

Mid-Peninsula High School

CONNECTIONS

MAGAZINE :: WINTER 2025



The Art of Stage Combat Takes Center Stage, Page 5



You may have seen the recent op-ed in *The New York Times* by Dr. Vivek Murthy, the U.S. Surgeon General, about the rising stress and mental health challenges faced by parents and caregivers. Dr. Murthy cited a study by the American Psychological Association that about 48% of parents report feeling completely overwhelmed by stress most days, compared to 26% of other adults. Alongside the traditional pressures of parenting like finances, safety, and sleep, parents now grapple with additional stressors that include pervasive screens, a national youth mental health crisis, and widespread uncertainty about the future.



If parenting is, as some have suggested, “the new smoking,” it’s clear that we must take this crisis seriously and make meaningful changes. That’s why I’d love to invite Dr. Murthy to visit Mid-Pen for some disconfirming evidence. While our families undoubtedly experience stress, the partnerships within our community offer a powerful antidote to the isolation that so often compounds it. By prioritizing connection, trust, and collaboration, we’ve cultivated an environment where students, families, and staff are truly supported.

Some of the practices at MPHS that ease the burden for families include:

Never worrying alone. This mantra, which I share frequently with prospective and current families alike, reflects our commitment to partnership. Whether through communication with a student’s Core teacher, outreach from the Learning Support Team, or a conversation with an individual teacher, we ensure that information is shared in real time and that colleagues and families work together to address concerns. We also encourage families to reach out proactively with questions or worries, creating space for shared perspectives and collaborative strategies. Likewise, staff at Mid-Pen never worry alone—we dedicate significant time each week to discussing students who are struggling and celebrating those who are thriving.

Creating multiple paths for adult connection. From our regular Coffee with Karen gatherings to music performances at The Guild to the festivities of DragonFest, we prioritize creating opportunities for families to connect in meaningful, low-pressure ways.

Our Parents Association plays a key role in fostering these connections, and are mindful about organizing events at various times of the day to accommodate different schedules. Whether in person or on Zoom, our MPHS family community might just be the best “empathy club” of all time.

Making things easier for students, families, and staff. I like to say that our 9:30 a.m.

start time is both humane and attainable; it’s a small but significant adjustment to the typical high school schedule that helps make mornings less stressful, particularly for those with longer commutes. Our balanced approach to cell phone use—keeping them out of classrooms but permitting them during breaks—ensures focus while maintaining flexibility. And by committing to restorative practices for behavior challenges, students learn to acknowledge mistakes and make authentic amends. This approach reduces the stress and rigidity often associated with traditional discipline systems, and encourages the deep growth that flows from accepting responsibility.

Mid-Pen stands out because we flip the traditional order of operations: we start with relationships and trust, which lays the foundation for students to learn to love learning and see themselves as capable and successful. Our Dragons deserve to feel known and understood—and so do our families and colleagues. In a world that often demands more and more from parents, Mid-Pen is where families and educators work together to create an environment of empathy, trust, and shared purpose.

I’m so proud to be part of a school that lives these values every day. 🐉

Karen Eshoo

CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS is published twice yearly for the parents, alumni, faculty, and friends of Mid-Peninsula High School.

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The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors.



Welcome New Trustees and Staffuly

Board of Trustees

We extend our heartfelt thanks to outgoing trustees Shari DelCarlo, Mike Foust, Quin Garcia '99, and Andrea Potischman P'23 for their years of service and commitment to advancing Mid-Pen's mission. We are also delighted to welcome two new Board members.

Tim Biglow

Tim is a proud parent of a 2013 Mid-Pen graduate and a strong advocate for students with diverse learning styles. A Stanford graduate with degrees in Music and Mathematical Sciences, he worked for nearly three decades in software development, retiring as Senior VP of Technology at Knowledge Networks. Tim rejoins the Board after previously serving as a Mid-Pen trustee from 2013 to 2020, including three years as Board chair.



Jerry Mullany

Jerry has served as CFO for several Bay Area independent schools, including Blue Oak, Bentley, and Katherine Delmar Burke, and currently works as CFOO at Head-Royce School. With a BA in Philosophy from Santa Clara University and an MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, he brings a wealth of expertise in school finance and operations to the Board. Jerry lives in Danville with his wife, Gita, and enjoys spending time with their two grown children.



Staffuly

The following talented individuals bring a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives to their new roles at Mid-Pen.

Aja Fox

Math Teacher

Aja's goal is to make math accessible to all students. A graduate of Ohio University with a BS in Education, she most recently taught at Notre Dame High School in Belmont. When not teaching, Aja enjoys crafting with her Cricut, cross-stitching, and playing video games.



Gen Greer

ELA Resource Specialist

A member of Mid-Pen's Learning Support Team, Gen holds a BA in English Literature from Scripps College and an MFA in Creative Writing from Bowling Green State University. Gen brings her passion for student-centered teaching to her work in the classroom and the Enrichment Center. Outside of school, she enjoys running, spending time with friends, and working on her novel.



Sahily Hilerio

Math Resource Specialist

A graduate of the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, Sahily has taught math in both public and private schools. She loves helping students have "aha!" moments and works hard to demystify math, both in her classroom teaching and as a member of the Learning Support Team.



Julissa Torres

English Teacher

Julissa, a Bay Area native and first-generation college graduate, holds a BA in English and an MA in Teaching Secondary English from Brown University. She is dedicated to creating a student-centered, inclusive environment that fosters critical thinking and respect. Outside of school, Julissa enjoys reading, crocheting, and spending time with loved ones.



Liz Wolford

Theatre Director

Liz joins Mid-Pen after serving as Interim Educational Programs Manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where she developed innovative theatre programming for students in preschool through high school. A Wesleyan University graduate with degrees in Theatre and Government, Liz is passionate about storytelling, imagination, and empathy. In her spare time, she enjoys ceramics, camping, and singing Balkan/Slavic folk music.



Natalie Zenuni

Communications Manager

Natalie comes to Mid-Pen after leading marketing efforts for the Riekes Center in Menlo Park. A graduate of Castilleja School and the University of Colorado, Boulder, with a BA in Ecology and Environmental Biology, she brings a strong background in strategic communications.



Fall Highlights at Mid-Pen

Celebrating Culture, Identity, and Talent

From honoring heritage to showcasing creativity, the semester was filled with events that brought our community closer together.

In September, the LatinX Club hosted a spirited celebration for **Hispanic Heritage Month**. Presentations explored the traditions, food, and cultures of various Latin countries, engaging the entire school. Afterwards, students gathered on the patio to savor traditional foods like pupusas and enchiladas. The fun continued with a piñata game,

where students and even staff enthusiastically took swings, showering the crowd with candy and laughter. In early November, the LatinX Club also hosted a beautiful **Día de los Muertos** celebration, featuring a vibrant ofrenda adorned with photos, marigolds, and offerings, as well as face painting and a festive bake sale.





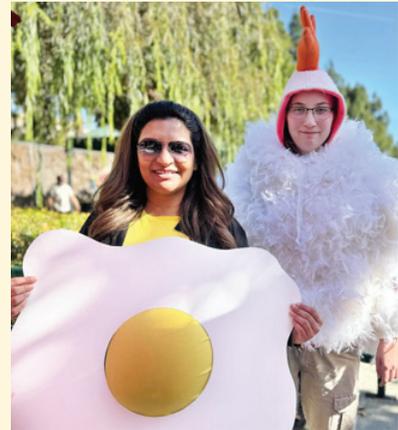
In October, the Mid-Pen community came together to celebrate **National Coming Out Day**, a powerful event dedicated to embracing authenticity and breaking down barriers. The Pride Alliance Club led the celebration with an educational presentation at a school Community Meeting, where members and teachers shared personal stories and highlighted the history of the day, which was founded in 1988 by activists Jean O’Leary and Robert Eichberg. In addition to raising awareness, the club organized a fundraiser in support of The Trevor Project, the world’s largest suicide prevention organization for LGBTQ+ youth. Their efforts raised \$254 for this vital cause, underscoring Mid-Pen’s commitment to fostering an inclusive, supportive environment where everyone feels seen and valued.

The Halloween spirit was alive as students and staff donned creative costumes for Mid-Pen’s annual

Halloween Celebration.

The campus buzzed with excitement

as everyone paraded in their spooky, funny, and imaginative attire. Among the highlights was sophomore Xesh Welser’s stunning Maleficent-



inspired costume, complete with dramatic horns and dark wings, which won best costume and added an extra touch of magic to the day.



Before Thanksgiving break, the **Fall Concert** transformed the gym into a dynamic theater. Students from six music classes performed an eclectic setlist, including Foo Fighters’ *Walk* and Boygenius’ *Not Strong Enough*. Guided by music teacher Jameson Swanagon, the performances showcased mastery of instruments like guitar, bass, and drums, leaving the audience inspired by the students’ growth and talent. 🐉



Who Says Theatre Isn't a Sport?

Drama and Swordplay Thrill in the Fall Play

Have you ever attended a stage production where the actors launch into a heart-pounding sword fight? The clash of steel and whirlwind of movement can leave the audience mesmerized. But behind the scenes, such combat isn't improvised—it's an intricate blend of choreography, illusion, and safety. This fall, Mid-Pen students brought those elements to life in their production of *Marian, or the True Tale of Robin Hood*, which wowed audiences with its humor, heart, and thrilling action.

The play, by Adam Szymkowicz, offered a fresh, comedic twist on the classic Robin Hood legend. "This is a heartfelt story about people finding the space to be who they want to be—and how important it is to have a community where you can just be you," says Liz Woolford, Mid-Pen's Theatre Director. The play was selected by a student-led committee, drawn to its adventurous tone and action-packed scenes. "There were so many students interested in stage

combat," said Liz. "This show had the perfect balance of comedy and classic swashbuckling fights."

Transforming students into convincing swordsmen required dedication and expert guidance. Early in the semester, Liz brought in Joshua Waterstone, an award-winning fight choreographer, actor, and educator. Joshua, who teaches at Foothill College and Berkeley Repertory School of Theatre, led workshops to teach the cast the fundamentals of stage combat.

Training began with the basics: spatial awareness, foot positioning, and weight distribution. These foundational skills ensured the actors' safety while setting the stage for complex choreography. Beyond the technical, students also developed practical skills like body awareness, discipline, and teamwork—tools that extend far beyond the stage. "It's about more than performing," Liz notes. "These lessons build confidence, coordination, and problem-solving skills."





Once the fundamentals were in place, the cast progressed to advanced techniques, including parry positions—a series of defensive stances reminiscent of ballet. These positions were practiced in sequences, creating routines that resembled intricate dances. By the time the cast performed in front of live audiences, their fight scenes had become polished showcases of precision and artistry.



and preparation to ensure every move was both safe and convincing. “You need to know where your body is in relation to others and be able to react in a way that feels genuine in space,” explained Liz. “It’s about being aware—knowing that if your right foot moves forward, your left foot moves back. Cultivating that kind of body awareness, especially

with others, is critical. Even though we’re not actually going to hurt anyone, the stakes are high enough to require real attentiveness to ensure everyone’s safety.”

For junior Baz Dowling, who played Little John, the experience was transformative. “It’s actually inspired me to look into getting my stage combat

Reflecting on the process, which requires a lot of trust and collaboration on the part of the fight partners,



licenses,” he said. Baz, who hopes to pursue acting after high school, recognizes the value of these skills for his future. “Incorporating stage combat training was a strong step forward for the Mid-Pen drama department,” he added.

Liz remarked, “They might not have started as friends, but by the end, after they’ve stabbed each other a million times, they will be friends.”

But stage combat wasn’t just about wielding swords—it also fostered trust and connection among the cast. Actors had to depend on their partners’ precision

Marian, or the True Tale of Robin Hood entertained audiences with its humor and action, but it was also a testament to the students’ dedication and growth. Through hard work and practice, the cast learned that theater can be as dynamic and athletic as any sport. 🐉



SHINING THROUGH CHALLENGES

Gavin Harris Brings Passion and Positivity to Mid-Pen

Director of Operations Gavin Harris stands confidently in the middle of Mid-Pen’s cul-de-sac, clipboard in hand and a bright red emergency backpack strapped to his back. His voice booms across the lawn as he addresses students and staffuly, thanking them for their efficiency and focus during the school-wide fire drill. The success of the under-three-minute evacuation isn’t just a testament to community cooperation; it highlights Gavin’s effective communication and unwavering dedication to safety and service—qualities that define his work and his life.

Since joining Mid-Pen in January 2024, Gavin’s official responsibilities have included safety and security, managing the physical campus, overseeing facility and construction projects, and handling the many duties required to keep the school running smoothly from day to day. Unofficially, he sees his role as something much larger: ensuring that every student feels seen, supported, and safe.

Almost every morning, Gavin is stationed outside Mid-Pen’s front doors, warmly greeting students and staffuly as they arrive. His familiar presence sets the tone for the day, fostering a welcoming atmosphere. Gavin strives to recognize faces, call students by name, and tune into their energy. It’s a simple ritual but an important one. “It gives me some insight into who they are, if it seems like there’s something going on with them energetically,” he says.

Though his impact is felt throughout the campus, most of Gavin’s work happens behind the scenes. Indeed, by the time students begin arriving around 9:00 a.m., Gavin has already been on campus for hours. Arriving around 4:00 am most days, he uses the quiet early hours on campus to tackle noisy or disruptive projects, ensuring they don’t interfere with the students’ school day.



His disciplined approach to work is deeply rooted in his life story, which reflects a remarkable journey of resilience. From a young age, Gavin dreamed of becoming a fighter pilot. After graduating from Bellarmine High School in San Jose, he earned a spot at the Air Force Academy to pursue his childhood ambition. There, he honed his leadership skills and deep commitment to excellence.

Then, life took an unexpected turn.

During the summer between his freshman and sophomore years, Gavin attended the Academy’s free-fall parachute school, where he suffered a catastrophic chute malfunction, resulting in a traumatic brain injury. The demanding academic environment of the Air Force Academy became insurmountable in the wake of his injury, and he was forced to withdraw after his sophomore year. “That really threw my life into total disarray,” he recalls. “Everything I had worked for since I was 8 years old was totally yanked out from underneath me, not through my own choosing or doing.”

Facing the loss of his lifelong dream, Gavin had to reimagine his future.

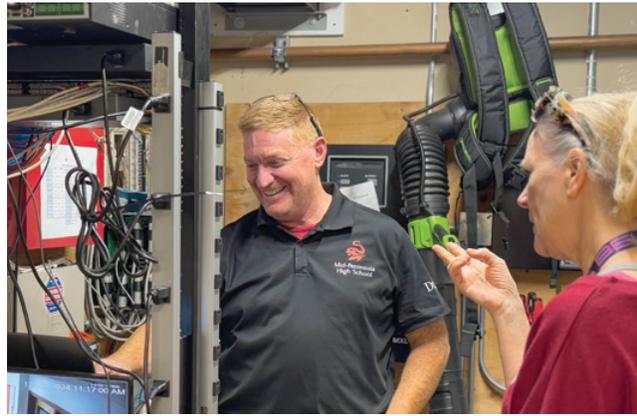
Gavin’s career path took him through a diverse array of roles, each shaped by his drive to make a meaningful contribution. Initially drawn to law enforcement and search and rescue for their camaraderie and teamwork, he realized these fields didn’t align with his priorities. He pivoted, exploring opportunities in executive and celebrity protection, retail operations, corporate training, and healthcare construction. In every position, Gavin brought his analytical mindset and passion for systems improvement, eventually discovering his talent for optimizing processes and fostering environments where people can thrive.



Adaptability and resilience define Gavin’s approach to life. He continues to face challenges as a result of his brain injury. While his early morning routine permits him to take advantage of the empty campus, it also coincides with his peak cognitive hours. “What happens to us doesn’t define us—it’s how we respond and what we do with it that matters,” he says. Gavin’s story is one of finding light after loss, turning adversity into growth, and channeling his energy toward service.

on how different his children are: “They show up differently, they identify differently, they have different quirks, different nuances.”

Gavin’s multifaceted role at Mid-Pen combines operational efficiency with human connection. While his primary responsibility is maintaining the school’s campus, his focus extends to creating an environment where students feel secure and valued. Whether he’s installing new security



Director of Operations Gavin Harris juggles many responsibilities around campus, from greeting students in the morning to working with Director of Technology Anne Marie Schar to ensure the school’s internet connection runs smoothly.

Gavin’s commitment to service extends beyond Mid-Pen’s campus. He and his wife co-founded HERicanes, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering young female athletes by providing mentorship, leadership (“leadHERship”), and skill-building opportunities. As a youth sports coach, Gavin emphasizes emotional well-being, teamwork, and personal growth. He aims to create safe spaces where young people can embrace their authentic selves—a philosophy that aligns with Mid-Pen’s commitment to student-centered support.

cameras, flipping burgers at a school barbecue, or offering visitors a welcoming smile, his philosophy of showing up with positivity—even amid personal challenges—has made him a beacon of reliability and warmth for the Mid-Pen community.

“I can make the decision every day, irrespective of what’s going on in my own personal life, or the level of pain I’m in, to just show up in the most energetically positive way,” Gavin says. “No matter what’s going on in students’ lives, one of the first things they get is sunshine.”

At home, Gavin prioritizes connection within his blended family, tailoring his approach to meet the unique needs of his children—two from his first marriage and two from his wife’s. His parenting is a lesson in adaptability, shaped in part by his experience raising four daughters who embody a wide variety of diverse traits—athletic, artistic, intellectual, musical, dramatic, hilarious, queer—and who are navigating the complexities of academics, social life, team sports, mental health, and just being teen/tween girls. Gavin smiles when reflecting

In some ways, Gavin is a bit like the sun himself—not only because he begins his day at dawn but because he strives to embody hope and possibility. As Mid-Pen students and staff navigate the rhythms of their school day, they are buoyed by his steady presence and unyielding commitment to the community. His story is a powerful reminder that even when life takes unexpected turns, we can find new paths forward, fueled by the strength to adapt, grow, and shine brightly. 🐉

Smartphones and Learning: Striking the Right Balance

As smartphones have become an integral part of daily life, schools nationwide are grappling with how to manage their use on campus. Concerns about classroom distractions, cyberbullying, and the effects of excessive screen time have led to restrictive policies in many states. For instance, Florida prohibits personal device use during class, Pennsylvania has adopted lockable phone storage, and California recently passed legislation requiring public school districts to implement similar measures by 2026.

At Mid-Pen, the approach to managing cell phones has always been about balance. The school recognizes the challenges posed by smartphones while striving to foster a healthy learning environment. The result? A pragmatic policy that aims to keep students focused in class while giving them access to their devices during breaks and lunch.

Mid-Pen's classroom policy requires students to deposit their phones into caddies at the beginning of each class. The caddies, simple over-the-door

organizers hanging in every classroom, have become a cornerstone of this effort. The goal is clear: minimize distractions, improve focus, and support mental well-being.

The policy emerged from creative problem-solving by English teacher Tara Theobald-Anderson, who was frustrated by the constant battle to enforce phone restrictions. Initially, confiscating phones until the end of the day consumed valuable teaching time and created unnecessary tension. Inspired by a simple Pinterest idea, Tara introduced the caddy system in their classroom, and it worked seamlessly. "It was super easy. No fight. Kids just knew they had to turn in their phones," Tara explained.

The success of this approach quickly spread, and soon, other teachers adopted it. This year, with national attention on the impact of cell phones in schools, Mid-Pen's staff fully recommitted to ensuring the policy is consistently enforced across all classrooms.





The consistency of the caddy system has been key to its success. Students know what's expected of them in every class, which has created a culture of accountability. Teachers like English teacher Julissa Torres, who previously taught in schools with inconsistent policies, see the difference. "At other schools, students were on their phones even when I was speaking to them directly," Julissa recalled. "Here, the uniformity makes it easier for everyone. Students are more engaged and actually getting the material."



emphasizes the importance of teaching students how to use technology responsibly. "We want our students to practice using their devices at appropriate times, which is a valuable life skill that even many adults still need to master," Karen said.

Students are permitted to use their phones during breaks, lunch, and occasionally in class when directed by teachers for academic purposes. This approach helps students build habits that will serve them well beyond their school years.

For students with medical needs that require phone access, exceptions are made, ensuring that the policy remains flexible while maintaining its overall effectiveness.

Not all students are fans of the policy, though many acknowledge its benefits. Sophomore Sunday Donaldson shared her perspective: "Some kids do get distracted by phones, and that's what the policy is set out to fix. But there are times in class when I think it's okay, and there are things they can be useful for. I don't know how to fix the problem, though."

This sentiment underscores a broader challenge faced by schools everywhere: finding the right balance between restriction and utility.

Mid-Pen's cell phone policy reflects a thoughtful compromise compared to stricter measures seen in other schools. Head of School Karen Eshoo

Parents also play a critical role in the policy's success. Karen has asked parents and guardians to resist the urge to text or call their children during the school day. While staying connected is important, the quickest way to reach a student in an emergency is through the Front Office, which can locate them immediately. By limiting non-essential communication during school hours, parents help reinforce the boundaries Mid-Pen has set.

By fostering responsible habits and setting clear expectations, Mid-Pen aims to equip students with the skills they need to navigate an increasingly digital world—both in and out of the classroom. This commitment to thoughtful, flexible solutions reflects the school's enduring mission: preparing students to thrive in a complex and ever-changing society. 🐉

Dragons Roar: Highlights from an Exciting Fall Sports Season

By Kurt Lange, Athletic Director

The fall sports season was full of excitement and memorable moments as our Girls Volleyball, Co-ed Soccer, and Cross Country teams demonstrated dedication and growth. From strong performances on the court and field to determined efforts on the trails, our Dragons gave it their all across every sport.

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

Coaches: Alec Salazar and Franc Salazar

The Girls Volleyball program featured both varsity and JV teams this fall, with 18 athletes showcasing talent and passion. The varsity team (pictured below) tied for second place in league play (6-4 record, 9-6 overall), while the JV team ended with a 5-5 record and remarkable improvement.

A highlight of the varsity season was the team's dominant 3-0 victory over rival Kehillah on Mid-Pen's Senior Night. This win avenged a tough loss earlier in the season and celebrated our graduating seniors in their final home game. The team also made a strong



showing twice against undefeated league champion Pac Bay, taking sets in both matchups—a feat no other team achieved.

The JV team finished with a 5-5 record, including a four-game winning streak featuring victories over Eastside Prep and Quarry Lane. Throughout the season, the team displayed remarkable improvement and cohesion. Key contributors included Captain Xenia Hernandez '26, Naomi Nielson '28, Reece Vetter '27, and Priyanka Belur '28, with several players projected to join varsity next year.

The following varsity Dragons received all-league honors: juniors Kimberly Rodriguez-Valladares and Ally Mintz (first team), seniors Chloe Kummerer and Ruth Schar (second team), and seniors Tamar Loeb and Lillie Martins (honorable mention). Sophomores Amelia Filo and Meeru Singhal also made huge contributions to the team, providing key performances that bode well for future seasons.





CO-ED SOCCER

COACHES: RAUL SALAZAR AND KURT HEISE

This year's soccer season brought together 23 players across all grade levels. Despite a challenging 1-8 season, the team played with heart and resilience.



The team's sole victory came in a thrilling 5-4 match against SF Christian, a game marked by grit and determination. They also battled valiantly in close contests with Kehillah, falling 3-1 and 4-2. Seniors Kate Amdursky, Nayan Chawla, Devon Crouse, and



Chris Rivera provided strong leadership, while standout performances from underclassmen like Eli Garcia '27 highlight a bright future.



Matthew Beach '25 (first team), James Carpenter '25 (second team), and Eli Garcia (honorable mention) were celebrated with all-league honors for their outstanding play this season. Special thanks go to Armando Quintana P'28 for his invaluable help during practices.





CO-ED CROSS COUNTRY

Coaches: Alan Cameron and Gen Greer

This year's Cross Country team was one of the largest in recent years, with ten Dragons competing across Bay Area meets. The team's strong league finish highlighted their growth and teamwork. Freshman MVP Eli Sundgren consistently placed among the top finishers at league meets, while seniors Lucas Kao and Walter Bachmann were instrumental in mentoring younger teammates. Coach Cameron reflected on the season, saying, "We were thrilled with the team's performance this year and are looking forward to working with more Dragons next year!" 🐉





Kate Smith '91 writes, "Hi everyone! Since 2013 I have established my own online music publication called In Rock We Trust that covers album and film reviews, interviews and live concert reviews. I have also established a connection with a film company in the Bay Area and am in the process of making my first film! Expected to be released between 2025-26. I have fantastic memories of Mid-Pen! My favorite memory was speaking at my graduation, thanks to my English teacher Laurie!"



Ryan Michaels '95 and his wife Shannon Haley are back in the Bay Area after many years in Nashville, where they built their career as the country duo Haley & Michaels. The pair recently performed the national anthem before the Monday Night Football game between the Kansas City Chiefs and New Orleans Saints on October 7. Now parents to two young children, they've embraced a quieter life close to family. Ryan has also ventured into real estate, working with The Agency in Los Altos.

Rachel Foreman '09 is a Medical Device Engineer at Medtronic. After Mid-Pen, she attended Cal State, Northridge, where she earned her B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. She writes that in 2024 she moved to the Dallas area for work and she adopted another dog: "Up to four dogs and three cats now. Got a side gig working as a veterinary technician. I recently had ankle surgery and am about to do the other side."

Congratulations to **Nisha Amena-Husain '10**, who welcomed her second son, Arvid, this past August. Arvid joins their older son, Lukas, who was born in March 2022. Nisha and her husband were married in 2021 and moved to Manteca, CA, in October 2022. She is currently a photographer and recalls her experience at Mid-Pen "taking photos in yearbook class and making pages for the yearbook."

Hana Dvorak '17 was one of several young alums to return to campus for the 2024 Thanksgiving Feast and Talent Show, a longtime school tradition. Hana is a glass artist and a graduate of California College of the Arts with a BFA in Ceramics and Glass. "As per usual I've been working a lot making art and training in Martial Arts as well. I frequently teach glass at Public Glass and am looking forward to getting married in February." She attributes her interest in

glass making in part to her experience at Mid-Pen: "The trips like our studio art trip and British History trip to Ireland were very memorable. I have referenced many art pieces I saw on those trips including, of course, the Chihuly museum. Just this year my family went on a big trip to Ireland because of how much I enjoyed learning about it and seeing it when in high school."

Our thoughts go out to **Michael Bennett de Avila '17** and his family. Michael is living in Portland, OR, and says he is currently working as his father's caretaker. "He was recently recently diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. I mainly spend most of my days helping him out. My favorite Mid-Pen memory would be getting to play basketball and captaining the team to help get us to CCS. And some of the teachers' words have stuck with me in my adult life."

Ryan Burton '18 graduated from Purdue University with a BA in Music and Technology. "I am living in Northwest Indiana now with my long-time girlfriend, traveling around the Midwest bowling at regional professional tournaments, and competing nationally in the spring. The Mid-Pen music program fostered and grew my passion for and knowledge of music, and led to me getting a degree in music."



Former Mid-Pen basketball players (from left) **Andries Castellano '21**, **Aaron Posternack '21**, **Taylor Young '21**, and **Calvin Healy '24** were back on campus in December to watch our girls and boys teams handily beat Apostles Lutheran High School in back-to-back games. Aaron recently completed a two-month internship at the Prague Institute of Planning and Development – "it was an enlightening and fun experience I'll never forget!" – and expects to graduate from Cal Poly SLO in 2026. Taylor will be graduating in May from Chapman University, is already beginning to work on his MBA, and will start an internship in the spring at the Orange County Transportation Authority. Calvin was named to the Dean's List in his first semester at Belmont University in Nashville, where he plans to major in Media and Entertainment "because I want to work for a music festival and be part of booking their lineup, eventually throwing my own music festival." 🐉



Mid-Peninsula
High School

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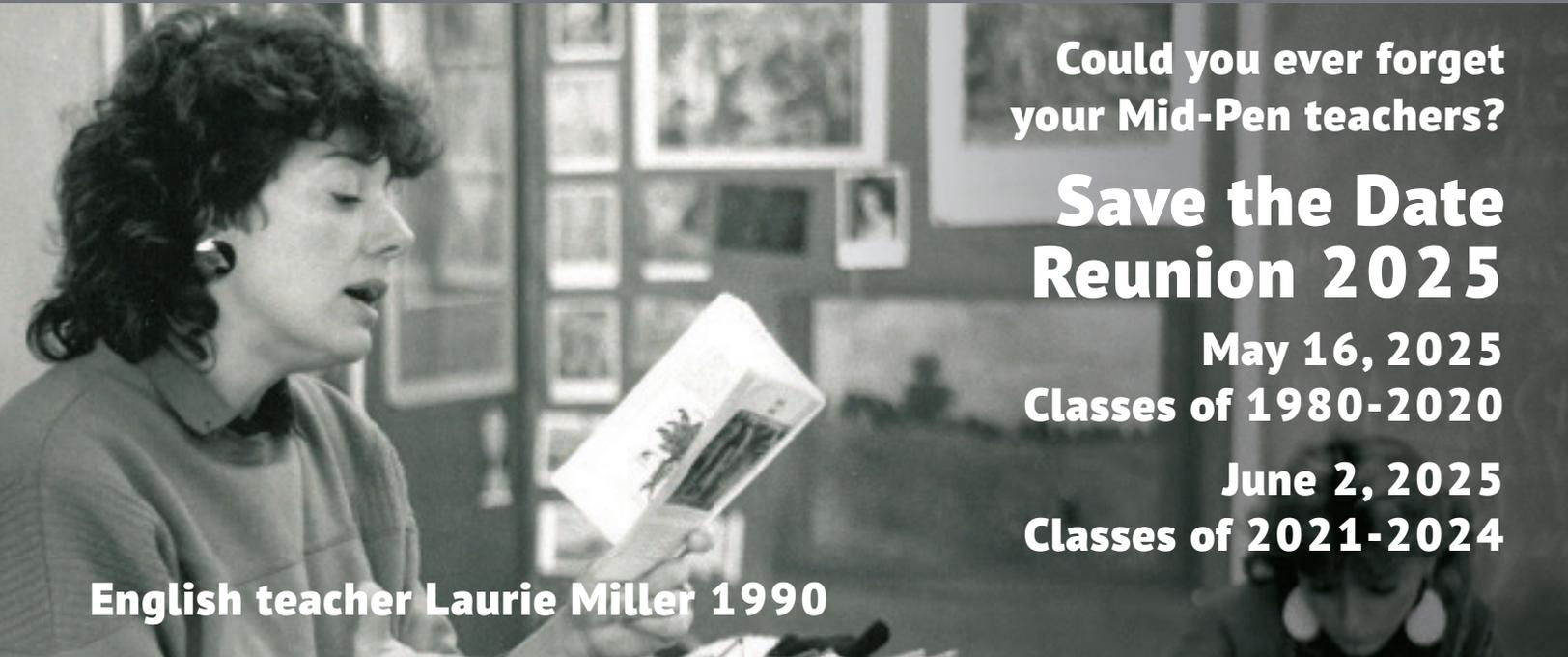
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**Could you ever forget
your Mid-Pen teachers?**

**Save the Date
Reunion 2025**

May 16, 2025

Classes of 1980-2020

June 2, 2025

Classes of 2021-2024

English teacher Laurie Miller 1990



2023