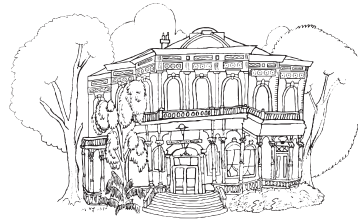


# NEWS



# NOTES

VOLUME 186

SPRING 2021

COMMUNITY THROUGH CHANGE

## Dear Reader,

This year is challenging for schools and families everywhere. Amidst the many difficulties and losses presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and racial injustice, along with the threats to our democratic fabric, Peninsula School’s mission, vision, and values continue to shine. Our students, staff, board, and families are meeting this moment with care for one another and authenticity about their experience. The Peninsula community continues to demonstrate incredible resilience under the weight of immense responsibility to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff and students, and maintain our relationships with one another.

This 186th issue of *News Notes* elaborates on the theme of change and overcoming challenge. In fact, the theme of this issue is *Community Through Change*, covering transitions our community faced and is still facing since March 2020. In the next pages, you will hear from Peninsula School community members about how we – as a whole school community – are adapting as a result of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and social injustices that are pervading our society. You will hear from a handful of teachers on how their programs shifted during COVID-19. Jaya, our Weaving and Textiles Specialist Teacher, shares her Community Quilting Project. John Fuller, our longtime Music Specialist Teacher, shares an incredible “This Land Is Your Land” covers project bringing generations of former and current Peninsula folks together in a celebration of music and community. Rasha, our Head Teacher of kindergarten, shares her professional growth journey and expanding understanding of child trauma.

Our vision is what continually informs and inspires us to move forward together. You will hear from Ryan Helton, Director of Development, and Betty Achinstein, Interim DEI Director, who

encourage each of you to reach out and get involved with Peninsula School’s strategic planning which is the articulation and roadmap of our vision. We will see improvements to our buildings and grounds, enhancements to our program, as well as DEI and communications initiatives building towards the 2025 Centennial Celebration. What are your hopes for Peninsula’s future? Please connect with me to share your stories and your vision.

I would also like to acknowledge that my recent transition to Interim Head of School is just one of the many changes we have navigated at Peninsula School this year. Many of you know me as a former Peninsula parent, board member, long-time educator in our local community, and most recently, as Peninsula’s Director of Admissions. I am grateful and humbled to serve Peninsula in this new role, and look forward to getting to know our extended community even better. Over these last few weeks and months, I have revisited our mission many times: *Through the progressive principles of constant reflection and renewal, Peninsula School will continue to adapt to the ever-changing world while holding true to the core values that have been the school’s foundation for nearly a century.* In our 95th year as a school, we continue to live this mission and all that it means.

We thank each of you for your continued support of Peninsula School. Our school community needs and cherishes your engagement during these times. Thank you for keeping us in your thoughts and hearts. We send our love, authenticity, curiosity, and hope back to you.

Sincerely,  
Mary Hofstedt,  
*Interim Head of School*



Current students welcome incoming new families in a drive-through parade in August of 2020.

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## RIISING TO THE OCCASION OF COVID-19

By Lisa Goochee, Communications & Outreach

COVID-19 CAUSED A DISRUPTION that changed school, work, and life for us all. Responding to this disruption required creative thinking, resilience seemingly beyond our depths, and new examinations across our institution as a whole. Not surprisingly, our students, staff, parents/guardians, alumni, and school partners rose to the occasion to help our school meet these changes and reach far beyond them. We highlight a few of the tremendous achievements of our whole community through this challenging time below.

- To meet the new demands of COVID-19, Misha Merrill, Program Support Director, stepped into a Pandemic Coordinator role. Misha led our school in addressing local, state, and national guidelines for school health, safety, and reopening. With the support of the COVID Prevention and Response Team and our Medical Advisory Council, Misha implemented protocols for health and safety with tremendous success across the school. You can read about these efforts in our school's *Pandemic Operations Plan* located on the school website.
- Peninsula School teaching staff adapted their programs with speed and grace, shifting their educational approach overnight to reflect the needs of our students in this demanding educational context. Teachers navigated how to deliver in-person and distance learning at once in a hybrid teaching model, becoming masters of school technology and multi-tasking while also guiding their students through new health and safety protocols. Most critically, our teachers devised creative lessons rooted in Peninsula's mission and delivered them with deep consideration for all of our students, both at home and in person.
- Before the school year started, many of our staff shifted teaching assignments, stepping into new roles, redistributing responsibilities, and adjusting schedules in order to make a return to in-person instruction possible while protecting the health restrictions of their fellow staff members. Our hats are off to all of our staff for their compassion, flexibility, and positivity.
- Our staff dove into diversity, equity, and inclusion work in partnership with CircleUp Education, our expert Oakland-based team. We are looking deeply into our school practices and policies



A student in Rasha's stands ready for his COVID test.



Colleen teaches literacy in the early days of shelter in place.

to identify areas where we can grow to be a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive school environment for students, families, and staff. We are also looking at our curriculum to ensure our students learn how to be not only active democratic citizens but upstanders for social and environmental justice.

- Families supported their children and partnered with teachers whether in distance or hybrid learning. Our parents and guardians, who also became technology masters, helped children through the temporary loss of social connections and support of the physical Peninsula School environment. We thank our families from the bottom of our hearts for remaining strong partners through this time.
- Virtual events kicked off with our *Virtual Earth Day Celebration* in April 2020 where our own student climate experts inspired us. *All-School Campfire Night* and the *Virtual Rock Concert* provided additional virtual bonding moments where the community came together in story and song to celebrate our physically distanced humanity. The *Virtual Craft Fair* team of parents, guardians, students, and longtime school volunteers put on an unparalleled virtual event complete with a craft marketplace alongside a full-day music and arts program.
- Our Facilities and Grounds team re-configured classroom spaces across the school, expanding outdoor learning spaces to maximize space for physical distancing measures amongst hundreds of other tasks to ensure the safety of our campus. Our stellar custodial staff doubled their cleaning and sanitation practices across our school grounds as one of many protocols for health.
- Responding to the narrowing of income sources such as Childcare, Summer at Peninsula, and fundraising events, our Finance Team worked at light-speed to secure a forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loan allowing the school to keep our entire workforce employed during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.
- Amongst her many other responsibilities to keep our school connected, our Technology Team of one – Bette Henley – spent the summer of 2020 reconfiguring our school wifi network, and ordering and setting up new hybrid learning technology equipment in every classroom throughout the school.

- People of Peninsula (POP), our parents and guardians association, continued to build community and connect willing volunteers to fun school projects this year. This group of community leaders helps mentor new families, educate parents on relevant topics, and participates in all kinds of school events. Always willing to support the school and generate new ideas to support families, we are ever grateful to this group.
- For a few short months, our great state of California also contended with tremendous wildfires, which threatened our air and for some of us, our homes. We were able to reopen our school in the midst of these fires thanks to The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) working in a remarkable collaboration with state and local agencies and with our own community cooperation.



A staff member shares a photo of the George Floyd memorial in Minneapolis, MN.



Thank you to our cleaning crew for doing a phenomenal job with all the extra cleaning and sanitizing this year.

- We are so proud to have our Development Team of Ryan Helton and Heather Horacek who bring great intelligence, energy, and humor to serving the school in countless ways. Be sure to read more about giving during COVID-19 in the next pages. Ryan offers us a lovely metaphor about giving during COVID-19, “Peninsula’s Philanthropy Tree.”
- And last but not most certainly not least, we thank Mary Hofstedt for so gracefully stepping into the Interim Head of School position midyear while still continuing her critical work as our Director of Admissions. Mary brings decades of experience in education as

well as her personal experiences as a past Peninsula School parent and Board Trustee. You can read more about Mary’s background on our website.

Forged by fire and pandemic – and rooted in a remarkable history – we are poised for greatness as we approach our 100th year anniversary. May we look back and remember this year as a time of tremendous growth, a year when we took the opportunity to recommit to why we are here and renew what matters to us as a community. Undoubtedly, when the fog of COVID-19 lifts, we will see a school in full bloom. May we all visit Peninsula School again soon (and in-person) to celebrate this place in the name of beauty, hope, and pure, unadulterated childhood.



Tara Dhillon, the President of People of Peninsula (POP), helped organize a COVID-safe charity meal feeding 120 people over the holiday season alongside the POP Council.

## INTERVIEW WITH ROCK ‘N’ ROLL PHOTOGRAPHER & ALUMNI PARENT, PAIGE K PARSONS

*Interview by Lisa Goochee, Communications & Outreach*

PAIGE K PARSONS IS AN ALUMNI PARENT, professional rock and roll photographer, and a much-loved member of the greater Peninsula School community. Last summer Paige approached Peninsula School with a curious offering to help out during the pandemic. It was called The Personal Protective Equipment Portrait Project, or PPE Portraits. Paige spent two mornings on campus photographing our staff and rekindling old friendships. Between portrait sessions, we asked Paige to share more of her Peninsula School and career journey, which are serendipitously entwined.

*Paige, what do you remember most fondly about being a parent in this community?*

The thing I remember the most fondly is the awe of coming to understand what it means to be a part of a tightly connected community. In fact, when I lecture about my journey into photography and the journey of my life, I always talk about how I never knew a sense of community before I came to be a parent at Peninsula School. As a child, my family moved around a lot. Being welcomed into a long-standing community and finding there was a place for me, space for me to be myself, and that I belonged here was life-changing.

It's not one particular memory, but the lingering feeling of belonging, of staying an extra hour at pickup, the coffee cart on Fridays, and having that chance to connect with other people. As parents, we were all so different, but we had the shared experience of parenting kids at Peninsula School.

*How has your relationship with the school changed now as a parent of alumni?*

I think one of the biggest things is that when I came to Peninsula, I knew nothing about progressive education. But there were so many teachers and parents that were willing to invite me in and not just explain what that is, but to let me watch it in action. Now, as an alumni parent, I am able to spread that knowledge and appreciation of progressive education even though I'm not at the school anymore.

It's been almost a decade as an alum parent; my daughter graduated in 2012, my son in 2017. When people ask me about my grown kids, I talk so much about how their experiences at Peninsula helped to form them and their opinions. I point to my own kids as examples of what it means to be a Peninsula graduate – and this is not to say they always have it easy, but I think they are fully-formed, know themselves deeply, have the courage to express their opinions, and continue to be curious about themselves and those around them. As a family, we often reflect on their experience at Peninsula and how that shaped who they

came to be. It's almost like, in hindsight, the experiences they got at Peninsula matured in richness and meaning.

I also think about the Spring Fair and Craft Fair in a completely different way. There's no more work jobs and I don't have to feel guilty about it in any way shape or form. I put in my 14 years of volunteering and now I can just enjoy these festive community events!



*Paige (pictured right) and Ellen (pictured left) work together to bring PPE to a few more facilities across the Bay Area.*

*Tell me about your career prior to today. What was your professional experience?*

It's a two-part career. When my daughter Emma started at Peninsula School in 2003, I worked in user experience consulting. I transitioned my career around the time my son Gus joined the school in 2008 to do more professional photography. I had the openness of teachers at Peninsula who let me photograph in their classroom as well as a few parent friends at school who encouraged me. In fact, it was a fellow Peninsula parent who paid me for my first photography session.

I think about my photography career as a parallel to my journey as a Peninsula parent. The campus is where I practiced the tools of my trade and came to understand how much I loved documenting and photographing connection. Initially, I did more of my photography at Peninsula than

at rock and roll concerts. There is so much emotion and connection at Peninsula School! I trained my eye on that kind of connection and enthusiasm, and I started to look for it in different places in the world. As I photographed more and more concerts, I was ready for the jump shots because I'd caught kids on the rope swing.

*What is the PPE Portrait Project, and how did you transition to this work?*

PPE Portraits are photos of a person's smiling face worn over their heart. They are used while these individuals are wearing a mask or personal protective equipment (PPE) which allows their patients or clients to connect with them. Usually, a teacher wears one to connect with a student, or a doctor with a patient, or a care attendant with a resident at an assisted living facility. They were conceived during the Ebola outbreak in Liberia by an Occidental College professor named Mary Beth Heffernan, whom I now collaborate with. They were revitalized during the COVID-19 pandemic by Cati Brown-Johnson at Stanford. You can find out more about the project at [ppeportrait.org](http://ppeportrait.org).

As for myself, I came to this project while I was wallowing in self-pity during the initial COVID shutdown. I had a lot of time because all the music venues were closed down. I was watching news 24/7, reading

technical papers on COVID-19, and watching Stanford School of Medicine’s weekly “Grand Rounds” on YouTube. I saw a person wearing PPE (a mask, face shield, lab coat, etc.) with a large sticker of her smiling face on her chest. I immediately paused the screen and had to figure out what that was. I knew I had to be a part of it.

I reached out to researcher Cati Brown-Johnson at Stanford, and asked if I could help in the project. She wrote back, “We’d love to have you. In fact, we’d love to put you in charge of all photographers, and with your user experience background, would you like to research and design a reusable version?” I really appreciated her welcoming me in. It was very much like Peninsula in some ways. It was this open-hearted, open-spirited endeavor where they simply said what they needed and invited me right in. That’s how it started and that’s how it continues.

My real hope is that because we can’t see each other’s smiles as we could before, these PPE Portraits will help to share those smiles, that joyfulness, to give those expressions of caring that we’d love to give. I’m hoping that PPE Portraits are a bridge to deeper connections.

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*“It’s almost like, in hindsight, the experiences they got at Peninsula matured in richness and meaning.”*

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***What are the benefits of PPE Portraits and how are those benefits being shown?***

We believe there are many benefits, and we’re just scratching the surface of the research. We are testing predominantly with medical staff and just now branching out to teachers and schools. So far we found increased connection, less fear, less provider burnout, and increased compassion on the side of the doctor or wearer.

***Why did you come to Peninsula with this offering?***

I’m interested in connection and I know Peninsula School is too. We have found the easiest way for this project to be adopted is by starting with organizations where there is already trust. I can’t think of a better place to roll out the project, especially as our first full-school, because Peninsula is so grounded in the idea of community, connection, and caring. That’s exactly the kind of place where we believe these portraits will be the most beneficial.

***This issue is about community through change. How does the PPE Portrait Project relate to that theme?***

When taking these portraits, there were many new faces of staff that I didn’t recognize. I am so grateful I got a little chance to connect with this new generation and capture some little essence of who these new folks are. When I saw and felt the familiar joy, excitement, love, and care in each person’s whole face, I knew deep down, there is a reason each of you are here to carry on what I experienced in my time at Peninsula. You were chosen to carry on what Peninsula School means to so many people. I’m so excited to share these smiling faces with the greater community and hope others see that Peninsula essence in each one.

*Community Through Change* is so perfect because there is so much change going on in the world right now. And personally, I’m soon to be an empty nester, with many changes in my personal life. All that said, Peninsula School can be there for me and I can be there for them. It’s not just about having a kid here. In this community, we can all be “lifers” in the best sense of the word.

I suppose just because *the way* we are creating community is changing and the people working at Peninsula are changing, it doesn’t mean the human instinct of caring will change in any way. If anything, we are shifting back to needing a closely-knit community and sense of belonging more than ever before. No matter how much the school changes or we change, finding ways to come back and connect to the school community and what it stands for is the goal. It’s so enriching and so valuable, and so worth the time and effort. I will continue to make the effort.

***Do you have a message you’d like to share with the broader Peninsula community?***

When I first came to Peninsula, I was really overwhelmed as a parent. I didn’t always have a lot of intrinsic motivation to be a part of a community. And because I’d never really been a member of a close-knit community, I didn’t know how to get more involved.

The number one message I have: the more you put into Peninsula, the more you get out. And I don’t mean that in a selfish way. I just mean that in a recursive way, that it gives back and builds upon itself.

We tell our kids that it is important to participate in community, and the best way we can do that is through example. Our relationship to Peninsula does not end, nor should it end, when our kids graduate. This is our community and there are so many ways to be an active participant after you’re gone from the daily life of campus.



*A snapshot of the PPE lanyards. This is just one form of PPE created for staff.*

Just because we’re not in the classroom doesn’t mean our relationships have ended and that the lessons learned are in the past. We’re still living these values every day, and I love returning to Peninsula and remembering those lifelong lessons.

*As with all of our alumni, alumni parents, and former staff, we are so grateful to Paige for her enduring presence and generosity to Peninsula School. As our Development Director Ryan Helton wrote in our last issue of News Notes, whether it’s your “time, talent, or treasure”, we appreciate everything volunteers share with Peninsula School, especially after they are gone from the daily life of campus. A heartfelt thank you goes out to Paige from all of our staff for these PPE Portraits as well as a collection of 20,000 images Paige donated to the school from her years as a parent. Thank you for sharing your many gifts with us from the bottom of our hearts!*

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Just before the holiday break, in recognition of the immense ongoing challenges confronting the school this year and in a spirit of gratitude, the Peninsula Board of Directors published the following end of year letter to the community.*

Dear Community,

This has been an extraordinary year, the likes of which most of us, certainly our children, have never experienced. The same cannot be said for our school, now approaching its 100th birthday. Through the years it weathered many crises, and yes, even pandemics. But this year's combination of political uncertainty, major societal reckoning with racism and a global pandemic with ensuing economic fallouts seems greater than any other. Each time, we have come through these challenges stronger for the shared experience.

Our mission to create and preserve a safe space for Peninsula students to thrive and develop their full promise was challenged virtually every day in 2020. It is perhaps not surprising that in a place that values opinions, voice and independent thought, agreement was not always found, but common ground and the well-being of all have always been the priority. Our core values prevailed despite the persistent threats to health, disruptions, distractions, and relentless uncertainty. It took the full efforts of every one of you to rise above this, and for this we thank you.

### *To The Peninsula School Staff*

We thank our staff for your resilience, adaptability and determination – everything it took to make our school a stable, safe, joyful place for our students. Whether it was creating brand new classroom spaces, adopting a hybrid in-person/distance learning model, or accepting the enormous responsibility of teaching children in this uncharted world, you rose to the challenge, committing yourselves day in and day out to living out the mission and values of the school. It has not been easy. Your tireless efforts, ingenuity and fierce dedication to your students is seen and appreciated by all of us. We thank you.

### *To Our Families*

We thank our parents and guardians for flexibility, patience and cooperation. We acknowledge that this past year asked you to participate in your child's learning on an entirely new level. It required more heavy lifting, and unfortunately, less connection to our grounds and to other families. But you have shown us creative ways of bridging the gaps. POP took the lead and families jumped in, helping with book clubs, baking exchanges, parent meetups, class trivia, cooking for a family shelter and creating a virtual craft fair. Our community continues to embody true kindness, generosity, and creativity. For this, we thank you.

### *To the Covid Prevention and Response Team (CPR)*

We thank you for carrying the weight of all of our expectations and fears. While continuing to perform your other vital roles to this school, you've navigated through the fog of the pandemic, always with our mission and core values in mind. The work has no doubt been exhausting; yet somehow you all soldier on, knowing what is needed for Peninsula.

While there is a tendency to mourn the things that have changed or been prevented because of the pandemic, we, as a school, led by the spirit and optimism of our children, will continue to welcome and be accepting of the possibilities and opportunities for change.



*In gratitude and appreciation we wish you peace, safety and good health,*

PENINSULA SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*A student in Nursery Green.*

## PENINSULA'S PHILANTHROPY TREE: GIVING DURING COVID-19

*By Ryan Helton, Director of Development*

IT'S A PLEASURE TO REACH OUT TO YOU with good tidings and a glimpse of what's to come for the Peninsula School community. As COVID-19 began to affect our area in March 2020, it was clear that it would not be 'business as usual' for Peninsula School. We quickly went into a local lockdown during our spring classes, necessitating an immediate pivot to online learning in a community that previously integrated technology with great time and intention. In addition to our pivot to distance learning, we saw other challenges. Our annual auction, slated for two weeks after shutdown, was moved online, slimming down our traditional fundraiser. Our Spring Fair was cancelled outright with large group gatherings banned. Additionally, annual events like graduation, our end of school rituals, Rock Concert, and camping were modified to be virtual if possible or cancelled. The rope swing and tree house were tied off. Needless to say, COVID-19 dramatically affected how Peninsula School operates!

Though we have had to put the many traditions enumerated above on hold, we innovated in new and exciting ways, showing our resilience in the face of a once-in-a-lifetime obstacle. Our teachers demonstrated their endless creativity and resolve as they taught outside and online to students who adapted to a major change in learning format. Our facilities and technology teams outfitted Peninsula with new equipment, always keeping the health and well-being of our students and staff at heart. Peninsula's administration and Board led our community with strength, looking to our past traditions to inform us toward our best future.

To weather this crisis, tradition, innovation, and caring for one another became the hallmark of 2020. Though we were denied many of our end-of-year traditions, we forged together to create modified versions of events and thought of new and dynamic ways to reach out to our community for help. We rallied to make Zoom a place for connections. We came together to make sure that vulnerable families in our community had a pathway to assistance. We safely found ways to celebrate rites of passage. In short, we did what Peninsula School always does: we adapted to the ever-changing world while holding true to the core values that have been the school's foundation for nearly a century.

Our world has faced tougher times, and Peninsula has persevered with grit, grace, and a strong sense of togetherness. Through wars, economic depressions, and times of social upheaval, Peninsula School remains a beacon of progressive value and, with your help, will continue to be so for years to come.

### OUR DEEP ROOTS

As we look to this past, we see examples of caring and stalwart stewards of our community – individuals who created the mold that allows the ideas of progressive education to continually flourish. Our past staff went through not so dissimilar times at a variety of points in Peninsula's history and it inspires us to persevere in this landscape. Past community leaders forged the way for thoughtful and caring leadership that guides us through this current crisis. Our graduates, who became citizens of the world through the lessons of Peninsula, rouse us to continue this tradition of progressive education. We look to the many hands who have made the light work, and see that together anything is possible.



*Ryan supports temperature checks and drop-off. He always brings smiles to children, parents, and staff.*

It is in our DNA at Peninsula that when times are tough, we dig deep and come together to help. In that spirit, we have seen some amazing acts of kindness and compassion. There are none for whom we are more grateful than the pilgrimage of alumni and alumni families who have stepped up to help. When we needed more staff to help us through the many needs of a hybrid learning model, our alums were there. When we needed leadership on the board to guide us through strategies and into a new chapter, our alums were there. When we needed a view to the past to see how tragedies and triumphs were faced

*Continued next page*

## PHILANTHROPY TREE

*Continued from page 7*

in prior years, our alums were there. Say what you will about these turbulent times, one bright side is seeing our alumni come together to care for these deep Peninsula roots.

### THE STRONG TREE

Deep roots allow a tree to grow strong, but it takes so much more for a tree to thrive. As we continue through this uncharted territory of the COVID-19 pandemic, we do not want to lose sight of where our tree is growing. As stewards of the “Peninsula Tree”, we must make every effort to ensure that we are providing support and stability for generations to come. Through strong programs, thoughtful giving, and innovative and creative ideas, we have been able to maintain Peninsula’s standing. We also managed to keep the community ecosystem that depends on this tree in relative harmony.

As you know, the cost of a Peninsula education is more than just the tuition that current families pay. It truly takes a village. Last year, Peninsula finished the year strong with only a minor shortfall in our Annual Giving Campaign (AGC). We finished the year with 100% of our current board giving, 92% of staff supporting our AGC, and 89% of families. We



*Seph, a school alum, stepped up to lead Nursery Purple, a new classroom needed to meet COVID safety protocols.*

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*“We did what Peninsula School always does: we adapted to the ever-changing world while holding true to the core values that have been the school’s foundation for nearly a century.”*

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consider this a tremendous success as we saw institutions of similar scale finish far short of their goals. We surpassed our Raise Your Paddle for Tuition Assistance goal of \$60,000 by nearly \$15,000. This fundraiser, done entirely online, was proof that giving has not taken a day off.

This year, the Development Office at Peninsula adapted our AGC to meet the unique online needs of our current times. In the fall, we were able to avoid mailing during heavy election mail season, circumventing additional strain on an already taxed system. Additionally, we were able to switch our on-campus events to online experiences that highlight community, teaching everyone in our families, regardless of age, about the need to help others. Finally, we were able to use these unique times to develop a theme that we thought was very appropriate for this time: *Nurturing Seeds of Connection and Creativity*.

In addition to fundraising through the Development Office, we have also had the pleasure of watching our People of Peninsula (POP) families association shine like the sun as they adapt our traditional parent events to the times. Craft Fair was an incredible online success, allowing our entire community to shop locally with artists and entrepreneurs (students and professionals) that love Peninsula while



*Margot’s students utilize a new outdoor learning space thanks to the Facilities team and Bette in technology.*



building community and supporting the school. Similarly, the annual Auction and Spring Fair will follow suit in a combined Spring Bonanza online event on May 1, 2021. We have also seen homegrown efforts like the Peninsula Plate Project and our t-shirt sales to great success because of inspired parent leadership.

Most importantly, last spring, POP saw a critical need from some of our families and staff in meeting basic necessities like food, shelter, and medical expenses. In true Peninsula fashion, concerned community members stepped forward and created the Peninsula Family Emergency Fund (PFEF). Raising nearly \$40,000 in just under a month, PFEF was able to distribute this assistance directly and expediently to families and staff in need because of job losses and other COVID related issues.

As you can clearly see, though the times may be tough, the will and determination of Peninsula's community is tougher than ever. We continue to work with our community to assess our needs. We partner with other local organizations to understand what is happening in our area and how we can best adapt our efforts to help. And, we work with leading professionals who advise us in all matters, from emergency preparedness to strategic planning in times of crisis. This is how a strong tree with deep roots weathers a storm.

**A STABLE TREEHOUSE**  
With deep roots and a strong tree, what would be more Peninsula than building our treehouse for today and the future? Our evolution continues as we adapt to COVID-19's impact and define how to educate our children in the years ahead.

On campus, Peninsula continues to make health and safety based improvements to our grounds and our classrooms such as enhancements to outdoor educational spaces, air purifiers, distance learning technology, and personal protective equipment. As the COVID-19 crisis continues, we will continue to adapt our response in the most thoughtful and informed ways.

Our Board of Directors is guiding and implementing the strategic plan, *Honoring Our Past, Building Our Future*. Adopted in 2019, this plan lays out a series of improvements based on five pillars; (1) Program and Professional Development, (2) Physical Environment, (3) Staff Recruitment and Retention, (4) Communications, and (5) Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. The board's Prioritization Working Group is shepherding these improvements as the school implements them over the next five years leading up to our centennial. If you are

interested in learning more about the Centennial Campaign, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Development Office at Peninsula. We are happy to guide you through this process.

In closing, as the Peninsula community reaps what generations have sown, we continue to plant seeds for tomorrow. If you are interested in supporting us, there are many ways to do so. Most importantly, we ask that you donate to the 2020-2021 Annual Giving Campaign, *Nurturing Seeds of Connection and Creativity*. You can do so by visiting the school's website, by utilizing the remit envelope included



*A virtual air hug shared by co-narrators after a physically distanced performance of Demeter and Persephone, The First Spring.*

in your paper copy of News Notes or for those who are receiving News Notes electronically, by using the donate button in the accompanying email, or by contacting the Development Office ([development@peninsulaschool.org](mailto:development@peninsulaschool.org)). Next, we ask that you keep in contact with the Peninsula community. Maybe it's a casual chat with some friends you haven't seen in a while. Perhaps you'd like to reach out and volunteer. Or, maybe you're interested in helping out with the centennial planning. Whichever way is best for you, we hope that you keep in touch.

From all of us here on campus, to our alumni, parents of alumni, current families, grandparents, former staff, friends, board members, we thank you for your generous gifts, your unwavering support, and, in your own special ways, being creative and compassionate contributors in the world.

## JOHN FULLER'S "THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND" PROJECT

*Interview by Lisa Goochee*

LONGTIME MUSIC TEACHER JOHN FULLER shares his thoughts about teaching music and the recent community-wide project he initiated in March of 2020. You can listen to all the contributors to John's "This Land Is Your Land" project on YouTube by searching for "John Fuller This Land is Your Land Maiden Voyage" or [clicking here](#). Stay tuned for updates about the 2021 Rock Concert by visiting our school website.

### *John, tell us about your project:*

Well, this first came to me when the COVID crisis began. I was trying to think of a way to capture the essence of how we teach and play music here at Peninsula School, and also, a way to share all the great music-making our community has supported over the years. As a teacher, I want to engender interaction and teach musicianship, much more than just theory and technique. By identifying people in the community who played – past and present – and having them play a specific song, interpret the lyrics their way, personalize it with their instruments, and showcase who they are and express that through music, this seemed like a great way to capture the essence of how and why we teach music the way we do at Peninsula. I hoped all the contributors could be a positive example for our current students that anything is possible with music.



*The virtual Rock Concert in spring of 2020 showcased incredible distance collaborations between students.*

### *Why did you choose the song "This Land Is Your Land"?*

I thought about it for a while. First, I wanted an easy song to play that has a basic structure. "This Land Is Your Land" is an inherently simple song to approach and play, and resonates for most everyone. I've found that even 6- and 7-year-old kids know it. It's pretty universal. Second, in the time of COVID and not knowing how our relationship to each other could continue, I thought a song about our relationship to our land and our country could be a good focus for us all.

There is also a rich and relevant history of this song tied to the anthem, "God Bless America." Woody Guthrie, the writer of "This Land Is Your Land", was tired of the nationalism and patriotism of his time, in the 1930s and 1940s, but he still wanted to celebrate this country. At first the title of "This Land Is Your Land" was called "God Bless America for Me". Woody Guthrie was a very political figure, but he decided ultimately to make the song less political. By changing the title to "This Land Is Your Land", he transcended national politics to make something timeless and inspiring. And this song is still sung by many popular singers today. I was inspired by Lady Gaga's use of it in her 2017 Superbowl performance.



*John Fuller came prepared for his portrait on the steps on the Big Building.*

I've been approached about how this song discounts a Native American point of view on land rights in America. I always invite those perspectives. I'd love to see this song rewritten. One guy did do that for the project. To me, it's really just talking about people and natural beauty and appreciating the land. People interpret it to show their slant, their view, that's all part of it. But inherently in the song, it represents a feeling of loving nature that everyone can relate to, but can also be changed to reveal a new personal truth.

### *What did you learn through this project?*

Everyone has different levels of skills and development. Some people are extremely skilled professional musicians who prepared and carefully executed. Other people just did it off-hand. Whether it was preparation and thoughtful arrangement, or just intuitive confidence and ability, it was so lovely to see the variety. This project creates an example of the variety of expressions people inherently possess. It was

*Continued on page 23*

## COMMUNITY QUILTING WITH JAYA ('04)

*Interview by Lisa Goochee, Communications & Outreach*

*Jaya Griscorn, a Peninsula School graduate of the class of 2004, is our current Weaving and Textiles Teacher. Jaya tutored and taught art, writing, and sailing as a teenager as well as ceramics during her gap year before college. In college, she worked as an EMT and trained other emergency medical responders. She has a BA in Studio Art from Bard College, an AS in Fashion and Small Business from Cañada College, and a four year Visual Arts Certificate from Idyllwild Arts Academy. After finishing her undergraduate degree, Jaya began working in education. Recently, Jaya completed a Zero Waste Fellowship with the San Mateo County Office of Education to develop waste reduction practices and curriculum for her weaving classroom. Below Jaya shares a bit about her community quilting project which she initiated in the fall of 2020 and will complete at the end of this school year.*

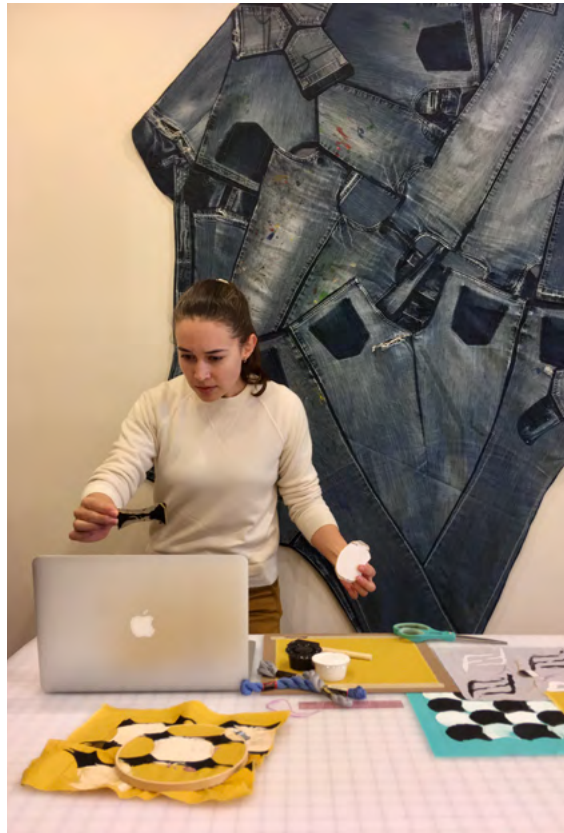
***Jaya, tell us about your project:***

Since we are all doing things so differently this year, weaving just wasn't possible in the same way it has been in the past. I wanted to capture as much as possible of what we usually learn in the weaving room, but transfer that to projects that can be done in the home with less sharing of equipment. I decided to focus on textile surface design rather than weaving. Each child in the school designed and printed a fabric square. I then collected all of those squares and am sewing them into a community quilt. All the student patterns and squares will join together in a huge collaborative project.

***Why did you choose this project?***

I love fabric and textiles and the tactile experience of working with fiber as a medium. I think that's something that many students feel who fall in love with weaving at Peninsula. Most of all, I wanted to make sure fiber was

still something that students were engaged with this year. And it turns out fabric manipulation is a great alternative to weaving. I found many of my hardcore weavers were happy to find an alternative avenue to exercise creativity with textiles in their lives at home.



*Jaya models the quilting blocks for students from her home teaching studio.*

***What do you like about pattern design and quilting?***

Pattern is a big part of why I love weaving as well as quilting. There is so much math and planning that happens ahead of time. You can really see how that planning is invested and then revealed in the final product. It requires mathematical thinking and I find it incredibly rewarding to guide students through that complexity. The geometry required for patterns and spatial relationships between shapes, thinking about line, scale, angles, rotation – it

becomes technical pretty fast to create complex repeating patterns.

Also, quilting lends itself so well to being a collaborative medium. Throughout history in many different cultures, quilting very commonly becomes something that people do as groups, something done out of

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*“Jaya crafted a project that is so well put together, where the students learned an incredible amount. The kids loved it so much!”*

*- Margot Berrill, Interim Teacher of 8- and 9-year-olds and Peninsula School Librarian*

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necessity that brings communities together all over the world. And that's something we need so much right now. Even though we can't be physically together, we are working together. I find love and solace in that, and I hope students did as well.

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*Continued on page 20*

## CHILD TRAUMA: A DEEPER PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

By Rasha Glenn, Kindergarten Teacher

WHILE MANY OF US HAVE EXPERIENCED THE DUAL PANDEMICS of COVID-19 and systemic racism within the past year as a shared traumatic experience, *what exactly is trauma?* Prior to 2020, I had a narrow view of trauma. Trauma, in the most basic sense, is defined as an emotional response to a terrible event (American Psychological Association). At the onset of the pandemic, I sensed this COVID-19 era would mark a change not only for my personal teaching style, but a shift in the entire global education system. I knew this basic definition of trauma needed greater depth in my life as well as practical examples and actionable frameworks.

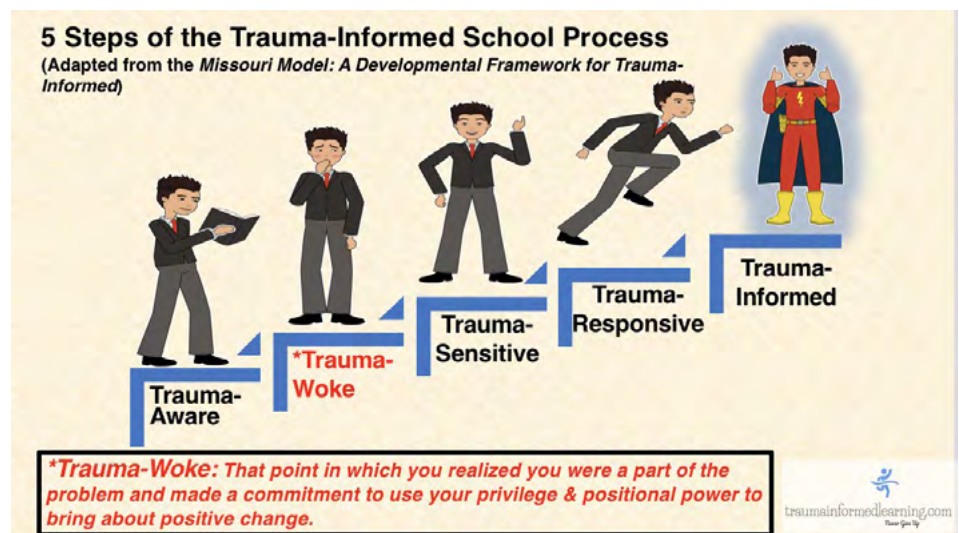
It is common in the education field for teachers to seek ongoing professional development to better themselves, their practice, and ultimately the children's experience. Motivated by the need to pivot my program for current and future students given the impacts of COVID-19 and systemic racism rearing its head, I set off with an imperative to deepen my understanding of trauma. I dove into an open-ended independent study, a journey which I share with you below.

After reading scores of books and articles, attending webinars and live virtual workshops, and completing self-guided training from both Starr Commonwealth and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, I came to hold a more nuanced definition of trauma. To me, trauma for children is being exposed to severe, frequent, or prolonged stress without adequate support. Events both acute (coming on sharply and quickly, such as the COVID-19 pandemic) and chronic (repeat events such as systemic racism) can be labeled as traumatic and can have the same impact on a child if they are not provided with the necessary coping skills and strategies. While our society often labels forms of overt abuse (physical, sexual, or verbal), neglect, domestic violence, food scarcity, and poor living conditions as traumatic incidents, we are blind to other manifestations of trauma that are happening daily in our communities, at our schools, on our playgrounds, and in our very own classrooms. We are often quick to write these occurrences off as mere signposts of childhood, but perhaps we must evolve our own thinking and revisit these types of "common" experiences.

For example, experiencing racism in all forms including microaggressions – internalized, interpersonal and institutionalized – witnessing acts of emotional violence such as digital drama, experiencing peer rejection, having no friends to play with, and poor academic performance are forms of traumas categorized as "adverse childhood experiences", or ACEs. Studies show that two-thirds of kids have experienced one of these traumas by the age of 16, and the more ACEs a child experiences, the more high risk they

are for a multitude of health problems later in life (Center for Disease Control). These trauma experiences can produce behaviors that also overlap with a multitude of diagnosed learning differences and disorders. Unfortunately, children from marginalized communities are often over-diagnosed or misdiagnosed for these disorders instead of being seen as a result of the trauma they have experienced.

Moving from trauma-awareness to establishing a trauma-informed practice became my next step, and it was not a linear process. "Trauma-informed" is a term that expands upon aspects of many well-researched educational disciplines such as culturally responsive education, social emotional learning, restorative practices, and responsive teaching (Missouri Department of Mental Health and Education).



Source: Adapted Missouri Model by Trauma-Informed Learning.

Implementing this trauma-informed approach – while complex and laden with educational jargon – can address *the whole child*, a term which encompasses intellectual, social, emotional, and physical health. As such, being "trauma-informed" is not just an add-on – it is a deep understanding based on dedicated practice, a complete shift at all levels of school and community. It requires us to acknowledge the impact and intersectionality of structural inequities. It calls us to work together, with great coordination, attention, and skill, to tap into our wealth of shared information to respond quickly and effectively to challenging situations arising in our diverse population of students and families. These are practices many Peninsula School teachers and progressive educators at large are familiar with, which can take years to fully understand, continually refine, and execute with skill.

In the process of my learning and reflection, I held a mirror up to my own teaching to look at past choices I made, choices that might have been traumatic for a child. I stumbled upon a new term, *trauma-woke*, defined as the point at which individuals realize they were part



of the problem and make a commitment to use their privilege and positional power to bring about positive change (Missouri Dept. of Mental Health and Education). Being trauma-woke is essential but only the second step to becoming fully trauma-informed.

After emerging from my “deep dive”, my biggest takeaway is that trauma-informed education is far more than mastering a set of strategies. Put simply, understanding and remedying the impacts of child trauma are ultimately an exercise in empathy and patience, coordination and flexibility, forgiveness of ourselves and others, and long-term collective dedication to change.

As I write this, a hurricane of images and stories flood my mind. What happened to the kid who didn’t feel included, heard, seen, or valued? What behaviors did I see as disruptive but were a child crying out for help, connection, and support through their trauma? When are these occurrences within a teacher’s control and when does the school institution or family need to partner with the teacher? How can we reconcile past damage and improve for the future of our children and community?

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*“Put simply, understanding and remedying the impacts of child trauma are ultimately an exercise in empathy and patience, coordination and flexibility, forgiveness of ourselves and others, and long-term collective dedication to change.”*

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I will leave you with this Ethiopian proverb: “The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth.” In 2021, I am making a commitment to provide this warmth. It requires self-reflection, reflection on my curriculum, reflection of my actions as an individual and especially as an educator. Reflection is the prerequisite because I must then take that reflection and provide reconciliation when possible and change when necessary. And with all that said, it still takes a village. What will you do?

*Trauma.* American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>.  
*Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).* Center for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>  
*Missouri Model: A Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Schools.* Missouri Department of Mental Health and Education: [https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/cnsl\\_Missouri\\_Model%20school\\_guidance\\_doc.pdf](https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/cnsl_Missouri_Model%20school_guidance_doc.pdf)

Rasha in February 2020 before COVID lockdowns.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION IN A TIME OF DISRUPTION

By Betty Achinstein, Interim DEI Coordinator and Teacher of 9- and 10-year-olds.

WITH THE DUAL PANDEMICS of COVID-19 and systemic racial injustice, along with the insurrection at the Capitol disrupting democratic processes and fueled by white supremacy, this is a time of reckoning in our nation. It is also an unprecedented opportunity for social change that resides at the heart of our progressive mission at Peninsula School.

means confronting America's legacy of oppression that many in our society, particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, continue to face. *It means confronting it locally within our school community* by embracing the difficult work of listening and acknowledging past challenges and current tensions; educating ourselves about how racism and other forms of oppression are systemic; and changing policies and practices to build a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable school.

*“We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.”*

– Sonia Renee Taylor

### OUR ONGOING WORK FOR CHANGE

The Peninsula School community has much work to do to ensure that our families and staff, most especially those who are Black and People of Color, are consistently seen, heard, valued and empowered. This work takes cultural humility and a willingness to name our challenges in order to grow. We have an important journey to take in order to increase the diversity, equity, and inclusion of our community. As we begin on this road, we want to share some of our initial efforts. We embrace optimism that we can work as a community to make lasting change. We welcome support along with constructive critique.

#### *Strategic Priorities*

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) make up a central pillar of Peninsula's Strategic Plan, involving four strategic priorities: 1. Build an inclusive environment of belonging for all; 2. Expand recruitment and retention of a diverse community of families, staff, and leadership; 3. Increase economic access to Peninsula; and 4. Designate ongoing school leadership to support the DEI agenda.

#### *Research & Development*

To better identify our DEI challenges and opportunities, we have launched a series of listening sessions with community and staff, which will inform DEI planning. We are conducting exit surveys and interviews to understand what factors inform families' decisions if they depart. Our external educational consultant also administered a school climate survey to the staff addressing DEI, which will guide our professional development work.

#### *Organizational Leadership*

At every level of our organization, we are working to build an infrastructure for collaborative DEI work, including:

**DEI Strategic Priorities & Initiatives**

**DEI Strategic Priorities**

- 1 Build Inclusive Environment
- 2 Recruit & Retain Diverse Community
- 3 Increase Economic Access
- 4 Designate DEI Leadership

**DEI Initiatives**

- DEI Task Force
- DEI Coordinator
- Board of Directors DEI Committee
- PEACe Community DEI Committee
- Staff DEI Committee
- Capacity Building & Consultant
- DEI Research & Development
- Affinity & Alliance Groups for Students & Families

This time of disruption exposes deep and longstanding challenges as well as reveals possibilities. How might we take up this moment to *not* go back to a “normal” that was filled with inequity, and instead, disrupt it? As Sonia Renee Taylor suggests, can we “stitch a new garment” that fits all? To do so, we must ask: *What does it mean for our school community to transform to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive?*

Peninsula School was founded on the principles of progressive education, which advocate that schools serve as models for democracy and vehicles for social transformation. And thus, just as our nation, we must work towards greater diversity, equity, and inclusion. This



Homemade Black Lives Matter Week of Action buttons, pins, and stickers prepared for a driveway rally in February of 2020.



Peninsula School staff welcomed training on restorative justice practices from a local school in January 2020.

- **PEACe Group** (Peninsula’s Equity in Action Committee for Education): This community-wide DEI committee nurtures understanding of and action for DEI at Peninsula and beyond.

*Professional Capacity Building*

We are working with our educational consultant to grow staff and board professional capacity on DEI. Recent workshops focused on disrupting implicit bias and understanding antiracism. In addition, the DEI Task Force attended The National Equity Project’s six-week *Leading for Equity Institute*. Our community DEI committee, PEACe, engaged in educational work on how to be an antiracist. People of Peninsula, a community-wide association of parents, guardians, and staff offered educational offerings on raising antiracist kids. We also build our capacity throughout the community through our DEI Newsletter and resources in Hot News.

*Affinity & Alliance Groups*

To foster inclusion, we launched student affinity and alliance groups. *Affinity groups* create a safe space to support people who share an identity that may differ from the majority population or is marginalized in schools or society. *Alliance groups* build allyship across identifiers to promote equity. At the request of Black students and their families, the school launched a Black Student Affinity Group. Students also requested a Rainbow Student Alliance open to everyone, and especially those who are LGBTQ+ or have family and friends who are. Peninsula families can engage in affinity and alliance groups as well, including the Families of Color Affinity Group and the newly launched LGBTQ+ Families Affinity Group.

*A Continuing Journey*

Equity work is generational, not swiftly completed, and we have a long journey ahead.

As a school community, our work involves interrupting inequitable practices and policies, examining and counteracting biases, and creating inclusive conditions for all where everyone can participate, thrive, and reach their full potential. We look forward to learning more, sharing updates with our community, and sustaining the ongoing work of diversity, equity, and inclusion together.

- **DEI Task Force:** This multi-stakeholder group meets weekly to coordinate DEI implementation work.
- **DEI Board Committee:** A group of board members who prioritize DEI across all strategic Board work and committees.
- **Interim DEI Coordinator:** This individual collaborates with staff, Head of School, and outside consultants to advance DEI priorities and build a sustainable infrastructure for ongoing work.
- **Staff DEI Committee:** A staff-focused group which engages in deep learning and action focused on antiracism to inform practice and policies. The whole staff is also engaging in exploring their own equity practices.

## IN MEMORIAMs

### Elizabeth Few

By Annie Young

I want to share my memories with you about Elizabeth Few, a beloved Head Teacher at Peninsula from 2004 to 2017. Elizabeth departed this life in late December 2019.

Elizabeth was my dear friend from the first. I first met Elizabeth when she and her son, Ashton, joined our class in 2001. She soon began volunteering, and eventually became our go-to substitute. It was clear that she understood Peninsula's educational philosophy. Over time she went from volunteering to being part of our teaching team. Throughout the year we had wonderful conversations about kids, teaching, and just getting to know each other. That was the beginning of our collaboration which continued from then on. Her manner with children was so respectful, kind, and intuitive.

In teaching, much of what takes place is working to unlock how a child learns with their social and emotional style. Elizabeth understood this, and had a beautiful quiet way of gaining a child's trust and helping them to feel good about their own self-discovery.

At the time we met, Elizabeth was an Instructor of French at Foothill College working with adults. Elizabeth decided to follow many of the kids from my class, and to become a full-day Assistant Teacher. Elizabeth became the Head Teacher of that class the following year, 2004.

Elizabeth's classroom quickly became a rich learning environment imbued with her unique gifts in languages, math, science, and creativity. Her classroom was a warm and inviting place where kids were exposed to French and Japanese. She spoke both languages fluently, so the children were treated to French and Japanese instruction in the afternoon.

With her desire to inspire her students to use their imaginations she created the yearly event called Creatureland. This grew out of her own imagination as a child creating personas and environments. She helped each child imagine their own creature. Each creature came to life! The culmination of this project was a collaboration with the whole class. There was even a Creatureland orchestra that greeted each attendee as they were guided on tours by the child-inventors. It was evident how all her kids were immersed in the experience.

Elizabeth shared a particularly beautiful relationship with her husband Roger and son Ashton. The joy and love they had for each other was evident whenever you were around them. Ray Dacanay shared a lovely story about coming upon Roger and Elizabeth one late evening in her classroom. They were working together to put the finishing touches on the Creatureland environment. They were



Elizabeth Few

having so much fun fine-tuning the latest rendition of this beloved event. There was so much love there.

The creatures appeared one last time at Elizabeth's memorial – still so meaningful to each artist, as was the beautiful human being that had touched so many of our lives.

Some people come into the world who have profound and special qualities. Elizabeth was like a rare and beautiful flower that you come across in the woods – a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I was so fortunate to know her. The trouble is you never get long enough with these gems, and then they are gone.

### Nora Hayes-Roth ('98)

Nora Hayes-Roth passed peacefully in her sleep on Sunday, November 22, 2020. Nora was a dearly loved alumna and also served as an Assistant Teacher in Taylor's class for one year (2018-2019). Nora was talented in so many ways: intellectually gifted, artistic, musical, as well as being emotionally sensitive and compassionate. Included below is an excerpt from a letter sent by her mother and stepfather, Bella Hayes and Perry Thorndyke:

*As we reflect on Nora's childhood, and look at our treasured photos of her, we remember and see an adorable and cheerful young girl, brimming with intelligence and confidence. She was fiercely athletic and competitive on the soccer field, fearless on the ski slopes, and devoted to dance in every style from ballet to hip-hop.*

*Working through some difficult teenage years, Nora nevertheless was admitted to and thrived at Smith College, graduating with honors and multiple awards in 2006 with dual majors in Government and Italian. While at Smith, she worked in Washington on 2004 Democratic senatorial campaigns, and she conducted academic research on federal election law issues.*

*She was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship and spent the 2006-07 year in Bologna studying media influences on young voter engagement, participation, and preferences. While in Italy, she was selected to represent Italian Fulbright Fellows at an EU convention in Brussels. Whenever we visited her in Italy, we were*



Nora Hayes-Roth



struck by how Italian she looked, talked, and acted; even the Italians treated her as one of their own. Beginning with her time at Smith and throughout the rest of her life, she was fluent in Italian and occasionally tutored others in the language – formally and informally – at Smith, around our kitchen table, through tutoring services, and wherever she could sit with a student.

When she returned to the US, Nora entered King Law School at the University of California, Davis, from which she graduated in 2010. At Davis, she won academic awards in subject matters, and in legal research and writing. Her summer work experiences included serving in the offices of one of the Judges on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in Pasadena.

Following law school, Nora chose not to pursue a legal profession. She experimented with a number of fields, including technology, caregiving, soccer coaching, and teaching. Her most rewarding work was in the presence of and helping others, particularly teaching children and often children with special needs. She was energetic and creative in engaging with children, and they responded to her gentle, playful, nurturing manner with enthusiasm and motivation to learn. In her final professional endeavor, she had been working toward teacher certification for elementary school and planned to teach in a magnet school, supplementing teaching she had already done in private schools.

Throughout this time following law school, Nora struggled with challenging and debilitating health issues that affected the kind of work she could do. We remained closely involved with her throughout her adulthood, providing love, support, and advice on her professional opportunities and personal choices.

We were fortunate that Nora lived near us for her last decade and in our home for a good part of that time, most recently from July 2019 to July 2020. What a pleasure it was to have all of our children – Aaron, Nora, and Nathan, as well as Aaron’s wife Ellen and their daughters Avery and Skyler – living nearby. Nora’s boyfriend Andrew was also a long-term member of our family circle. We certainly had a full house on the holidays!

At the end of July, Nora had been working hard on her MS and certification as a multi-subject elementary school teacher. She planned to start teaching in the fall at a magnet school serving underprivileged kids in San Jose. So she moved to a conveniently located apartment, with two other student teachers as roommates. We knew we would miss her, but it was the right step for Nora to move on with her life. Unfortunately, she subsequently suffered a series of setbacks, some personal, some circumstantial. Nonetheless, she persevered in her efforts to become the wonderful teacher she would have been.

*We have always cherished Nora, and will continue to cherish her, as a woman of great intelligence and beauty and spirit and empathy. We mourn her passing, but we are comforted in the knowledge that she is at peace. We hope to have a larger outdoor Celebration of Life in the spring when it is warmer and safer, and if we do, we will certainly let you know.*

**Susanne Friedlaender**

Susanne Friedlaender was the Librarian from 1962 to 1968 and again in 1975 through 1983. Many books in our library still have her name inscribed inside the front covers as the donor! Her three children attended Peninsula school, Leonre (’70), David (’71), and Diane (’83). Susanne was a much loved member of the school community. We wish her peace and send love to her family.

**Emile Bruneau (’86)**

We regret to announce the passing of Emile Bruneau (Peninsula School ’86) in late September of 2020. Emilie was our school Physical Activities Teacher from 1999-2002. Emilie studied biology and psychology at Stanford before obtaining a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, later working at a cognitive neuroscience lab at M.I.T. where he developed a vision of evidence-based conflict resolution practices around the globe.



Emile Bruneau

Jeneen Interlandi – a *New York Times* journalist who covers public health – writes about Emile in a recent article stating, “He believed that science should help people improve the world around them and that scientists should embrace the challenges that come with leaving the lab for what he called the ‘messy’ real world. ‘Our goal should be more than doing good research,’ he told a group of colleagues shortly before his death. ‘We have the ability to walk through darkness and spread light.’”

You can read more about Emile in this article titled, “The World Lost Emile Bruneau When We Needed Him Most. His research spread light and empathy around the globe.” (Click here to find the article if you are reading the digital edition.)

**Michael Fredrickson**

This past spring, former staff and board member Michael Fredrickson passed away peacefully surrounded by family in Iowa. Michael was an essential member of every teaching team and committee he was a member of. He was an Assistant Teacher in the Nursery and Childcare Programs. He also served as an invaluable staff-elected member of our Board of Directors. Michael is remembered for his gentle nature and loving approach that endeared children to him. He will be dearly missed.

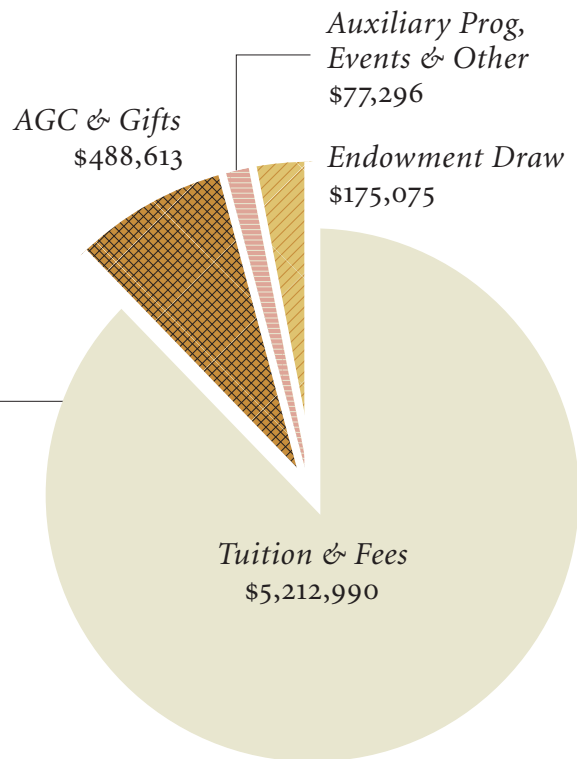
*Peninsula School is pleased to present our*

# 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Peninsula School's operating revenue for the fiscal year 2019-2020 was \$5,953,974 compared to \$5,466,152 in the 2018-2019 school year.

**2019-20 REVENUE**

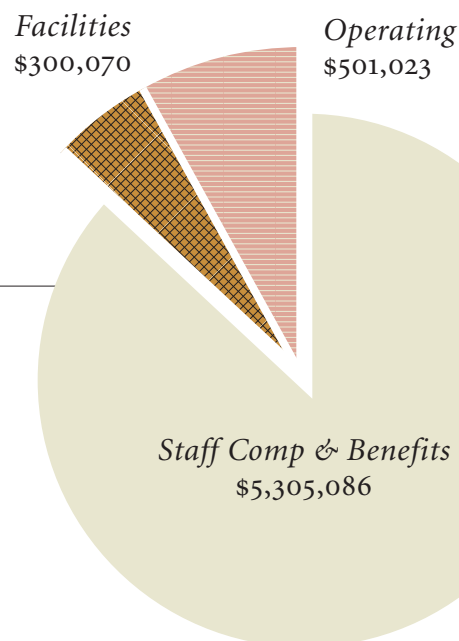
TUITION & FEES	\$5,212,990	88%
AGC & GIFTS	\$488,613	8%
AUXILIARY PROG, EVENTS & OTHER	\$77,296	1%
ENDOWMENT DRAW	\$175,075	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,953,974</b>	



Expenses for the 2019-2020 school year totaled \$6,106,179, compared to \$5,423,369 for the prior year.

**2019-20 EXPENSES**

STAFF COMP & BENEFITS	\$5,305,086	87%
FACILITIES	\$300,070	5%
OPERATING	\$501,023	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,106,179</b>	



**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

*June 30, 2020*

<b>ASSETS</b>		<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,143,062	<b>Liabilities</b>	
Tuition and fees receivable – net	2,646,718	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 28,593
Pledges receivable	110,908	Accrued payroll and related liabilities	228,791
Investments	7,990,578	Deferred tuition	4,929,593
Prepaid expenses and other assets	63,537	Charitable remainder trust liability	52,013
Charitable remainder trust	133,808	Forgivable loan – PPP	964,800
Property and equipment – net	<u>1,946,803</u>	Total liabilities	<u>6,203,790</u>
 Total assets	 <u>\$ 15,035,414</u>	<b>Net Assets</b>	
		Net assets without donor restrictions	
		Undesignated	3,093,425
		Board-designated for special projects	126,808
		Board-designated PRRSM fund	15,700
			<u>3,235,933</u>
		Net assets with donor restrictions	<u>5,595,691</u>
		Total net assets	<u>8,831,624</u>
		Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 15,035,414</u>

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

*For the Year Ended June 30, 2020*

<b>REVENUES AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>Without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>With Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>Total</b>
Tuition and fees	\$ 5,966,841	\$ -	\$ 5,966,841
Tuition assistance	(753,851)	-	(753,851)
Tuition and fees – net	<u>5,212,990</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,212,990</u>
Contributions	<u>488,613</u>	<u>80,588</u>	<u>569,201</u>
Other			
Investment income (loss) - net	(33,954)	308,625	274,671
Change in value of charitable remainder trust	-	822	822
Other Income	<u>55,625</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>55,625</u>
Total other revenues and support	<u>21,671</u>	<u>309,447</u>	<u>331,118</u>
Net assets released from restriction	<u>347,578</u>	<u>(347,578)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue and support	<u>6,070,852</u>	<u>42,457</u>	<u>6,113,309</u>
 <b>EXPENSES</b>			
Program services	4,614,708	-	4,614,708
Management and general	1,395,626	-	1,395,626
Fundraising	<u>364,375</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>364,375</u>
Total expenses	<u>6,374,709</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,374,709</u>
 <b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	 (303,857)	 42,457	 (261,400)
Net assets – beginning of year	<u>3,539,790</u>	<u>5,553,234</u>	<u>9,093,024</u>
Net assets – end of year	<u>\$ 3,235,933</u>	<u>\$ 5,595,691</u>	<u>\$ 8,831,624</u>

*A full set of 2019-2020 financial statements is available on request from the school's Director of Finance, Beth Lee.*

## STUDENT PROFILES

### WHAT SURPRISED YOU THE MOST WHEN WE STARTED DISTANCE LEARNING?

*"I didn't think we would be on the computer as much. It wasn't hard, it just took me some time to learn what to do."* – A first grader in Colleen's

*"Using Seesaw was hard at first. (It's an app for learning stuff where you can post activities.) I was already pretty good at using computers but this was different from what I usually do. Going into the new environment after being used to doing everything in front of me, where I could touch the paper and stuff, that was a bit hard."* – A fourth grader in Taylor's



*"Well, when we first started it there was a lot more independent work than we were used to. Then we changed back to campus full time and it was easier to work together."* – A seventh grader in Jesse's

### WHAT ABOUT PENINSULA SCHOOL DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST THROUGH THE PANDEMIC?

*"I like that I get to see all my friends. There's this friend that I play with every day. We were keeping secrets but we just started to share."* – A first grader in Colleen's

*"I think you really still get a lot of freedom. Being in person I can still do a lot of what I want. There's a nice open natural area to play in and we have a rope swing now. Peninsula is epic."* – A fourth grader in Taylor's

*"I really appreciate the effort the teachers put in to make fun and interactive assignments. They also make sure everyone has fun with them. I appreciate all the work they do."* – A seventh grader in Jesse's

### WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED TO DO ON CAMPUS WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER?

*"I'm excited to not stay six feet away coz it's hard to do that. It's better to be normal like one or two or three feet."* – A first grader in Colleen's

*"I miss touching and playing with my friends, like wrestling and being near everyone. I'm probably gonna hop on my friends backs."* – A fourth grader in Taylor's

*"Probably weaving and music. Weaving is so relaxing and therapeutic. And with music, John is so nice and so funny. Can't wait to make music and have a really great time."* – A seventh grader in Jesse's

## COMMUNITY QUILTING

*Continued from page 11*

Finally, quilts are also functional objects that keep people warm. They are a way to reuse fabric from other things that have gotten worn out. It's very common for groups within a community to pool their scraps from worn clothing rather than throw away junk fabric that is no longer able to serve its original purpose. In that sense, quilting serves as a model for zero-waste, which teaches students something about sustainability and the environment. The textile industry is a huge source of pollution, so I relish any chance to teach young fiber artists ways to offset that waste in their own craft practice.

### *How does this project relate to this theme of change in our community?*

For me, a big part of our traditional weaving program happens through our afternoon Activities time. A part of what I love so much about the weaving room is that students of different ages are all mixing together. It's a time when they're all getting to know each other and seeing how more advanced weavers are making things they haven't even dreamed of. With our need to be physically distanced in COVID, that has been a big part of what I've been trying to retain in my program. That is why I wanted to do a collaborative project across our entire student community rather than isolated projects with each class. I wanted to make one quilt for the whole school as a way to bring those different ages together and allow them to relate to one-another, and each other's creativity and work. The medium changed, but the message stays the same: we can still make hands-on textile art all together.



*A student in Margot's expands his pattern textile designs to a DIY t-shirt that reads, "I am smart, friendly, and brave."*

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We extend our heartfelt thanks to so many generous donors who gave to Peninsula School during the 2019-20 school year – current parents and parents of alumni, board and staff members, alumni, grandparents, friends, former staff, community partners and employer matching programs. Together you help us carry on our rich tradition of progressive education that creates a joyous place for our students to learn and grow, climb trees and stomp in puddles – all supported by our fabulous teaching staff.

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**THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND**

*Continued from page 10*

even more amazing than I imagined. It's moving to see and feel how perfectly each version stands alone.

*This issue is about Community Through Change. How do you relate that theme to your project?*

I've spent over 30 years teaching at Peninsula. I've seen a lot of change, on all levels: political, environmental, reacting to change outside the community, and change from within the community.

Lately, it's been more difficult to engage kids in playing music than in the first two decades of my time. The way people connect with music is completely different than 30 years ago. It used to be that people had albums on the shelf. You could see the picture or artwork, put a record on and absorb it, like it or dislike it. CDs were still something you could handle and touch. After MP3s became the norm, a period began where every person had their own iPod. You might see a four-person family drive by with four different things playing in their ears. So the communal experience of listening to music shifted.

As the culture and technology evolved, due a lot to Silicon Valley, people coming to school had a lesser relationship with music playing or listening in general. Kids had less free time. People sometimes seem afraid of free time to play, be aimless, let inspiration come.

*“Music is a craft, but also serves to connect us as a community.”*

I am still excited about trying to connect the community to music. Everyone can play music. Everyone can participate by appreciating it. Music is a craft, but also serves to connect us as a community. And I use this ethos to instill a folk approach to music with kids. I have them simplify whatever they want to play, and play it together. This gives me a lot of joy. People are talented. People are musical. I find that many alums return and reflect on the time spent and experience of playing music here at Peninsula. It resonates in other aspects of their lives and I am inspired to hear about it over the years. I feel many people would benefit from more time and space to play music, play in this broad Peninsula sense, and experience the potential for joy.



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## NEWS NOTES

### *Speaking of community change...*

Many staff and parents continue to share that *News Notes* is too easily confused with our weekly newsletter, *Hot News*. As such, we are considering a change to the title of our semi-annual school and alumni magazine, *News*

*Notes*. Here are a few contenders that surfaced from staff and students. Do you have a vote, or your own clever idea? Please write to us at [NewsNotes@peninsulaschool.org](mailto:NewsNotes@peninsulaschool.org) to share your opinion.

- ➔ *A. Peninsula Post*
- ➔ *B. Peninsula Press*
- ➔ *C. Coleman Chronicles*

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*Please contact [NewsNotes@peninsulaschool.org](mailto: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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