

The Peak to Peak Alumni Magazine

# Piqued

*/ˈpēkt/* (verb) to excite interest or curiosity, to arouse an emotion or provoke to action



20



## CELEBRATE

Volume 3: Issue 1  
November 2019

Peak to Peak's 20th year is a time to not only celebrate how far we have come, but it is also a time to look forward. This fall, we seek to both commemorate the distinguished accomplishments of our students, staff and alumni, and to peer ahead as we set sight on the future of our organization, staff, alumni, and current students.

### In this issue:

- Twenty Years of Memories from Alumni and Staff
- P2P Y2K NYE
- A History of Athletic State Championships

# Since Peak to Peak Opened, We Have...

- Served more than **3,700** families and **6,100** students in grades K-12
- Graduated more than **1,700** seniors
- Seen graduates matriculate to **250** different colleges and universities located in **46** states and at least **6** international locations
- Had more than **50** athletic teams and individual athletes win state-level championships
- Consistently been ranked among the top schools in the nation
- Positively impacted countless lives!

## Message from Ms. Reeser

Executive Director of Education



Dear Peak to Peak alumni,

This year is a special one at Peak to Peak, as we are celebrating our 20th year of operation—a significant milestone in our school's history! We are excited to commemorate our history, our accomplishments, and to reflect on how far we have come as a school. Whether you were part of the pioneering group of students who attended elementary classes in the Excalibur building, the modular buildings we used when the secondary program began, or if you joined Peak to Peak after our current campus was constructed and built out, you are part of a unique and extraordinary school community. Once a Puma, always a Puma!

Starting Peak to Peak was a grassroots effort that created a community of parents, guardians and staff members who were united around a common vision and mission for a truly excellent education that inspires and prepares students to pursue their dreams. Over the past 20 years, the campus has changed and improved substantially, programs and courses have been enhanced in significant ways, but our vision and mission have remained constant. Peak to Peak is still a school where students are encouraged to explore their interests, develop their passions, build strong relationships with their peers and adults, and learn continuously. School founders were incredibly tenacious and determined, and the hard work was well worth it, especially when we consider how much has been accomplished in 20 years. We are now a firmly established school with an incredible track record of achievements and successes. By any measure, we have much to be proud of.

Margaret Mead's famous quote comes to mind when I think about Peak to Peak's humble beginnings: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." These words resonate because they aptly reflect the group that started the school, and they speak to the powerful impact that civic-minded people, like those that Peak to Peak produces, can have on the world. As a school, supporting these students is our mission and our responsibility, and we take it seriously as we pause to celebrate our 20th anniversary, and look forward—with optimism and great anticipation—to the next 20 years!

Thank you for reading this edition of the alumni magazine. More news and updates are available on our website: [www.peaktopeak.org](http://www.peaktopeak.org). We look forward to helping you stay connected with Peak to Peak.

Best wishes,

Kelly Reeser  
Executive Director of Education



PEAK TO PEAK CHARTER SCHOOL  
INAUGURAL YEAR

**WINTER WONDER** a holiday craft market at  
PEAK TO PEAK CHARTER SCHOOL  
800 Merlin Drive Lafayette, CO

East Boulder County's biggest holiday market!

Saturday  
**DECEMBER 7 10AM - 4PM**

OVER 70 LOCAL VENDORS!  
Plus: gift wrapping, holiday treats,  
live music, kids' activities,  
and MORE!

Produced by The Art Market Lafayette in association with Friends of Peak to Peak 501c3

"I've never felt more at home than I did in Mr. Hankla's classroom. I will never forget the hours we spent learning about the fundamental principles of physics and how the world around us works. Mr. Hankla was an integral part in the discovery and development of my future career and the future careers of many of my friends!" - Alice Oveson '16



On the cover: The Peak to Peak Puma has a new look but the same school spirit!

At Right: The Puma celebrates Peak to Peak's 20th year at the annual fall picnic.

## Upcoming Events:

- **Dec 2nd, 5:30-7:30pm:**  
One Act Play
- **Dec 9th, 6:00-8:00pm:**  
Choir Concert
- **Dec 10th, 6:00-8:00pm:**  
Orchestra Concert
- **Dec 11th, 6:00-8:00pm:**  
Band Concert
- **Dec 12th, 1:45-2:45pm:**  
Elementary Sing-A-Long
- **Jan 15th, 3:10-4:30pm:**  
Middle School Short Skits
- **Jan 31st, 5:00pm:**  
K-12 Spirit Night
- **Feb 3rd, 6:00-8:00pm:**  
Poetry Out Loud
- **Feb 7th & 8th:**  
Middle School Play
- **Mar 13th, 6:00pm:**  
The Peak Gala

[Click to see Peak to Peak's K-12 Events Calendar](#)

Right: High school students in Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica brighten up the campus with their chalk drawings. The purpose of the society is to recognize high achievement of high school students in the Spanish language, further develop students' outreach and leadership skills, and to promote a continuing interest in Hispanic studies.

Far right: Third grade students visit a farm and learn about bee hives.



In early October the College Counseling Center hosted the 10th annual Peak to Peak College Day! Over the past 10 years, there have been more than 1,170 individual presentations on college day. From 2005 to 2019, the counseling staff has submitted materials for more than 10,050 college applications. On average, 5.4 college applications were submitted for every alumni during their senior year of high school. Since the school started keeping track, there have been approximately 2,660 college visits to Peak to Peak.

*"Something that speaks to the depth of my appreciation for Peak to Peak is that every one of my friends probably knows that I went to the number one high school in Colorado. And they know not because I liked to brag (which I do just a little) but because I cannot tell anyone about myself without telling them about the most formative 13 years of my life at Peak to Peak. It is impossible to separate any success I have had or will have from the school that made me who I am, and for that I am forever thankful."* - Mitchell Ward '15

## Alumni Spotlight: Trevor Patch *Class of 2010*

### Where are you now and what are you up to?

I am the Director of Baseball Research and Development at the Colorado Rockies where I oversee our internal data science and software development groups. I am married to a fellow Peak to Peak graduate, Elisabeth (Roob), and we live with our dog Nash in Brighton.

### Do you think your time at Peak to Peak helped you pursue this? If yes, how?

Of course. The best part of Peak to Peak, outside of a multitude of great teachers that impacted us, was the amazing community of students. The "average" student such as myself had so many incredible classmates to look up to that were and are doing incredible things that pushed us to be better every day.

### Did you ever imagine doing this while you were at Peak to Peak?

I was lucky that teachers such as Mr. Letter and Mr. Hankla showed me that math was able to be used in industries that were interesting and solving exciting problems. Despite some other great math teachers, I really struggled with any desire for math because I never thought I would use it. However, these teachers showed that you can parlay these math skills into industries that are doing extremely cool things. During high school is when the "Moneyball" revolution really started to blow up so I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time with the right skills!

### What education have you pursued since high school?

Coming out of Peak to Peak, I actually went away to the College of Wooster to play NCAA golf and study math. After a year I decided rural Ohio didn't compare to Colorado so I returned to get mathematics and statistics degrees at Colorado State. I finished up college in two years there. A couple of years later I completed a Masters in Data Science from Northwestern University.

### Who was your favorite teacher and why?

There were a couple of teachers that I really enjoyed that are still at Peak. Mr. Hankla, Ms. Flanhofer and Mrs. Letter taught me a lot of great skills. However, I will have to call out Mr. Letter as I got to have him as my baseball coach and teacher for two years during my junior and senior years. Both Mr. and Mrs. Letter have been awesome to me throughout high school, but especially in the years since then where I get to be a witness to them carrying our trivia teams to regional victories.

### Are you still friends with anybody you met at Peak to Peak?

I am married to one of my friends at Peak to Peak, but also stay in contact with a number of good friends and keep up with them through adult league sports like softball, basketball, and hockey. One of the things I enjoy about Peak to Peak is that it acts similar to a college alumni network where I enjoy seeing all the positions and activities that fellow alumni are up to. I hope someday our alumni are impressive enough to fill an "Alumni of Peak to Peak" Wikipedia page.

### What's the most influential class you've taken in college?

The upper-level statistics classes that introduced me to the advanced side of programming were probably the most influential part of my journey. I didn't know that I would enjoy the intersection of data science and software development as much as I would and would never have found that out without back-dooring my way into programming.

### What would you like to tell your fellow alumni?

I hope everyone is doing well and if you are ever around a Rockies game, look me up and I will attempt to come say hello!



## Faculty Spotlight: Susan Prieto

### How long have you worked at Peak to Peak, and what classes have you taught?

I have taught at Peak to Peak since its inception in 2000, so twenty years. I have taught Kindergarten, 2nd grade, 5th-grade math, math support and reading support.

### How is the school (and/or students) different from when you first worked here?

Where do I begin? First this campus is a huge improvement over the tiny daycare building where we began 20 years ago. Our curriculum is more cohesive throughout the school. We now have a cafeteria, and teachers to teach art, music, libraries and languages; these didn't exist 20 years ago. There are paraprofessionals to help in class, lunch duty and recess duty. We also have support for students that need extra help; these positions did not exist at the beginning.



During those first years, I had a pet rabbit, Lizzy. She ran around the room during the day, and down the hallways to visit others after school. When I was ready to go home, I'd call her and she'd come running back to class for the evening.

The early years of Peak to Peak encountered many growing pains. Now the community knows and trusts us. We've come a long way!

### What's the secret to a successful class?

Think like the students. Put yourself in their shoes; make connections, really get to know and appreciate each student.

### Tell us about your recent successes/adventures?

I earned my Master's Degree in Education in 2015. Recently, I went on a sailing trip with a group of friends. One friend was the captain and we were his mates...super fun. My husband and I built a pottery studio for me.

### What message would you like to leave for our alumni?

You are so fortunate to [have come from] a place where [teachers] can make a difference with kids. Teachers here work collaboratively and care about each other. [We know that we have] the power to change what needs to change, constantly improving our school.

### What section of the bookstore would we find you in and why?

Reading takes me away to places I could never go. I love non-fiction, so that would be a great place to start: travel, adventure, biographies, history, and historical fiction. I'm currently in two book clubs. The book clubs get me reading books that I wouldn't normally read, but still truly enjoy. These take me to all areas of the bookstore, which I really appreciate. You probably need to look everywhere to find me, or text me if the bookstore is too big (Powells in Portland). I do love to read!

*"Driveline used to be in the field next to the building on Excalibur. When it rained, the field became muddy. We'd set wood two by fours across the worst parts, but sometimes the cars would slide off and get stuck. The president of our board, Kevin Drummond and I, and whomever else was around, would push the cars out of the mud. We never did need to call a tow truck!"*

- Susan Prieto (Kindergarten Teacher)

*"Mrs. Prieto's hoedown! Digging for gold in the sandbox - best day ever - and now an OreDigger (coincidence?). Salish with Mr. Knox truly changed my life and made me go straight into science. Biology with Mr. Harper lit a passion in me for biomedical engineering! Traveling to Ecuador with Señora Dunphy made me want to travel the world. Senior Beach Day made community service one of the biggest aspects of my life. All in all, from kindergarten to high school, Peak to Peak shaped me into the person I am today - thank you." - Catherine Gable '16*



Right: Fifth graders raising spirits and welcoming students, staff, and families to school one early September morning.

Below: A new mural painted by middle school artists adorns the second floor hallway in the LMC outside of the fifth grade classrooms.



## Twenty Years of Athletic State Championships

- 2005**  
3A State Champions - Boys HS Soccer  
5A State Champions - Boys HS Hockey
- 2006**  
3A 300M Hurdles - Margaret Weingart
- 2007**  
3A 300M Hurdles - Margaret Weingart  
3A 100M Hurdles - Margaret Weingart  
3A 1600M Relay - Mundhenke, Hopkins, Whitehead, Weingart
- 2008**  
3A 300M Hurdles - Margaret Weingart  
3A 1600M Relay - Wang, Hopkins, Whitehead, Weingart
- 2010**  
3A 100M Dash - Khadijah Sayyid  
3A Triple Jump - Luke Johnson
- 2012**  
3A State Champions - Girls HS Soccer
- 2013**  
3A State Champions - Girls HS Soccer
- 2014**  
3A 4x800M Relay - Oveson, Oveson, Hamerly, Frisbie
- 2015**  
3A State Champions - Boys HS Golf  
3A 4x800M Relay - Oveson, Hamerly, Metzler, Frisbie  
3A Cross Country - Quinn McConnell  
3A Boys Golf - Sam Taylor
- 2016**  
3A State Champions - Girls HS Cross Country  
3A 800M - Quinn McConnell  
3A 400M - Anna Shults  
3A 4x800M Relay - Shults, Hamerly, Oveson, McConnell



The 2013 State Champion Girls High School Soccer Team

- 2017**  
3A State Champions - Boys HS Golf  
3A Boys Golf - Davis Long  
3A 1600M - Anna Shults  
3A 3200M - Anna Shults  
3A 4x800M Relay - Shults, Bradfield, Metzler, McConnell  
3A Cross Country - Quinn McConnell  
4A Boys Tennis - Brett Finan
- 2018**  
3A State Champions - Girls HS Tennis  
3A Girls Tennis #1 Singles - Trisha Somasundaram  
3A Girls Tennis #1 Singles - Trini Somasundaram  
5A Wrestling - Vince Comella
- 2019**  
3A State Champions - Girls HS Tennis  
3A State Champions - Boys HS Cross Country  
3A Girls Tennis #1 Singles - Trisha Somasundaram  
3A Girls Tennis #1 Singles - Trini Somasundaram  
5A Wrestling - Vince Comella  
3A 4x800M Relay - McConnell, Howard, Bradfield, Shults



## The Peak Innovation Fund

The Peak Innovation Fund is a flexible account that provides immediate funds to new innovative project proposals submitted by any K-12 staff member. These projects may not otherwise be possible through the school's traditional budgeting process. All community members are invited to financially support his unique fund through our online donation site. We invite you to view a video highlighting a few of this year's Peak Innovation Fund projects at [www.give.peaktopeak.org](http://www.give.peaktopeak.org). The following creative projects have been funded so far this year with more to come!

*"I remember spreading out all of the students' schedules on my floor to create classes and make schedules by hand! No computers, no spring meetings. It was August and the Peach Festival was happening in downtown Lafayette. We worked all weekend on the floor to pull those schedules together just days before the high school opened."*  
- Kimberly Gannett (HS College Counselor)

### 2019-2020

- Ms. Michelle Eckstein (Elementary Technology):**  
Design Thinking with UBTECH Robots
- Ms. Erica Harlow (Teacher Librarian):**  
Playaway into More Access
- Ms. Jennifer Jouzdani (Middle School English):**  
The Mysteries of Robert Leach
- Mr. Kurt Schaefer (High School Science):**  
Mobile Cooking Lab
- Ms. Lauren Sessions (High School Science):**  
Supporting 3D Printing and Design in Science Classes

*"I remember taking CHAEO with Señor Matthews and filming a music video that accurately portrayed all that the song was communicating. It was so fun to make, and watching them altogether in our tiny 10-person class was such a blast. Any class with Señor has a special place in my heart!"*  
- Cambria Pilger '17

Right: Art students visit Italy during the summer.  
Below: Ms Gannett visit with Sara Branham ('18) and Rachel Thomas ('18) during a recent college visit.



# 20th Anniversary Peak Gala



We invite all our alumni students and families back to this celebratory event on March 13, 2020 as we celebrate the "eve" of Peak to Peak and party like it's 1999! Tickets go on sale January 1st, 2020.

## Alumni Updates

### Class of 2009 Nikki Singh

Graduations: BA, International Affairs, University of Colorado Boulder, 2013; MPA-PNP, Public Policy & Non-profit Management, NYU, 2019  
Current Job: Policy and Advocacy Manager - Sikh Coalition

### Class of 2010 Brad Shumway

Current City: Arnolds Park, IA  
Graduations: BS, Electrical Engineering, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), 2016  
Current Job: Distribution Engineer, Alliant Energy

### Class of 2011 Anna Doka (Labozan)

Current City: Männedorf, Zürich, Switzerland  
Graduations: BA, International Studies, University of Denver, 2015  
Current Job: Team Assistant for Human Resources, Mondelez International  
Marriage: Victor Doka, 2016

### Class of 2013 Yaejin Lee

Current City: San Francisco, CA  
Graduations: BA, Architecture, Minor in Sustainable Environments, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, 2018  
Current Job: Architectural Designer, Solomon Cordwell Buenz Architects (SCB Architects)

Mr. Schaefer teaching one of Peak to Peak's newest courses, Kitchen Chemistry.



### Class of 2014 Owen "Mac" Harrigan

Current City: Broomfield, CO  
Graduations: BA, Film Studies, UCCS, 2018;  
Pursuing a masters degree

### Emilia Russo

Current City: Seattle, WA  
Graduations: BS, Computer Science, University of Chicago, 2018; BA with Honors, Psychology, University of Chicago, 2018  
Current Job: Software Engineer, Microsoft

### Class of 2015 Michael Balmes

Current City: Golden, CO  
Graduations: BS, Computer Science, Colorado School of Mines, 2018  
Current Job: Software Engineer, Allegion  
Marriage: Annette Balmes, 2018

### Class of 2018 Madaline Callaway

Current City: Loveland, CO

### Robin Peterson

Current City: Winter Park, CO  
Graduations: Working on a BA, Government and Middle Eastern Studies

### Class of 2019 Jacob Dong

This [linked video](#) says it all.

"Mrs. Letter and Ms. Flanhofer inspired me to learn and sparked fascinating discussions. I felt I became a better person because of them."  
- Lindsey Plambeck '10



Acceptance Day for the Air Force Academy class of 2023. Jessica Kirkpatrick ('17) was one of the upper classmates that gave Blake Bride ('16) his shoulder marks signifying acceptance into the Academy and completion of basic training. Blake will play hockey for the Academy and begin his Freshman year. Blake has spent the last couple of years in the Junior Hockey League. Jessica is in her junior year.

"I remember my first day coming into the newly built North Building back in 2002. I was hired to help lead the social studies department and begin our AP social studies program. I had rosters with students in grades 7-10. My room (N145), to my surprise, was full of about 5,000 new and used textbooks, fresh from the district warehouse. Yikes! I was incentivized to get the books to their appropriate owners, pronto, so that I could actually have a room in which to teach!" - Kyle Mathews (HS Principal)

# 20

If you had 20 seconds to share a Peak to Peak memory, just 20 seconds to capture what Peak to Peak means to you, what would you say? We are collecting short videos from our alumni and their families for this year's celebration of our 20th year. Please send a 20-second video memory, congratulatory message, or just a simple "hello!" We want to hear from you!

Submit alumni photos & video memories!



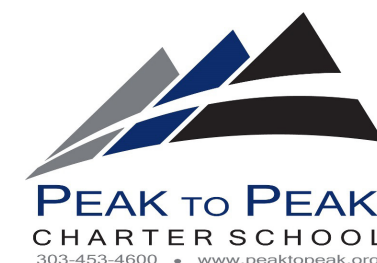
Please contact us at [p2p.friends@bvsd.org](mailto:p2p.friends@bvsd.org) for more information.

"When it started, Peak to Peak was operating out of a shoe box. I wasn't quite sure why I had to transfer to this new school but I did as I was told. I quickly adjusted to this for the simple reason that I loved my teacher. Miss Heissler was a tough, but fair 2nd grade teacher. She was fun to learn from and knew how to work a classroom. As the years went on, the Peak changed rapidly. Upgrades were coming every year. By 5th grade, I was learning in the South Building, a new and exciting milestone to crown my elementary years. As I advanced, and the school grew around me still, it became clear the rapid success was thanks to the same factor that adjusted me so quickly to my strange new school - the quality of the educators.

Like Miss Heissler, they were all highly intelligent, balanced, clever, disciplined, entertaining, engaging, compassionate, thoughtful, progressive, and passionate. With so little other exposure to other schools, it took me a while to notice my education was coming from the cream of the crop.

I remember watching as Ms. Freeman and the team deliberated intently on the demo instructors who wanted to join the pantheon. I knew then just how seriously they selected their most prized assets. The staff is truly the heart and soul of the school, and by then, they knew it.

To this day, when I look back on my full education, I am perhaps most thankful for Peak to Peak and the brilliant minds I learned from there. Peak to Peak made me who I am today. Thank you so very much." -Tom Geier '11



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