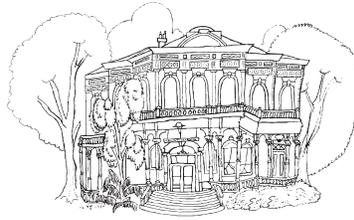


NEWS



NOTES

SPRING 2020

VOLUME 185

WELCOME TO THE SPRING 2020 VALUES EDITION

WELCOME TO THE SPRING edition of News Notes that focuses on Peninsula School values. In this issue, which is the 185th issue of News Notes to date, we are taking a moment to pause and reflect on our shared reasons for being here together, “the why” behind the important decisions we make each moment, day, and year in support of the children and community.

The 2019-2020 school year marks Peninsula School’s 94th year of operation, one in which we find ourselves in a time of transition as we adapt to the transforming social and environmental context within which we live. This school year we began implementing the work outlined in the school’s third strategic plan: *Honoring our Past, Building our Future*. This work included a master planning process to preserve and enhance our grounds; deepening our approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of our school community; recruiting and retaining a talented staff; and strengthening our progressive program. The strategic plan also called us to revisit our institutional stories and how we communicate who we are.



One powerful way we tell our story is through our values. Peninsula School values include Authentic Interactions, Community, Equity, Freedom and Responsibility, Meaningful Academics, and, of course, Play. Our values provide us with a light to guide us in the present, a map to navigate the future, and a link to our founding vision.

Like many prior issues of News Notes, you will find alumni updates, program happenings, and thoughtful reflections from Jim Benz, our Head of School. In each piece, we worked to connect our thinking and storytelling to a core value named above. Some values are explicitly named and some can be inferred. We hope you enjoy this issue and it serves to remind you of the great shared purpose of Peninsula School. As always, we love hearing from you. Please send in your reflections, feedback, ideas, and updates to include in future issues to NEWSNOTES@PENINSULASCHOOL.ORG. We send great care to our former and current members of the Peninsula School family.

CAMPING AND THE PLEASURES OF SMALL THINGS

By Jim Benz, Head of School

BETWEEN ME AND A SMALL COLLECTION of chatty 6th graders is a fully energized campfire that I helped a few of them to build a few minutes ago. A collection of us are sitting in those foldable camp chairs you can buy just about anywhere these days. Mine isn’t very comfortable; the backs on these things always seem to sag in just the wrong spot for my aging lumbar, and instead of a place to rest my head, the back of the chair is low so my head flops back like a Pez dispenser. But the fire and the kids’ satisfaction with building one for their classmates to enjoy on this chilly morning near Big Sur seem to make the chair more comfortable and eases my pre-caffeine entry to the day.



This is how the days on Peninsula spring camping trips tend to begin – drowsy at first around a small fire ring and gaining energy and volume as more kids gather in various stages of alertness; a mashup of pajamas, sweatshirts, and parkas, often hilarious chit chat about dreams or that hapless moth stuck in a tent and vocal desires for bacon. And, spoiler alert,

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Peninsula friends hiking in our nearby redwoods.

CAMPING

Continued from page 1

aside from interruptions for meals and the occasional hike or trip to the beach during the week, there isn't much more variation on the theme as the trip wears on.

Since before Big Bertha, the school bus that was used by fearless Peninsula staff members to ferry students on camping trips to far-flung destinations, camping has provided for students a pace and a perspective that drips rather than gushes – slow, pensive and unhurried, far removed from their typical days at home. The intent for these trips is to expunge the digital and harried noise in student's lives and return to analog methods for building community.

As I wander across the field, the grey tones from the mist begin to lift, revealing sharper hues. I'm in search of a cup of coffee and witness three kids watching a hawk glide overhead, others talking with friends outside tents, and a few reflecting to themselves. These tableaux represent how camping trips are intentionally devoid of choreographed activities to keep students preoccupied throughout the week; rather, the rhythm of life is comfortably vintage, designed to have students interact with themselves, others and nature, supplanting the busy pace of life in Silicon Valley.

Camping days follow the progress of the sun across the sky and drift quietly, ebbing into meals, sunset, and campfires. These

abundant unstructured times allow kids to dive into that 759-page book, to make bracelets while having a conversation with a teacher, to explore the simple but confoundingly weird pleasure of word puzzles, and the chance to whittle a perfectly ordinary stick into a smooth and barkless sculpture. Simple pleasures become an occupation (identifying birds, constellations or flowers) or a sport (swatting flies, swimming in a frigid mountain stream, catching crawdads).

The campfire continues to burn. In fact, they tend to burn all day, becoming a traffic circle of a sort, an intersection for conversation, meetings, marshmallow roasting, singing, and storytime. Chairs around the fire ring are rarely empty, and the talk wanders

casually from gaming strategies to characters in novels, from the Warriors to Lizzo, and from rides at Harry Potter World to sibling annoyances. Through these rambling conversations, students deepen their understanding of others, often discovering things about peers whom they may not have known very well, and they gain an appreciation of personality variations that, they come to learn, inevitably constitute community.

Aside from the progress of the sun, meals are the only mark of time passing. Meal preparation is a focus of these trips and is, in many ways, a core activity for social and emotional learning. It is a logistical task of Olympic proportions yet one that is the most practical application of empathy and caring.

Every student must participate in meal prep, serving and cleaning. When you are an adolescent and part of a small group of peers working together to cut two pounds of strawberries, chop enough potatoes to make home fries for 20, cook 5 pounds of bacon, and shell, whisk and scramble 3 dozen eggs all while creating gluten-free and vegetarian

options, your world naturally expands beyond yourself to integrate the needs of others.

Peninsula traditions for the cooking teams become lessons in selflessness; the cooking team prepares and serves the meal and then must wait until all members of the class are served before they themselves can eat. After cooking, serving and eating, the cooking team then cleans pots and pans and the entire “kitchen” area, gaining – somewhat by design – an appreciation of the daily work done by adults at home (you’re welcome!).

As adults during camping trips, we spend days and nights with students engaged in hiking, laughing, cooking, eating, being goofy, being tired, singing, reading, playing cards, wondering, and generally being ourselves. At Peninsula, the relationships between students and staff on campus during the school week is naturally relaxed and familial, but the days and nights spent in close proximity to adults in these camping activities – even the mundane ones – deepen the adult-student relationships to a profound level.



Students enjoy a peaceful moment near a local stream.



Teachers and students prepare firewood for a week of camping.

Students learn that the adults who have chosen to spend their careers with young people are multidimensional, nuanced, complex and whole, and this provides irreplaceable lessons about life, growing up, empathy and understanding.

After a dinner of burritos and salad, the air chills and the stars begin their evening debut. In our busy family lives, the weekdays of many children are populated by school, late afternoon sports practices, Tik Tok and traffic, and much of adolescent social life outside of school occurs through the tunnel of a palm-sized screen. As we crowd around the fire in camp chairs and layers to ward off the chill, it’s comforting to know that our camping trips continue to bring students closer together, to appreciate community, to experience nature, and to indulge for a short time in the pleasures of small things.

STUDENTS “BIOBLITZ” OUR CAMPUS WITH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

By Lisa Goochee

IN OCTOBER OF 2019, SCIENCE TEACHERS Aaron Tinker and Jeff Zotz collaborated with Taylor Sayward’s 3rd-grade and Christy Utter’s 6th-grade classes in partnership with BioBlitz, a *National Geographic* sponsored program. As described on their program website, BioBlitzes are a form of citizen science that “focus on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time.”

Citizen science is scientific research conducted in whole or in part by amateur scientists. It has many historic to modern applications from software engineering to bird-watching to astronomy. A most recent example of citizen science in popular culture was the documentation of the complete solar eclipse that took place in August of 2017 where amateur astronomers across the country were called to document the sun from various angles, providing important insight about the surface of our sun.

Lower School Science Teacher, Aaron Tinker, shared that our science team and many collaborating teachers had a great interest in bringing more opportunities for citizen science to Peninsula School because it allows for such a meaningful experience of the scientific method in practice. Students are able to participate in the building of our collective human knowledge.

To demonstrate the real-world impact of citizen science and facilitate such an opportunity on campus (the BioBlitz), *National Geographic* sent



Dr. Joe describes the ecosystem of decomposers found underneath a fallen log on the west-side of campus.



A Student discovered this 12 inch long Southern Alligator Lizard living by the front steps of the big building.

a scientist named Joe Cutler, Ph.d, to our campus. Christy Utter was motivated by the opportunity to collaborate with an expert. “Part of what appealed to me was doing research alongside a professional who is studying freshwater fish in Gabon and other parts of Central Africa. Here is a scientist coming to speak with our students and facilitating real fieldwork on campus.”

Dr. Joe is an ichthyologist (a type of marine biologist) and conservationist based in central Africa. He provided the students and teachers with a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate the many applications and relevance of the biological sciences in solving real-world problems starting with the documentation and preservation of species on our own campus. Dr. Joe opened up a whole new way for the students to see, explore, and know

our campus, taking them beyond a generalized awareness of the native species we support at Peninsula School and offering students the opportunity to document and track the health of those species over time.

To document the variety of species on campus, students used an open-source iPhone application called iNaturalist that has citizen science applications far beyond K-12 education. As our students carefully canvassed the grounds, snapping photos in iNaturalist of roly-polys, crickets, lizards, leaves, and flowers, they simultaneously conducted a campus clean-up.

Aaron explained his primary passion for engaging students in the BioBlitz process: “[Bioblitzes] offer an avenue to address the many environmental issues plaguing the world. A major challenge central to environmental research and advocacy is having enough data to provide evidence that justifies change. Having a proper understanding of the issue requires long-term data which is expensive for underpaid field scientists to do on their own. But anyone with a little training can do a lot of this data collection. The sheer volume of data can help solve a lot of challenges like air temperature and soil PH.”



Students from Taylor's and Christy's convene to hear about the BioBlitz and Dr. Joe's work in Gabon.

Summarized so simply by Aaron, “Kids get to do real science and see their data contribute to a broader understanding of environmental issues.” Through this process, an incredibly empowering and meaningful learning opportunity emerges. Christy confirmed, “I have students who are passionate about wildlife conservation.... this was really powerful for them.”

We are so lucky to have such a rich, biologically diverse campus that fosters an ethos of stewardship in our students. This opportunity for citizen science is a great example of the Peninsula value of Meaningful Academics. Children are exploring the natural world, developing strong critical thinking skills, and problem-solving the most significant challenge of our time – the preservation of our natural world – right here at home.

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD GOES TO JACKI HOLZMAN '74

By Jacki Holzman, Peninsula School alumna

Jacki Holzman is a Peninsula School graduate ('74) who recently won an Alumni Achievement Award from The University of Alaska, Anchorage. Jacki completed her master's degree in Anchorage after a bachelor's degree in geology from Humboldt State University. Before that time, she lived in the Bay Area where her early childhood was shaped on the grounds of Peninsula School. Below, you can read Jacki's reflections on Peninsula School, a place where she attributes learning the value of “authentic interactions.”

Most recently, I acted on the value of authentic interactions when I introduced myself to a three-star general at a social event, something many of my colleagues would be afraid to do. The event was a celebration of the Emperor of Japan's birthday. We just finished a cultural Taiko performance (Taiko drumming). I changed from my costume and returned to the ballroom. General Bussiere was new to Alaska and the senior officer at the event. I had just been promoted to Deputy Regional Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration Alaskan Region. Knowing from my experience at Peninsula that I can take action even when apprehensive, I introduced myself. We ended up talking about our families. There's an implicit belief in our culture that people with titles are more important, are implicitly better, or deserve more attention. But we are all human, and our families are important to all of us. It's a subject that brings us together.



My family at Peninsula School is where I learned this simple truth of human nature: we are all members of this human family. I attribute a lot of my career success to treating people with equal humanity and respect. In thinking about the life experiences which forged this and other values in me, so many of my values connect back to my time at Peninsula School.

When I recall my stories of Peninsula, images of people wanting to talk about things that were actually important comes to mind. Peninsula School taught me that every person can contribute, regardless of title. Titles never stood in the way of people connecting over what's real, sharing ideas, and being themselves. The authentic interactions this enabled prepared me to successfully work with people at all levels of responsibility. In receiving this award, I wonder how we can preserve these human moments and continue to model them for the children of our future.

HORSEPLAY: A LONG-FORGOTTEN SCHOOL ARTIFACT SHOWS ROOTS IN OUR SCHOOL VALUES

By Jessica Silver-Sharp, Peninsula School Former Parent and Archivist Consultant

THE SCRAPBOOK PAGES ARE BROWNEED, brittle and acidic. World War II put a heavy burden on US supplies of basic materials like food and paper, many of which were needed abroad. To meet this surging demand, the government conserved supplies and established a rationing system. Paper rationing began in 1940, resulting in poor paper quality for civilian use and hence, the shabby state of our scrapbook. To help slow down the deterioration and balance the acid in the paper,

album reveals this reality, dually reflecting the most popular film genre of the times, the wildly popular “Westerns.”

While not many Peninsula School documents from 1938-1947 – a decade defined by rapid social and economic change – have survived, this previously overlooked artifact deserves a special place in our history. Almost 80 years old, the scrapbook tells the story of “Peninsula School Horseplay.” Before our school held annual auctions, “Horseplay,” sometimes called “Fiesta,” was Peninsula’s “chief scholarship benefit” fundraiser. In fact, documents show that by 1948, a large portion of the school budget went to student scholarships.

Likely assembled by staff in the later 1940s, the scrapbook includes Horseplay programs, newspaper clippings, and professional publicity photos stamped by Palo Alto photographer Berton Crandall. Most of the materials are tucked in, having lost their original glue or tape. Handmade promotional prints from 1938 advertise the fair in cobalt blue, red and dark green, giving the album a pop of color. For you print-making buffs, these are probably hand-carved linocuts. While photocopying – xerography – was invented that very year, it came into use a few years later.

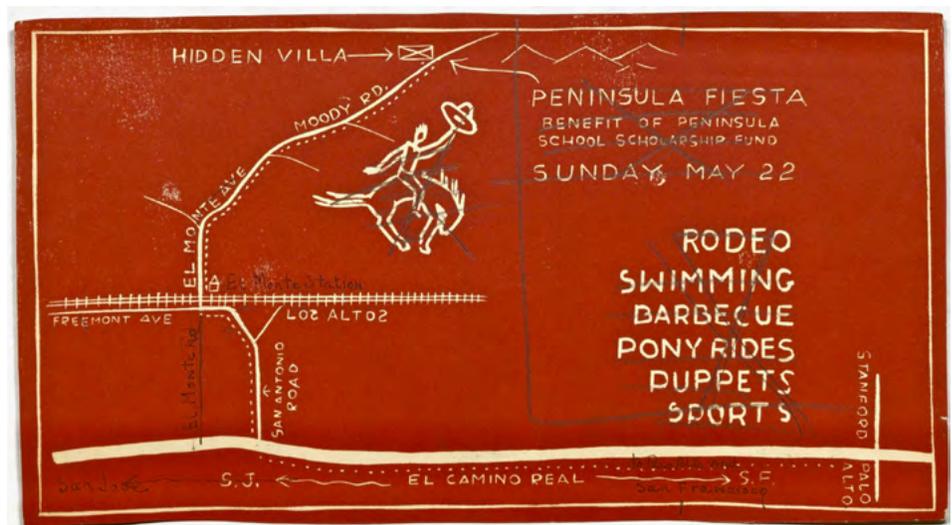
From 1938 to about 1950, Horseplay was held annually at Frank and Josephine Duvencck’s beautiful Hidden Villa Ranch in Los Altos. Like our fairs today, the event



Students celebrate the Fiesta.

the album pages are interleaved with alkaline paper. What can this forgotten artifact from our school archives – a beat-up scrapbook from the 1940s – teach us about Peninsula School? You might be surprised.

The scrapbook opens with black and white photographs in an envelope. Peek inside and you’ll see the Hidden Villa valley and mountains forming a backdrop to smiling kids and adults in western wear on horseback. Many parts of California, including Menlo Park and Los Altos, were truly rural then. Many Peninsula School children would have lived in the country and owned or ridden horses as a means of transportation. The

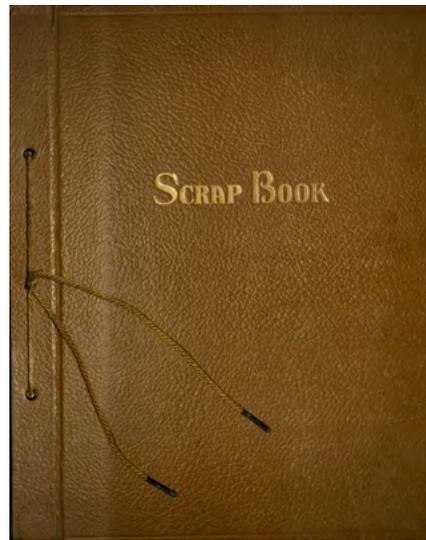


A hand-carved linocut flyer used for the event.

was organized by the parents, teachers and staff (often one and the same) for at that time Peninsula was a “parent-run school.” As with our contemporary fairs, the public was always invited. And unlike today, so was the press. The first news clipping advertises, “Fiesta promises to restore gallant Grandee Days” including panning for gold and other activities harkening back to – and romanticizing – the days of “real” 49ers. The next year boasts a full “cowboy orchestra.” From other sources in the Archives, we know Peninsula students loved to sing cowboy tunes – especially *Home on the Range*. One could guess that the cowboy symbols reflected a spirit of self-reliance and freedom, mirroring the values held by our progressive educators organizing the fair.

The rodeo, barbecue and pony rides were the mainstays of the fair, with new offerings annually ranging from a silly nightgown race to an official horse parade. An old bulletin reports on *several surprise booths done by the older groups of children from the Peninsula School*, reminding us of Upper School kids today managing booths or selling crafts independently. It promised *rope swinging across the creek*, (the roots of our current tradition, substituting big puddle) and a *parking spot for the small fry where Mrs. Milton Priger will tell stories throughout the day*, again revealing early roots of a creative storytime tradition that’s continued at Peninsula for decades.

A newspaper spread (*San Francisco Call Bulletin*, 1938) shows a group of boys and girls smiling in jeans and pants, easy to equate with



An example of a worn and tattered scrapbook page on it’s way to restoration.

freedom and play at this time period. It wasn’t until the 1930s that American girls began to wear shorts and pants for play; to school, girls wore dresses or skirts. A few images in the Peninsula School Archives do show 1930s girls in pants, another hint that Peninsula valued gender equity early on.

So what *can* a beat-up scrapbook reveal about Peninsula School today? This artifact offers evidence that even outside of school, students were expected to explore their own interests and express themselves through *freedom and responsibility*, through *play*, values central to our progressive school that have persisted. As essentially a scholarship event, Horseplay shows Peninsula’s early, strong emphasis on *equity* in progressive education. The album also places Peninsula in the context of both pre and post-war California culture through a decade of very rapid change. As we find ourselves in similar times of supersonic change, can we gain clarity about Peninsula today by better understanding who we were? How have our core values shifted or stayed the same? The scrapbook is available for careful browsing – by you – at a future Spring Fair. I’ll be excited to hear what *you* may discover!

ABOUT JESSICA SILVER-SHARP AND THE PENINSULA SCHOOL ARCHIVES

Jessica Silver-Sharp is a former Peninsula School parent and Peninsula School Archives consultant. Jessica worked as an archivist in museums and libraries in California and New York. Beginning in 2012, continuing the essential collecting work of Florrie Forrest, Jessica began offering her expertise to the School as a volunteer. Following Jessica’s heart-felt contribution of hundreds of hours, we are pleased to employ Jessica as a professional consultant this year in preparation for Peninsula’s centennial. If you have donations for the archives or interest in collaborating on this work to organize and preserve our school history, please contact our News Notes team at NEWSNOTES@PENINSULASCHOOL.ORG.

HORSEPLAY PROGRAM

1. Parade — assembles at 1:30.
2. Judging of costumes
 - a. Best outfitted horse and rider

1. }	woman
2. }	man
 - b. Largest family group.
3. Drill

}	San Jose Mounted Patrol.
}	San Mateo Mounted Patrol No. 1.
4. Horsemanship for children under 14.
Judged on seat, hands, performance of horse.
5. Pinto Horse Class.
6. Stock Horses.
Horse must have bit, loose noseband, if any, no martingale.
7. Nightgown Race.
In teams—(10c entrance fee—pot to winner).
8. Three Gaited Show Horses.
9. Water Race.
Girls only—(10c entrance fee—pot to winner).
10. Five Gaited Show Horses.
40% conformation, 60% performance.
11. Road Hack.
Free for all, any equipment.
12. Palomino Horse Class.
13. Stake Race.
14. Musical Chairs.

BARBECUE DINNER 11:30-1:30
75c — Children under 12, 50c

BUILDING CLASSROOM COMMUNITIES AT PENINSULA SCHOOL

By Lisa Goochee

ANY TEACHER CAN TELL YOU the importance of understanding and cultivating the shared social dynamic that emerges in every classroom. Educational research shows us that discovering, shaping, and monitoring the classroom dynamic is foundational in creating a safe space that activates curiosity, sustains motivation, and creates joy for all students. Navigating this constellation of individual and group qualities – and observing how they evolve across a school year – is essential in maintaining a supportive environment for growth.

As a progressive school with a focus on the whole child, Peninsula School elevated this human side to learning from its founding years.

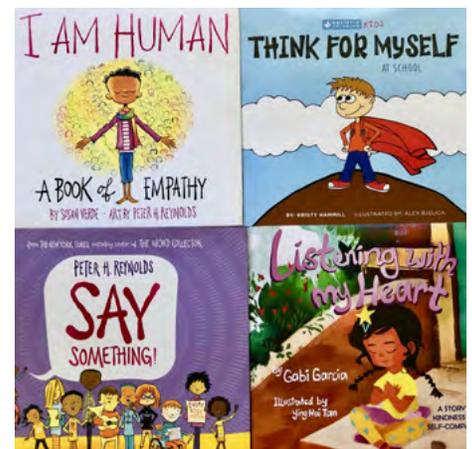
Assistant Teacher, Cici Cassinero, shared the first take on this training, saying, “What’s truly great about the overall program is that it’s striving to create a kinder and more compassionate environment for children.” As stated on their website, *Responsive Classroom is an... approach to teaching and discipline that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness.* They explain that their programs help teachers, both elementary and middle school, to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms. A key question for our teachers was, what of this evidence-based program fits within Peninsula’s approach and culture?



Two students smile for the camera after sharing their goals for the year.

In environments like Peninsula, with its historic focus on social and emotional learning, a deeper focus on this classroom culture remains an immense part of the learning itself. It is the foundation for powerful human relationships that carries our graduates through a lifetime.

In August, six of our teachers across the lower and upper school set out to deepen and expand their strategies for enhancing classroom culture and climate. They sought training in an evidenced-based program called Responsive Classroom. One common practice mainstreamed by Responsive Classroom and practiced by Peninsula teachers for many decades is the concept of a daily classroom meeting, often facilitated in a circle.



A sampling of books from Loli’s classroom that focus on aspects of community. These books are often read during circle time.

This was very clear for our Lower School teachers. Melissa Wright, Head Teacher of 6- and 7-year-olds, uses many aspects of the program that emphasize and reinforce basic elements of successful relationships such as turn-taking in conversation, how to participate in structured games, and how to utilize self-control and regulation. Similarly, Loli

Tejada, Head Teacher of 7- and 8-year-olds, stated, “It took us some time to think and make it work with our schedule, but eventually we were able to find the elements of Responsive Classroom that worked.”

In the Lower School classrooms, one of the values of Responsive Classroom is in teaching young children how to express themselves. Melissa states, “It’s important for kids to feel safe and connected, empowered in everything they do through their day, and really, their whole lives. Responsive Classroom starts with such small things. For example, there was an opening activity in a circle on the first day of school where kids asked each other questions like, *Do you like apples*

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STUDENTS ARE AGENTS OF CHANGE

By Lisa Goochee

THIS SCHOOL YEAR, Peninsula School staff examined questions about student activism as a core feature of the Peninsula School student experience. We examined this topic across two full-staff meetings, directed by a small group of teachers and administrators. The goals of these staff sessions were:

1. Enrich our shared understanding of where we came from in order to inform where we're going as a community in regards to student agency or activism.
2. Discuss developmentally appropriate approaches to student agency or activism across the progression of a Peninsula School student experience.

To reach these goals, this group brought the staff together to explore professional development resources; highlight key issues (such as climate change or immigration); document projects of focus in various classrooms; name important community partners in our work; consider key skills, knowledge, and conditions for students to be successful agents of change; and reflect on the history of student-led change-agency at Peninsula School.

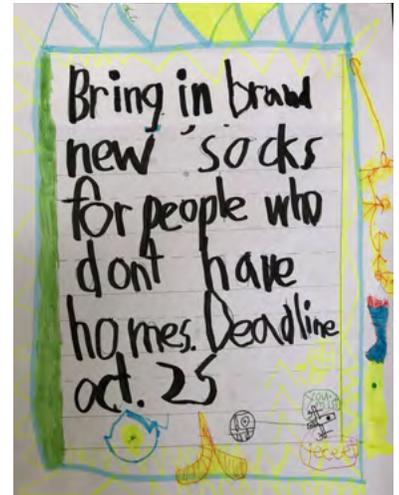
Peninsula's new Admissions Director Mary Hofstedt, one of the group members coming to us with a rich background in youth empowerment work, addressed the work in the following terms: "Agents of change, as we've defined it, can represent externally-focused acts of activism and protest, or represent a very personal learning experience." Empowering students to facilitate change, however they define it, is essential.

Ceramics Specialist Eliza Thomas who has been involved in community work for decades shared, "There are a lot of places we could take these staff discussions, but it's important to hold in mind that the discussions are themselves a goal, bringing people to a shared understanding and opening up the possibilities." Toni Ouradnik, the 7-9-year-olds Head Teacher added, "We're trying to be intentional about facilitating this in student-centered and developmentally appropriate ways, not that we weren't already."

As many are aware, student activism and advocacy is integral to this school's history and mission, dating back to our school founders



Students stand proud in the September 20th worldwide student climate protest.



A student in Taylor's demonstrates his agency with a sock drive for unhoused people in the Bay Area.

who championed many humanitarian and environmental efforts from the 1920s through the 1960s. As our conversation continues on campus, we ask you, our readers, to share your stories of student agency at Peninsula School. Do you have a story of student activism or change-making? What does student change-making mean to you and what creates the conditions for students to feel empowered at Peninsula School? Please write to us at NEWSNOTES@PENINSULASCHOOL.ORG so we can bring your story to light.

STAFF PROFILES ON PLAY
STAFF WEIGH-IN ON A MOST CHERISHED VALUE, PLAY!

What does play mean to you? What have you learned about play at Peninsula School?



**COLLEEN
 MCPEEK**
Head Teacher

I really enjoy laughter. I enjoy calm and going for a walk. I love hiking and being with my kids. I think my favorite thing is just being a family and laughing and remembering funny moments. Play is peace and calm and joy and laughter. Laughter is so important.

At Peninsula, play to me is all that matters here. How they learn about how they are in the world is through play. They learn how to share, how to be kind, how to step in or step back, how to express themselves and communicate, and they also learn. Peninsula really gets what play is. Kids really get to play here in unstructured time to figure out life.



Students having fun during Peninsula's annual Workday event before the start of school.

MATT BROTSCH
*Physical Activities
 Specialist*



My definition of play is specifically in the psychomotor domain. I care a lot about the movement that's involved and the skill-building that takes place.

ARAN JOHNSON
Assistant Teacher

When I feel like I'm 'at play' it's a time when I'm having almost full autonomy over my choice to do what I'm doing. I might be needing to follow rules. Rules are a part of play, but I'm doing it because I want to be doing it.

What I've learned is that, when kids are playing, the knowledge they learn sticks a lot more. But knowledge appears to be acquired a little slower when they're playing... or at the pace a parent might want it to happen. But knowledge learned in play sticks. It seems slow, but it's deeper.



FAGA MISA
Childcare Director

It means being carefree, having fun, using my imagination, and that's it!

Play is the foundation of social and emotional learning for nursery and primary grades because they're practicing different scenarios and meanwhile finding out, who is down to go with it? So they learn these dynamics and cues. You propose an idea and some people say, 'That's a great idea.' Sometimes they say, 'That's a horrible idea.' and that's learning. In this place, there's a lot of freedom to discover yourself and wonder.



D'ARCY NICOLA
HR Specialist



Play to me is about finding joy and learning about myself and others. Sometimes it involves spending time

with friends and family (games, adventures, or throwing toys for our dogs) and sometimes it involves trying new things. Some people might see it differently but I made my first challah recently and it was really fun (and yummy too)!

Since I work in the Business Office, I'm not involved with kids much at Peninsula, although I enjoy the visitors I do get!

RAY DACANAY
Associate Teacher and Facilities Caretaker

Play is about finding a balance for me. It's a chance to take a break and find out *what are my choices*. It is the creativity to explore oneself and hopefully, I can do the hokey pokey and turn myself around.

What I've learned about play at Peninsula is that it's creative growth, one's heartfelt rhythm, climbing six acres of joy.





MERRILL GRUVER

Drama Specialist

Play means doing something for no other reason but that it brings joy.

I'm grateful that I work with such playful adults... even our oldest students are still tapped into their playfulness.

GAIL BLACKMARR

Associate Teacher and Childcare Teacher

Art and play to me are totally entwined, encouraging me to be a more keen observer. Play, for me, is a big part of what makes otherwise mundane experiences worth living. It is the joyful bubbling up of all the 'What if's' when beginning some creative project with yarn, or fabric, or paper, as well as the hundreds of small choices to be made that follow.



Every year I'm moved as I watch a child shift from relatively solitary play to joyful collaboration with a newly-found friend in the block corner, the dress-up area, or in front of the painting easel. Not that play – or art – is

without its conflicts and disappointments. One of my takeaways from a professional development conference on the benefits of play is that it is so rich in encounters with the unexpected. In other words, play fosters problem-solving, inventiveness, and resiliency.

FRANK SMITHSON

Associate Teacher and Facilities Director

After a strong rain, the puddle under the swings at Colleen's fills to the brim and becomes a center for play and learning: stomping, splashing, and laughing with friends; decision making; diving in (literally) or stepping back; physical challenges; issues of scarcity and sharing the prime space; power struggles and building consensus among friends; action, reaction, and consequences; countless opportunities for imagination and creation; construction skills; physics; fluid mechanics...



Every year the water, the swings, a couple of planks, and a few short logs are played with over and over, and somehow every year the children develop an engaging new twist with these simple elements. This out of the way corner of our campus rates as a true Peninsula treasure.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITIES

Continued from page 8

or bananas? This becomes an essential foundation in creating positive classroom culture when it grows into, *What do you do when you're sad? What can you do to be a good friend today?* It encourages students to start taking safe and small social risks. These translate to healthy risks academically and socially throughout their year and then their lives."

In Loli's class, Responsive Classroom served as a positive way to approach guidelines that the classroom community needs to follow in order to reach student goals. Loli launched the year with a lesson on hopes and dreams, writing about what the students wanted to learn this year in and outside of school. They also developed norms with input from the students such as *be kind* and *have fun*, based on the Responsive Classroom approach. Sharing more of what she learned from the program, Loli states, "I notice how the students are engaged and having fun from a foundation of intentionally built community practices. This built sense of community shows up in the respect students show towards what others feel, what others have to say, in building friendships, and in making (and overcoming) mistakes."

Jesse Gillispie, who completed her dissertation on this subject of how classroom culture fosters student identity, discussed some middle school Responsive Classroom approaches. She stated, "There is a fundamental desire for younger children to please adults. But there are huge shifts in the adolescent brain that drive them away from adult-pleasing behaviors. What works is framing language around how to make requests. For example, rather than say 'please sit down' to a student blocking the board, a teacher can ask 'can everyone see okay?' This shifts the dynamic from pleasing the teacher towards social awareness and influence. This is of greater value at the adolescent stage."

We are fortunate for Peninsula School's generous professional development fund available for staff to deepen their knowledge and practices. We are proud to have such discerning educators who use these funds wisely. Above all, we are grateful to our teachers and students for building a most treasured school value, community.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS ENDOWMENT GIFTS!

We extend our deepest thanks to the donors listed below who contributed to support the future of Peninsula School through their gifts to the Peninsula School Endowment & Trust Fund (PSE&TF) for the 2019-2020 school year. The PSE&TF was started by the Board and parents in 1970 to ensure that Peninsula School would continue for generations to come. The PSE&TF provides security for the school and protects Peninsula from unforeseen circumstances, with the added advantage of affording a percentage of its total investments to Peninsula's annual income. We appreciate your generous donations, which allow future children to one day follow in the footsteps of nearly a century of students and alumni, also enjoying our mud-filled grounds and inspiring progressive education.

Thomas Akin & Michelle Arden
Mark Ankenman &
Amanda Edmonds
Jon Appleby & Amy Park
Jeff Baker & Shaula Kumaishi
Steve Basta
Juliana & Andrea Betti-Berutto
Claire & Brian Bokor
Jean-Claude Brizard &
Brooke Stafford-Brizard
Alexandra & Darrin Brown
Mario Caprini & Whitney Woo
James Chen & Loretta Li
Kevin Chen & Nell Curran
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Michael Cox &
Corinna Darian-Smith
Pracheeti & Rushi Desai

Tara & Gaurav Dhillon
Darin Donovan &
Belinda Chlouber
Katie & Jonathan Dyer
Jesse Fourt & Christy Utter
Casey & Matt Girard
Sid Gupta & Mona Sheikh
Christin & Ford
Hinojosa-Kirschenbaum
Buddy James & Aileen Adriano
James Kittock & Leslie Walker
Doug Koo
Kathy Koo
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Mark Paskin & Baq Haidri
Andras Pattantus &
Alicia Masiulis
May & Oliver Petry
Roozbeh Pirzadeh &
Narges Masoudi
Yunwei Qi & Lili Zhuang

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Ratchadaporn &
Pasin Suriyentrakorn
Molly & Jorge Tapias
Derek Tian & Alicia Tang
Alethea & Jesse Van Hiller
Priya & Dirk Wenzel
Justin Worthington &
Joanna Smiley
Jungjoo Yoon & Sunny Chung
David Zhao & Joyce Chen
Donna Zuckerberg



We are so grateful to the 8th Grade Class of 2019 for their generous gift to Rasha's kindergarten space. Donned with rainbow ribbons, students and staff are thoroughly loving the structure!

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

By Julia Rubin, Class of '96

JULIA, YOU ATTENDED PENINSULA SCHOOL AS A STUDENT AND NOW SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. WHAT DOES THE VALUE OF “FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY” MEAN TO YOU IN YOUR ONGOING SERVICE OF PENINSULA SCHOOL?

A deep and multi-dimensional understanding of personal freedom is one of the most influential gifts Peninsula School has given me in my life. By experiencing authentic and consistent choice-making for myself from a young age, I learned my interior landscape, both its strengths and vulnerabilities. I learned that adults trusted me to make my own decisions, and via this freedom, I learned my identity. I found where my true passions lay and how to pursue them through the development of a personalized learning process – supported by my teachers – who



understood the lifelong value in allowing a child to develop her own way of doing things. As a Peninsula graduate who also became an educator, I might call this learning a discovery process of my own intrinsic motivations. As a child, it didn't matter what freedom was called or what it was cultivating in me. The effect was visceral, real and lived, and has remained consistent throughout my life.

In my service to Peninsula School as a board member, my relationship to *Freedom and Responsibility* continues to

deepen. As I navigate the adult world of work, family, and the ongoing journey of seeking fulfillment in life, the importance of paying forward and protecting the gift of freedom for this generation's young people feels vital. By this I mean, as I get older, I find my happiness becomes more dependent on the freedom of others, freedom secured for the future. As a Board member, I am now responsible to protect the freedom of the students who attend Peninsula School. That responsibility has a variety of manifestations, from voting in favor of allocating resources to protect our beautiful campus, to serving on strategic visioning and planning task forces and committees, to counting myself personally “in” on Peninsula School's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Navigating adulthood makes me all the more aware of the value of freedom in a Peninsula School education. I see my freedom now in the service of others. All children deserve this right to know themselves, to find strength in their voice, to confidently assert responsibility, and boldly advocate for transformation.



IN MEMORIAM

Elizabeth Few

It is with great sadness that we report that former long-time teacher Elizabeth Few passed away on December 29th after a long struggle with cancer. Her husband Roger, their son Ashton, Elizabeth's sisters, and her stepdaughters were by her side.

Elizabeth was a Head Teacher in the primary for six- and seven-year-olds since 2004 and brought a magical combination of warmth, kindness, a wide breadth of knowledge and life experience to her teaching. She inspired her students with her passion for French and literature and with her sense of whimsy in projects such as “Creatureland”. She was adored by her students and highly respected by parents. Elizabeth and Roger's son Ashton is a Peninsula alumnus, class of 2009.

We will miss Elizabeth's smile, her generosity, and her boundless energy. If you'd like to send a card, the address is below.

Roger and Ashton MacFarland
544 9th Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025

As this news came just before News Notes deadline, there will be a deeper tribute dedicated to Elizabeth in the next edition.

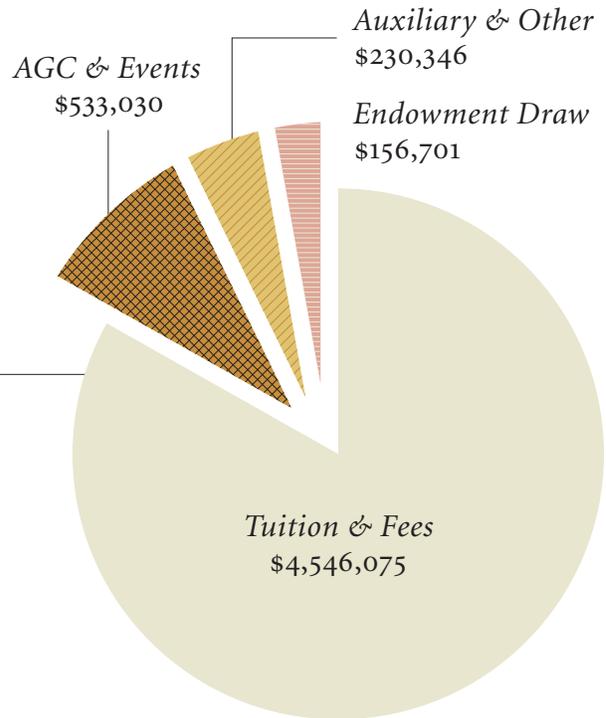
Peninsula School is pleased to present our

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Peninsula School's operating revenue for the fiscal year 2018-2019 was \$5,466,152 compared to \$5,237,955 in the 2017-2018 school year.

2018-19 REVENUE

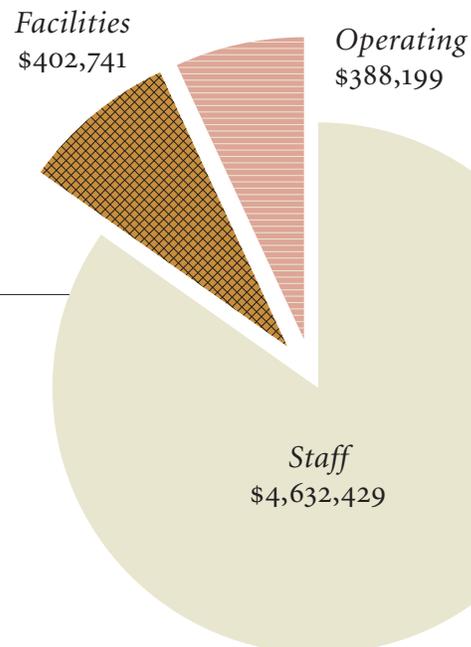
TUITION & FEES	\$4,546,075	83%
AGC & EVENTS	\$533,030	10%
AUXILIARY & OTHER	\$230,346	4%
ENDOWMENT DRAW	\$156,701	3%
TOTAL	\$5,466,152	



Expenses for the 2018-2019 school year totaled \$5,423,369, compared to \$5,144,816 for the prior year.

2018-19 EXPENSES

STAFF	\$4,632,429	85%
FACILITIES	\$402,741	8%
OPERATING	\$388,199	7%
TOTAL	\$5,423,369	



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

June 30, 2019

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,390,942	Liabilities	
Tuition and fees receivable, net	2,662,112	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 28,539
Pledges receivable	109,332	Payroll and related liabilities	376,610
Investments	8,215,910	Charitable remainder trust liability	54,920
Prepaid expenses and other assets	48,896	Deferred tuition	4,977,598
Charitable remainder trust	135,893	Total liabilities	<u>5,437,667</u>
Property and equipment, net	<u>1,967,606</u>		
Total assets	<u>\$ 14,530,691</u>	Net Assets	
		Net assets without donor restrictions	
		Undesignated	3,366,325
		Board-designated for special projects	126,808
		Board-designated PPRRSM fund	46,657
			<u>3,539,790</u>
		Net assets with donor restrictions	<u>5,553,234</u>
		Total net assets	<u>9,093,024</u>
		Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 14,530,691</u>

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the Year Ended June 30, 2019

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
REVENUES AND SUPPORT			
Tuition and fees	\$ 5,799,456	\$ -	\$ 5,799,456
Tuition assistance	(721,883)	-	(721,883)
Tuition and fees - net	<u>5,077,573</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,077,573</u>
Contributions	<u>533,030</u>	<u>134,644</u>	<u>667,674</u>
Other			
Net investment income	50,978	349,535	400,513
Change in value of charitable remainder trust	-	1,990	1,990
Other Income	<u>46,470</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,470</u>
Total other revenues and support	<u>97,448</u>	<u>351,525</u>	<u>448,973</u>
Net assets released from restriction	<u>240,726</u>	<u>(240,726)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue and support	<u>5,948,777</u>	<u>245,443</u>	<u>6,194,220</u>
EXPENSES			
Program services	4,418,168	-	4,418,168
Management and general	1,162,567	-	1,162,567
Fundraising	<u>210,089</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>210,089</u>
Total expenses	<u>5,790,824</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,790,824</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	<u>157,953</u>	<u>245,443</u>	<u>403,396</u>
Net assets - beginning of year	<u>3,381,837</u>	<u>5,307,791</u>	<u>8,689,628</u>
Net assets - end of year	<u>\$ 3,539,790</u>	<u>\$ 5,553,234</u>	<u>\$ 9,093,024</u>

A full set of 2018-2019 financial statements is available on request from the school's Director of Finance, Beth Lee.



Peninsula School

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Dear Peninsula Community,

For those in our Peninsula School community who are no longer Peninsula students or whose child has moved on from Peninsula, you may be wondering how our beloved school has been faring during the COVID-19 crisis.

As a school, we are experiencing unprecedented and unforeseen circumstances that have required us to be flexible and adapt our paradigm of education in new ways. While the campus is closed, the learning continues, just in a different way. Each staff member was hired based on their ability to connect to children in an authentic way, on their passion for the subjects they teach, on their quest for being lifelong learners, and for their commitment to Peninsula's mission. They have done a remarkable job learning to use technology for distance teaching and adjusting their program and method of delivery. They have acted with skill, grace and patience and are committed to providing a distance learning program that is true to our mission and that values students above all else.

The school entered this crisis in a position of strength - the budget was well managed and balanced, we were fully enrolled with a strong waitpool of applicants, the school owns all of its property, we don't carry any debt, we have a robust emergency cash reserve, our endowments are professionally managed, we have stable leadership, and our Board of Directors are committed to ensuring the long-term health of the school. Our community has also responded with compassion and care: forming an emergency fund, increasing tuition assistance, and ensuring we all stay connected. I'm confident that we will endure this challenge as we have endured other challenges throughout the school's long history.

We thank you for your dedication to Peninsula School, and we hope to share more stories of our reunited community in the next issue of News Notes.

*Sincerely,
Jim Benz, Head of School*

Please contact NewsNotes@peninsulaschool.org if you need additional copies of News Notes, hope to add someone to the mailing list, or no longer wish to receive future mailings from us.

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