

THE MAGAZINE OF WILLIAM PENN CHARTER SCHOOL

Penn Charter

FALL 2023

Head of School

KAREN WARREN COLEMAN

PORTRAIT OF A PENN CHARTER LEARNER

The Portrait of a Penn Charter Learner articulates the skills, attitudes and competencies Penn Charter seeks to nurture in our Lower, Middle and Upper School students.

THE PORTRAIT HAS FOUR CORE DOMAINS:
COURAGEOUS LEARNER
CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATOR
CHANGE CULTIVATOR

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

A Penn Charter learner embraces the importance of identity and the role it plays in academic and lived experience.

A Penn Charter learner recognizes that diversity is essential to a caring community shaped by Quaker values, and they act with kindness and empathy toward all.

A Penn Charter learner examines and develops their own identities as part of their growth and development, and uses reflective practice to better understand others and their experiences. A Penn Charter learner understands that no identity is more or less important than any other.

Read more about the Portrait of a PC Learner at penncharter.com/portrait.

Holding Up Mirrors, Looking Out Windows

For years, Penn Charter educators have sought to create “windows and mirrors” when teaching about and discussing diversity, equity and inclusion. The concept was introduced in 1990 by Rudine Sims Bishop, professor emerita of education at the Ohio State University, in her essay “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors,” which called on educators to select children’s books that both reflect the students’ lived experiences as well as provide a view into others’ experiences and cultures.

At PC, the concept has been extended beyond Lower School’s book offerings. All teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to see themselves mirrored not just in the books offered, but in coursework, programming and assemblies. At the same time, teachers also ensure that students encounter windows into the perspectives and identities of others.

“The analogy of providing windows and mirrors helps us understand the importance of bringing diverse voices to learning experiences for our students,” Director of Lower School Marcy Sosa said. “What teachers teach, talk about and share with our students matters because our students matter. Our job is to choose texts and speakers that provide a window into another culture or a mirror that reflects their cultures.”

“As a Friends school and an intentionally diverse community, we are dedicated to creating spaces to explore our unique identities,” said Naté Hall, director of enrollment management and interim director of diversity, equity and inclusion. “Our DEI coordinators in each division work alongside colleagues to plan age-appropriate presentations and assemblies that draw connections to our curriculum.”



Rodney Eric Lopez, dance instructor, artist and educator



Tchin, an Indigenous storyteller

Two recent special events underscored this commitment. In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, Rodney Eric Lopez, an educator, artist and former executive director of Dancing Classrooms in New York City—where his teaching was featured in the award-winning documentary *Mad Hot Ballroom*—visited students in all divisions to share principles of Latin vernacular dance and its important place in Hispanic traditions. Lopez is a master instructor of Latin and social dance, and has taught children and adults for over 25 years. He not only provided students a view into his experiences and culture, but reflected the rhythm inside them by inviting them to join him for a dance.

A month later, Lower School welcomed Tchin, an Indigenous storyteller, as part of Penn Charter’s celebration of Native American Heritage Month. A nationally known and award-winning artist, Tchin is an accomplished musician, flutemaker, folklorist, jewelry designer, educator, author, painter and clothing designer. As a “teacher of lessons,” he engaged the students through a variety of

activities to convey the rich tapestry of Native cultures, wisdom and talents that contribute to the vibrancy of our community and world.

“These assemblies bring the stories and lessons from the classroom to real life, and we are grateful for the gifts that these presenters offer to our students by way of their authentic, lived experiences,” Hall said. **PC**

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Karen Warren Coleman is the first woman to lead Penn Charter. **Page 14.**
(Photo: Michael Branscom)

OPENING THOUGHTS

From the Head of School



Welcome to the fall 2023 edition of Penn Charter magazine. Within these pages, you will find stories of tradition, of curricular innovation, and of academic, artistic and athletic excellence—cornerstones of the Penn Charter experience.

You will also find stories of growth and change—two concepts I have spent a considerable amount of time contemplating as Penn Charter's new head of school. I take tremendous pride in being a new member of this remarkable community, and I feel equally grateful for being trusted to usher in a new era of growth and change for the PC community.

Typically, growth and change are considered jointly, with one assumed to naturally spring from the other. Though there is clear truth and wisdom in the adage “growth requires change,” I also believe that growth can shine a light on all that is great about an organization, like Penn Charter. Recognizing our strengths allows us the privilege of approaching growth from an ideal position, building upon the successful core principles of excellence that are central to a PC education.

We are fortunate to be experiencing tremendous growth in a number of areas: Our enrollment this year has topped 1,000 students for the first time in PC history; our campus is expanding to include a new lower school, another milestone in the transformation of PC's campus and the completion of our academic village; and our students continue their intellectual, spiritual and emotional growth every day.

We embrace and celebrate these developments and look forward to continued growth, and we do so in the context of the enduring Quaker principles upon which Penn Charter was founded. We value that of God in each individual; we are committed to fostering excellence in academics, arts and athletics; to honoring and celebrating difference, and centering inclusion and belonging; and to educating our students to live lives that make a difference. These foundational values and decades of shared experiences will continue to fortify Penn Charter for decades to come.

As the educational landscape continues to evolve, we have an obligation to think expansively about what education looks like in the future. I cherish the opportunity to uphold the principles upon which Penn Charter was founded as we advance and elevate our academic, arts and athletics programs within a community where our students continue to be known, supported and challenged by our faculty and staff. This moment in Penn Charter's history provides an extraordinary opportunity for us to build upon our strengths as we continue to shape a successful future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Warren Coleman".

Karen Warren Coleman

Penn Charter

THE MAGAZINE OF WILLIAM PENN CHARTER SCHOOL

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Penn Charter is the magazine of William Penn Charter School. It is published by the Marketing Communications Office and distributed to alumni, parents and friends of the school. In addition to providing alumni updates about classmates, reunions and events, the magazine focuses on the people, the programs and the ideas that energize our school community.

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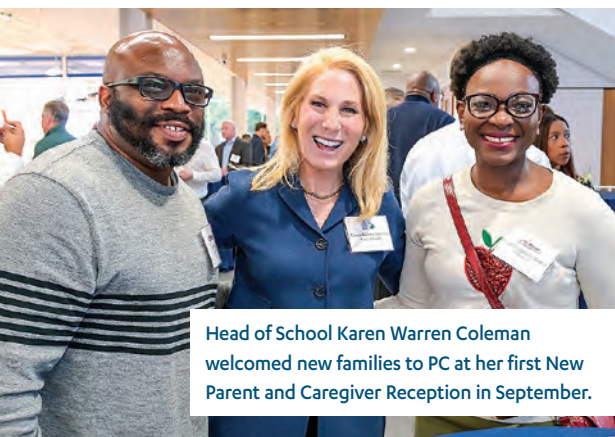
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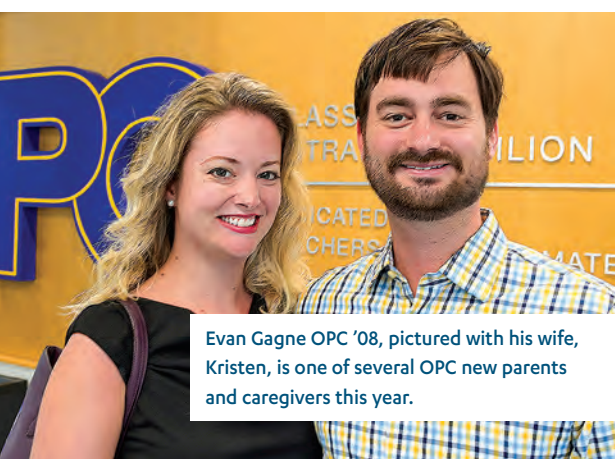
Now in its second year, the Family Circle Committee is a group of volunteers who partner with Penn Charter's Development Office to strengthen the culture of family giving at PC.



Head of School Karen Warren Coleman welcomed new families to PC at her first New Parent and Caregiver Reception in September.



Senior Parent Gift Committee: Becky Guenther, Alison Abernethy, Amy and Kevin Covert, Lisa Kolalowsky Smith, Jon Dyer, Yatora Johnson, Nicole Martz and Kim Lewinski.



Evan Gagne OPC '08, pictured with his wife, Kristen, is one of several OPC new parents and caregivers this year.

ENGAGING THE PC COMMUNITY

The collective engagement of parents and caregivers at Penn Charter enriches the community and enhances the student experience. In recent years, the level of parent involvement has grown significantly, with parents and caregivers connecting in ways that are most meaningful to them.

In early September, Penn Charter hosts the New Parent and Caregiver Reception, where new families can meet each other, connect with PC faculty members, and acclimate themselves to campus. As these new parents are establishing their roots at PC, senior families are celebrating the final stretch of their PC journey. In October, those families are recognized at the Senior Parent and Caregiver Dinner, hosted at Timmons House.

From phone banking on Great Day to Be a Quaker to grilling burgers on the sidelines for Color Day, it takes a village to pull off iconic Penn Charter events, and parents and caregivers contribute in a variety of ways to support the school and students.

The Parent & Caregiver Community, with its goal of supporting and enriching the experience of families at school, offers a variety of leadership and liaison roles. Parents of pre-K to 11 students often serve as evaluators for the Senior Comprehensive Projects at the end of each year. And parent and caregiver development committees such as Family Circle and Senior Parent Gift Committee offer a way not only to connect with other families but to share in the impact made by the collective participation of the PC community. [PC](#)



All smiles—for new students and parents—on the first day of kindergarten.



Manie Musicale 2023: Uniting Us in the Power of Music

Each day in February and March, as part of *Manie Musicale* (Musical Mania), Upper and Middle School French students listened to newly released songs from the francophone world and voted for the song that they liked the best.

This music competition was created by two French teachers in Maine to coincide with the NCAA March Madness basketball tournament. When the competition launched in 2017, two middle schools in Maine participated. Since then, the program has grown to include more than 1,500 schools from 49 states and Washington, D.C., as well as Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Egypt, England, France, Ireland, Mexico and New Zealand.

PC French teacher Marianna Allen, who partnered with her colleague Nicole Duffy, incorporated this project into the curriculum three years ago. It is centered around the appreciation of francophone music produced by artists across the globe that promotes diversity, inclusion and tolerance. With a nod to March Madness, students select 16 French songs, voting for their favorites by filling out NCAA-style brackets.

When leFLOFRANCO won the global Manie Musicale 2023, Allen and Duffy thought, *why not invite him to campus?* So Allen contacted FLO and asked if he would perform for PC's Middle and Upper School students. In October, FLO packed his van and drove 12 hours from Ontario with his colleague, DJ Skorpyon, to put on a concert for PC's grateful and starstruck students, as well as to share knowledge and passion about the French language.

So, who is FLO? He is a hip-hop artist from Ottawa, Canada, born in Paris of Haitian descent. He uses both French and English in his music, describing his style as “multicolored urban pop.” FLO brings a multidimensional perspective to serious thoughts and ideas. His music is a journey from modern hip hop, such as trap and electro, to Caribbean sounds, including soca, reggae fusion and kompa—music from his Haitian origins.

The goal in bringing FLO to Penn Charter, Allen explained, was to provide a space for students to appreciate the universal language of music. “It didn't matter at that moment whether they are currently learning



Getting the Upper School audience into the “FLO.”



TOP: Afterglow with FLO: Director of Upper School Kim Berndt, Marianna Allen, Head of School Karen Warren Coleman and DJ Skorpyon. **BOTTOM:** FLO hypes up the Middle School crowd.

Mandarin, Spanish, Latin, French or any other language,” she said. “With this concert, our students realized that no matter what languages you speak, anyone can appreciate a second language or another culture, provided that they keep an open mind and heart to let the music speak to them. We saw this at both the Middle and Upper School concerts when FLO broke down the lyrics for students to try out, and all of them embraced it together and enjoyed the rhythm and collaborative vibe while learning together in joyful ways.”

Many of the other artists PC students considered for Manie Musicale 2023 have participated in the French-language equivalent of *The Voice* or *American Idol*, while others are gaining traction through social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

In a Q&A after FLO's performances, students practiced speaking French and learned his approach to creating songs.

“With so many events in the world today that can bring us down, FLO and DJ Skorpyon used their gift of music to lift us all up,” Allen said. “Even though students might not understand every single word in a song, they understand what FLO communicated and how they felt while they listened and danced. This is the foundation for cultural respect and mutual appreciation, and our PC students rose to the occasion by listening and learning through the music. What a valuable moment for us all.” **PC**



More info: www.maniemusicale.info

Sidewalk Talks with Second Graders

Second grade teacher Joe Maguire knows that seven- and eight-year-olds are inquisitive. And creative. And problem-solvers.

So, just like he did when the Graham Athletics & Wellness Center was under construction, Maguire took his students on a site visit of the new lower school, to speak directly to the people with answers to their questions: the construction managers.

Penn Charter's new lower school, scheduled to be a LEED-certified, gold-level building completed by the fall of 2025, is of great interest to the second graders, who look forward to being the first fourth grade class in the building. So, in September, Ansley Cox, director of facilities, arranged for the students to go behind the secured fencing and observe the construction site with superintendent Lee Yannoni and project manager Lee Anderson from Intech Construction.

Students asked *How do you use the machines?* and *Where will the new playground be?* and *Do you live in that trailer?* But also, *Where did the trees go?*

Cox told students that all trees removed during the construction would be replaced with trees native to the area, increasing the overall tree cover. And as for the big pin oak tree, deemed a heritage tree, Cox said, "We took measures to preserve it by encircling it with a protective fence to prevent heavy machinery from damaging its roots. And we had it pruned to maintain its health. We've also repurposed some of the felled trees to use their stumps as tables and chairs for the planned outdoor classrooms." [PC](#)



HALLOWEEN: A CAST OF CHARACTERS

In the prelude to the annual Halloween parade, the senior class, masquerading as everything from Storm Troopers to the Lorax, visited Lower School buddies in their classrooms. As the parade began, the mysterious Halloween witch had a partner in leading the way: Head of School Karen Warren Coleman, dressed as Mario! [PC](#)



Middle Schoolers Explore the Ancient and Modern Culture of Italy

Middle School revived international travel last June with a weeklong exploration of Italy. Open to all seventh and eighth grade students and designed for Latin students, the excursion offered a firsthand taste of the culture and history of the Roman Empire.



More than 20 students and three chaperones explored three regions: Sorrento, Naples and Rome. In the picturesque seaside town of Sorrento, students took lessons for a southern Italian folk dance called the tarantella, agreeing that teacher Charlie Brown emerged with the best dance moves of the group! They also toured a working mozzarella farm, learning how the creamy cheese is made.

From Sorrento, the group cruised on a high-speed hydrofoil ferry across the Bay of Naples to Capri, a steep island with towering hills and winding streets. The group took a funicular to the island's top, with its incredible vistas and sweeping views of the sea. On the way back down to the port, the group took a local bus and learned the phrase *stipati come sardine* (packed in like sardines).

Noah Hall, a rising ninth grader, reported having the best meal of the trip on Capri: "Having fresh seafood from the sea that was 20 steps from my table was amazing."

Next stop: Naples, in many ways the *real* Italy—a bustling city teeming with businesses that are not there to cater to summer tourists but rather an Italian city for Italians. Underneath the streets of Naples lies a labyrinth of ancient aqueducts and catacombs, as well as bomb shelters that served as a refuge for Italians during World War II. This hidden city was a source of awe and fascination for the group as they ventured through its depths.

The World Heritage Site of Herculaneum, engulfed and preserved by volcanic ash and mud from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E., provided a window into architecture, art, mosaics and everyday life two millennia ago.



From top: Pizza-making in Rome; touring Herculaneum; discovering Capri's famous lemons.

The final stop was Rome, known as the "Eternal City" because the ancient Romans believed the empire would endure forever. With their walking shoes on, the group explored various neighborhoods, as well as the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica, the Colosseum, and the ruins of the Roman Forum, which was the social, political and commercial hub of the Roman Empire.

During the tour's last night, the urban explorers enjoyed an evening *passeggiata* (walk) to the Spanish Steps and Trevi Fountain with their friends before participating in an Italian culinary tradition: making pizzas. They learned how to lay out the dough for a perfect pie, top it with ingredients in the Roman style and finish it off in the oven. The result was their own authentic, brick-oven Italian pizza. *Molto buono!* **PC**



Cultivating Nature-Based Play

by Rebecca Luzi

In the spring of 2022, a small group of Upper School students in the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Certificate program engaged in a cross-divisional collaboration to develop outdoor learning experiences for Lower School students. This partnership resulted in the research, design and implementation of nature-based play activities and materials that encourage students to build, create, collaborate and engage with the natural world.

Lower School teachers had already been interested in expanding recess opportunities beyond organized activities like ball games. In 2022, as they looked toward the upcoming construction of the new lower school building and the temporary reduction of play structures after the removal of the blue playground, they wanted to cultivate a different way to play.

“The open green spaces that we now use for recess are good for throwing a ball, playing tag and spinning hula hoops,” said Marcy Sosa, director of Lower School. “But our students also enjoy creative play. Playing with natural materials, creating mud piles and building creative scenes for dramatic play are a part of the Lower School experience.”

Unstructured nature play, research shows, promotes creativity, teaches responsibility and stimulates the senses in a way that builds cognitive skills.

Alyson Goodner OPC '96, director of the Center for Public Purpose, connected Sosa with Grace Agosto, Zady Hasse and Maia Kafer, all Class of '24, and Noah Dacanay, now OPC '23—students who were working toward earning an environmental certificate. The certificate builds upon the Quaker testimony of stewardship and aims to bolster critical thinking skills needed to explore the complex issues of environmental sustainability. Goodner had been working with this group of students to research the positive impact of nature-based play

continued on next page

“Functional possibilities with nature-based play look different from traditional play spaces,” Director of Lower School Marcy Sosa said. “The possibilities of interacting with non-man-made objects such as sticks, dirt, plants, insects, and weather elements such as rain, sunshine and wind, promote problem-solving and creative solutions. Nature-based play contributes to a child’s cognitive, social-emotional and motor development.”



on the student experience and the long-term impact on environmental and civic engagement.

Sosa was enthusiastic about the students' proposal to research ideas for nature-based play and present them to Lower School teachers as a potential recess activity. The next step toward realizing the vision would be to apply for a Lehr Fund grant to financially support it.

The Lehr Fund for Public Purpose Programming, established in 2019 by OPC parents Seth and Ellyn Lehr, enables students and teachers to design learning experiences that prepare graduates with skills and competencies to lead lives that make a difference. The grant application process itself is a learning experience for Upper School students.

"We had to have actual facts, not just that nature-based play was a good alternative but *why* it was and what benefits it would have for our students," Grace said.

"Probably the biggest thing I learned," Zady said, "was how do I work with multiple people on one document? How do we spread around the work? How do we bring all these ideas together and navigate our separate perspectives? When do we need to get feedback? I feel like all of that was as informative as researching the benefits of nature-based play."

The Center for Public Purpose's Lehr Fund committee approved the application in spring 2022. Included in the grant proposal was a plan to visit and explore area schools and programs with a nature-based play blueprint to learn about materials, successes and challenges from both teachers and students. Penn Charter's own pre-K served as one of those site visits, as did The Miquon School, with its tenet that "the natural world is a place to learn."



"This project would not only benefit students' awareness of the environment, but also allow them to connect with peers who might not have similar interests. We know from early research that students engaging in nature play also have opportunities to gain a sense of autonomy and independence by getting to explore and play by themselves or in smaller groups. Not only is this a skill that will benefit them for the rest of their lives, but it also decreases conflict with peers while playing. Nature play also allows for more options for creative thinking and tinkering. This variety can help increase creative problem-solving during play and is beneficial to all students."

— Upper School students, in their Lehr Grant application

"I went to Miquon for elementary school," Zady said, "and so I was really excited to share my experience with a different kind of recess that was a little more connected to outdoor spaces."

Maia, another former Miquon student, visited Awbury Arboretum to learn about its summer camp program. Using materials they find in the woods, she observed, children "can do whatever they want within their boundaries. And they just started making a whole village—a whole civilization. I thought that was really interesting."

"I was reminded why this is important to me—because it's so open-ended that you can really be creative and do whatever you want."

Another member of the nature play team was Geoffrey Trotter, a Middle School social studies teacher this year, and an Independent School Teaching Fellow in PC's fifth grade last year. When Trotter was a teaching fellow at Miquon, prior to coming to Penn Charter, he became familiar with nature-based play and its positive impact on the student experience.

The students and Trotter, who began researching nature-based play models in the summer of 2022, presented their findings and a plan for a pilot program at Penn Charter to the Lower School faculty that fall.



Geoff Trotter, Zady Hasse, Grace Agosto, Maia Kafer and Noah Dacanay OPC '23 (not pictured) embarked on a year-and-a-half-long project to integrate unstructured nature play into Lower School recess. "Grounded in research and centering collaboration, experimentation and reflection," said Alyson Goodner OPC '96, director of the Center for Public Purpose, "these friends led an effort to support the PC community and encourage stewardship of our environment."

Once approved, the students used the Lehr Grant funding to purchase materials and implement the pilot, which included specifics for play materials, as well as ways to organize and store them and to encourage children to care for them.

The fifth grade class became the first group to try out the materials, becoming "nature-based play ambassadors" for younger grades if they chose and providing feedback on the project.

Trotter watched the fifth grade students demonstrate both independence and stewardship of materials. "I could see an awareness of their surroundings and an accountability to take care of the space that all students shared," he said.

The reusable materials "unlocked the creativity of students," Trotter reflected. "They weren't designed for one use. I saw students really thinking outside the box and coming up with their own play ideas with these materials."

Grace, Zady, Maia and Noah gathered insights from the fifth graders as well as ideas of norms the group should observe. "We went over some essential concepts—be constructive, be creative," Zady said.

"We followed the approach of not telling people the rules right away but letting them come up with their own," Grace added.

The Upper School students honed their plan while working with the fifth grade. They learned that they would need varied materials and shapes to keep children's interest, such as sticks, slices of tree trunks, shells, pinecones, and also Stick-lets, colorful silicone connectors intended for building with sticks. They found that students would walk around and find their own materials to add to the mix, like leaves, flowers and tree bark. And they saw how imaginative and open-ended nature play is, as students built a bridge and a restaurant and a house built into the nook of a tree trunk.

"It was fun for us to be in this leadership position, and then for [the fifth graders] to kind of follow and be leaders with the younger kids," Maia said. "It was fun to watch how they approached that."

When the research was complete, the pilot program was a success, and the Lower School teachers gave their approval to roll out nature-based play to each class. After purchasing the materials this fall, Maia, Zady and Grace, now seniors, assembled natural materials into nature-based play kits in portable tubs that are stored in mini sheds wherever students have recess, from the Lower School Green and Perrott Field to the front field and Chigwell Close. They visited each grade to talk about the kits and review the nature-based play norms. The seniors joined Lower School recess to model and facilitate for the first week, and then, Grace said, "we just let them do it."

"We often talk about the environment being the third teacher and how important nature-based play is for students," Sosa said. "It also connects with our Quaker values around environmental sustainability and stewardship. This project came directly from our students and directly benefits our students."

"This was an example of students actively sharing their lived experience with our school," Goodner said. "Each of these Upper School students and Geoff understood the importance of nature-based play on their own learning or the learning of others. They recognized its potential to center the care of our natural and human communities in play, which can have a long term impact on students' environmental and civic engagement."

"Throughout this experience, the students were courageous learners, following their curiosity, inviting others into the process at every stage and taking ownership of their education." PC



COMMENCEMENT 2023

On a brilliant and warm day, 102 seniors processed across Maguire Field to the waiting stage to be celebrated by their families, friends and teachers. Commencement speeches reflected on growth and perseverance, Quaker principles, possibilities, and Penn Charter's vision statement to educate students to live lives that make a difference.

Commencement celebrates both an end and a beginning, and the Class of 2023 recognized the moment as they were formally introduced as graduates of Old Penn Charter, ceremoniously moving the tassels on their graduation caps to the left. **Congratulations!**

"What difference can you make? Think about it. And if you don't know yet what that is, that is fine. But be on the lookout for what that difference may be. With this Penn Charter education that you have, be on the lookout for the change you may foster."



— Darryl J. Ford, in his final Commencement speech as head of school



"I learned that success to me is not about being better than others, it's about being continuously better than yourself. You have to be your biggest cheerleader and your biggest critic. Finding the balance is hard, but once you have your own back you don't need anyone or anything other than motivation to succeed."

— Commencement speaker
Chloe Pinto



Jack Frank received the Phi Beta Kappa Award for excellence in scholarship.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2023!

An end-of-year survey showed that 89 percent of students in the Class of 2023 are attending one of their top-choice schools. Forty-one percent were enrolled at a “most competitive college” according to Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges.

Amherst College	Pennsylvania State University (7)
Arcadia University	Saint Joseph’s University
Arizona State University	Smith College
Boston University (3)	Syracuse University
Carleton College	Temple University
Catholic University of America	George Washington University (3)
Chapman University	Trinity College
Columbia University	Tufts University (2)
Commonwealth University of PA	Tulane University (3)
Connecticut College	United States Air Force Academy
Cornell University (3)	United States Military Academy
Dartmouth College	United States Naval Academy
Davidson College (2)	University of California-Riverside
Drexel University (6)	University of Colorado
Duke University	University of Connecticut
Emerson College	University of Delaware
Fairleigh Dickinson University	University of Glasgow
Georgetown University	University of Mississippi
Holy Family University	University of North Carolina - Wilmington
Howard University (2)	University of Pennsylvania (7)
Ithaca College (2)	University of South Carolina
Johns Hopkins University	University of Tampa
Lafayette College	University of Vermont (2)
Liberty University	Villanova University (2)
Loyola Marymount University	Virginia Tech
Loyola University Maryland	Washington University in St Louis
Lycoming College	Wellesley College
McGill University	West Chester University (2)
Muhlenberg College	Widener University
Northeastern University	Williams College
Northwestern University	York College of Pennsylvania
Ohio State University (2)	



“Be thankful and confident you can always fall back on the lessons we learned at PC. Quaker principles such as stewardship, service and honoring the light in others will carry you far in school but also in life. Not only will these traits better you personally, but they will also help you impact the new communities you join.”

– Commencement speaker
Chet Kempinski



Sydney DelBello received the Alumni Society Senior Award in recognition of her scholarship, character, leadership and athletic ability.



Watch a recording of the ceremony and view more photos at penncharter.com/commencement2023.



Profiles

Chelsea Erdmanis Greenspon OPC '02

BY ED MORRONE OPC '04

As assisting clinical director for a nonprofit organization that supports people with autism, Chelsea Erdmanis Greenspon OPC '02 learned to give back to the community as a PC lifer.



For Greenspon, Penn Charter was very much a family affair. Her father, Val Erdmanis, was a longtime wrestling coach and a Lower School physical education teacher for 40 years before he retired in 2017. She also got to walk the halls for more than a decade with her younger sister, Devon Erdmanis D'Alessio OPC '04.

"Before starting school here in kindergarten," Greenspon said, "I went to my first PC wrestling match when I was three weeks old. I've always said that I grew up here."

So maybe it was only natural that Greenspon, through her career, would lead a life that makes a difference by supporting families. In fact, she credits Penn Charter for planting that seed, tracing her interest in helping others to a video about eating disorders she watched in seventh grade health class.

"Finding and honing that passion is one thing I loved about PC," she said. "The person I am, the values I hold—I owe a ton of that to [Penn Charter], and Quaker values were a huge part of that. It's been incredibly influential in my professional life and my life as a whole." Taking Intro to Psychology, taught by the late Joe Perrott Hon. 1689, during her senior year only "sealed the deal," she said, in pursuing her mission beyond Penn Charter.

Greenspon received a BA in psychology from Lehigh University, followed by an MA in counseling psychology from the College of New Jersey. She interned with an eating disorder unit before deciding she had other interests, pivoting in 2009 to work as a psychotherapist for Thomas Jefferson University, assisting clients with substance abuse issues. Greenspon continued this work part-time while eventually earning a doctorate in clinical psychology at Chestnut Hill College.

"It was always the plan for me to get my doctorate," she said. "Getting that experience before and during my doctoral program made my current work more meaningful."

Greenspon first went to work for SPIN Inc. as a pre-doctoral intern and became a full-time licensed psychologist for the organization in 2018.

The nonprofit is a leading provider of support for children and adults with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities in greater Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley. In her current role since August 2020 as assisting clinical director, Greenspon supervises interns, therapists and clinical supervisors, and performs diagnostic evaluations for individuals—primarily ages 2-21—at risk for autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

In addition to PC, she credits her mother, who worked in autism support classrooms with the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit for 25 years, with steering her toward this type of work with SPIN. "It's an amazing company," she said. "Very family friendly, and I mostly work with low-income families on medical assistance. Helping underserved communities who don't have great access to mental health resources is an important value of mine."

Greenspon has also started her own private practice, Greenspon Assessment and Consultation, offering autism, ADHD, neurodevelopmental and learning disability evaluations and referrals. She works with families in applying to area schools, including Penn Charter, for admissions testing. For Greenspon, who played field hockey and lacrosse at PC and was also involved with Quakers Dozen and the theater program, it was important to remain close to her alma mater. For the past 15 years, she's been an Alumni Society director.

"I've always joked that I can't stay away," she said. "This place raised me. It's a way for me to stay connected and give back to the broader OPC community."

She has been married to Brian Greenspon OPC '02, a nurse at Wills Eye Hospital emergency room in Center City, since 2015. The couple has two young children: Caroline and James. Being a parent has only added value to Chelsea's work with kids. "I've definitely gained more perspective and empathy for parents in doing family therapy," she said. "It's so challenging, but I try to help families make changes by meeting them where they are."

Penn Charter taught Greenspon more than academic skillsets, she said. "It also taught me to be a good citizen in the world. You don't get that from every school. It's more than just academics—it's teaching values and how to be a good human being." **PC**

Atiba Wade OPC '95

BY REBECCA LUZI

Atiba Wade OPC '95 has an expression he uses often: When preparation meets opportunity, success is the result. Wade is always prepared, opportunity often finds him, and success has been the upshot of his varied career.



Atiba Wade, in *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*

As a student athlete at Penn Charter, Atiba Wade was always in the pool. He played water polo and swam the 100-meter breaststroke, 200-yard individual medley, 100-yard freestyle—“whatever Reece Whitley swam,” he said, laughing about the PC phenom who would follow him, graduating in 2018. “All the records that Reece has, I once had.”

Wade also swam for the storied PDR Swimming, founded and coached by American Swimming Coaches Association Hall of Famer Jim Ellis. PDR, which stands for both Philadelphia Department of Recreation and the more inspirational Pride, Determination, Resilience, was the first Black swim team in the country.

When the 2007 film *Pride*, based on the story of Jim Ellis, was in production, Wade got an email from his friend, a sports agent, suggesting that Wade be a swim double for a lead actor in the movie. As a former competitive swimmer, Wade was able to work with the director to add authenticity to his scenes. After all, Wade said, “You couldn’t pick a better double than someone who was actually a part of the PDR team.”

This experience would kick off a new career for Wade. Preparation meets opportunity.

Wade, an art major at the University of Georgia, where he was an NCAA All-American swimmer, had moved in 2004 to the vibrant art scene of Santa Fe, N.M., where he was a swim coach and a professional swimmer. Through the Santa Fe Photographic Workshop, he assembled a photographic portfolio and submitted it to talent agencies. “And then,” Wade said, “I got pointed in the direction of doing some background work for movies because there’s a movie scene in New Mexico.” His first role was as a prison guard in the crime thriller *Shot Caller*.

After that, Wade focused on coaching swimmers and training other athletes at his fitness company, H2Go, when a stunt coordinator reached out. Next

thing Wade knew, he was in Alaska, followed by New York, working as a stunt double for Giancarlo Esposito for the Netflix series *Kaleidoscope*.

While filming *Kaleidoscope* in 2021, preparation met opportunity once again when underwater cinematographer Peter Zuccarini, whose credits include *Avatar: Way of the Water*, asked Wade if he wanted to work on *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*.

Once Wade realized that Zuccarini was “the Steven Spielberg of underwater videography,” he was wowed by the offer but also well prepared for the challenge. “It’s like you’re dribbling on the basketball court, and Phil Jackson comes up to you and says, ‘Hey, kid, you’ve got talent. You want to come work with me?’”

Wade traveled from New York to Atlanta and ended up on the set of the Ryan Coogler-directed Marvel movie for two months. His swimming and gymnastics background had prepared him for his role as a sailor in the Wakanda navy. Led by stunt coordinator Andy Gill, he worked with dancers and gymnasts, Cirque du Soleil performers and katana specialists. “You have people whose sole job is to be able to ride a horse, fire arrows and fall off the horse,” he said of the stunt team. “Or people whose thing is being lit on fire. That’s their specialty. To be able to use my skill set in that environment and to be able to add value to the project was phenomenal.”

A world away from Hollywood, Wade also uses his skill set working with Wounded Warriors— injured soldiers and veterans in the Army Recovery Care Program. Serving the program since 2015, he eventually became head swim coach of Team Army, a role he holds currently, while working with veterans of the Air Force and Navy as well.

“It really shaped or redefined my definition of the word *can’t*,” Wade said. “And being able to journey through that with these soldiers and veterans really helped create a new perspective for me.”

In 2022, he coached Team USA at the Invictus Games, in The Hague. In the games, founded in 2013 by the Duke of Sussex, Prince Harry, injured veterans compete in adaptive sports, embodying resilience. Invictus means “unconquered.”

If Wade has made a difference in the lives of injured soldiers, they have made a difference in his, too. He has become a better person and a better coach through this work, he says. “Being able to creatively use my skill set in that environment really just took my coaching to another level.” [PC](#)



At the beginning of the school year, Karen Warren Coleman gathered with kindergarten and pre-K students for a tree dedication in honor of her headship.

PLANTING ROOTS

KAREN WARREN COLEMAN

by Mark F. Bernstein OPC '79

Unlike presidents, departing heads of school do not seem to have a tradition of leaving a note for their successors in the top desk drawer.

Instead, on her first day as Penn Charter's new head of school in July, Karen Warren Coleman received a different sort of welcoming gift from her predecessor, Darryl J. Ford: a peace lily. Ford often sends peace lilies to new heads he knows, locally and around the country. The sentiments it conveys are hope, prosperity and longevity.

"It's a reminder of peace during stressful times," Ford says.

The stress is inevitably part of the role, but as she navigates the beginning of her first school year, Coleman says her main emotions are excitement and anticipation.

When school begins in the fall, she noted, "we always talk about how the kids need to get back in the routine, but I actually think that, for the adults, things don't settle in until the kids are here. It's been wonderful to have students back on campus. Things are noisy, you're hearing laughter, the sound of basketball on the court outside, the rush of changing classes. It's been great."

The start of any school year is a time of change, but PC is undergoing more than at any time in recent memory. Besides Coleman, there

are 26 new faculty and staff (along with 147 new students, bringing total enrollment to a record 1,016), new campus construction, new traffic patterns and new pickup lanes. There is a new coat of red paint on the main doors and a new red maple tree along the main drive to commemorate Coleman's headship, which pre-K and kindergarten students helped dedicate to her.

For the greater PC community, you might say it all marks the start of a new era. Not only is Coleman the first female head in school history, she is the first since Earl Ball arrived in 1976 to have no previous connection to Penn Charter, and only the eighth head in the modern era. Still, the perception that people move between distinct eras with hard boundaries is an artificial construct. The life of an organic community such as a school, Coleman notes, is really more of a continuum.

"I've come in and the treadmill's already moving," she laughs. "So, how fast can I run?"

Pretty fast, to judge from her first months. Coleman has jumped in to all aspects of PC life, learning names, making connections, and participating in events ranging from an Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration to a reception for new parents and caregivers. She has also immersed herself in the history and traditions of the PC community.

"I've read everything I can put my hands on," she says, and is now rereading most of it because the names, places and stories carry a deeper meaning now that she is here.

That intellectual drive and desire to learn are qualities that have distinguished Coleman throughout her career. "Karen is an innately curious individual," says Paul Hough OPC '77, who co-chaired the Trustees search committee with PC parent Amy Gadsden and Ben Robinson OPC '82. "She's very interested in learning about how things work and the ideas of the people around her."

Coleman brings a unique background to Penn Charter, having served for five years as head of the Hockaday School, an all-girls PK-12 school in Dallas. Before that, she spent 23 years in higher education, serving as a senior administrator at several top universities around the country.

In retrospect, it is not surprising that Coleman pursued the career she did. Education, she notes, "was very much a part of our growing up."

Her mother was a public school teacher in the Bronx, where she was raised, and one of her three siblings is a college professor in Toronto. Coleman majored in psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she graduated cum laude, gaining insights into learning that she has employed regularly ever since. Psychology, she says, "is the lens through which I see everything because it's really about understanding how people tick. Psychology informs how I think about the student experience every day."

She expanded her focus in graduate school, earning a master's degree in higher education and student affairs administration from the University of Vermont. In 2015, she earned a doctorate in education from the University of Pennsylvania, where she wrote her dissertation on first-generation, low-income Black male students at highly selective research universities in which she interviewed students at Duke, Penn, Princeton and Stanford.



Coleman, pictured with juniors in the Center for Public Purpose, was drawn to PK-12 education so that she could make a difference in the lives of students at a younger age.



Eighth grade students show Coleman their paintings on display in the Middle School atrium, discussing their techniques and inspiration.

Coleman spent more than two decades at the college level working with students, as director of student conduct at George Washington University, and as student affairs director and associate dean of students at the University of California, Berkeley, where she served as lead strategist to the vice chancellor.

In 2009, she moved to the University of Chicago, first as associate vice president for campus life and then as vice president for campus life and student services. Reporting to the president, she led initiatives including major building projects and transformational diversity and inclusion efforts for students.

The decision to leave UChicago was a deliberate one, Coleman says. Although she loved her work, after more than two decades in higher education, she believed it was time to make a change. However, she wanted to continue working with students and found that harder to do as she rose through the administrative ranks. "The higher up I moved in [higher education], the further away I moved from working directly with students—because that's the nature of the work," she explains. "You become much more involved in policy and strategic planning. Both of those things are interesting and exciting, but I felt like I was getting further and further away from the mission of the institution."

During Coleman's work with college students over more than two decades, she became increasingly interested in how she might be able to apply the experiences and observations she made in higher education to working with students much earlier in their development. Never one to shy away from a new experience, she began to explore PK-12 education. "After more than 20 years in higher ed, my interest was piqued for how I could make a difference with students at a much earlier age," she says. She joined Hockaday in 2017.

As she anticipated, the move was challenging. Hockaday—and Dallas—were different than anywhere Coleman had worked or studied before, and far from both her and her husband's families. Even so, she approached her new school with characteristic rigor, thoroughness and commitment. Over the next five years, she directed a series of innovations, launching an Institute for Social Impact which, like

continued on next page

KAREN WARREN COLEMAN

PC's Center for Public Purpose, sought to engage students in real-world problems that concern their communities. She diversified the school, increasing enrollment of students of color by one-third and increasing diversity on the board of trustees fourfold. Coleman's tenure at Hockaday was marked by transformational change and growth, increasing admission applications and reducing selectivity, working with the board of trustees to come to the difficult decision to phase out the school's boarding option, launching a comprehensive athletics master planning effort and modifying the graduation attire requirement to better reflect best practices and to accommodate non-binary and gender nonconforming students.

At the end of the 2021-22 school year, having successfully led Hockaday through the disruption of Covid-19, Coleman and her husband, Andy, decided it was time to move back to Chicago to help care for her husband's aging parents during their final illnesses.

Penn Charter had begun its search for a new head of school even before Ford publicly announced his decision, in March 2022, to move on. A committee of 11 trustees was appointed, working with the recruiting firm Storbeck Search and creating two panels to engage all parts of the community: a school advisory group, consisting of faculty and staff, and a community advisory group, consisting of parents, caregivers and OPCs.

For Coleman, PC was an attractive opportunity because it offered many of the same strengths that had attracted her to Hockaday and to the universities where she had worked, including a tradition of academic excellence, a commitment to a holistic student experience that included competitive athletics and a strong arts program, superb and thoughtfully-designed facilities, and an engaged community. It was also closer to her family in New York City.

But PC's foundation based on Quaker values offered a new and unfamiliar dimension, one Coleman was eager to embrace head-on.

"She really has been diving into what it means to be a Quaker school," Gadsden says.

In characteristic fashion, Coleman tried to learn everything she could about Quakerism. Her studies helped her address several overarching questions. "My biggest area of interest was in understanding what a Quaker education looks like in the day-to-day lived experiences of our students and our teachers," Coleman says. "When we think about educational pedagogy, what role does Quakerism play? When we think about student leadership, how does our understanding of Quakerism inform our practice? How are our Quaker values fully integrated into the life of the school?"

But Coleman's study of Quakerism was far from just an intellectual exercise. She also talked to everyone she could, asked countless questions and attended Quaker meetings in both Chicago and Philadelphia, simply to have the experience and begin to understand how they operate.

One of four finalists for the head of school post, Coleman spent two days visiting the PC campus and meeting with administrators, faculty and students. Her appointment was announced on Oct. 19, 2022.



Coleman and her husband, Andy Coleman, in Neko Harbour, Antarctica.



Karen and Andy with Andy's late parents, Lola and Virgil Coleman, at Karen's doctoral graduation from Penn in 2015.

"Karen has devoted her career to the care and growth of students," Jeffrey Reinhold, clerk of Trustees, said of her selection. "Karen's passion for students has been in evidence in all her interactions with the Penn Charter community throughout this process. She is smart and serious and can talk on any subject."

"It was the sum total of her background that spoke to us," says Hough, who adds that although PC is a tight-knit community, it is also, in his words, a "thousand customer business," with more than 200 employees as well as parents and alumni. "Karen will bring a degree of rigor that will be very useful to Penn Charter," Hough predicted. "She will construct a culture that allows a large school to feel like a small community."

That rigor will also help Coleman lead PC in developing young learners who are intellectually independent as well as intellectually curious. Looking back to her time at UChicago, Coleman says, she began to be concerned that young people were not arriving at college with those skills already developed. It is one of the reasons she wanted to turn her focus to primary and secondary school education.

“We were seeing students arrive at universities much less well prepared,” she elaborates. “They were brilliant kids, but they were increasingly less capable of engaging in their own self-advocacy, to be agents of their own decision-making.” Bringing her experience in higher education to bear, Coleman says, she was “deeply interested in seeing if I could be a useful, helpful, productive, contributing member in a pre-K through 12 environment.” Ultimately, she believes, the point of a Penn Charter education, “is not just to prepare students for college, but to prepare them to live in the world.”

Former UChicago colleague Karlene Burrell-McRae, now dean of the Undergraduate College at Bryn Mawr, described Coleman’s leadership style as compassionate, empathetic and thought-provoking. “She centers access, diversity, equity, inclusion and antiracism in all that she does,” Burrell-McRae said. “Her drive is all about ensuring her students will not only thrive, they will build foundational skills and begin to develop the confidence to become transformative, socially-conscious change makers in the future.”

Following her selection as head of school, Coleman met regularly with Ford to prepare for the transition. “Darryl has been an incredible friend and mentor,” Coleman says. “We talk regularly, sharing the camaraderie of shared experience and love of PC.” She has also gotten to know Earl and Pam Ball and benefitted from their wisdom. “They both have such a profound understanding and affection for this community,” she marvels. “Earl’s astute ideas, his clear memories of this place and his leadership—his experiences are so timely, and he has been generous to share them with me.”

In early September, at her first opening assembly, Coleman introduced herself to students by emphasizing their shared status as newbies. “Like some of you, I have had my share of a little bit of nervousness,” she confided. “Starting a new job is very much like starting a new school or even a new grade. There is a lot of information to take in, a lot of getting used to new ways of doing things and, of course, getting re-accustomed to homework—and that applies to me, as well! I’m glad we can experience the joy of a new beginning together.”

Coleman arrives just as construction of the new lower school building, the last big piece of the \$135 million **How Far?** capital campaign, gets underway. Even as a newcomer, Coleman says she recognized that such an aspirational campaign could not have succeeded without broad-based support. “The engagement by our OPCs was critical to the financial success of the campaign,” she says, “but really it is a credit to the entire Penn Charter community. A lot of people stepped up, whether in terms of giving their resources or their time.”

The Colemans have begun to settle in to the Philadelphia area. Coleman’s husband, Andy, is a professional photographer who has contributed to National Geographic Traveler, and the National Geographic website and image collection. Both are avid runners, hikers and bikers who are eager to explore local parks and trails. One weekend shortly before school began, they ventured up to Jim Thorpe, Pa., for a 50-mile bike ride. Having lived in some great food cities, they are also excited to explore the local restaurant scene, and Coleman has already approached her new colleagues for recommendations. “I’m just really excited to truly get to know Philly,” she says.

As Coleman and PC get to know one another, the community will appreciate the new head of school’s very hands-on approach to things. “Those who know me well know that I ask lots of questions, hopefully smart questions,” Coleman says. “It’s all in the interest of making sure we are focused on what is best for our students. How do we lift up the student experience in a world that is changing more rapidly than at any point in our lifetimes?”

In the spring and summer, Coleman attended memorial services and Meetings for Worship for Caesar Williams OPC ’80, Nancy Donaghy Hon. 1689 and Steve Simpson OPC ’62. It was a way to pay her respects to those who left an indelible mark on this institution, to meet people spanning generations, and to learn more about the new community she was about to join. Hearing the stories and seeing the connections was a moving experience, one that helped Coleman appreciate the legacy she inherits.



Former heads of school Darryl J. Ford Hon. 1689 and Earl J. Ball Hon. 1689 have shared their wisdom and love of Penn Charter with Coleman.

“Even after being here for decades, there will be people that we will honor who I will never have had the opportunity to know,” she reflects. “But you come to know them through their connection to this community. You listen to their classmates and family, and you learn about them as individuals. You come to understand that they developed deep roots that often started here or intersected here. It’s powerful.”

In other words, the life of a school is not a series of discrete eras. It is a continuum.

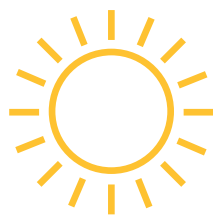
Hough makes the same point about Coleman. “We’re not so much turning the page as continuing to write the story,” he says.

Coleman will contribute to the distinguished story of Penn Charter.

“Karen’s success in strengthening institutions and a deep dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion align seamlessly with Penn Charter’s values,” Robinson says. “Her infectious enthusiasm for education and a proven track record of transformative leadership made her the ideal candidate to guide the school into a promising future.”

Those who might be concerned that Coleman has big shoes to fill should rest assured.

“I have a lot of confidence in Karen,” says Gadsden. “She’s a very dynamic leader. She’ll wear her own shoes.” **PC**



QUAKERISM IS OUTSIDE

by Lisa Turner



As a Penn Charter Upper School teacher and garden educator, I am in my sixth year of work-study with Depaul House garden in Germantown. Through that work, and in partnership with Tom Rickards, my colleague in Religious Studies and Philosophy, I have learned an important truth: Many of the best revelations live outside the school and meeting houses.

Simplicity

Teacher Tom's 10th grade Quakerism class arrives on a sunny October day, the most recent of their alternating visits to local meeting houses and trips to the garden. It is the third year of our partnership. In this course that explores the testimonies of Friends through weekly service projects and reflection, students have grown skilled at learning in changing spaces.

"Okay, friends," I say. "Welcome! Let's begin with a moment of silence."

Our beginning is always a circle.

"It's a good day to garden! I have six tasks today. I'll read the list and you can determine which one speaks to you. One: lettuce and strawberry planting. Two: tall-reaching removal of an invasive weed. Three: tomato harvest. Four: bouquet gathering—recycled jars and scissors are over there. Five: hot pepper harvest—see me for special authorization. And six: Mystery Dig—something delicious is underground in bed 12, but I'm not going to tell you what it is."



Quakerism students who embark on the Mystery Dig unearth purple potatoes. Others bundle bouquets of flowers grown in some of the garden beds.



Lisa Turner and Tom Rickards are partners in the 10th grade Quakerism course and in community garden tending in Germantown.

I re-read the list, and students volunteer for their choices, smiling. There are always surprises. When we loop back to the tall-person task, all eyes land on the youngest McGlinchey. But Tom is not here for typecasting today. He and his colleague stake a claim on the Mystery Dig.

With their important and singular tasks, each set of students cares for the garden and the many communities connected to it. Later that day, two students decide to deliver their jar of zinnias and fuzzy-tailed reeds to Head of School Karen Warren Coleman, who would later talk about how meaningful this seemingly small gesture was to her.

Peace

Depaul House garden is a 25-bed green space at the corner of Sprague and Price Streets in Germantown—part of a large, green land parcel that is privately owned and leased. The house hosts a men's residence with staff supporting pathways to wellness and employment. Penn Charter's partnership with Depaul spans six years.

Teacher Tom's class arrives in a week that has been shattered by news of war. When one task remains unclaimed on the garden list—the tall vine removal—Tom steps into that role, as he always does, filling the need that remains.

“Focusing on that was exactly what I needed today,” he says.

A garden fulfills the need for peace in ourselves and is also a mechanism for peace in the world. To grow is to create, generate and connect. A garden is the opposite of war.

Integrity

I arrived at Penn Charter in 2012, one year after Jim Ballengee founded the Center for Public Purpose, under the headship of Darryl J. Ford. Jim proposed a unique opportunity to fulfill my “coaching” responsibility in the Upper School: managing the learning garden at St. James School down the road in Allegheny West. It was a job component I came to cherish as much as classroom teaching, and it later expanded to PC campus gardening and Depaul House garden. Some of Penn Charter's most distinguished work has emerged from Jim's legacy of integrity; by centering community engagement at Penn Charter, he has ensured that students are consistently connected to our Strategic Vision. Now under the directorship of Aly Goodner, community engagement, outdoor education and experiential learning are all flourishing; Michael LoStracco, chair of Religious Studies and Philosophy, and his department also provide hundreds of students with real and ongoing opportunities to live our Quaker mission.

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Community

When I first began managing the garden at Depaul House, the chain-link fence area was piled 16 feet high with stumps—the perfect scaffolding for stinging, invasive hops. Sister Marge, a resident nun on the property at the time, made it her mission to rid the garden of those stumps. If my years as a student and teacher at Catholic schools taught me anything, it's that when a Sister provides a directive, it is my mission to follow it.

A year later, on my 50th birthday, I decide to take that stump project to the next level by crowdsourcing a mulch pile. For years I had longed for the kind of mulch power to keep the hops and thistles at bay, and this was my big chance! The donations became their own Continuing Revelation. Community is everywhere! Friends from California, Colorado, Virginia and, of course, Philadelphia, all contributed to my weed-abatement mission. Two years later, the mulch has drastically shifted my time from weeding to growing.



For her birthday, Lisa Turner was gifted with enough mulch to keep the community garden thriving.



Volunteer Preston Thomas prepares the ground for pollinator plants and raspberries with the help of a young neighbor.

Pollinator plants and raspberries now thrive in the mulched space where the pileup used to be; my father-in-law is the lead volunteer in this effort, occasionally with the help of a (very) young gardener from the neighborhood.

Equality

The garden is surrounded by a pointed iron fence. Over, through or around it, the neighbors come to visit: Ms. Doreen, the de facto block mayor; artist and mother Moniqua; Christine Gaylord Johnson, a local children's book author. We chat and share the food that grows in the garden. Ms. Doreen has a standing order of scallions, collards and hot peppers, which she returns in little packages of cooked goodness. In the summer, Mondays are chef harvests, tailored for the menus of Depaul House chef Christine'a Rainey and Damon Banks of Dame's Delicious Catering. Dame turns any and all greens into platters of joy.

Neighbor distribution remains the largest and most effective channel for food grown at Depaul House garden. The remaining top five destinations include PC staff and faculty common areas, Germantown Community Fridge, East Falls Community Fridge and the Turner-Thomas family kitchen.

Working at Depaul reveals that time is a luxury. If we have it, spending it in service is one of the most healing things we can do as human beings. A recent visitor to the Upper School, Rodney Eric Lopez, shared a related idea from fellow dance scholar Anita Amirrezvan: "Partner dancing is fun ... but I'd like to suggest that it's also a form of resistance.

When you're dancing, you can't buy anything. You can't be deluged with ads ... You participate and immerse yourself in it, instead of outside and watching it. You're an active creator of your own fun." This truth also applies to the garden, where the only consumption at play is the actual human need to eat! Gardening is a dignity proposition. Food cultivation illuminates the human right to eat what is close, delicious and healthy.

I want to eat everything that grows in the garden—and I do—raw, roasted, sauced and souped. My produce obsession is also compost for conversations about recipes, families and a million other most important things. Community engagement is a relationship, not a transaction. My life, heart and stomach—and those of my friends, family and colleagues—have been filled at Depaul House garden. Tom and I both want this life for our students and the people who live nearby.



July harvest at the Depaul House garden.

Stewardship

To steward the Earth and all of its residents is also to grow new thoughts and realize that nothing is new. Perhaps Shakespeare put it best: When Hamlet and Horatio, his best friend and fellow theologian, discuss the mysterious appearance of The Ghost, Hamlet says, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Shakespeare wrote these lines at a time when two

versions of Christianity were competing for primacy in Europe; praying to the dead had recently been declared illegal by the Protestants then in power.

I like to interpret these lines as Shakespeare telegraphing the folly of human rules, borders and enclosures. The garden itself as a wrought-iron enclosure is a very recent human practice; when 18th century European land holders introduced fencing to keep peasants away from particular areas, hunger and poverty emerged in new ways. Throughout the Lenapehoking, the original homeland of the Lenape, our Indigenous friends continue to grow and find food everywhere. They have embodied Quaker testimonies since a time well before Quakers existed.

"Gardening is a dignity proposition. Food cultivation illuminates the human right to eat what is close, delicious and healthy."



I have learned that everyone needs good food. Everyone is in need. Community and other testimonies are enacted both inside and outside. Things that grow are medicine. The best food distribution channels will always be closest to the source: neighbors, bees, teachers, groundhogs, goldfinches, high school students, and of course, the gardener. The unannounced visits of cats and insects, just like our students' planned ones, are joy deliveries. Each of us brings our own lived testimonies of peace, integrity, stewardship and equity. [PC](#)

If you and your family would like to spend time at Depaul House garden, email Lisa Turner at ltturner@penncharter.com.

LEARN MORE.

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<https://www.lenape-nation.org>



Visual Arts faculty members cultivate their own creativity as well as their students'. Pictured, front: Jennifer Chernak, Brooke Giles, Joy Lai. Back: Karen Riedlmeier, Eva Kay Noone, Bill Cusick, Ruth McGee, Jasmine Spence, Rosemary Kilbane.

Accustomed to showcasing their students' art throughout the year—and especially during the annual All-School Art Show—Penn Charter's art teachers this year celebrated each other's talents by exhibiting their own art to the community in October. It was just a glimpse into their varied talents, as the Visual Arts Department faculty are all practicing artists and designers outside of the classroom.

From pre-K to Upper School, each art teacher comes to their teaching practice with an ongoing personal experience with art-making. As artists, their thirst for creative challenges extends beyond the schoolhouse, as seen in their exhibits, inclusion in art residencies, visibility at art fairs, and summer professional development at notable art institutions all over the country. When these teachers work with students, they bring their art practice and enthusiasm into the classroom in unique ways through demonstrations, references to current events in the art world, meaningful reflection and guidance as students experience for themselves the power of decision-making within their own art.

We invite you to take a moment to learn about the Visual Arts faculty who play an integral role in schoolhouse events, culture, interdisciplinary work, service, and the support they offer students in identifying and expressing their creative self.

Joy Lai Chair of the Visual Arts Department, Upper School

Joy has a wide span of art practices: photography, drawing, painting and printmaking. Dedicated to her drawing practice and as a member of the Urban Sketchers community, she has sketchbooks filled with work from Philadelphia neighborhoods and throughout Europe. Last summer she attended the Printmaking ArtLab Residency at the Kansas City Art Institute as well as the Summer Artist/Educator Residency at Moore College. She is a 2024 recipient of the inaugural Linda Dubin Garfield Fellowship at the Da Vinci Art Alliance.

Ruth McGee Upper School

Ruth is a ceramicist who also works in mixed media and paint, and participates in live-figure drawing in her neighborhood. Her studio on the marshes of New Jersey offers inspiration from nature. "What I hope," she said, "is to be able to inspire individuals to maintain a sense of eagerness, to ask questions with enough curiosity to nurture their yearning to know more." Last summer she attended the Mixed Media ArtLab Residency at the Kansas City Art Institute.

Bill Cusick Upper School

Bill is a potter with a studio in Glenside. He primarily works on the wheel, and his plateware, bowls, mugs and serving pieces are available during events at his studio. "My life as an outdoorsman really informs my work as a potter," he said. "I constantly am finding natural elements and forms to bring into my work." Bill first brought his talents to Penn Charter while covering for Ruth McGee in the ceramics studio.

Eva Kay Noone Upper School

Eva Kay for many years has designed costumes for theater outside of school; her sewing and design skills are part of the service work she brings to the community. She is vice president of the board of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ballet Society and frequently designs costumes and headpieces for the ballet company, including a recent performance of *Carnival of the Animals*. She volunteers her talents for two major ballets each year: *The Nutcracker* and a spring production that includes classical ballet repertoire and original works.

Rosemary Kilbane Upper School

Rosemary has her own graphic design consulting business, Altitude, where she uses her creativity to brighten local businesses' branding. Rose's interest in painting began at a young age. While in college at Rhode Island School of Design, she created large-scale multimedia pieces that bridged the divide between realistic painting and the abstract/individual perceptions of the eye. It was there that her work in the abstract began across painting and photography. Rose works with positive and negative shapes and textures in her abstract paintings to create emotion and feelings. Her paintings have been featured in local galleries.

Jennifer Chernak Middle School

Jennifer's paintings are abstract representations of nature. She has a studio in Germantown where she holds open studio events, and she also exhibits in juried shows. Videos about her art can be found on YouTube and through her website, jchernak.com. "I enjoy being a witness to the artist that lives within each student," she said. "Students make bold and exciting choices. The Middle School art room is a place of discovery and joy." Last summer she attended the Painting ArtLab Residency at the Kansas City Art Institute.

Karen Riedlmeier Lower School

Karen creates paintings and drawings in her home studio and outside on location. She illustrated the children's book *The Lost Princess*, written by now-retired PC teacher Charlie Kaesshaefer. She also takes studio classes each year, including two gouache classes through Penn Studios this summer. "This is my 32nd year teaching art at PC," she said. "Each day my students nurture the learner inside me and inspire me with their curiosity, bravery and creativity. Teaching and making my own art keeps me in a student's mindset. Each day I am solving creative problems while satisfying my soul."



In October, art teachers exhibited their own talents in the Special Gifts Gallery and invited the community to an opening reception.

Brooke Giles Pre-Kindergarten

Brooke's art and teaching practice focuses on play. Her teaching philosophy is rooted in the Reggio Emilia pedagogy, which values hands-on exploration and discovery of children's interests. Her personal art practice reflects these values as well, embracing an organic playful interaction with materials and process. She works primarily in mixed media, specifically using printmaking, drawing and fiber arts. Last summer Brooke settled into a new studio space at her home in Germantown, where she looks forward to growing her practice.

Michelle Dowd Lower School

Michelle freelances as an illustrator and graphic designer. She illustrates children's books and coloring books, in addition to designing logos, cards, posters and toys. Michelle enjoys painting with oil, acrylic, watercolor, gouache and often layers it with drawing materials or collage. She appreciates the process of creating "something out of nothing" and loves to watch students bring their ideas to life.

Jasmine Spence Lower School

Jasmine, a member of Newtown Friends Meeting, is a designer and artist whose work spans a variety of media such as watercolor, clay and architecture. Last summer she designed an addition to a lake house in coastal Maine. New to Penn Charter, and filling in during Michelle Dowd's maternity leave, she is delighted to be working with students in a Friends school. "I really enjoy seeing the exuberant, uninhibited creativity of the Lower School children as they engage in their process of art making," she said. **PC**



WHATEVER THE WEATHER

In "Whatever the Weather," a festival of short plays, 37 Middle and Upper School performers and 18 crew members explored the perils and comedy of an ice storm, a snow day and a tempest.





In the one-act play festival opener, “Paper or Plastic: The Ice Storm,” the audience cheered for Sarah, the new assistant manager of a grocery store, as she navigated an impending blizzard. “Just Another Snow Day” highlighted the comedic talents of a combined Middle and Upper School cast when a snow day upends their plans and creates new opportunities. In the third play, “The Tempest,” the audience journeyed into a magical Shakespearean realm where love, forgiveness and redemption would take center stage.

Holly Silberman made her directorial debut with the Middle School production of “Paper or Plastic: The Ice Storm.” “Just Another Snow Day” was directed by Eva Kay Noone and featured the hilarious exploits of students and teachers. The adaptation of Shakespeare’s “The Tempest,” directed by Ari Baker, was performed by Upper School students.

“Balancing academics and athletics, our cast made sure not to miss a beat in play rehearsal,” Silberman said. “Their final performances were spectacular and showed their wide-ranging abilities. It was a pleasure working with the cast, who made me smile every day and delighted our audience.”

Baker was excited about the concept of the festival because “it connected the Middle and Upper School divisions to work and play together,” she said. “It has been a pleasure seeing students in grades six through 12 acting together on stage and cheering each other on. It is a joy to watch them grow and learn as individuals, students, performers and a community.” [PC](#)

 See more photos at [flickr.com/photos/penncharter/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/penncharter/albums).

Photography by Wide Eyed Studios





137TH PC/GA DAY



The Penn Charter campus was energized by hundreds of students, OPCs, families, faculty, staff and friends at the 137th PC/GA Day on Nov. 11.

The joyous occasion culminated in PC's retention of the Competition Cup following victories by the Quakers in six of the 10 athletic contests against Germantown Academy, including a 35-14 win in the day's concluding football game!

The event also marked the first PC/GA Day for Head of School Karen Warren Coleman, who cheered on PC's student athletes from the sidelines, joined teams for each of the senior recognitions before and after the games, and jubilantly took part in the on-field celebration following football's victory.



View more photos at [flickr.com/penncharter/sets](https://www.flickr.com/photos/penncharter/).



BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

Securing second-place finishes at both the Inter-Ac and PAISAA championships in late October, the Quakers dug deep for one final race and defeated GA 19-37. PC had six of the top 10 runners in the race, and junior TJ Zwall was named Most Outstanding Player.

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

A tight 24-31 loss to GA did not diminish the season's accomplishments of the PC girls cross country squad, which entered the day fresh off a first-place finish at the PAISAA Championship on Oct. 28. Junior Alli DeLisi finished first overall on PC/GA Day, and was named Most Outstanding Player.





GIRLS WATER POLO

The Quakers capped off a brilliant season with their seventh consecutive PC/GA Day victory, this time by a score of 14-6. Junior Zoe Page was named Most Outstanding Player and finished the season with 40 goals, third on the team behind sophomore Lili DeMartinis (59) and junior Eliza Black (55). The Quakers finished the year 17-4 to post a 48-12 mark over the past three years, which includes three straight Eastern Prep titles and three trips in a row to the Flight 1 Championship in the Beast of the East Tournament.



BOYS WATER POLO

For three quarters, the Quakers had an upset on their minds, leading 9-6 heading into the final frame. GA had come away with wins in the teams' prior two contests on the season. Unfortunately, the Patriots scored the game's final six goals to claim a 12-9 win. The team finished the year 15-13 in league and non-league play.



TENNIS

Girls tennis capped off a strong season with a dominant 7-0 victory over GA, the team's second shutout win over the Patriots of the season. Senior captains Savannah Abernethy and Frances Guenther were named Most Outstanding Players. On the year, PC finished 10-6 overall and 8-4 in the Inter-Ac, good for a third-place finish.



FOOTBALL

After winning their first three games of the season, the Quakers suffered five straight defeats. This difficult stretch tested the team's resilience—a challenge they met and conquered head on against their greatest rival to earn an emphatic 21-point victory, 35-14. Senior Zach Curtin, who rushed for a season-high 176 yards on 20 carries and threw a 7-yard strike to junior Eian Kilpatrick for his first career passing score, was awarded the Geis Trophy as the game's most outstanding player.



BOYS SOCCER

While the Quakers came up just short of an Inter-Ac title, they were able to triumphantly close their season with the most thrilling victory on PC/GA Day—a 1-0 overtime win on a penalty kick goal by sophomore William van Beelen with 31 seconds remaining. Senior goalie Pete Punchello received the James Rumpp OPC '55 MVP Trophy for his stellar shutout performance.



GIRLS SOCCER

A season that started off with four losses was redeemed by the Quakers winning six of their final eight Inter-Ac games, including a 3-2 victory on PC/GA Day. Senior Gia McCusker's goal before halftime ended up being the difference-maker, as the Quaker back line, along with senior goalie Maia Kafer, held the Patriots scoreless the rest of the way. McCusker was awarded Most Outstanding Player.



FIELD HOCKEY

The Quakers dropped a 2-1 heartbreaker in overtime, but the result did not dampen their season's success. The team won seven games on the year, the most wins for a season since 2019. Sophomore goalie Ailyah Leonard was named Most Outstanding Player, coming up with several huge saves that kept PC in the game.



GOLF

Golf typically tees off the PC/GA Day festivities early, and this year's Nov. 8 match took place at Huntingdon Valley Country Club. The event featured a match play format, where each school's top eight golfers were pitted individually against one another for nine holes. Despite a great showing from PC's golfers, GA came out with the win, 6.5-1.5.



Athletics Achievements

Each year, the athletics staff, coaches and Director of Athletics Mike Brooks celebrate PC students who are recruited to play their sport in college, thanking the athletes and their families for their contributions to Penn Charter athletics and the school community. Congratulations to all of the seniors who will be competing in athletics at the collegiate level!

In November 2023, 17 seniors were recognized for their college commitments.

Back (L-R): Christian Clauss (College of the Holy Cross, baseball), Curran Rahn (Fairfield University, lacrosse), Ella Lewandowski (University of Oregon, lacrosse), Aditi Foster (Northwestern University, lacrosse), Grace Walter (William & Mary, lacrosse), Toni Plunkett (Bucknell University, lacrosse), Olivia Linus (Merrimack College, soccer), Devon Felsenstein (Springfield College, gymnastics), James Joel (Sacred Heart University, lacrosse).

Front: Gavin Michener (Villanova University, lacrosse), Nora Maione (Rutgers University, lacrosse), Macie Bergmann (Drexel University, softball), Maia Kafer (Connecticut College, soccer), Ellie Choate (Duke University, rowing), Ava Egan (Fairleigh Dickinson University, lacrosse), Abby Steinbrook (University of Delaware, swimming), Jimmy Melnick (Lafayette College, soccer).

 Look for additional college-bound athletes in the spring issue.



Get into the SportsZone



Read all the buzz about Penn Charter athletics in SportsZone, a weekly news column on our website featuring highlights from varsity sporting events and interviews with coaches and student athletes, written by Ed Morrone OPC '04.

Visit penncharter.com/sportszone and find the June 6, 2023 post for a spring 2023 sports recap!



RAYMOND R. DOONEY HON. 1689 ATHLETIC HONOR SOCIETY CLASS OF 2023



Steve Bonnie OPC '66 welcomed the AHS crowd.

When the Dooney Field House was removed this fall to make way for the construction of PC's new lower school, Penn Charter sought a way to continue to recognize the impact of the building's namesake. Raymond R. Dooney Hon. 1689 was a legendary football coach who impacted the lives of many who attended PC in the 1950s and '60s. Since his influence was most felt on the playing field, it made sense to sustain his legacy by naming the Athletic Honor Society in his honor.

With a gift made by the estate of Laurence M. Russell Jr. OPC '64, the newly renamed Raymond R. Dooney Hon. 1689 Athletic Honor Society inducted its first round of honorees under his name on Nov. 10.

Congratulations to the inductees.

INDIVIDUAL INDUCTEES

James Davis OPC '59
Ed Yaeger OPC '93
Larry Storm OPC '96
Lauren Cash O'Hara OPC '03
Bridget McDugall OPC '07
Donald (Doc) Mittica, Coach

TEAM INDUCTEES

1980 Boys Tennis
1998 Girls Cross Country
2007 Boys Water Polo
2013 Girls Soccer



View the AHS videos at penncharter.com/ahs • View more photos at flickr.com/penncharter/sets

ATHLETIC HONOR SOCIETY CLASS OF 2023



James Davis OPC '59 lettered in basketball, track and soccer, and was named All-Inter-Ac in soccer for three of his playing years, as well as league MVP in 1958. He was basketball co-captain and honorable mention All-Inter-Ac during the 1958-59 season, and Inter-Ac track champion in 1959, earning first in the 440 and 880 and setting a record in 880 at 2:05.4.



Ed Yaeger OPC '93 reenacting his swimming form while receiving his AHS award.

Ed Yaeger OPC '93 was All-Inter-Ac in swimming in 1991, 1992 and 1993, and All-American in 1992 (relays) and 1993 (relays and 50 freestyle). He holds PC records in the 50 free (team and pool), the 100 free (pool), the 4x100 medley relay (team and pool) and the 4x100 freestyle relay (team and pool). In his senior year, Yaeger was ranked in the top 20 in the nation in the 50 free and 100 free. He also played water polo his sophomore, junior and senior years before water polo was recognized as a lettered sport at Penn Charter.



Larry Storm OPC '96 was a three-sport athlete, football and basketball captain, and baseball starter. In football, he was First Team All-Inter-Ac, First Team All-City and Second Team All-State. During the 1995 season, Storm threw for 1,810 yards, good for 201.1 yards per game and 15 touchdowns. He also received the Geis Trophy as most valuable player in the 1995 PC/GA game. His 292 yards passing in a single game ranks ninth in PC history.



Lauren Cash O'Hara OPC '03 was a field hockey and softball captain in the 2002-03 season. Named MVP and All-Inter-Ac for field hockey her senior year, she was selected to the USA Futures Program in 2001 and 2002. In softball, she led the team in on-base percentage and stolen bases for three varsity seasons.



Bridgette McDugall '07 was a varsity letter winner in softball, basketball and soccer all four years, and captain of soccer, basketball and softball. She was also All-Inter-Ac and MVP in soccer in 2006, and a member of the Inter-Ac Championship softball teams in 2004, 2005 and 2006. She earned MVP honors in softball in 2007.



Donald (Doc) Mittica was the first head coach of PC softball, serving for 30 seasons from the program's inception in 1992, through 2021. He posted an overall record of 403-171-1 and an Inter-Ac record of 191-75. During his tenure, the team earned nine Inter-Ac championships and four PAISAA championships. Mittica coached 85 players who were named to All-Inter-Ac teams.



Coach Donald (Doc) Mittica, Sarah Kate LeVan OPC '92 and John Burkhart OPC '72.



ATHLETIC HONOR SOCIETY CLASS OF 2023

The **1980 boys tennis team** earned the first Inter-Ac title since 1961 and featured several outstanding players, including Josh Sarnier OPC '80, who went undefeated in 1980 to finish first in singles and, over six varsity seasons, compiled a record of 83-4. The team also received important contributions from Evan Jones OPC '82, who finished second in singles; Don Klein OPC '80, who finished fourth in singles; and Franklin Horowitz OPC '81, who finished fourth in singles.

PICTURED: Josh Sarnier OPC '80, Ward Greer Jr. OPC '80, Roger Muchnick OPC '80, Franklin Horowitz OPC '81, Steve Guyer OPC '81, Peter Klein OPC '80.



The **1998 girls cross country team** finished undefeated in dual meets and earned first place at the George School Invitational before winning the Inter-Ac and PAISAA championships. The team also took first in the league by 34 points over GA. All-Inter-Ac honors were awarded to Catherine Peff, Eden Silverstein OPC '99, Tiffany Reynolds OPC '00, Stephanie Saint Germain OPC '99, Meg Walters OPC '99, Gita Rao OPC '99 and Rachel Berman OPC '00. Peff and Silverstein also captured All-State honors.

PICTURED: Jim Ballengee Hon. 1689, Stephanie Saint Germain OPC '99, Eden Silverstein OPC '99, Meredith O'Brien OPC '02, Lauren Wechsler '00, Lindsay Ballengee OPC '99.



The **2007 boys water polo team** went undefeated in the Inter-Ac and set a school record at the time with a .828 winning percentage at 24-5 overall. Twins Kyle and Jeremy Maurer OPC '08 shared league MVP honors, and Elias Tanner OPC '08 was All-Inter-Ac in goal. Sam Lozoff OPC '08 was also All-Inter-Ac, and Matt Tausch OPC '08 earned an All-Inter-Ac honorable mention. Six players on the team scored over 35 goals on the season.

PICTURED: Matt Tausch OPC '08, Matt Star OPC '08, Kyle Maurer OPC '08, Matt Cahn OPC '08, Sam Lozoff OPC '08, Jeremy Maurer OPC '08, Mac Ferrick OPC '10, Elias Tanner OPC '08, Evan Gagne OPC '08, Charlie Brown Hon. 1689 (coach), Joe Acquaviva OPC '10, Ben Cooper OPC '09, Drew Bonus OPC '09.



The **2013 girls soccer team** finished the season 10-1-1 in the Inter-Ac and 20-2-1 overall before winning the Inter-Ac and PAISAA championships—both firsts for the program. Dominique DeMarco OPC '16, Lauren Dimes OPC '14, Jlon Flippens OPC '16 and Stephanie Soroka OPC '14 earned All-Inter-Ac first team honors. Flippens was also named All-Southeastern Pennsylvania, and DeMarco was later drafted by the San Diego Wave of the National Women's Soccer League.

PICTURED: Hannah Fox OPC '16, Stephanie Soroka OPC '14, Kristina Kubach OPC '14, Abby Evans OPC '15, Jlon Flippens OPC '16, Darcy Borski (coach), Julianna Casasanto OPC '14, Ashley Maher, Kellyn Zeuner.

OPC WEEKEND 2023



More than 300 graduates returned to campus for the 130th Old Penn Charter Weekend on May 5 and 6, reconnecting with former classmates and educators during the awards ceremony, reception, OPCs of Color Brunch, athletic contests and the All-School Art Show.

Eleven reunions for classes ending in 3s and 8s also attracted alumni from 25 different states to celebrate at PC and at venues across Philadelphia.

On May 6, the lives of former PC teacher Buff Wiegand Hon. 1689, who taught history, math, religion and PE for 27 years, and longtime Board of Trustees member Caesar D. Williams Jr. OPC '80 were remembered at separate Memorial Meetings for Worship. This year's OPCs of Color Brunch was in honor of Williams, who always looked forward to the event.



Nikki Negron OPC '04, Sue Brennan OPC '04 and Amanda Zaid OPC '04 reconnected during OPC Weekend.



OPCs of Color Brunch

OPCs of Color gathered on May 6 to enjoy breakfast and good company.

DAVID P. MONTGOMERY OPC '64 Alumni Award of Merit

STEVEN A. BALBUS OPC '71

The Alumni Award of Merit is given “to a graduate of William Penn Charter School whose character and outstanding achievement have reflected lasting credit upon this old school.”



Steve Balbus's name is the latest addition to the list of Alumni Award of Merit honorees on the Meeting Room wall.

Steven A. Balbus OPC '71 traveled all the way from Oxford, England to return to Penn Charter's Meeting Room, where he was honored by the school and Alumni Society President Michelle Chaitt OPC '00 for an exemplary life after PC.

Balbus is a Salvian Professor of Astronomy and a Professorial Fellow of New College at the University of Oxford, England.

A theoretical astrophysicist, he has taught courses in astronomy and astrophysics at all levels, and has made widely-recognized contributions to the understanding of accretion discs, dilute gasses and the interior of the sun.



Steve Balbus (right) with his brother, John Balbus OPC '78.

Balbus made other discoveries when he returned to PC.

“The school has become an amazing place, with so many changes from the '60s and '70s, all of them clearly for the good,” he said. “It [is] evident everywhere.”

Beyond the joy of first viewing his name painted reverentially on the Meeting Room wall by retired visual arts teacher Randy Granger Hon. 1689, Balbus had a chance to catch up with old friends and family.

“To be able to reconnect with classmates and to have Rod Hillas OPC '71 and my brother [John OPC '78] meet one another was an emotional high,” Balbus said. “It was an evening that I will truly never forget.” PC

John F. Gummere Distinguished Teacher Award

BRIAN McCLOSKEY OPC '82

Brian McCloskey OPC '82, an Upper School math teacher since 1986 who has coached baseball and football in various capacities over 30 years, was honored with the John F. Gummere Distinguished Teacher Award.

“As I reflect on my four years as a student and 36 years of teaching at this institution, my heart is filled with gratitude and appreciation,” McCloskey said after accepting the award.

“I would like to thank the parents of this community, especially those parents who supported me during my tenure as head football coach and dean of students. Your generosity and support did not go unnoticed.”

McCloskey also thanked his current and former colleagues for their guidance, support, mentorship and expertise; his family for their unwavering support, sacrifices, encouragement and understanding; and his current and former students.

“Your unique personalities, talents and contributions to my time at Penn Charter have made my teaching experience truly special,” McCloskey said of the students who have shaped his career. “You have been an unforgettable part of my journey as an educator.”

“The emphasis on community and the fostering of strong teacher-student relationships among other things is what makes Penn Charter special. This school has given me the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of countless students, and for that I will always be grateful.”



Brian McCloskey with son Colin OPC '14, wife Gina, and daughter Karly OPC '16.

Honorary 1689

"Given to a member of the Penn Charter community who has shown extraordinary commitment to the school by demonstrating pride and excellence in the performance of their duties and by consistently providing encouragement and support to the student body."

JEROME ALLEN

Jerome Allen has spent more than 30 years at Penn Charter, serving as a member of PC's grounds and transportation teams. Since 1992, his dedication to the school community has spoken volumes through the range of responsibilities he completes for the benefit of students, faculty and staff, families, and all visitors to campus.

When he was conferred an Honorary 1689 diploma in May, Allen's wife, Jennifer Cresina Allen, delivered acceptance remarks.

"Every day, Jerome goes to work and puts his best foot forward, making sure the students at Penn Charter get the things they need," Jennifer said, standing next to Jerome on stage in the Meeting Room after he received his diploma. "Whether it is through driving the bus or making sure the facilities and grounds are always ready to go, Jerome helps to allow these students to reach their maximum potential."

"To work anywhere for over 30 years is quite an accomplishment," Cresina continued. "However, to work in a place to help kids grow and develop physically, emotionally, spiritually and academically is to me, a far greater achievement."



Celebrating with Allen (center), from left, mother-in-law Patricia Cresina; friend Chrissy Rodrigues; daughter Autumn Allen; wife Jennifer Cresina Allen; sisters Genevieve and Helena Allen; and father-in-law Dennis Cresina.



Jen Ketler (center) celebrated the conferral of her Honorary 1689 diploma with brother-in-law Jon Dyer, brother Michael Steinbrook OPC '89, nephew Jevyn Dyer, sister Rachel Dyer OPC '92, and mother Carol Steinbrook Hon. 1689.

JENNIFER KETLER

Jennifer Ketler, a Middle School math teacher and softball coach, also received an Honorary 1689 diploma. Ketler began teaching at Penn Charter in 1999 and has also served as Middle School math coordinator and eighth grade advisor.

"The countless relationships that I have developed with students, and the fact that I get to see them continue to succeed in high school, is such a valuable gift," Ketler said after receiving her diploma. "When people ask me why Penn Charter, I always credit the amazing students that we have."

Ketler was joined by her family at the reception after the ceremony—a group that includes sister Rachel Dyer OPC '92, PC's registrar and database manager, and mother Carol Steinbrook Hon. 1689, who retired from PC in August after 41 years in the development and business offices.



William Penn Charter School Then & Now

c. Early 1950s

John Flagg Gummere, catching up with Middle School baseball players, was the fourth head of school in the modern era, 1941-68.



2023

Karen Warren Coleman, cheering with the girls soccer team on PC/GA Day, became Penn Charter's eighth head of school on July 1, 2023.

Class Notes



Penn Charter magazine wants to hear from you, and your classmates do, too! Submit your news and photos at penncharter.com/classnote. Digital photos should be 300 dpi JPEGs.

Hon. 1689

Chris B. Fabian shares that she and her wife, Konstanze, had the good fortune to attend two FIFA Women's World Cup games last summer in New Zealand. "Sadly, the U.S. was out by the time we arrived, but we did see Spain win twice before they headed to the final game. Earlier in the year, my sons **Jonathan Christoph OPC '07**, Robert, and **Carl P. Christoph OPC '14** surprised me at the Mother's Day Rockies vs. Phillies game at Coors Field; they flew to Denver just for the day. What a gift! I continue to volunteer three days per week at the Colorado Therapeutic Riding Center, working with riders and horses. While retirement in Colorado is a blessing, I remain grateful for 34 years of teaching at PC."



1936

First Lt. John A. McCown II was officially memorialized by the Army's 10th Mountain Division with a training school in Fort Drum, N.Y. bearing his name.



a moment of weakness, I agreed to be the recording secretary for the Valle Verde Resident Council. This consists of assembling 21 reports in 21 different computer languages. Our daughters are doing well. Susan lives in Sun Valley, and Jennifer is currently working in India."

Eugene M. Cheston Jr. reports, "My wife, Elsie, passed away in June. Most readers react to our news as being sad. I'm traveling a different path than being sad. We were married for 60 years, and I truly recall every year as being a great marriage. On a different note, I made a gift to PC in memory of **William H. Hobson** and **Michael N. Wood**, two of my closest friends over many years. I was Bill's best man and close friend until he was taken from us way too young by cancer. Mike died recently; we had been friends since 1939. He taught me how to fly in a military surplus airplane SNJ-5 (Navy) or T-6 (Air Force). We traveled all over. I especially recall good times flying around the Bahamas. Great experiences. I continue to be in touch with his widow, Mary."

Skip C. Corson Jr. writes, "My life partner, Penny Brodie, and I had hoped to attend her all-class high school reunion in Camden, Maine. This was not to be. Next year we'll make it because it will be her 65th. (Please don't tell her I gave out the actual count!) For vacation this summer, we headed to my family's camp in Moultonborough, N.H., on Lake Winnepesaukee. It makes me happy that my children still want to come back each year to a place that has many joyful memories for them and their offspring. This process is not easy, since **Benjamin OPC '83** lives in California, Julia is in Oregon, Tracy lives in Massachusetts,

1950

William M. Buchsbaum and his wife, Jane, were named Santa Fe Living Treasures for their many years of dedicated service to nonprofit organizations throughout Santa Fe.

1952

Arthur U. Ayres Jr. writes, "Ann and I are doing well. I'm still playing pickleball twice a week with mixed results but good fun and exercise. A science discussion group was started several years ago. During Covid it slowed down with Zoom and aging participants, but suddenly there's a new spirit with younger participants. I just gave a PowerPoint presentation on spatial filtering, which is the use of underwater acoustic arrays to detect Russian submarines. In

and Nick resides in New Jersey. Penny and I value our continuing contacts with local OPC '52 classmates, including Jean and **David M. Jordan**, **Wally Loeb**, Carol and **Bill McGuckin**, and **F. Bruce Waechter**."

Colson H. Hillier Jr. writes, "Hilliers' highlight in February 2023 was a two-week cruise on the Norwegian Star to Antarctica. We survived the Drake Passage, had a spectacular day cruising Admiralty Bay and have seen enough penguins, whales, birds, seals, plants and ice to last us a lifetime! We also had a nice visit in August on Cape Cod with our two sons and family; it's always great to see the four grandchildren. Home on Amelia Island, Fla., Pat is busy volunteering and playing some crazy canasta game called Hand and Foot, while I'm still playing pétanque, doing lots of reading and loving the Wordle challenge. Go Eagles!"

David M. Jordan writes that he has enjoyed "getting granddaughter **Grace Jordan-Weinstein OPC '23** off to Northwestern following her much-decorated graduation from Penn Charter, and grandson **Charlie Jordan-Weinstein OPC '20**, also a PC graduate, getting ready for another good year at Penn. Otherwise, Jean and I spend most of our days at home here at the Quadrangle in Haverford."

William M. McFadden reports, "My last update was two years ago when I had just come to assisted living and lost my wife. Here's a quick life summary and current report. I finished my residency (with a couple of years out for the Army) at a time when Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center was looking for another ophthalmologist. I was happy to settle in Hanover, N.H. It was home until we retired to Florida in 1996 and spent our retirement years traveling, first by air and land, later by ships. Over the years, I've kept two hobbies: photography and fishing. The legs are a bit wobbly for many things. Photography has come to the rescue, giving me something to keep active. I started



Pictured: **Robert R. Adams**, **Richard P. Graff**, **William M. Felton Jr.**, **Philip E. Lippincott** and **Richard L. Geyer**.

taking informal portraits of my neighbors and the lovely people who take care of us. I converted to black and white, and put them on display. Figured I'd be thrown out, but it is a sensation."

William J. McGuckin writes, "The McGuckins enjoyed a nice summer at our Rangeley, Maine, home since early May. While a bit of rain at times, it was certainly much cooler than the Philadelphia area. We had a lot of our family, including Carol's brother, stop for overnight visits during the summer and planned to stay in Maine until the end of leaf season at the end of September."

Michael P. Ritter writes, "My wife, Margo, and I have lived beautifully together for many years in Takoma Park, Md., in the house that originated the neighborhood some years before we got here. Even though we never had kids, we've enjoyed our neighbors and the neighborhood for friends and shopping, and enjoying the lanes to take our daily walks."

F. Bruce Waechter reports, "In August, we were blessed with a sixth great-grandchild. We have nine grandchildren. Nine of our family members live in Seattle, others in Las Vegas, Minneapolis and Boston, as well as three in Philadelphia. Although we miss having more of the them nearby, we are blessed with a healthy family. Janet passed away two years ago, but we enjoyed 65 years of marriage together—what a legacy! I'm living in a continuing care retirement facility in suburban Philadelphia, and have a few minor ailments, but our family has been truly blessed with good health and happiness."

1956

Laurence T. Howell writes, "Our oldest grandchild, Daniel, just had a daughter, Morgan Mae. We are proud great-grandparents!"

Class Notes

1959

James R. Buchanan writes, "I am joyously married to the same wonderful woman after 58 years. I still enjoy elk hunting, snowmobiling, traveling and single malt scotch. Three great male 'kids' and six grandchildren. Life is very good!"

1960

James M. Arrison III golfed with **Richard P. Allman** at the annual Bert Linton Golf Outing.



Pictured: **James M. Arrison III**, David Connolly, **Samuel H. Francis**, **Richard P. Allman**

1961

David L. Geyer reports, "Was busy this summer replanting the lawn and rebuilding veggie beds while adding view site decks atop our sunset hillside and waterfall at the end of our century-old pond."



Raymond W. Vickers and his wife, Priscilla, hosted a dinner in their new home in Concord, Mass. The night was spent telling stories about the Class of 1961 and teachers with (pictured, from left) **Ranney W.**

Thayer, **David O. Williams** and **Jack Rogers Hon. 1689.**



1963

Charles Kurz II (left) ran into **Wilson S. Ross OPC '46** in Bryn Mawr, and they posed for a picture in their PC hats.



W.B. Starke and his wife, Mimi, are pictured with Barry's Lionel train display at their home in North Carolina. Most of the trains are from his childhood, and Barry built most of the buildings in his later years to create this display.



1968

Edwin S. Skinner Jr. shared, "The whole Skinner/Marshall family (pictured) gathered on Labor Day to have fun fly-fishing and being together. We do this weekend every year. We headed for the Grand Tetons for a western getaway with many cool stops. On the way back, we stopped in Fairfield, Iowa, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the closing of Parsons College, where Pam and I met in 1968!"



1970

George J. Hauptfuhrer III and his wife, Sally, celebrated their 42nd anniversary in June and their daughter's 40th birthday in September. He writes, "We continue to live in Atlanta but wish we lived closer to our three children and seven grandkids, who live in Pennsylvania, California and Maryland. I'm on a glide path to retirement as an investment consultant, trying to stay in shape and getting increasingly involved in church activities."

1973

Frederick H. Bartlett III enjoyed his 50th reunion, held at the Timmons House last May. He writes, "We had an excellent turnout, and it was great talking with so many members of our class. My second year assisting head coach **Chris Rogers OPC '97** with the Middle School boys lacrosse team (pictured) was again very rewarding for me. I loved returning to the PC campus five days a week, coaching the boys and interacting with PC staff members."



Roger S. McDowell reports, "I finally retired as COO of an orthopedic group practice in Chicago. Redeployed as CTO—"chief tilling officer"—of a backyard farm in Charlottesville, Va. My wife and I are channeling our inner Oliver and Lisa Douglas (of *Green Acres*). Enjoyed seeing my classmates at the 50th reunion. Great surprise to see **Billy Roberts** again. Shout out to **Bob Marquess** for keeping the OPC '73s in line!"



CLASS OF 1973 50TH REUNION



1974

David L. Doms writes, "After teaching at Berklee College of Music for 20+ years in the electronic production and design department, I have retired, but continue to teach for Berklee Online part-time. I've recently released several of my electronic creations on the streaming services Spotify, Pandora, YouTube Music and Apple Music under the name of Dreamtime9 (search "Dreamtime9 Primordial"). I've also been releasing some works with my electronic improvisational duo, The Fest (search "The Fest Glide") and re-releasing songs from my former band, Down Avenue (search "Down Avenue This Moment"). I'd enjoy reconnecting with some old classmates; you can reach me at ddoms@berklee.edu."

Class Notes



David S. Jonas is looking forward to a strong turnout for the class's 50th reunion next spring. He is a partner at

Fluet Law in Tysons, Va., and is also nearing 20 years as an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown and George Washington University law schools in the national security field. He teaches nuclear nonproliferation law and policy, a class he created after serving as the nuclear nonproliferation planner for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dave is widely published and is a frequent speaker on this topic at law schools, on radio and television. He reports that he is still playing tennis after all these years.

Robert K. Kurz writes, "Last June, I attended my second cousin's wedding in Charlottesville, Va. While there, I visited with Thomas Jefferson, better known as **Bill Barker OPC '71**, at his home in Monticello (pictured below). If you have not been to Monticello, I urge you to go. It's a very beautiful and interesting place, and Bill gives an incredible presentation as Thomas Jefferson for about 30 minutes, several times a day."



Rob also reports that he recently had lunch with Peter Reinke. "He was my English teacher in seventh and eighth grades, and one of the finest teachers I ever had. I'm very pleased to report that at 90 years of age he's in excellent health and enjoying life in the Andorra section of Philadelphia. It was wonderful to catch up with him after all these years, and I even got a commitment from him to attend our 50-year reunion in May 2024!"



Craig J. Sabatino and the team at Intech Construction recently broke ground on Penn Charter's new lower school, the next big project in the school's campus transformation.

1975

Stephen R. Mazda has published his first book, through Mill City Press, titled *401(k) Magic "7 Secrets."*

1979

John D. Lemonick writes, "A couple of years ago, my wife, Karen, and I moved to Bryn Mawr. I'm still practicing law in the Philadelphia area, although I relocated my civil defense practice to Donnelly & Associates in Conshohocken. Our class's 45th reunion is this spring. Pat Lynch, Mark Bernstein and I are planning what should be a great event. Come and check out the ever-growing campus, meet the dynamic new head of school, Karen Warren Coleman, and party with your classmates like it's 1979."

William R. Rosenblatt reports, "I've just published my fourth book, *Key Changes: The Ten Times Technology Transformed the Music Industry* (Oxford University Press), written with my good friend Howie Singer. I guess taking computer programming with Mr. Kuehn and playing in jazz ensemble with Mr. Cox had effects down the line."

1980

Scott D. Marlowe shares that he and his wife, Susan, relocated to Sarasota, when he joined Radiology Associates of Florida

CLASS OF 1978 45TH REUNION



at Sarasota Memorial Hospital. “In May, I was elevated to partner with RAF. The same month, we were honored to attend the centennial meeting of the American College of Radiology in Washington, D.C., where I was recognized as an ACR fellow. Less than 15 percent of all ACR members will achieve this distinction during their careers.”

1987

William M. Keane Jr. shares a photo of OPCs at the Philadelphia Country Club. Left to right: **Patrick H. Keane OPC '88**, **Michael P. Sheward OPC '89**, **John S. Michener OPC '89**, **Bernard J. McCabe** and **William M. Keane**.



1988

Sydney H. Coffin reports that when he became a caregiver for a friend with a long illness, he discovered the good work of a group of young OPCs. “Wouldn’t you know it, the gardeners coming and going in her yard were all OPCs, too! Class of 2020. And their best friend is the son of **Webster U. Walker III OPC '87**! The PC community helps her weed and plant, swim weightlessly, smile broadly and laugh loudly every day. Thank you all so very much. *Somos mas fuerte juntos.* (We are stronger together.) It’s a pleasure to know that wherever we are, we’re eager to help each other.”

CLASS OF 1988 35TH REUNION



1989

Jeremy A. Dubin writes, “It was the summer of OPC '89 reunions, in Boulder, Colo., with **Ivan S. Lavinsky** and **Michael A. Bernstein** at Dead and Co. (pictured, top), and at Red Rocks with **Peter K. Meyers**.”



1990



Justin B. Wineburgh enjoyed a summer full of exploring new business opportunities, spending quality time with family and friends, and

traveling. Wineburgh is president and CEO of Alkemy X, a leading global entertainment company headquartered in Philadelphia. With additional locations in New York City, Los Angeles and Vancouver, the company creates content for the biggest names in film, television, agencies and brands. Since joining the struggling company in 2016, Wineburgh repositioned Alkemy X as an entertainment industry player to watch, bringing the team’s leading visual effects work to projects like Netflix’s *Wednesday*, Prime Video’s *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, AMC’s *The Walking Dead* and *Fear the Walking Dead*, and HBO’s *The Righteous Gemstones*. Already in 2023, Alkemy X has received 12 awards for its creative advertising work with top brands including Hulu, Electronic Arts, Headspace and T-Mobile.

Class Notes

CLASS OF 1993 30TH REUNION



1993

Nicholas R. Mahrt and his partner, Alanna, moved earlier this year to Amsterdam and love it. “We live on the Prinsengracht (Prince’s Canal) and just bought a boat to explore all the waterways. **Ryan J. Tadeo** visited in October, and all OPC are welcome. *Tot ziens!*”



Ryan J. Tadeo writes, “In April, I traveled to Guildhall in London to formally be awarded my Level 4 Diploma in Wines from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust. This follows many years of study, featuring courses in wine science, wine business, blind tasting and theory of wines of the world (including sparkling and fortified), along with research on natural wine.

These studies were in tandem with a start-up investment in the Bhutan Wine Company, the first-ever vineyards in the kingdom of Bhutan. Next summer, there is a trip on the horizon to celebrate our first harvest!”

1995

Sherri S. Quintero shares, “I was honored in May as a recipient of the Herman Frait Memorial Award for Jewish Day School Teaching Excellence.” Her classmates **Susan Kroll** (left) and **Megan Evans** (right) came out to celebrate this achievement.



CLASS OF 1998 25TH REUNION



CLASS OF 2003 20TH REUNION



2003

Thomas G. Bell Jr. finished up four years of flying search and rescue for the U.S. Coast Guard in Clearwater, Fla., and moved to Kodiak, Alaska, with wife Miho and son Jack (age 2). He writes, “Looking forward to continuing flying with the Coast Guard and going on new adventures with the family up north!”

2007



Jonathan (Jaji) Hulting-Cohen shares, “I had the pleasure of speaking to a number of PC students in the performing and fine arts via Zoom. It was exciting and inspiring to hear about their passions, and about the career trajectories of the other PC arts graduates. I’m enjoying a life performing historical and contemporary music (including an upcoming concert at nearby Haverford College) and teaching at University of Massachusetts Amherst. My every encouragement to those PC students who want to engage with the arts throughout their lives.”

CLASS OF 2008 15TH REUNION



2008

Connor M. Gorman (left) and **Derek H. Speranza** have been named chairman and vice chairman, respectively, of the Junior Committee at the Union League of Philadelphia, “wrestling control of event planning for the club’s young members from longtime GA/ Shipley/SJP hegemony. Huzzah!”



2010

Bianca M. Santini-Dumas (pictured, third from right) reports, “In August, I had the pleasure of serving as a marketing committee lead for the 51st national convention for the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA). It was a record-breaking event with over 5,400 attendees. I oversaw the ALPFA on-air testimonial booth where students, professionals and partners shared their stories. Coming from a background where I was often one of the only Latinos in my classes, I recognized the importance of representation and diversity early on. It was at Penn Charter where I began this journey, representing our school at diversity conferences, where I could share my experiences and advocate for greater inclusivity in education. The highlight of my experience in San Antonio, Texas, was being recognized for the work completed in April executing the first Northeast Regional Technology Summit hosted on Vanguard’s campus in Malvern.”



Class Notes

2012

Sara Samuels shares, “In May, we celebrated the official ribbon-cutting of our nonprofit mental health organization, People First Therapy Group. Myself, along with a number of colleagues, founded the organization in February 2021 and have been working tirelessly to fulfill our mission of providing mental health services to anyone, regardless of socioeconomic status. It’s been so rewarding to bring this vision to life.”



2013

Gabriella E. (DiGiovanni) Galati joined the 6abc Action News team in Philadelphia as a sports reporter/anchor/producer.



2017

Brendan M. Cellucci, Denarii Beard and **Adam Holland** share, “We have created a live podcast we call ‘Culture Church.’ Our goal is to share what goes on behind the scenes in the journey that athletes face, while also highlighting the passion we have for the culture. Follow us on all socials @culturechurchpodcast. As always, Go Quakers!”



2019

David J. Garnick reports, “After graduating from Penn last spring, I moved to Oahu, Hawaii, to teach eighth grade English and social studies with Teach for America. I truly can’t believe it has been nearly five years since leaving PC. If you find yourself in Hawaii, please, please reach out! I would love to see you.”



CLASS OF 2013 10TH REUNION



2020

Myles Sams writes, "I was named one of the 2023 Athletes of the Year by Arcadia University. I was also named All-Region in long jump by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association and qualified for five events at the MAC Championships. This is my first year competing in triple jump and I was named first in the region in 2023. I finished second in triple jump at the MAC Championships and became the first-ever national championship qualifier in Arcadia's track and field program history. I represented the university at the NCAA 2023 Division III Men's Outdoor Track and Field Championships, in Rochester, N.Y., at St. John Fisher University in May."



2022

Jerry G. Rullo IV finished his freshman year at the University of Notre Dame, winning an amateur boxing title, going on a service trip to Africa and walking on to the Fighting Irish football team.



DEATHS

1947



Charles S. Ganoe,
on Oct. 3, 2023.

1948



Frederick S. Allen,
on Feb. 23, 2022.

1949



J. Walter F. Blizzard Jr.,
on July 7, 2023.



Glenn L. Van Hest Sr.,
on June 24, 2023.

1951



Fred F. Woerner Jr.,
on March 29, 2023.



Robert B. Zubaly,
in December 2021.

1953



Donald S. Luria,
on Dec. 25, 2022.

1954



Samuel L. Frieder,
on June 28, 2023.

1957



George M. Dolan,
on March 29, 2023.

1959



Richard N. Urian,
on Jan. 22, 2023.

1960



William W. Blodget,
on Aug. 8, 2023.



John J. Deasey III,
on Feb. 23, 2023.



Joseph A. Silvaggio Jr.,
on Sept. 20, 2023.

Class Notes

DEATHS

1962



Stephen W. Simpson,
on Aug.10, 2023.

1964



James V. Burns,
on May 22, 2020.



John H. Hay III,
on Aug. 3, 2023.



James G.B. Perkins III,
on April 25, 2023.

1969



Theodore H. Silary Jr.,
on May 18, 2023.

1972



Joseph M. Muldoon,
on Aug. 19, 2023.

MARRIAGES

2001

Eugene J. Dooley Jr. married Maggie Kelly on May 13, 2023.



Pictured, from left: **Gregory T. Ley, Philip S. Katz, Eugene J. Dooley Jr., Phillip J. Elbaum, Peter A. Groverman** and **Kenneth J. Devenney.**

2004

Stacy Petro married Blake Wheale on June 11, 2022. Pictured, from left: **Erin E. Hozack Markam, Dominique Negron, Stacy Petro, Blake Wheale, Julia E. Soffa, Catherine Claire, Stephanie Petro OPC '96.**



2004

Daniel Werner (born Jarzembowski) married Britta Werner on June 23, 2023. The couple lives in Hamburg, married on the German North Sea island of Föhr and had their church wedding in Florence, Italy, in September.



2007

Patrick Brady married Lauren Wippman on July 29, 2023.



2009

James H. Grace married Raina Haas on Aug. 12, 2023.



2010

Jillian Falkoff married Jason Cohn on June 25, 2023 in Mexico.

Bridesmaids included: **Blair L. Drossner**, **Michele S. Drossner**, **Daniela (Nazarian) Peraino**, **Remy E. Seiken**, **Eliza B. Davis** and **Sydney Weinberg**.



Jim Bloom married Kathryn Leonard on April 16, 2023.

Pictured, from left: Peter Wise, **Stuart T. Pasch**, **John Guest**, Trevor Brown, Dustin Beardsley, **James Bloom**, Kathryn Leonard, Clara Leonard, Grace Hartrick, Alexa Rillman, Cameron Gunn, Highsmith Rich, Colleen McEnaney, Allison Hren.



Class Notes

MARRIAGES

2013

Michelle A. Gross married Greg Bailey on Jan. 14, 2023.

Pictured, from left: **Jessica T. Drossner**, **Emily C. Diaz**, **Michelle Gross**, Greg Bailey, **Emma J. Ebert** and **Alison H. Borowsky**.



Bennett W. Samuel married Catherine Tondi on May 13, 2023.



2014

Marissa Samuels married Mike Reitcheck on May 28, 2023.

Pictured, from left: **Dominic Primerano**, **Hailey A. Bennett**, **Glynis M. Braun**, **Marissa Samuels**, **Ariel Barber**, **Anna D. Ten Have**, **Cherie Doan** and **Lauren Dimes**.



BIRTHS

2005

Lyla and Zara, to Yoni and **Jessica Hirt**, on May 12, 2023.



2006

Palmer Ware, to **Virginia McMunigal** and Patrick Kelley, on July 3, 2023.



2010

Eloise, to David and **Morgan L. (Strauss) Speer**, on May 10, 2023.



2016

Sloane Victoria, to **Eileen M. Hennessy** and Freddie Killian on Jan. 20, 2023.

Sloane served as flower girl for her parents' wedding on Oct. 21, 2023.





“Last year I was asked to be the PC Quaker. At first, I thought I would just attend a few football games and scream a few cheers, but it quickly became so much more than that.

I ran around with the Penn Charter banner, handed out bells and pom-poms, took photos with everyone from little kids to OPCs, and hyped up the crowd. I also participated in the Great Day to Be a Quaker video.

I spent time with lower schoolers, both reading books and dancing with them. Throughout the year, I could not stop smiling, and I loved making everyone around me smile, too.

As the Quaker, ***I experienced immense pride in representing the school***, fostering positive and vibrant school spirit throughout campus and beyond, and making lasting connections with countless PC community members.

I am grateful to everyone who supports the PC student experience for giving me the opportunity to create memories as the Quaker. ***I am even more grateful to be a part of Penn Charter’s community*** as a whole, and to make my first gift as an OPC this year. I hope you will join me!”

Kayla Joyce

Kayla Joyce OPC '23

Gifts to Penn Charter’s Annual Fund support students like Kayla in all aspects of the student experience. They help provide our dedicated teachers with professional development opportunities, maintain world-class facilities, purchase classroom supplies and more. Every gift makes a difference, no matter the size.



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MAY 3-4
OPC Weekend

MAY 24
Color Day