helped her put her shoes back on, and she jumped down.

At a meeting three days earlier, Peninsula's staff talked about creating a safe environment for our students, and how, in the context of positive risk-taking, do we define what that looks like? Our goal is that students feel safe in their environment, from classrooms to our vast outdoor spaces. Part of this safety is the comfort in taking age-appropriate risks, allowing students to try something new and to listen to their intuition when something doesn't feel right.

Research from the [National Institute for Play](#) indicates that children who partake in age-appropriate, positive risk-taking strengthen their cognitive development. They grow their self-awareness as they wonder if they're ready for a new physical challenge, taking time to assess the risk and understand their limit. At Peninsula, that might look



A Lower School Student swings over Lake Peninsula.

like a student feeling ready to jump off the Big Stump at the Rope Swing for the first time, but knowing that climbing up to the Tree House still feels too advanced.

Feeling ready to take a risk and try something new isn't only a product of the physical environment we have at Peninsula, but it's a culmination of everything we do as a school. The trust that students have in their teachers, their peers, and themselves is paramount to feeling confident in taking a risk. Teachers play a pivotal role in walking students through the steps of positive risk-taking and how to build their confidence and calculate risk. "We teach kids to listen to their bodies in times that are risky, either physically or emotionally, because it will always lead down the right path for them," says Nursery Blue Head Teacher Megan Hart.

Teachers are there to offer guidance and ask questions to promote further self-reflection in students as they attempt a new goal, a process that begins in our Nursery classes. "Children come in and are here for two years. Our first year students will watch our second year students jumping off the tallest point they can for the rope swing. The younger students will work up to that, starting at the lowest point possible, and sometimes not even wanting to let go of the teachers in the beginning," Megan continued. "We tell them to listen to their bodies, and keep watching the other children and practice jumping from lower points."

Peninsula students constantly see older kids on campus model positive risk-taking and the successes and failures that come with it. We see this with the rope swing in Nursery Blue as well. As the first year students work their way up to being able to jump from the highest point, a lot of times their second year classmates will come over and give them tips like "hold on to the rope higher," and coach them through the experience. This teaches our youngest students to begin to trust themselves and assess risk, and our older students not to pressure, but to offer guidance and support.

Megan summarizes this lesson perfectly with an anecdote that she often tells new parents: "If children really get to know themselves in terms of how much calculated risk they are willing to take, they will be able to say no without fear of judgment from anyone."

As with most things in life, teaching and learning risk-assessment is all about balance (sometimes literally!). There are plenty of intentional opportunities for Peninsula kids to engage in positive risk if and when they feel ready to. Our campus is, essentially, a safe space for trying new things, a comfortable place to be able to take risks and learn limitations. This can look like singing at the Rock Concert, or trying the Rope Swing for the first time. It can come with the support of friends and teachers to help guide the way. The triumph of seeing a child accomplish a challenge is equally as delightful to witness as watching them seek alternatives and respect their own limitations. These experiences and decisions happen daily at Peninsula, and we celebrate them all.



*A student in Nursery Blue plays on the class rope swing.*



*Tree climbing is a form of positive risk-taking we see daily at Peninsula.*

FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES

We are thrilled to reintroduce longtime staff member Andrea Parkes in her new role as Peninsula’s Math Specialist! Andrea brings a passion for infusing math teaching and learning with joy, creativity, and challenge. She has been an Associate Teacher in Lower School since 2015 as well as a Peninsula parent. She’s been teaching Math Activities since 2018 and led a Professional Learning Community for Peninsula teachers focused on progressive approaches to math teaching and learning.



Andrea Parkes

Andrea cares deeply about equity and access in mathematics education and helping all students grow into confident, flexible mathematicians with a growth mindset and a solid foundation of concepts, facts, and skills. This summer she completed her Master’s Degree in Mathematics Education and Educational Leadership from Mt. Holyoke College (congratulations, Andrea!). She has completed additional math education training with Math Recovery, California Mathematics Council, Making Math Real, Illustrative Mathematics, and Youcubed, Stanford’s math education research center.

Before Peninsula, Andrea taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in public and independent schools in California, Arizona, and New York. She credits her time as an educator at Crow Canyon Archaeological Center in Colorado, the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City with helping her bring an engaging hands-on, inquiry-based approach to math teaching and learning.



Kristina Cohen

Join us in congratulating our very own Kristina Cohen as our newest Lower School Head Teacher where she will be working with 6-8 year olds. For the past five years, Kristina has worked throughout the Lower School as an Assistant Teacher, most recently in Colleen’s class. Kristina was born and raised in San Jose, and holds a masters degree in international relations from San Francisco State University

and a multiple subject teaching credential from CalState TEACH. Before entering the classroom, Kristina worked for over a decade as a program manager and director for several Bay Area non-profit organizations. She also spent several years living in Latin America and Spain, teaching English, volunteering, and learning Spanish. She is thrilled to continue her work here at Peninsula School and is excited to build an inspiring learning environment focused on global issues, diversity, social justice, and social-emotional learning. Kristina lives in Redwood City with her husband and two children ages 13 and 10. When she’s not teaching or shuttling her kids around, Kristina loves to explore the California coast, soak in local arts and culture, and dream about her next adventure abroad.



This year, we are overjoyed to reintroduce Peninsula teacher Paula Terzi into her new role as the school’s Spanish Specialist! Paula is starting her fourth year at Peninsula, having joined the staff in November 2020, working as an assistant with Lori, Toni, Nancy, and last year with Colleen. In addition to her years at Peninsula, Paula brings experience of teaching Spanish in Palo Alto’s after school program, where she met Lori who ultimately introduced her to Peninsula.



Paula Terzi

Paula grew up in Argentina. She attended university for a degree in psychology, and after four years and a thesis (*Character strengths and virtues, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with life in general in ophthalmologists working in public hospitals* from Buenos Aires CD) she became a licensed therapist. One of her most impactful experiences for her teaching was a training in pediatric surgical psychophylaxis. She worked with kids and teens who were set to have major surgery to help them work through the fears around such a procedure. Her key takeaway was that children deserve honesty and bringing concepts to their comprehension level to face hardship in a healthy way. This philosophy helped shape her teaching philosophy into what it is today.

Coming into the Spanish Specialist role, she has plans to tailor the curriculum to the school’s mission and vision into her lessons, with more social justice and social emotional learning. Having been an assistant for the last three years, Paula is familiar with different classroom curriculums, and is excited to integrate what our students learn every day across subjects into their Spanish experience. Her hope is to make learning a new language fun, and for the kids to leave being curious and wanting to investigate more.

WELCOME JONATHAN SIEBERLICH

In January, we welcomed new Upper School Music Teacher Jonathan Sieberlich to the staff! Jonathan brings a wealth of talent and expertise to our students. He holds a Bachelor's and Masters in Music in Tuba Performance, plays a wide variety of different instruments, and has worked extensively with elementary through high school students in the Bay Area. You can hear him perform regularly with groups like the Jazz Mafia, Nomad Session, Jensen Engineering, Circus Bella, as well as many of the Bay Area Symphony Orchestras including San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Stockton, Marin and Modesto.

Jonathan has fit in seamlessly at Peninsula. In April, he hosted his first Rock Concert, and in addition to teaching for this year's Rock Concert, he also has plans to help students begin to record their music.



*Jonathan working the sound board at the Rock Concert.*

MUCHAS GRACIAS,  
MARTHA!

After a wonderful nine years as our Lower School Spanish Specialist, we are wishing a wonderful retirement to Martha Portillo! Martha came to Peninsula in 2014, and has been teaching Spanish to our Lower School students over the years both during class times and Activities. We will greatly miss her warmth and kindness, and how she greeted everyone with a smile.



*Martha Portillo*

Martha came to Peninsula after teaching Spanish at a Catholic School in Dallas for over two decades, which was a pretty different environment! She came in ready to teach, and also ready to learn from the students and colleagues about this place. She adapted her teaching to fit Peninsula and the interests of the students here, and brought her enthusiasm and joy to the classroom for many years.

For her retirement, Martha has moved back to Texas to be closer to her family. We are so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from and work with her. We wish Martha the best and hope she has a restful retirement filled with family, friends, and relaxation!

ALL THE BEST TO  
LOLI TEJEDA!

Loli came to the Bay Area in 2014 from Argentina. She started her education career at Peninsula School as an Assistant Teacher in 2017 and quickly moved into a Head Teacher role in 2019. Even though she got her law degree in Argentina, she quickly discovered that her passion was in teaching. Loli was a natural educator and always kept the social well being of students at the forefront. Her cross-cultural perspective as an Argentinian and her passion for celebrating diversity in her classroom was paramount.

As a teacher, she was an amazing collaborator and worked tirelessly to bring new and inspiring content, projects, and joyful learning to her classroom. Loli departed mid-year last year and took time to prepare for the upcoming arrival of her baby girl. As she embarks on this new journey of motherhood, we will miss her immensely, but rest assured she has brought and will continue to bring the same joy, love, and passion to her new role as a mother.



*Loli Tejada*

## HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

*Continued from page 5*

sessions with parents, staff and the Board were conducted along with a survey, and its results were shared transparently with the community. Finally, to keep everyone informed we have created a [Head of School Search webpage](#) on the school's website that includes previous community-wide emails, FAQs, the search timeline, and the official Opportunity Statement sent to candidates.

As we move into the fall, the Search Committee will review the dossiers of candidates, screened by our search firm, to select semi-finalists to interview. After the interviews are conducted, the Search Committee will select three finalists to come on campus in early October. This will be a fantastic opportunity for the community to get involved in the selection process and meet the candidates. Each finalist will come for a 2-day visit and meet with staff, students, families, the Advisory Committee and Board members. Surveys will be available to gather as much feedback as possible from each of these interactions.

It is important for us all to remember that these interactions are a two-way street – as much as we are assessing if each candidate aligns with our mission and values, they too are assessing if Peninsula is the right community for them. Our goal is to showcase the very best Peninsula has to offer while being honest and transparent about the challenges we will face together, ensuring candidates have a comprehensive understanding of who we are. We invite you to welcome them, show them what it means to be a part of our amazing Peninsula community, and help make it a great experience for everyone! After the conclusion of the visits, the Search Committee will carefully consider all feedback and decide which finalist to present for Board approval. It is the Board who will have the final decision on who to hire. We anticipate this happening shortly after the finalist visits in October.

We have been encouraged by the community's involvement in the process thus far and look forward to a deeper connection to the process in the fall during finalist visits. The goal is to have a new Head of School that we are all excited and enthusiastic about, who inspires and leads in creating a space where our children thrive. Once our new Head of School is finalized, we can't wait to start gearing up to welcome them to Peninsula for the 2024-2025 school year!



*Class of 1973*

## CLASS OF 1973: 50 YEARS LATER

*Peninsula's ties live for lifetimes! Each year at the Spring Fair, we honor graduated classes who have a significant number of years since their graduation. This past spring, we welcomed alumni from the classes of 2013, 2003, 1998, 1993, 1983, and 1973. The Class of 1973 celebrated 50 years since their graduation, and got together the day before the Fair to reminisce on their time as Peninsula students. Five decades later, their memories and friendships remain cherished! Below is a piece from retired Peninsula teacher, Jerry Hearn, who was celebrated with the first graduating class he ever taught, the Class of 1973.*

A half-century after they stood on the front steps of the Big Building and graduated to the strains of "Teach Your Children", members of the Peninsula class of 1973 held a reunion on the day before the 2023 Spring Fair. Nine of the fifteen classmates, along with several spouses and their teacher Jerry Hearn, gathered at the home of class member Margie Lee to share a potluck lunch and to enjoy the ambience of the beautiful woods surrounding the place. The attendees, at the instigation of classmate Alan Holiday, shared extensive stories of their experiences during the previous decades, as well as memories from their Peninsula years and their three-week 8th grade trip to Montana. They laughed, sometimes shed a few tears, and in general, re-created the closeness and trust that they shared when they were at Peninsula. Their stories were varied: most graduated from college, some had gotten PhDs, MDs, or JDs, some were teachers and one a member of the horseshoeing hall of fame! Over the many years, a number of the class had remained quite close with one another, and had also met not too long ago for another reunion. As they left the delightful gathering, they shared one more round of hugs and heartfelt promises to stay in touch and meet more often. What a wonderful tribute to the Peninsula culture which creates such enduring and meaningful life-long relationships among its students.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Evie Plankinton

Evie Plankinton, Peninsula Nursery teacher, Childcare Founder and longtime director, passed away May 2, 2023. Evie's kind nature nurtured many of Peninsula's youngest students during her time here.

Evie began as an assistant teacher in Jill Kaplan's classroom in 1978, and became the Head Teacher in Nursery Green the following year. Her daughter, Robin, graduated from Peninsula in 1986, but Evie continued on here for nearly 20 more years. In 1989, she added to her responsibilities by founding the Peninsula School Childcare Program that is still going strong today. In 1996, she ended her time in Nursery Green, and transitioned solely to Childcare, where she remained for the next 9 years until her retirement in 2005. Her creative mind went beyond working with children to making sweet goods for them. We have Evie to thank for our ongoing crafting community, Busy Fingers, which she founded and was an active member of for many years.

Evie was an incredible teacher and friend to many in the Peninsula community. She will be dearly missed.



Evie Plankinton

### Ted Lee, '76

We are deeply saddened to hear of the loss of Peninsula alumnus, Ted Lee ('76). Over the summer, a memorial was held for Ted in the Big Field, hosted by his sisters Amy and Margie. Read on for more from Amy.

*Ted Lee (1962-2023), grew up in Portola Valley, Washington DC, San Francisco and finally back in Portola Valley by the age of 9. He was able to attend Peninsula School where his Grandmother*

*had taught music in the 1930's while her kids, including Philip Lee, Ted's dad, and several siblings, attended school. The Peninsula tradition in the Lee family included not only a prior generation, but siblings and cousins from Ted's generation and now the children of those children are alumni. May the tradition go on.*

*At the Memorial for Ted under Flattop this July, we were reminded of some of the deep friendships Ted formed during his years at Peninsula. Those bonds helped him as he grew into his adolescence in a family which fractured, as many did during the 1970's. At that time, friends joined Ted in riding ponies, playing, and having fun with up at "Boronda Farm," the Lee family spread in Portal Valley. After Peninsula, Ted went on to graduate from Gunn High School. He earned his BS in Accounting from Chico State with the highest honors.*

Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with Ted's family and friends.

### Frank Coale ('68)

Franklin Steele Coale Jr. passed away from cancer on March 3, 2023, surrounded by his loving family. He will be remembered for his vast comprehension of medicine, his passionate sense of adventure, rare intellect, wonderful wit, strong work ethic, artistic gifts, athletic accomplishments, and most importantly, his love for and devotion to family and friends.

Frank was an avid reader, which opened his mind to the wonders of exploration in the world around him. He had a knack for understanding how things worked, and the deft skill to take apart and put anything back together. He was deeply curious and energized by learning – someone who was committed to progress through knowledge. Frank had a lifelong commitment to advocating for what he believed in and helping those in need, which showed up in many ways, both professional and personal.

His passion for science and love of art led to numerous lifelong interests. Frank did ceramics at Peninsula and pursued that passion after into adulthood, inventing new glazes and techniques, in addition to being a skilled woodworker. Both pursuits led him to create many works of art, with aesthetic and practical applications, which can be seen throughout his home and the homes of those he loved.

Frank loved the outdoors on both land and water. He possessed a nearly unrivaled affinity for and knowledge of the winds, seas, tides and constellations, and these coupled with his remarkable athletic talents, made him a world-class windsurfer and sailor. He was a certified U.S. Coast Guard Captain and a champion sailing competitor. He and his wife, Lisa, spent 10 years sailing in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific on Mango Moon, the 52-foot Corsair catamaran they helped build in a shipyard in Vietnam. Their tales and adventures on the high seas of Tonga, Thailand and New Zealand (to name a few) are what novels are made of.

Frank was bright, talented, industrious and generous with his time and love. He will be missed beyond compare.



# Peninsula School

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