

Echoes

THE ALUMNAE/I MAGAZINE OF THE WHITE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

The Adaptable Mindset Issue



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CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE. THEY ARE PROACTIVE
AND CONSISTENTLY FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT."*

— DONALD BALL

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AN ADAPTABLE MINDSET: ESSENTIAL IN TODAY'S EVER-CHANGING WORLD

By Donald B. Ball, Interim Head of School

Welcome to the new fall edition of *Echoes Magazine*! We are shifting the publication of *Echoes* to autumn to better inform and celebrate our community during the academic year.

The theme for this issue is “adaptable mindset.” What does it mean to have an adaptable mindset? Above all, it means you respond well to change by embracing challenges, framing them as opportunities for growth and innovation rather than obstacles or setbacks. Adaptable people demonstrate flexibility, a willingness to bend and break habits, and to react positively when their circumstances change. They are proactive and consistently focus on improvement.

Being adaptable is an essential quality of leadership that includes skills in creative thinking and problem-solving. Scientists, inventors, entrepreneurs, and leaders all use questions to lean into and explore uncertainty. The great challenges of our time, such as population pressure and environmental sustainability (see our last issue of *Echoes*), will see resolution by those who dare to step into the breach of the “unknown unknown.” These explorers will pry opportunity from mystery by indulging curiosity, surfacing insight, and being adaptive as they find a way forward.

These are qualities that we at The White Mountain School seek to foster in ourselves as well as in our students to prepare them for fulfilling lives in an increasingly complex world. Adaptability and responsiveness are hallmarks of our talented

faculty, who seek to meet the unique needs of each student and equip them with the tools they need to succeed academically and in their future careers.

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback on the inclusion of alumnae/i written stories in the previous issue of *Echoes*, so we’ve repeated that approach and continued the inclusion of perspectives from current faculty and students. Our contributors share details about the role adaptability has played in their lives, and how being part of the White Mountain community has helped them acquire an adaptable mindset. We greatly appreciate their insights and reflections!

As you’ll see from their stories, being flexible and willing to adapt to changing circumstances has equipped them to handle life’s ups and downs, surprises, and disappointments. Importantly, it has given each of them the resiliency to carry on and find a way forward – perhaps one of life’s most essential skills.

Thank you for being part of The White Mountain School community, and for supporting the school’s enduring legacy of preparing bright, engaged young people to go forth and have a positive impact on the world. We are proud to continue a long tradition of creating an environment in which our students learn to view challenges as opportunities and develop the self-confidence, empathy, and awareness necessary to elevate their own lives as well as the lives of those around them.



Commencing with an Adaptable Mindset

This year's Commencement Address for the Class of 2022 was delivered by Amy Bannon '14. The remarks captured the ideas and set the stage for this year's schoolwide theme of adaptable mindset. The White Mountain School is defining adaptable mindset as: Embracing opportunities with a willingness to improve, frame, and build cultures that respond positively to change, while seeking out others for collaborative growth and innovation. Here are Amy's remarks.

Thank you for welcoming me back to campus for this special opportunity. Students, friends, families, and Class of 2022, it is my great honor to return to White Mountain and be a part of this important day in your lives.

It was nearly a decade ago when I sat where you are now, as someone who could barely muster up a single word for “pass the book” — affectionately known by my friends as “awkward Amy.” I was a shy kid, someone who was desperately trying to align my voice with what I cared about.

Standing before you today all of these years later is a welcomed challenge. Not only because I'm nervous, but because when you google “commencement speeches,” you quickly realize how high of a bar and how wide of a spectrum you have to write these things — and it's hard to compete with the ranks of Taylor Swift, Barack Obama, Abby Wambach, the list goes on. On top of that, I am addressing one of the most resilient classes in the Schools' history and I would be remiss not to acknowledge the many ways in which these past two years have impacted your learning, growth, and patience.

But here you are. And here I am.

I've accepted this opportunity as a challenge to speak clearly, knowing that the worth behind my words, paired with a space to share them, is a great privilege — especially as a young woman. Terry Tempest Williams, a favorite author of mine, shares that one must “begin speaking from the place where beauty and bravery meet — within the chambers of a quivering heart.” The White Mountain School has been a crossroads of both beauty and bravery for me over the years, and I can't think of a greater honor than to return and speak from that quivering heart, even if it comes with a shaky voice.

While my voice may shake today, my whole body was trembling with nerves 12 years ago when Hiapo taught me how to tie a retraced figure-eight knot for the first time. I could not have anticipated the impact that moment would have on my young adult life that followed. I went on to become a student here, and then an intern, I even accepted my first job here after graduating college. I wasn't sure what all of that meant at the time, but I do remember walking these halls and feeling the gentle nudge of my younger self. A nudge from the kid who sat wide-eyed during one morning meeting, learning about adaptive sports for the very first time. While White Mountain was familiar to me, that nudge encouraged me to seek new places where beauty and bravery met.

From there, I dove into strategically developing several non-profits into their next phases of impact and growth. As someone surrounded by people constantly adapting to their surroundings, it wasn't long before I adopted what I refer to as an “adaptive mindset” — or a set of theoretical tools that you can carry with you as you encounter challenges, failure,

and roadblocks in your pursuits. This mindset has helped me navigate through the uncertainty of the past two years, it has helped the athletes I work with, and it has made me a better friend, colleague, and human. It also serves as a reminder that there are steps between the problem and the solution — most of which involve adapting.

I work for an organization called Wasatch Adaptive Sports, serving on their executive leadership team as the Development Director. Wasatch Adaptive Sports was founded in 1977 to encourage people with adaptive needs and their families to realize their potential and engage in active living through recreational, educational, and social programs.

What does it mean to have an “adaptive need,” you might ask?

Consider this: Each evening when you go back to your dorm, you go up the stairs, turn on your light, and sink into your bed after a long day of class and sports. If you were a student who relied on a mobility device, such as a wheelchair or crutches, you would have to transfer to the ground, butt scootch up each stair, somehow get your chair up those stairs, transfer back, wheel to your room, and if you're lucky, the light switch isn't quite out of reach from your seated position — and knowing Bethlehem, NH, you might be doing the aforementioned in -10 degree, crisp north country air.

While that is an obvious example, the simple truth is that all of us are adapting every day. In my work, I can't problem solve in a way that would reverse paralysis, cure a traumatic brain injury, or spontaneously grow limbs back. And it is an ableist mindset to make an assumption that those



disabilities are the barrier to entry between them and what they want to do in the first place. In many cases, the barriers go beyond perceived physical limitations and are placed on them by an ableist society.

If I've learned anything from my many years working and playing alongside people who recreate, communicate, and live with different needs from my own, it is that we are all overcoming something.

Someone might look at my friend Kaitlin and see that her missing hand would be her biggest barrier to climbing her first multi-pitch. But it wasn't. It was a fear of heights.

You might run into my friend Trevor in his wheelchair at your local ski resort and think his paralysis is his biggest barrier to the skiing, but it is often staff at the resorts who

You belong there. And sometimes, we even put ourselves into those boxes on our own.

I was told I was too quiet and lacked the confidence necessary to succeed as a leader in outdoor spaces. And there is nothing more paradoxical than being told you are too quiet by someone actively speaking over, and for you. And for a while there, I believed them.

Then, I stopped talking and started doing.

I started working directly with the people I wanted to help and my voice followed. I stand here now, 25 years old after leading a non-profit from infancy into a year-round operation with a substantial operating budget that enables hundreds of people with disabilities to lead active lives.

In my first two months at my current job, our team of primarily quiet women raised over one million dollars for adaptive recreation in Salt Lake City. One million dollars. That value equates to enabling over 25,000 people with disabilities to get outdoors and be active — while increasing their independence and enhancing their quality of life.

You see, I have adapted to my introverted and quiet nature by staying busy and communicating through action and initiative. I have adapted to my anxiety, to be able to walk up to this podium and deliver this speech. I've adapted to inequities, as a woman who has been told to smile more than I have been asked to sit at the table. I have adapted over and over again, through hardship, loss, uncertainty, grief, and doubt. And because I have adapted, I have become more resilient and prepared for that next step — even if the floor gives out under my feet.

And because each of you have adapted to a wildly a-typical high school experience, you are more prepared than you know. You have adapted to make it to this day. You will adapt as you find your own pathways, motivations, and goals. So take a deep breath, find peace in not knowing how it will all pan out, and take your adaptive mindset with you into this exciting new chapter.

As White Mountain alumnae/i, you are joining the ranks of some of the most driven, loving, passionate, and goofy people I have ever known. I hope you carry that identity with pride, and be sure to return to this important place that helped to shape the person you are becoming.

Congratulations, Class of 2022.



question whether his sit-ski equipment is appropriate for the chairlift, despite being a better skier who can not only ski circles around them but also backflip over them if he wanted to.

Then there's my friend Bill who is blind. You may think his blindness is his biggest barrier to competition climbing, but it is the Uber driver, who sped away from the curb after seeing him and his guide dog, instead of transporting him to the gym.

These are real people, and their perceived limitations are only made greater by those who decide they can't before they do. The world puts people into these boxes. You belong here.



*Hiapo Emmons-Shaw,
Trina Chiasson '03, Becky Beno
and Lillian Schrank Graham '03*

POWERFUL AND ENDURING THEMES

Becky Beno and Hiapo Emmons-Shaw married in 1996, and not long after made their way to Suriname for a two-year stint with the Peace Corps. In 1999, as their assignment was drawing to a close, Becky's younger sister Liz was preparing to graduate from WMS, where Becky's good friend Terry Maguire was also coincidentally teaching English. Through these serendipitous connections, the couple learned of two openings for teachers at the school, applied, and in the fall of that year started their new positions – **and they've never looked back.**

**Becky Beno,
Director of the
Learning Center**

**Hiapo Emmons-Shaw,
History Department
Chair / Teacher**

“Spending one’s life at a boarding school is all about adaptability,” says Becky. “When we first started, we were only 10 years older than the seniors! We didn’t yet have children of our own or the commitments that come with having a family, so we were able to be especially involved with our advisees and other extracurricular activities. We would invite both of our advisory groups over for fondue and then play the party game ‘Mafia.’ It was a blast!”

Their first son, Justin, arrived in 2005. Becky adjusted by dropping her duties as a teacher and at the Learning Center to become a full-time dorm head. A few years later, the school eliminated the position of dorm head, so Becky and Hiapo job shared. “I worked full time, Becky worked part time, and the school adapted to our circumstances, which was really wonderful,” recalls Hiapo. “The focus on community and willingness to be flexible and accommodate our needs made it possible for us to stay here as our situation changed.”

The couple’s second son, Alden, was born in 2008, and Becky’s role expanded to include serving as an international student coordinator alongside Matthew Toms. “At first, we only had a few international students, but the numbers grew over time,” Becky remembers. “Attending school in a new country and learning a new culture requires a lot of adaptation.

It’s not just the language – as with any country, we have all kinds of norms and behaviors that we take for granted, but they can be challenging for international students to navigate.”

“Examples include things like eye contact, how teachers and students relate to one another, our version of ‘punctuality,’ and even views on plagiarism,” she continues. “Matt and I developed a pamphlet to address some of the more common issues, but we’d also organize informal get-togethers for international students to talk through different situations and help them acculturate. We had a lot of fun together doing ‘cultural’ activities such as Yankee swaps or playing Wind in the Willows and going on field trips to see Blue Man Group in Boston or visit the Deerfield Fair.”

Becky and Hiapo are deeply appreciative of the sense of family cultivated at WMS. “It’s a natural extension of the school’s commitment to community,” reflects Hiapo. “This is an integrated space. The students are away from their families, but everyone on campus – faculty and administrators, our kids, and the students – all form a larger, extended group. Community weekends and ‘family dinners’ where everyone gets together reinforce and strengthen these bonds.”

“I feel very proud and grateful to have been able to spend my life in a place that prioritizes **community, inclusivity and belonging.**”

—Becky Beno



Hiapo, Becky and Stephanie Speicher '02

Although the two are very much on the same page in terms of their values and goals, each has their own area of specialization within White Mountain. In addition to teaching history, English, and the occasional religion course, Hiapo is a senior member of the rock-climbing program, which includes many of the same students as the White Mountain Scholars led by Matthew Toms. Focused on Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)-identifying students from low-income backgrounds in the U.S., Matt's efforts center on ensuring that Scholars have opportunities to explore sports and outdoor activities with which they may be unfamiliar in a safe, encouraging environment. "It's great to watch kids work hard to step outside their comfort zones to learn a completely new sport, and then become models for others to follow," Hiapo remarks.

For her part, Becky serves as director of the Learning Center, in addition to providing academic coaching to participating students, and her passion for her role is clear. "The students we work with in the Learning Center are neurodiverse, so there's a lot of adaptation - in both directions," she says. "We have to be flexible and help them figure out how they can best learn, but ultimately they are the ones who have to do the really hard work. We guide them through the process of identifying which strategies will work best for them, whether that's choosing a specific place to sit in the classroom, recognizing the need to take movement breaks during class, learning how to break large assignments into smaller, more manageable pieces or actively reading an assignment for English class."

"We help our students strengthen their executive function and try to equip them with skills and habits so they can accomplish their goals," she elaborates. "It's not easy. Building new habits takes practice and perseverance. You have to make a lot of small steps over time. As academic coaches, we take a trial-and-error approach, and things don't always work the first time. Our goal is to give kids a sense of self-agency - we want them to feel responsible for their own success and feel empowered by that responsibility. We strive to build strong relationships with our students and to create a safe and caring environment so they feel encouraged and supported as they do that hard work."

"Academic coaches - and really, all teachers at White Mountain - have to be adaptable in their teaching styles to ensure they meet the needs of all students," Becky concludes. "Neurodiverse students need to be especially flexible and open to learning

strategies that will help them not only in class, but for the rest of their educational experiences and lives. The students I work with are some of the most adaptable people I know!"

In the more than two decades they've been a part of the White Mountain community, Becky and Hiapo have seen the school's pedagogy evolve in response to a changing world. "Memorizing facts is no longer enough, and one could argue it's becoming secondary to the skills you learn," Becky observes. "To make it in today's world, one must know how to acquire and synthesize information. Our curriculum has shifted to an increased focus on critical thinking and investigative learning. We want to give kids agency and have them use their own curiosity as a driver for learning. We also want them to develop essential qualities like perseverance and curiosity."

That said, Hiapo is also mindful of what hasn't changed. "While our individual roles have morphed over time, and that has certainly required flexibility, what we're trying to do - help kids grow and thrive - has remained constant," he says. "I may slightly adapt how I do things from one student to another, or from one year to the next, but my philosophy about education is still the same." One new practice he's adopted in recent years is taking more photos of his students. "These kids are far from home and their parents miss them. Their families want to see how they're doing, and photos provide so much information and context. As a parent, I know I would want to see that my son or daughter is happy, healthy and having a good time!"

Becky agrees, adding "We've worked with teenagers for years, and I've always been empathetic toward their parents, but now that I'm the mother of two teenagers - both of whom attend White Mountain - I have a new appreciation for what our students' parents are going through. Being a parent to a teen isn't easy! Growing up is a complex process, and the world is becoming increasingly complicated. Covid made it even more so - it was incredibly tough on teens. I try to be there for our students, and their parents, as much as I can."

"Over the years we've been here, many programs and initiatives have come and gone, but community and connection are powerful and enduring themes at White Mountain," Hiapo says. "It's something that has been transformative for students," concurs Becky. "I feel very proud and grateful to have been able to spend my life in a place that prioritizes community, inclusivity and belonging. We've adapted to many new developments, but those core values haven't changed." ■

LIFE LESSONS *from The Garden*



By The Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld, Episcopal Church of New Hampshire

As a bishop, I've learned that people and institutions can learn a lot from a simple garden. In fact, Jesus referred to himself as a vine and then, in the garden of the empty tomb, he appears to Mary Magdalene—the first witness of the resurrection—as a gardener. I reflect back to midsummer when we've had a series of muggy yet sunny and warm days. It makes one less apt to move around. But the garden is burgeoning with all ... kale, a forest of basil, and the bold tendrils of the squashes—spaghetti, acorn, yellow summer. All are reaching well beyond the borders of the raised beds. But it's the tomatoes that I think have the most to say about adaptability.

Early in the season, I plant my seedlings in the mix of compost and dirt. Then I carefully insert these cone shaped wire cages into the soft earth. At first, the tomato cages dominate the square beds. Within a few short weeks, the plants grow up within the conical space, using the steel wire as leverage to promote their rising rather than merely sprawling out to eventually rot on the soggy ground. What I notice is that the plants don't just shoot straight up in a rigid rectilinear grid. They don't mimic the order of the steel trellis. Instead they curve, twist, and reach in all sorts of ways to allow their leaves to tilt toward the sun. Underneath and unseen, their roots are stretching in the directions where the water below is in most steady supply. With the assistance of the unbending wires, the plants improvise. They adapt in order to flourish.

The references to organic, adaptive, improvisational life are so central to the life and purpose of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire that we've adopted the image of the Vine in our shield, and we talk about Tending the Vine of our relationships with God and our neighbor and each other. And that Vine includes The White Mountain School!

In response to the need for sunlight, water, air and space, the tomato plant leans on the structure of a cage. As a church, we lean on the baptismal promises to follow Jesus, to gather as the disciples did, to uphold human dignity and to see in our neighbor—sometimes the neighbor who troubles or challenges us the most—the image of God. We promise to strive for justice and peace. Some liturgies include promises to care for the natural environment as God's own creation and not as something to be exploited to the earth's—and our—peril. These stated promises and the mission behind them shape our Benedictine “rule” and form a kind of trellis for our flourishing. Knowing who we are allows us to adapt, improvise, experiment, fail and stand up again.

How are we adapting? How are we similar to the plant that turns, and even dances toward the sun, seeking nourishment and water from the soil? In response to the prohibitive expense and time commitment of a traditional three-year residential seminary, The Episcopal Church of NH has started a local School for Ministry (SfM) that allows persons who feel called to ordained ministry to be trained here in New Hampshire while keeping their day-jobs. As more and more small parishes find supporting a full-time priest virtually impossible, graduates of the SfM can be “bi-vocational”—serving as physician assistants, teachers, college administrators, hospice workers, even factory workers, and as a priest to the local parish.

Adaptive thinking is also at play in the current plans to revise the cherished *Book of Common Prayer*. Presently the BCP has not been revised since 1979, and this represents the longest stretch of time without a revision since Thomas Cranmer drafted the first prayerbook in 1549. Increasingly, as local churches can now draw from *on-line* prayer resources throughout the worldwide Anglican communion, the adaptive question inevitably arises: what do we mean by a book? Is it the physical thing with 900 pages between two hard covers? Or is it the repository of authorized documents that are somehow stored in “the Cloud” and accessed by handheld electronic devices? I have to admit, there are some adaptations that are harder for some more than others. I've come to cherish my worn leather-bound prayer book, with the pages made crinkly from the water of the baptisms I've performed, and smudges left in the decades of Ash Wednesday services and the dirt from the countless graveside observances of the Burial of the Dead. I will find it hard to give that up when the day comes. But every library in our nation right now, including The White Mountain School's, is facing a



changing relationship to printed material.

In fact, students at WMS graduate with an adaptive mindset. Their curiosity is how they turn, quite naturally, toward the light of new truth. Their compassion acknowledges that they live with others and do not exist in isolation, but can be both challenged and strengthened by the presence of others. And their courage simply means they live with commitments that come from the heart. All these qualities allow our students to thrive well beyond their time in Bethlehem.

I think of the church's ministry to and with young people a lot. As the general population ages in New Hampshire, we are finding fewer young people who attend or who are even minimally aware of the Christian message of love, hope, inclusion, and moral and spiritual flourishing that many of us learned in a “mainline” denomination or a synagogue or mosque in the latter half of the 20th century. Perhaps a faithful, adaptive mindset encourages us to see in the amazing young people that find the supportive trellis of teachers and staff and learning culture at WMS to be the leading shoots and vines and of new growth. They may not be in church in the traditional sense, but they are certainly participating in God's own work of bearing witness to the wonders of the creation and the adventure of exploring truth. That may be the single most powerful reason why I am so committed to this School's continued strength and support. ■

Lights! Camera! Adapt!

By Cameron Holly Dexter '04

**It's a hot night in Los Angeles, and I can't sleep. One thought keeps me awake.
The ending of my film doesn't work, and I only have a few hours to fix it.**

I push myself up out of bed and flip open my laptop and scroll down to the end of my script. The sound of the city distracts me and minutes tick by. A siren wails and echoes as it trails past. Loud voices cackle from the busy city street below my apartment. For everyone else, it's the end of a Saturday night, but for me, the morning brings the last day of filming for my project, *The Recipe*, a retro horror short about a housewife in the 1970s who's struggling with her husband's recent infidelity.

I'm the Director, Producer and Co-Writer of the film, and the pressure I feel to execute this story is immense. The past two days of filming were fantastic, but incredibly challenging. Our small cast and crew spent our first day of filming doing car work with a vintage Ford Mustang in the Santa Monica Mountains and then moved to shooting a night exterior outside of an iconic and seedy LA motel. Our second day of shooting, we worked in a stage space constructed to look like a 1970s home with authentic vintage props from the era. The footage looks amazing, the actors are on point, the lighting is perfect, but we have one big problem: the ending of the film doesn't work.





The co-writing the script was an enjoyable collaborative process, but my co-writer and I couldn't seem to agree on how to wrap up the story. As the Director, it's up to me to solve this problem or we won't have a film. We're going to start shooting in a few hours, and I just need one line to bring clarity to the chaos and provide a proper resolution to this revenge story.

I take a sip of coffee and begin to punch the keys of my computer. My alarm goes off. I'm out of time, which means I will have to fix the ending while we are shooting. For now, it will have to wait.

Filmmaking is like becoming an architect of miracles, for people who don't like to believe in miracles. I'm not necessarily talking about religion or spirituality. I'm talking about the effort it takes to recreate life. Most folks don't realize how many people contribute to even a small film. It takes teamwork and a huge amount of creative collaboration from all departments to execute a Director's vision. Actors, Producers, Assistant Directors, Production Designers, Lighting, Grip, Camera Department, Hair and Makeup, Wardrobe, and the unsung Production Assistants who quietly keep us hydrated and caffeinated. When everything is going well and everyone is working at their highest level, it's a thrilling, addictive experience. When things start to go wrong, it can make even the most seasoned filmmakers heads' spin.

Independent, narrative work days are typically 12-hours or more. A lot can happen in that time when you're building a world from scratch. We have a saying on set, "anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." The world has Captain Edward Murphy to thank for that profoundly accurate statement, known colloquially, of course, as Murphy's Law.

At least once a day, Murphy's influence on a film set rears its wily head. There was the time the entire crew got heat exhaustion and food poisoning on the first day of filming in the Sonoran Desert, or the time one of my lead actors was convinced she needed a vile concoction to simulate her barfing and once she drank said cocktail, she began to actually vomit, running to the sink where she hit her head and started bleeding. Or, when a dog on set fell asleep during a simulated intimacy scene and started snoring just as the actors were "getting into it."

There are the magical moments, too. Sunsets across Montana. Sunrises in the desert. Meeting creative people every day. It's a mixed bag on film sets because just like life, this job has pushed me in ways I never thought I'd be pushed, and I've encountered challenges I'd never thought I'd see. Somedays I shake my head and say, "Wow, what we pulled off today was a miracle."

I'll never forget the feeling I got when I was sitting in Lee Zanger's *Probable Aspects of Biology and Chemistry* class at White Mountain School, and that he told us that scientists all over the world look at the probability of life as we know it, the axis the earth sits on to create seasons, the speed of the rotation that gives us what we call our calendar year, the distance we are from the sun and moon, that this number is so fantastically small, scientists have no choice but to scratch their heads at the sheer, staggering magnitude of it and use a word most scientists don't use often, miracle. To me, film sets are microcosms of this phenomenon.

When I sit down with a new script, it's like wading through a near infinite amount of possibilities for how the production of the film can go. To understand how this ties into miracles let me describe what goes into the planning and scheduling of a film. I need to carefully evaluate each scene, every element. Will it be shot at day or night? Which actors are needed for what scenes? Are there minors needed? Which locations can I think of that would make this production really shine? Any animals? If so, they need a Wrangler. What wardrobe do I see the actors in? How many camera setups do I see for each scene? A camera setup is the number of camera angles the Director and Director of Photography decide is needed to cover each scene. Are we doing big sweeping handheld camera moves, are we doing something with Special Equipment? Maybe a Steadicam, Dolly or Techno Crane? Remember, every time the camera is moved for a new setup, that almost always means all the lights need to move unless the lighting department has us lit for 360 degrees. What's the Art Department up to? Is the set "dressed"? Which props are needed? Will we have any intimacy scenes? Does each actor feel safe and comfortable with every element of the intimacy scene?

As you can see, there's a lot going on at every moment in the preproduction and production stage. It takes an open mind that can adapt easily to varying scenarios. This lends itself perfectly to what we are talking about today. I learned to have an Adaptable Mindset at White Mountain. WMS planted the seeds of bravery, curiosity and inner strength. That mindset was found in moments both small and large. Surrounded by the friends I made and also in quiet moments spent in the mountains and trees, and on the OLEs. There's one special moment on an OLE I would love to share.

I was up on Mt. Washington, skiing Tuckerman's Ravine, on one of WMS' Outdoor Learning Experiences (OLEs). I was the only female-identifying student doing a winter ski trip up one of the most extreme climates the Northeast has to offer. The days were tough, but I was doing what I loved, skiing in the mountains. The nights were cold. We wore only our boot liners in the lean-tos. And I do mean lean-tos. Huts with (what I remember and this may not be true) literally 3 walls, not 4. My boot liners were soaked from a day of hiking and skiing. I woke up and had to pee. I calculated the intensity of it, could it wait until daybreak? Not a chance. This was a must-pee scenario. I cursed the trip and this stupid crazy school that brought us to such extreme climates. In a rush, I stripped off my sleeping bag and pulled on my half-frozen boot liners. "This is insane," I thought to myself. Pulled on my puffy North Face jacket and shuffled out into the cold night.

Then something unexpected happened. I looked up and listened. Snow was falling, and a beam of light from a waning moon was dancing in the sky. The mountains glowed around me, and I was all at once utterly astounded at the unimaginable beauty of wild and free places. It still brings me to tears as I write this. My purpose didn't matter. In that moment, the past and future melted away. I was simply existing with nature, in time with nature.

For an angsty high school kid, that was like winning the lottery or getting hit by lightning. Even now, I know how amazingly rare moments like these are in my world, but for those few minutes, many years ago, I was at one with something greater than myself. Pushed to new extremes to find the untouched wilderness this world has to offer. I am no great explorer, but for me, it was pure magic.

I consider the mountains to be the best parent a girl could ask for. My parents put me on skis as soon as I could walk. Every winter meant hours and hours of ski training. All my best friends were at the mountain. I've laughed, I've cried, I've gotten unbelievably lost and found in the mountains. I mean that literally. In my senior year at WMS, I got lost in the woods during a rainstorm and had to jump up and down for 5 hours so I wouldn't get hypothermia before the Fish and Game Dept. could rescue me. I learned about life and death and felt my own limitations, and understood my own power as I dug deep into those mountains. I carry those lessons with me to this day.

But, it took me a long time to get where I am now. My myriad of previous jobs includes waiting tables, working at Patricia Braggs call center, farming in Northern California, running some exclusive Airbnbs, working in a coffee shop in Tahoe City, teaching ski racing at Squaw

Valley (newly renamed Palisades Tahoe) for a winter, being a personal assistant to musicians, photographers, painters, a Beverly Hills fashionista, refinishing furniture in an art studio in Santa Barbara, and living off the grid in a yurt. The yurt actually led me to filmmaking. While I was living there, I started a YouTube channel. It was all about my adventures living alone in the mountains of Santa Barbara. One day I got an email from someone named Nicholas Tolkien. He said he loved my YouTube channel and asked if I wanted to meet for coffee. He had a film collective and thought I would be a good fit. He had a feature film he was working on and I started out as a "PA" or Production Assistant. Turns out, he was the grandson of J.R.R. Tolkien. Who knew?

Why am I rambling on about my checkered resume? I guess it's because I've learned to live by the philosophy about enjoying the journey. Life is tough. Our minds can be such rough instruments. There's so much pressure put on us to know where we are going and I'm here to say it's OK to flounder. To explore. To fail. To continue to seek new paths, new adventures and destinations.

I can't end this without talking about the friends I made at WMS. Something about that bond for us has never faded. It might be 10 years before we see each other, but I am in touch far more with the people I met at WMS than I am with those I met in college. For me, I made my best friends at the age of 15 and that still hasn't changed today at 36. I love these women. I grew up with them and I know if I needed anything today, I could call any of them and they would do what they could to help. That's rare.

WMS means family to me. Many of you reading this might now that my mother Laurie Cameron Zeiser worked in the Admissions Department for many years. Laurie passed away from cancer in September of 2019 and is missed very much by those who knew her. She was also like a surrogate to many students who came through White Mountain. Family comes in so many shapes and sizes and I was so lucky to grow up at WMS.

Fast forward to a place I never dreamed I would be. Directing a film in L.A. I'm back on set that last day. It's down to the wire and that final line of the script is almost ready. I finish typing behind the scenes and rush towards set with the laptop in my hand. Ashlynn Yennie delivers the line.

Later the Director of Photography will tell me they cried when they heard her say it. Rare for a seasoned film professional. You saved the movie he would tell me later. Maybe I did. Just another day on set. Embracing an open mind and the potential for amazing things to happen all around us in the art we create. ■

A person wearing an orange hard hat, a light blue t-shirt, and khaki pants is using an axe to clear a path in a forest. They are crouched down, swinging the axe at a log. The forest is dense with trees and moss-covered ground. The title "Adapting to the Trail" is overlaid in a large, white, serif font at the top of the image.

Adapting to the Trail

By Claudine Aoun '22

While it may appear “on-brand” of me to have delayed until the last day to submit this story, this time it was with good reason. I’ve just finished my first season of Trail Crew with the Appalachian Mountain Club and it was an exquisite experience. I’m going to just get straight to the point. I believe I was ready for the work ethic required to thrive there. However, I could never have been prepared to meet the people that I did. Every single person was ready to sweat, get hurt, suffer and give it their all, while all the while being some of the kindest folks you’ll ever meet, fighting to volunteer to take more group gear or do the worst task. Conversations were always interesting with them, to say the least. The group morale and camaraderie will never cease to impress me. The only complaints were ironic or serious reflections of the situation we were in. Even then, everyone was having a good time—freezing in the pouring rain as we fireline equipment across the raging river, when one slip could become a very, very different day.



My first introduction to everyone was an introductory circle (to which I was almost late, accidentally going to the wrong facility ten minutes away at the Pinkham Center instead of Camp Dodge). All thirty-five of us stood in a field and went around saying our name with an adjective that began with the first letter of our name, but with a stretch and safety tip, of course. I could only come up with “Clamoring Claudine” because someone had to use “Creative” before me. This circle would become a staple for the beginning of our day with questions ranging from “would you rather have pans for hands or sweat jelly?” to “are there more doors or wheels on the planet?” An example of a safety tip was “Watch out for slippery rocks!” or a popular “Stay hydrated y’all.” Camp Dodge, the main Trails Center, was unbelievably stunning. At the highest point, a new timber frame pavilion stood, with a perfect view of Mount Washington, Clay, Adams, and Madison. Yet, most people stayed in the Adirondack chairs on the Main Building porch and enjoyed the same view. I frequently sat there myself with half a watermelon and a spoon. I rolled into “No Tell,” the ancient caretaker housing, where I lived during most of my off days. No Tell was my favorite ratchet building in Camp Dodge. The porch beams were visibly supported by slats of wood nailed underneath. It sported no insulation, raw plywood and braces decorated the inside. As I prepared to sleep on the top bunk, I realized

there was no ladder, it faced into the back wall. A quick solution—using the ax handle pullup bar in the roof supports to swing into bed.

The first week included acquiring our PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), Wilderness First Aid training, learning how to roll rocks, and tool maintenance. This was also the chance for Crew Leads to pick who they wanted for their teams. Being picked for a team was roughly fifty percent of what crew members were talking about. We had five projects: Alpine work on Mount Franklin with rock work around Zealand; Roving Crew; Accessibility surfacing at Cardigan; In tread rock work Webster to Jackson; and the Great Gulf/Monadnock Crew. While I had a preference for backcountry work, I would have loved to do any of these projects. At the end of the week, placements were announced and I was put on the Roving Crew. Roving crew would travel to Maine Wilderness in Greenville, North Adams Massachusetts, Bridgton and Denmark Maine, and the Great Gulf just under Washington. My excitement was endless, ready to start real projects and learn as much as I could.

Our group consisted of my Crew Leader, Emily, and my fellow Crew Members Owen, Erik, and Scott. I found myself a little scared to work so closely with people I had just met because we were the only crew doing four eighty-hour weeks—eight days on six days off and later, four days on and six days off. We were going into Maine with the tiniest idea of our team dynamics, what little we knew derived from four general days of existing around one another and one full field day. But it turned out to be great! We surmised at the end of the season that we were the only combination of people who were capable of working eighty hours together in one go without causing a catastrophe. Perhaps it was our killer personalities that kept us going. Maybe it was the strange jokes and our shared hatred of mosquitoes. We often dissociated in the first couple of weeks and nicknamed ourselves the DRC (Dissociating Roving Crew) quickly. We managed to talk about our doo-doo rather often. All the other crews did too, so we weren’t too strange for it. Our group music playlists had the most aggressive tone shifts you’d ever hear, going from *Enchanted* by Taylor Swift to *Honky Tonk Badonkadonk* by Trace Adkins. At our first project in Maine, we stayed in a cozy yurt, stocked with a semi-rat-proof cage and fridge that froze a lot of our food the first week. I fixed it. Each week we would come up with meals that would make us run to the privy every night, after break dancing to the names of inappropriate songs. The undying food classics include, but are not limited to: Curry, Burritos, Mac & Cheese, Burgers, Spicy Peanut Noodles, Pesto Pasta, Red Sauce Pasta, Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup, and Quesadillas. To combat the rigorous fieldwork, as you may have predicted, we ate a lot of food. At the end of each hitch, we created a menu of our group dinners and

personal breakfast, lunch, and snack needs. An average of a day of eating for me in the Great Gulf (when we need to pack light)—Ramen with a salmon packet and Fig Newtons (450-500 kcal), two energy bars (300-400 kcal), cold soaked protein oats (700 kcal), another energy bar and apple (250-300 kcal), and a hefty serving of whatever our dinner was (500-600 kcal). Between 2,200 kcal-3,000 kcal. I'll sprinkle in a smaller snack in between the other snacks to replenish potential losses as well. I would eat almost the same thing every day with small changes here and there, I found this amount just right for me, and it took time to figure out. During training week, I accidentally lost one and a half pounds, due to not eating enough. They told me that all food would be provided at Dodge, but in a miscommunication, the kitchen didn't make enough for the number of people present (this didn't usually happen). The rumors are true though, Trails makes you seriously fit, and I've gained seven pounds of muscle from the diverse work.

We surmised at the end of the season that we were the only combination of people who were capable of working eighty hours together in one go without causing a catastrophe.



The work was a strange phenomenon, where highs were absolutely fantastic, you could have a rock sit exactly the way you wanted. But more likely, you will struggle for hours on end to move this boulder inches. The process of building a staircase is to quarry rocks from around the trail, which was to unearth boulders large enough to be steps and find “ugly potatoes for gargoyles.” Gargoyles or gargs are the annoying and ugly rocks around the steps to keep hikers walking on the main stairs. Rock bars and pick maddocks are the most used tools for this particular task. Once we had a satisfactory amount of rocks, we would dig a keystone into the ground, preferably a wide, short, and flat flake, that we would make flush with the ground. This begins the structure of the stairs to support the next step, which gets placed slightly below the back of the previous rock, to create an eight-inch rise or less. After creating two steps we put the first gargs on both sides of the first step by digging slightly into the earth and setting it down in a solid position. If there is any possible back lean we would always pack in the holes with crush; half fist-sized rocks we create with a double jack (commonly known as a sledgehammer) by smashing big unwanted boulders. The amount of steps created is based on the rise and run of the slope we're creating. Haha! Yes, I actually used slope calculations in my life, disappointingly quick, too. On average we would set one to two per day. Rock work is one of the most dangerous tasks though. At our other Maine project, the quarry site was on a steep hill above three switchbacks, creating three chances to hit a hiker. This made the construction much slower because we would stop moving rocks when we saw a hiker entering our vision below the work site. If a boulder were to roll, it wouldn't stop until flat ground and that wasn't for a while. Additionally, with the fact that this particular trail receives about fifty thousand people every year, we would sometimes stop every five to ten minutes.

More obvious dangers are crushed limbs, fingers, and feet. Everyone on my crew pinched their fingers at some point, I crushed mine in the first hitch when lowering a step onto some hidden ledge. It was a strange feeling, I was nearing seventy hours through the work week and it felt as if someone pressed the power button. I almost passed out. I was so stoked to know that it wasn't broken though, so I hiked out with a good attitude!

When we finished our first project in Maine Wilderness we moved in the opposite direction to North Adams, to do work on Mount Prospect, a section of the Appalachian Trail. More general trail maintenance came into play—corridor clearing, removing useless bog bridges, tread work, and removing roots. We installed a sixteen-box step staircase with huge cedar logs, which had been hiked in the previous year by volunteers. Emily cut them up after we drew the measurements on them, just like stone,

the mechanics of wood are similar, take one inch from the bottom and the remainder from the top to create a consistent rise. Where the erosion was particularly bad, check steps would be put in to hold in dirt and crush. To divert flowing water, a horizontal log would be set in the dirt with drainage running to the side. Another version of this was a turnpike—an elevated pad of dirt and crush to walk on as water streams to the side. An interesting thing was that hikers often didn't want to step on our work. I could understand the thought process in the politeness of avoiding interrupting. However, it baffles me when people walk around the entire staircase to end up slipping on the path. Please just walk on our work, that's what it's there for and it makes us so happy to see it used.

Some unexpected things to note:

- I never knew that five people could tell me the same joke in one day without them knowing it.
- The escalators are never coming in, I'm just so sorry.
- When I am actively swinging a pulaski or double jack in the middle of the trail, please don't tell me to keep going and that you'll "slide right by." I can't do that.

Last but not least on my journey was The Great Gulf Trail! We would be joining another crew for the last two weeks of the season. Some parts of this trail were literally a river and included a five-mile hike in with an incredibly slippery cascade section about three-quarters of a mile from the established campsite. The first time my crew went up Owen was out with Covid (he's okay and returned the next hitch) and Erik was pulled to do work with the Alpine Crew, leaving Emily, Scott, and myself. It quickly became obvious to me that I didn't drink enough water that day as I became so heated and confused. I thought the extensive hike was an unnecessary risk and time-consuming, taking away from the project, which I still believe. However, once my headache went away, all my attention was turned to the beauty of the Gulf, crashing waterfalls and misty mountains surrounding us. The moisture brought dozens of colorful mushrooms from the sides of the trail. We were in a valley, and with total visibility, the gorgeous headwalls and the ridges cradled us. The smell of pines and freshwater woke me in the chilly mornings. The wind howled and brushed the trees at night. Within three days our worksite temperatures dropped from ninety-eight degrees to forty-five with heavy rain showers. We worked in mud pits, setting step stones to hop across, cleaning drainages and blockages. There was a day I spent eight of my hours clearing a section of the trail from blown down trees ranging from as wide as a small tire to simple branches.

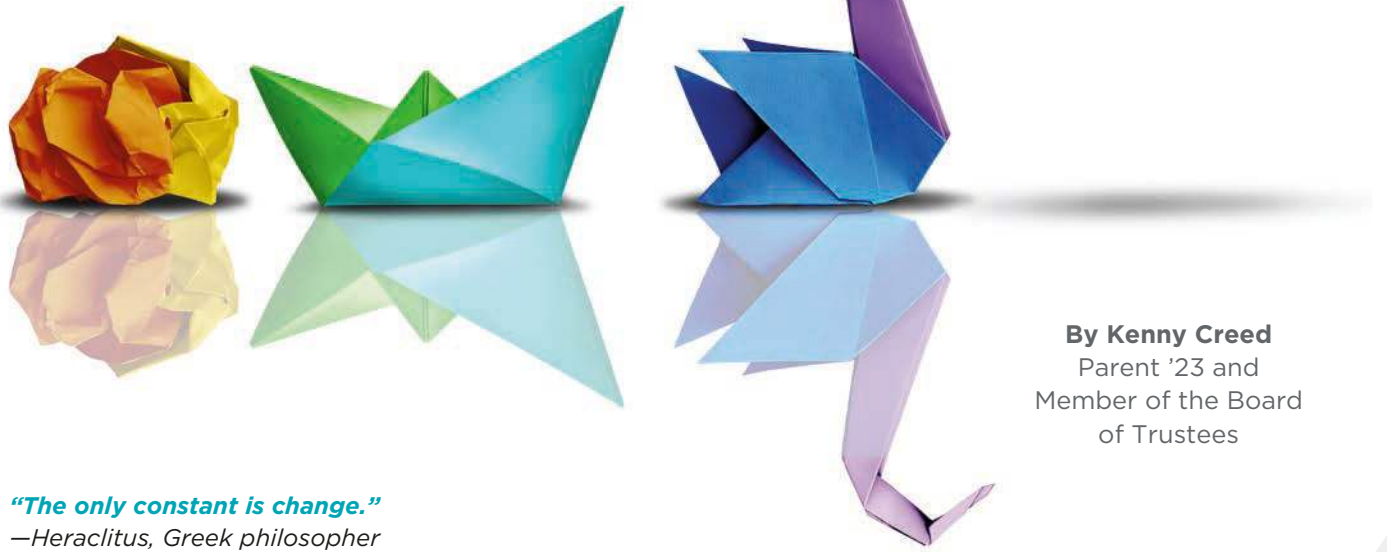
On our last night of the season, it began to rain heavily. It rained the whole night and we woke up to it. That brisk morning, about 5:20 a.m. I volunteered to get the bear bags from the tree with my numb fingers. I scarfed down my hot

ramen under the tarp with Emily and Owen. After packing all our personal gear, we stood with our hands tucked under our armpits. At 7:10 a.m. I recommended that we take a selfie in the rain to boost our spirits. This was followed by a laughing fit after which we joined the other crew under their tarp and discussed how we were going to pack out as we had too much to take with us in one trip. Emily and Michael, the other crew lead, went to scout the river. We knew one of the other crews began hiking up to us around 4:30 a.m. that morning to help us, but their arrival time was unknown, our crew leads also went to look for them—at 8:00 a.m. We'd been blasted by the wet wind for long enough. We started the hike out. Turns out, the water level rose by a foot overnight and the usual way we cross was now impossible to do safely.

In a change of plans, we crossed near the campsite, firelining gear, and equipment across the freezing river. The water came up to my knees, numbing my feet quickly, but there is nothing I could do about it. Bushwacking around the side we come back to the main trail at 9:00 a.m. It took us forty-five minutes to cross a five-minute section. It was definitely the most exhausting part of the day, but we hadn't reached the cascades yet. As we made our way down I began to hear the iconic whoops of trail workers, the Web-Jack crew had arrived to take some of our load in the middle of the worst section. Honestly, what ended up being most helpful was the morale boost of seeing our friends. We all began to joke and confessed how horrifying the water had become. If someone were to have slid down that section, they would have disappeared in rapids, no chance of survival. Looking back on this situation, leaving the heavy gear at the site would have been the better move, ensuring more stability and less pressure. We all got to the calmer part of the trail safely at 10:20 a.m. The fourth crew came down from the Chandler Brook Trail, putting eighty percent of the entire trail crew in one spot, it was quite the ruckus. We all hiked out an alternative route to the Mount Washington Auto Road where several work trucks picked us up at 12:45 p.m. To end the season we threw dry clothes on and ravaged some bagel sandwiches, fresh fruit, and cheese, watched a slide show of all the fun pictures we took throughout the season, cleaned up Camp Dodge for the future season and relaxed. Another surprise came from the Dodge kitchen though, a full Thanksgiving spread was released at 6:00 p.m., with a huge table stuck together, and the entire Trail Crew, Dodge Staff, Americor, and supervisors celebrated.

It was an amazingly unique experience, created by the people and the undeniable beauty of the mountains. In the midst of working sometime in the rain, I decided to defer my college start date to the spring so I can continue trail work into the fall. There is an irresistible sentiment in the solitude of work with the harsh weather of the White Mountains. Tested and trialed, I remain enticed. ■

THRIVING IN THE UNKNOWN



"The only constant is change."

—Heraclitus, Greek philosopher

In Amy Bannon's (WMS class of 2014) recent commencement speech, she championed the advantages of an adaptive mindset, where resilience enables one to overcome difficulty. Her words will gain more relevance and immediacy with every passing year as the relentless pace of change increases and all of us work to keep up.

How can schools "teach" the adaptive mindset?

As the father of a rising four year senior, I've seen the effects of an education that promotes an adaptive mindset. My son, Nicholas, cites the challenges of WMS's "orientation trips" and "field courses" as the best opportunities for having to deal with the unexpected, where his adaptability muscles get a workout. "Orientation trips force you to live with people you don't know, while out in the wilderness doing something kind of crazy." Nick's freshman year orientation trip involved filling canoes with camping gear, an eclectic assortment of musical instruments, 10 kids and three teachers and paddling to some islands on a lake. For three days, participants had to endure rain and insects, collaborate in setting up camp and cooking meals, and write and perform a wide array of songs. "It wasn't easy at first. But it ended up being an amazing experience. I'm not very musical but I am pretty good with words and lyrics. I ended up being the lyricist for a lot of the songs. Some of the kids on that trip are my best friends today."

By Kenny Creed
Parent '23 and
Member of the Board
of Trustees

Here, the positive outcomes made the annoying, scary or uncomfortable bits of the trip seem worth it. The next time Nick is faced with what appears to be a challenging experience, he may look for the positive outcomes that await—or create them himself with a mindset that is ready to adapt. These adaptable outcomes are the most impactful learning models that I have observed and fostered in my professional career as an educator and school leader.

I have worked as an elementary educator for most of my adult life in traditional public and private schools, Silicon Valley tech enabled schools, and project based learning schools. In all those years, I witnessed hundreds of children struggle, and triumph

-simultaneously-while learning. What is clear is that real learning is messy. For some, it is painful. For those practiced at adapting to new challenges, there is joy in the struggle. The ability to face a challenge that seems impossible and embrace it anyway is a valuable skill. It can be taught.

I worked as the Head of School at Hudson Lab School, a project based learning and intergenerational learning elementary school sited in a nursing home. At Hudson Lab, K-6 students and 70- to 100-year-old residents, the Grands, collaborated on projects designed to solve the challenges of aging: mobility, memory loss or finding joy in the everyday interactions of life. I witnessed students developing skills, habits and attitudes that transcended the memorization of math formulas and the 50 state capitals. We were asking our students to summon all the skills needed to solve problems that even the teacher could not anticipate. In these experiences, an adaptive mindset is developed.

Regularly, students were required to enter into an experience that had unknown expectations and outcomes. That can be very scary at first, especially if you're a first grader. Meeting a centenarian for the first time and interviewing them to learn about their needs takes courage, and curiosity, as well as good manners and patience. What was once thought to be scary, was actually a lot of fun. It's true, 100-year-old nuns can be fun friends.

Students working in collaborative groups would emerge from these meetings with their new Grandfriends and then have to process the qualitative information they gathered, and begin to solve the problem. What's the problem? "I use a walker and always need my glasses, my book and my tissues, but I don't have enough pockets to carry it all," reported one Grandfriend to her first grade problem solvers. Immediately, the students are placed in a problem-solving zone they have never encountered. And, the expectation is that they still have to solve for it, because their Grandfriend really needs to be able to keep her stuff with her when she travels around the building on her walker.

What follows is a visceral, deep learning experience where compassion and excitement become the drivers for the next phases of the learning. When caring about something important, a human being's natural powers of creativity and ingenuity are activated. For these students, this work mattered. Time to crank up the creativity, and invent.

Through the design thinking process, these young students ended up inventing a well-designed, sewn waist apron to hold the glasses, book and tissues for their Grandfriend. Building prototypes and testing progressive iterations of the original design takes patience; another necessary skill.

Learning how to use a Singer Heavy Duty sewing machine for the first time could be daunting, unless you have already been developing your growth mindset. Here, the power-of-YET can make the hard seem doable. "I don't know how to use one of these machines - YET." This attitude can be taught and learned by the very young and the very old. And it is future proof. In fact, the future requires it.

A student entering high school today will graduate from college in 2031 and step into the workforce. A child entering kindergarten this fall will graduate from college and step into the workforce in 2040. Can any of us predict what that world will look like for these kids?

Preparing students for a rapidly changing world where the future really is unknown challenges schools to offer programs that help students develop resiliency, optimism, curiosity, imagination, ingenuity and adaptability. Like our young inventors at Hudson Lab School, high school students can benefit from being challenged with projects and experiences that require all these skills.

Team sports offer excellent opportunities for developing adaptability and resilience. But there are other experiences that offer even more novel challenges. Rock climbing, backpacking, farming, theater, leading a club or writing a first novella all require creativity, flexibility, adaptability and resilience, especially when things go wrong. Usually, when things go wrong, Plan A is no good. Plans B and C need to be developed and implemented. Sometimes this needs to happen quickly. Regularly embracing and putting into practice the traits of adaptability offer the best hope for not just surviving in the future, but thriving in the future -and finding joy in the here and now.

“If you’re not prepared to be wrong, you’ll never come up with anything original.”

—Sir Ken Robinson, Leader in the development of creativity, innovation, and human potential.

Schools, by design, strive to prepare students for the future. High schools today work to prepare students for the workforce as well as college. At the moment, the college experience is somewhat predictable. What is unpredictable is what jobs will require in the coming decades.

Most students are exposed only to the predictable structures of school calendars while following assignment rubrics, writing papers, taking tests and earning letter grades to satisfy a teacher’s expectations. These skills are not the currency of the modern workplace. Bosses don’t give you time to study for the test. You won’t write papers for a letter grade. In the most interesting jobs, employees are being asked to solve problems that have not been solved before. There is no syllabus. If you have had a lot of practice confronting a problem no one has solved before, you are likely to thrive in this environment.

This is the core premise in “Experiential Learning.” Students learn through doing in a real world situation and then they reflect on the process and what was learned and what still needs to be learned to continue or refine the work. For creative people, this is a fabulous environment in which to learn and grow. And it requires vast amounts of adaptability and encourages rather than discourages creativity.

We hone our ability to implement creative ideas when we are given opportunities to try things that have open ended outcomes. To dare to work in a “startup” where everything is new, creativity is required. There is no instruction manual. Trial and error, or the more advanced version of this technique, the design process, becomes the template for finding solutions and success. It’s very messy. It can be frustrating working in this zone where many of the tools needed to accomplish the work have yet to be invented. So, you adapt by designing the tools that allow you to move forward. To succeed in this world, the skills of adaptability are required.

“Becoming is better than being.”

—Carol Dweck, author of Mindset: The New Psychology of Success

For many bright students, the fear of failure impedes the development of courage and creativity. Why take a risk with your pent up creativity on a high school assignment when you know that the teacher’s grading rubric dictates that you simply satisfy the demands of the rubric.

When learning offers opportunities to explore the unknown, research and gather information, test hypotheses and theories and, most importantly – fail, a durable and transferable kind of learning happens. To develop the skill of resiliency in the face of failure takes practice.

The Academy Award winning rock climbing documentary, *Free Solo*, or its companion, *The Dawn Wall*, so perfectly demonstrate the power of failure. Nothing great is accomplished without first learning from all the failed attempts that led to success.

“We stigmatize mistakes. And we’re now running national educational systems where mistakes are the worst thing you can make — and the result is that we are educating people out of their creative capacities.”

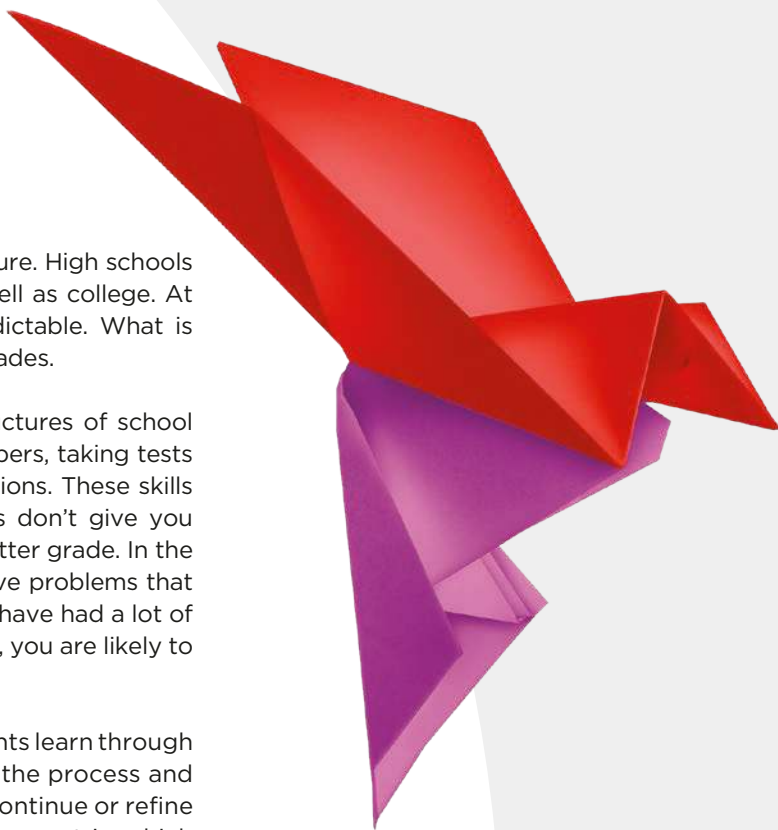
— Sir Ken Robinson, Leader in the development of creativity, innovation, and human potential.

Like Amy Bannon’s championing of the adaptive mindset for all of us, let’s remember that school is more than time spent collecting important bits of knowledge. It can be a place where we learn the skills that allow us to easily adapt to our rapidly changing world. With this skill we are most likely to thrive and find joy in much of what we do.

“When you are finished changing, you are finished.”

—Benjamin Franklin

ADAPT! ■





Managing Risk

Q&A with Will Gadd '85

Will Gadd attended WMS from 1983-1985. After graduating, he obtained a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Colorado Mountain College before going on to launch what can reasonably be called an epic career in outdoor adventures. A native of Canada, Will grew up in Jasper, Alberta, and now lives in Canmore, a picturesque town surrounded by the stunning beauty of the Canadian Rockies. Will's days involve guiding expeditions, hanging upside down from frozen waterfalls, paragliding, and other extreme sports, as well as leading film crews that record his impressive exploits for sponsors. Recognizing hazards and adapting activities to mitigate or eliminate risk for himself and his companions is integral to what Will does every day.

You seem like a relatively normal person. How is it that you ended up doing what you do?

The environment in which I grew up was laissez-faire, to say the least. My parents were great, and as naturalists they passed their love of the outdoors on to me, but I joke that I was raised as a semi-feral wolf child. There wasn't a lot of structure or routine, and I see that as one of the advantages I got in life – from a very young age, I learned to continually adapt to new situations.

How did you make your way to The White Mountain School?

The public school system in Jasper wasn't the best, academically or otherwise, and I was getting into trouble because I was bored and didn't have constructive opportunities to use my energy. WMS, with its focus on outdoor activities, looked perfect to me. I was lucky enough to have a grandfather who helped me attend, and it changed my life!

In what way?

I was finally able to pursue things that I loved, like rock climbing and kayaking, in an organized, supportive environment. The instructors were amazing, and I learned an incredible amount about leadership by watching them. We gained experience placing gear, organizing outings and working in groups. I acquired leadership skills by following the example of my instructors, watching them take care of people on the river or on the rocks, and trying to emulate them. It wasn't formal leadership training, but I absorbed it like a sponge and still draw on what I learned.

It sounds like you adapted to life at White Mountain rather easily?

Oh, I wouldn't say that! It's true that I was quite independent, so being away from home in a different country was no big deal, although the culture of rural New Hampshire was very different from that of a tourist town in the Canadian Rockies. For me, however, the structure of boarding school was a major novelty, and a bit of a shock. This was the first time I'd really had to live by others' rules. "What do you mean I have to be in the dorm by a certain time at night?!"

Although I chafed a bit under the restrictions, having such amazing access to outdoor sports meant everything to me, and I was willing to do whatever it took to be able to participate – even if that meant studying, something I'd never done before. If your grades were low, you had to spend Saturday in study hall, and I did not like that at all! As a result, I applied myself – and not just to avoid study hall. I wanted to be there, so I was motivated to get good grades and be able to stay.

The White Mountains represented completely new terrain for me, and we were given a lot of autonomy to explore

and do things on our own, which helped me grow as an individual. That said, I didn't have the resources that a lot of the other kids did. I hitchhiked everywhere – I wonder if that's even allowed anymore?!

We tend to think of adaptation in the context of adapting to something negative, but in my case, I had to adapt to a higher functioning environment than I came from, and I liked it. WMS might not seem terribly structured to some, but it sure was for me, and I flourished.

The trajectory from Jasper to White Mountain to ice climbing and producing adventure films makes sense – how does the poli sci degree fit in?

I did consider other careers – becoming a doctor held some appeal, but organic chemistry interfered with my afternoon rock climbing. I also contemplated becoming a lawyer, but then realized lawyers spend all day indoors. A prof suggested that I merge my love of writing with my love of the outdoors. I took his advice and became *Climbing Magazine's* first-ever intern. That was my entrée into the outdoor industry, and the next 35 years of my life (and counting).

So what exactly do you do all day?

I keep busy with several jobs, which means I have to adapt to new situations every day. I'm certified with the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides, and I run my own guiding company that takes clients on expeditions to challenging environments like Mount Everest and Greenland. I also give presentations on risk management. And last but not least, I'm a sponsored athlete, which involves filmmaking and guiding film crews into remote locations.

To be honest, ever since I attended WMS, my days have followed the same schedule – I work and manage my business in the morning, go out and do stuff that's athletic in the afternoon, I work again at night, and then I go to bed. It's a pretty nice routine!

That does sound pretty nice. But also full of risk! How do you keep yourself and others safe?

Several of my foundational principles about managing risk come from things I learned at WMS. One of our instructors, Jim Fitzpatrick, always said, "You fit everything you can into the day, but you can only move as fast as the least skilled person in your group can move safely, so you lift them up."

Another important principle is understanding the difference between confidence and competence. We should always be guided by the latter, not the former! High confidence and low competence are a bad combination. We have to recognize our own limitations. "Do I know what I'm doing?" If not, I bring in people who do.

However, the most important factor in risk management is the ability to anticipate and recognize change, and adapting in response, rather than trying to make the situation bend to your will. This is especially true on film shoots – I may have an idea of what I want to do, but we have to adapt to the environment we're in. We can't force anything – if the weather's bad, that's it. I'm often operating in places where few if any people have ever been, taking large crews into hazardous situations and doing my best to bring everyone back out again. It's continual adaptation because there's no game plan to start with.

So look on the bright side, and everything will be OK?

Heck no! I spend most of my time thinking about the dark side. What could go wrong? In my line of work, when something goes wrong, people die. I am constantly looking for ways things could go sideways, and planning for how I'll handle that. I don't go around thinking the universe loves me. The universe doesn't care! You need to watch out for risk and be prepared to handle it.

But to be clear, this isn't about being a pessimistic Debbie Downer. On the contrary, it's actually very freeing. I don't worry, because I know I'm prepared. I'm into the positive power of negative thinking...except that it's not negative. It's about thinking things through, recognizing potential hazards and making good decisions – that's the secret to getting the outcomes you want in life, and doing cool

things without unreasonable or unnecessary risk.

Change can be positive as well as negative, limiting or expanding, and the difference between the two often comes down to attitude. If you are open to seeing opportunities, you can embrace positive change, pull it toward you, and use it to do something interesting. When I've done well in life, it's usually because I saw an opportunity and made it work.

◀ *Will hangs upside down from frozen waterfalls for fun, and as his daughter demonstrates, she's got the same appetite for adventure.*



Where Does Education Happen?

Tory Amorello '02

As almost any of us know, the last couple years have been extraordinarily challenging for schools. Running a school, and leading effectively, through the Covid pandemic has been, frankly, insane, challenging, impossible, thankless, and scary. It has also, in significant ways, had silver linings. Being an educator during Covid means participating in real and useful conversations about education, and about the ways we value and organize learning opportunities. After two plus years of leading through a pandemic, we are seeing a new conversation happening about the meaning of where, when, and how “learning” happens.

I attended WMS in the early 2000s, during a stretch when the motto of the school was “Small School, Big Outdoors.” I graduated from White Mountain in 2002, and traveled to Washington State to attend Whitman College. While at Whitman, I participated in a field studies program for three months which was focused on environmental issues facing the intermountain West while living outdoors. After graduating from Whitman, I immediately began a career as an independent school educator that took me through roles as a teacher, librarian, dorm parent, mountain bike coach, soccer coach, ski coach, trip leader, and finally administrator, at schools in Colorado, Vermont, and finally back “home” in New Hampshire. I am now the Head of School and Executive Director at Waterville Valley Academy/WVBBTS-SEF, a snowsports club and academy just down the road from WMS.

All of that being said, I’ve basically never not been in or at a school in my life. As much as education has defined my life, I’ve been fortunate enough to attend and work at some of the most unique and interesting schools in the country – schools where experiences are not only valued, but given actual credits on a transcript. I’ve been fortunate enough to study, work, and raise my family at places where education is an all-encompassing, 24/7 goal, not an 8-3 p.m. activity.

During the Covid pandemic, it feels like the world may have caught up to that idea.

When I made the decision to close my school on March 12, 2020, I – like everyone else – thought it would be a short term bridge to a post-pandemic future. My letter to families from March 12 said, “At this point, we intend for distance learning to continue at least until April 15, the end of the scheduled break,” and continued, “We are fortunate that our strength is the ability to communicate with and educate students who are traveling or remote from campus.” As a ski academy, my school, WVA, exists

because it’s unrealistic for student-athletes to train and compete at the highest levels of our sports while still maintaining a “normal” school day: ski areas aren’t always open at night, races and events happen during the day, and are usually midweek. Ski academies, which have existed for more than forty years across our region, recognize that while our students are by necessity going to be spending less time sitting in classrooms than their more traditionally educated peers, the nature of their participation in our sports has inherent educational value. The processes of calculating risk, iterating on failure, adapting approaches, and goal-setting are baked into the experience of being a student at a snowsports academy. We may not have as many hours of classroom time as other schools, but we have authentic experiences which absolutely impact the lives and brains of the young people who travel through our programs.

These processes – authentic experiences and essential challenges, adapting to risk and iterating on failure – are also truly at the heart of the WMS experience. WMS is not, and will never be, a sports academy: it has both a broader reach and a different mission. At the core, however, it is also, and has always been, about teaching in as authentic a manner as possible so that students, and staff, have to learn to adapt to risks, to their environments, to fail, then to iterate on failure, and finally – sometimes, hopefully, – to succeed. All of that is called learning. The classroom at WMS was never the only place where we found valuable lessons: many of the most important things I took away from WMS were because of the learning experiences that pushed well past the walls of our buildings. Taking a



In our isolation, we moved a focus on community way, way up our priority list. We were not unique in making this change. In so many ways, our schools – small, adaptable, nimble, and responsive, were built for this moment: the most important conversations of that first spring were not about AP U.S. History, or Calculus, or Biology; they were about taking care of each other, responding to real-time needs, and supporting each other in that moment. I had so many moments where I looked around, and felt so profoundly grateful and intensely humbled by my colleagues and my profession. We took on the insane challenge of a full-format pivot with enormous responsibilities to and for our communities, and we thrived. As WMS has known forever, education is wherever you make it.



Resiliency is Key

Kristina "Stina" Engstrom '56

Like most people, I've changed gears many times in my life to adjust to new situations, and I also spent a good part of my career helping others learn to be more flexible and adaptable. While I think I was born with the "adaptability" muscle, so to speak, my time at St. Mary's introduced me to new experiences and gave me the opportunity to exercise and strengthen it.

My family lived in the Washington, D.C. area until I was about twelve, at which point we moved to my father's hometown of Plymouth, Massachusetts. It was beautiful there, and we all loved it, but I was unhappy. Although I did well scholastically at Plymouth Junior High School, my teenage angst (depression?) may have been too much for my mother, who was on her own during the week while my father worked in New York City.

A friend of my older sister was attending St. Mary's at the time, and on that basis, the decision was made to send me there. I entered as a sophomore, and although it took a bit of getting used to, I soon settled in.

Eventually, I was elected to the head of the student body, so apparently everyone else thought I was OK. I'm kind of shy and stepping into this and other leadership roles required me to adapt and change. The small size of the school meant it was something I could handle – and I acquired skills that I would use throughout my adult life.

By the time I graduated, I was in love with the theatre – I knew I couldn't act, but I still wanted to be involved with the stage. I was accepted by the Carnegie Institute of Technology (which in 1967 merged with the Mellon Institute to become Carnegie Mellon University), but neither my parents nor my teachers thought that was a viable option, so they rerouted me to Pembroke, the women's college at Brown University.

That wasn't to my liking, so I dropped out after less than a year, went home and worked at odd jobs for another year before going to the Boston University School of Fine and Applied Arts (now the College of Fine Arts).

Once there, I realized the arts and I didn't fit. One reason was that I didn't have the talent. Another was that we were located next door to a school for handicapped children and seeing the struggles those kids faced just getting into their school building every day made my studies and (some of) my classmates seem frivolous by comparison! So, I changed my major to history and graduated with honors in August 1961.

I wanted to get away, so I headed south and west on a Greyhound bus and landed in Taos, New Mexico, where I lived for almost a year. This was before Taos had become famous and popular with hippies (who didn't really exist yet anyway). It was an artist's enclave, and I supported myself doing odd jobs. In the midst of my time there, JFK announced the creation of the Peace Corps and I thought "Ah! That sounds interesting!"



I took the entrance exam, was accepted, and went through three months of training, after which I was sent to Mountain Province in the northern Philippines to teach English to primary school students. Another young American woman and I were assigned to the area. We had no running water or electricity, telephones, or of course, computers; and we were posted there for two years with no trips home. It definitely required some flexibility to get used to shopping, cooking, teaching, and almost everything else, but for the most part, I loved it.

After returning from the Philippines, I went home to Plymouth for a few weeks and then headed to Washington, D.C., where I worked at Peace Corps headquarters for about four years. I then went to work for a company that ran training courses for Peace Corps recruits and helped prepare volunteers for a smallpox vaccination campaign in Afghanistan.

This particular program was more demanding than a typical Peace Corps assignment – in addition to encountering linguistic challenges and cultural differences, which all volunteers encounter, these volunteers wouldn't really have a home base. Instead, they would constantly be on the move across the country, often in very remote areas. What's more, the group consisted of only women, certainly another challenge in a country like Afghanistan.

The volunteers learned basic Farsi and technical skills like how to give injections, but they also had to demonstrate they could be flexible. In this and other experiences, I've learned that it helps to be born with the ability to adapt, but you can hone that skill by connecting with people who are different from you, exposing yourself to new environments, and even eating different food. Not everyone who completes Peace Corps training is selected for an assignment; often a person's "deselection" was based on her or his inability to adapt.

Smallpox was essentially eradicated in the country by 1973, and in the world by 1980. I'm proud that I contributed to this victory!

Another professional highlight occurred in 1969, when the Peace Corps asked me to direct the first in-country training program in the world. Today in-country training is standard, but I organized the first one ever, in Afghanistan. I had to figure everything out from scratch, getting dorms and classrooms set up, buying cots and desks, and wrangling all sorts of other logistics. That was my last hurrah with the Peace Corps.

Having left the Peace Corps, I went on to get a law degree from the University of Kansas, although I never practiced law. After passing the Massachusetts bar, I wrote training materials (mostly for health workers and educators in developing countries) and did short-term contract work setting up programs for people coming to the U.S. to study our approach to providing educational and other local government services.

Adapting to change has been a consistent theme throughout my life. In any case, it's about having the resiliency to weather the ups and downs of life and be comfortable in new situations. I retired about 15 years ago, and while that was another big change, I'm adapting!

Another professional highlight occurred in 1969, when the Peace Corps asked me to direct the first in-country training program in the world. Today in-country training is standard, but I organized the first one ever, in Afghanistan.

Growing in Relationship

Alana Kumbier '94
Chair, Board of Trustees

On a Friday night in 1992, the classroom wing was dark, but a friend and I turned on the lights and settled into a couple of chairs in Mark Corliss' classroom. Mark's classroom, at the end of the hall, was decorated with prints of paintings, pages of ink-brushed Chinese characters, and newspaper clippings, its tables and desks sharing space with a tabletop Zen garden. This space welcomed us back after hours, when we talked about what we were learning in our class on Eastern Philosophy. What does it mean to cultivate non-attachment? How do we reckon with impermanence? How can we delight in this moment and acknowledge that everything (our friendship, our time at the school, our lives) will change? We speculated, enjoying a kind of uncertainty that felt spacious, in a time and friendship that felt expansive.

On another weekend, a friend hosted a group of us for dinner. She and her best friend spent the day cooking dinner for six, dinner and dessert, my first home-cooked meal in months. We sat down at a table decorated with candles and votives, arranged around a vase of daisies and pink alstroemerias. I don't remember what we ate or what we talked about that night, but I remember a lot of laughs and a feeling of kinship and warmth. This was the first time I'd eaten a meal cooked and hosted by friends, my introduction to the magic of culinary friendship and chosen-family dinners.

At times like these, I'd move closer to becoming the person I hoped to be. In the months before I came to the school, when I dreamed about the life I'd have at White Mountain, I thought about what I'd learn in classes. I didn't imagine that I'd find a community of friends and teachers who were passionate about making things happen, exploring ways of being, and pursuing creative projects together. Again and again, I'd figure this out: that relationships were where my learning and becoming happened. Sometimes in the classroom, but mostly outside of it. The confidence I felt in classes wasn't matched on the trail, but I learned how to hike with faculty guides and peers, outfitted in gear loaned to me by dorm-mates and friends. One good friend joined me at meal times, and with great kindness, shared his love for classic cars (especially the Dodge Dart Swinger). He made the values of care, maintenance, and repair clear to me in a daily way. The joy I felt stage-managing plays with a faculty member's local theater company might have been an early sign that I'd come to love editing, librarianship, and drag.

While I was held in community in many ways at school, I held some parts of myself back. I felt like the uncertainties and differences those parts presented were too messy, too weird, or unsafe to share. I was (and still am!) a type 1 diabetic and a

bisexual
queer
person.

In the early 1990s, I didn't have access to language and frameworks that could help me understand myself in relation to disabled and LGBTQ+ communities and to social movements. I didn't think of my illness or my sexuality as things to be particularly proud about, and I managed to draw—and pay—as little attention to those aspects of my life as possible. I was, unintentionally, living something like the plot of a sensational teen illness novel, a genre I'd read for fun before getting my own diagnosis. I remember those novels moving through familiar plot points: the protagonist gets a diagnosis, she resists her new sick reality and tries to act as if she's not sick or refuses to comply with a treatment plan, and some sort of crisis ensues. Ultimately, she must reckon with the consequences of keeping her illness a secret and failing to take care of herself. She may be rewarded with love and friendships at the end of the novel, though she may have to do reparative work to rebuild trust in her relationships.

Fortunately, in the story of my real life, the invitation to be in community at White Mountain, to be always learning in relationship, proved stronger than my internalized ableism and fear. As friends and teachers cared for me as a student, classmate, and creative person, it became harder to sequester the diabetic and non-straight parts of my experience. In my last months at school, I started talking to close friends and trusted adults about my illness, and came out about my emerging sexual identity to a few people. While nobody I talked to shared my experiences, they offered me empathy, compassion, and resources. I graduated from White Mountain having made a journey from separation to connection. I left feeling known and loved as an imperfect, uncertain, chronically ill, non-straight person who still had a lot of time to figure things out—a relief after I'd invested so much energy in trying to be a perfectly responsible, intelligent, mature, competent young adult.





When I started college, I resolved to find friends and community with whom I could be my whole, in-process, self. During my first weeks on campus, I learned about BiGALA, the small gay, lesbian, and bisexual student group on campus. I started attending meetings on campus. It was through those meetings that I met Frank, a gay man in his thirties. Frank lived on a farm (though through some turn of events, we both lived in the campus' low-income, no-frills dorm during my first year). He studied salamanders as a biology major, wrote poems, and lived with HIV. Our different class years meant that Frank had completed many of his general education courses by the time we met. However, we both ended up in a required communication course in his senior year. The course and its assignments were terrible. But that terribleness gave us a lot to joke and groan about after class, as we walked each other to the lab or the library.

In our walking conversations, Frank would ask me about my health, and I'd ask him about his. I didn't know what it felt like to live with HIV, and Frank didn't know what it felt like to be diabetic, but we shared experiences—with complex daily care routines, navigating the mazes of medical and insurance systems, and being sick in early adulthood. That semester, I was struggling with a shift: the easy-to-manage (and easy-to-neglect) diabetes I'd experienced in my teens was morphing into something more challenging. I put in the work to control my blood sugar levels, but my results were weeks of intractable highs and lows. The changes my doctor suggested didn't resolve anything; with each change, there seemed to be a new set of problems. I was frustrated and scared, and resented the chronicity of illness and unruliness of my body. I was doing the work! Carefully calculating insulin to carbohydrate ratios, factoring in any necessary corrections, many times a day. Doing everything in my power to be in

control. Why wasn't my stupid body complying?

As I shared my frustrations with Frank, he started sharing resources. He told me about zines, books, and poetry he was reading by fellow gay and HIV+ men. Frank passed along issues of the zine *Diseased Pariah News* (DPN). DPN combined dark humor, political education, personal ads, medical news, centerfolds, comics, recipes, and tips for day-to-day life with HIV. It was my first encounter with an illness community that wasn't organized by a medical center or charity. These people were cranky, critical, and funny. Reading along with Frank, I started to practice my own crankiness. What a release, a revelation! We could make sick jokes with each other, and complain, and keep on living.

Next, Frank passed along *In the Lap of the Buddha* by Gavin Harrison. He'd started reading the book, and I joined him for a two-person book club. In his memoir, Harrison shared how insight meditation helped him come to terms with suffering he'd experienced as an abused child, and later, as an adult living with HIV. Together, we contemplated how his approach could shift our relationships to the illnesses we treated as our opponents. Our conversations helped me make a radical change: I tried cooperating with my diabetes instead of controlling or fighting it. I practiced compassion for my body and myself as we navigated day-to-day living. I struggled (and still struggle) with shifting from distress to curiosity and non-judgement when something doesn't seem to be going well. And here was that idea of impermanence again, a gift when I was feeling like things would be hard forever. A reminder that the body I was trying so hard to control would be ever-changing, unpredictable. Just like all other animals, plants, and rocks, this illness and I were always going to be in flux. Frank shared how real impermanence felt as he anticipated his death, reminding us that our practices had different stakes and timelines. We had our moments of doubt—would it really make a difference to befriend our illnesses? To sit around talking to a virus and a condition, in a cooperative spirit? Because we were in it together, we kept trying.

The practice Frank and I began together has kept me company for over 25 years. After he passed away, I kept building community with LGBTQ+ people with illnesses and disabilities. I've been learning from writers, activists, artists, and organizers who amplify stories of mutual aid and access by and for disabled people. It's a far different set of stories than those I encountered in the illness novels I read as a young teen, or the cautionary tales I heard from strangers who wanted to share what they'd heard about living with diabetes (or to ask what I thought about *Steel Magnolias*). In their place, I now have stories and communities of care, delight, and solidarity. I don't know what the coming decades hold, but I trust that these stories and communities will continue to help me change, and will matter to my and our well-being.

New Perspectives on What's Possible

Bret Arsenault '80

Born and raised in New Hampshire, Bret Arsenault was in the eighth grade when he moved to Seattle with his mom and younger sister following his parents' divorce. Lacking financial means, the three found themselves in government housing and on welfare, which prompted Bret to pick up work at a grocery store to earn extra cash. His older brother stayed in New Hampshire with their father and attended WMS on a ski scholarship.

A few years later, his brother was approaching graduation and started a conversation with Bret about attending WMS. "The school sounded great, and even at 15, I understood the importance of getting a good education," he recalls. "And the idea of being able to ski again was very appealing! Also, my mom was struggling a bit, and I thought it might be easier for her if she had one less person to worry about."

Bret was accepted to WMS, and in August 1978, just a few weeks after receiving his driver's license, found himself on a cross-country road trip with Alan Watson, who taught chemistry and coached cross-country skiing and running at the school. Alan lived outside Seattle, and each fall he'd get himself back to the east coast by driving for Auto Driveaway, a vehicle relocation service.

Bret had met Alan prior to moving to Washington State, when Alan was a coach at Pats Peak ski area in New Hampshire. Through a sequence of events somewhat shrouded by the

mists of time, Bret's older brother reconnected the two and Bret joined Alan for a memorable trip from Seattle to Boston.

"Alan was hardcore," Bret says. "We drove straight through, day and night. We only stopped for gas, and we ate raw potatoes." Why?? "Because they didn't need to be refrigerated and would keep in the car. It sounds brutal, and I can't imagine letting my 16-year-old daughter do anything like that today, but it was super fun. We had amazing conversations about all kinds of stuff, and I learned a lot." The duo repeated the trip the next fall.

After arriving in Boston, Bret met up with his dad, who took him to WMS – his first visit to the campus – where he moved into Steele House a short distance off campus with Alan and a few other students. Bret was already fairly independent, so many aspects of adapting to life at WMS didn't faze him, save one: regimented study time.

"Up to this point, I had been able to do well in school without anything that resembled good study habits," he remembers. "In Seattle, I was a very distracted student. Being in an environment that focused on academics was a big change, but I think the biggest shock was that in the WMS setting I was able to apply myself, and even though the coursework was challenging, it wasn't hard to keep up."

Not long after arriving at WMS, Bret met with the school's downhill ski coach, Dave Ryder, who asked if he would join the competitive ski racing team. "I barely had enough money to buy ski equipment, so the additional funds needed to race were out of reach. Dave proposed a deal: if he could use his industry connections to get me equipment, I could hang on to my money and use it for racing. That worked for me, so we headed to Joe Jones Ski Shop in Waterville Valley, where I got outfitted with what I needed."

After graduating from WMS, Bret briefly started college but then dropped out to pursue his dream of making the U.S. ski team. A series of injuries eventually put the kibosh on that plan, and "In hindsight, my injuries were probably a blessing in disguise. I wasn't quite good enough to be a top ski racer, but had that not happened I would have kept skiing and working to support myself without going to school," he reflects.

By this time his brother was attending The College of Idaho, and although Bret was no longer able to compete at the highest levels of the sport, the ski coach encouraged him to enroll at the college and ski for the school's team. Bret took him up on the offer, a decision that led to two seminal experiences.

The first had to do with teamwork. "Ski racing is a very individual sport,

“As the saying goes, you can either have a team of all-stars, or an all-star team. It's a lesson that's stayed with me throughout my career.”

but when you're on a team, you have to adapt your mindset. The goal is no longer to get the fastest time possible by pushing yourself to (but hopefully staying on the right side of) the edge between maximum speed and a crash. In team racing, the goal is to make sure everyone finishes in one piece and that the team's overall standing is good," Bret explains. "As the saying goes, you can either have a team of all-stars, or an all-star team. It's a lesson that's stayed with me throughout my career."

The second experience involved meeting amazing math professors who got Bret into computer design, something that ultimately led to his joining Microsoft and rising to his current position of Chief Information Security Officer, a role that's discussed in this article.

Bret has adapted to shifting circumstances many times throughout his life, and he credits the education and broadened horizons he acquired at WMS with equipping him to succeed. "Education is incredibly empowering

and life changing, and attending WMS was pivotal for me. It gave me an entirely new perspective on what was possible. It wasn't just the teachers – I was exposed to people from completely different parts of the world, and I don't just mean geographically. At some point I realized, 'Wait a minute, I'm doing just as well as this kid. He expects to accomplish great things...I guess I can, too!' It totally changed my understanding of what I could achieve."

Having spent time on the less-affluent side of the socioeconomic spectrum, Bret is passionate about expanding educational opportunities for disadvantaged populations. "Particularly in today's climate of heightened awareness of racial injustices, I think it's important that we focus on the root of the problem – inequitable access to educational opportunities due to socioeconomic disparities – more than the symptoms."

He encourages people to think critically about this and other issues. "The polarization on many important

topics in this country has become untenable. Conversations on critical issues like gun control have become non-scalable, meaning you can't get three sentences into a discussion before both sides dig in and refuse to budge. Having an adaptive mindset means being able to see valid points in multiple perspectives. The pandemic has been a forcing function in this regard. People talk about being inclusive, but they're often not open to other's views."

In keeping with the theme of expanding educational opportunity, last fall Microsoft launched a national campaign to help community colleges and HCBUs expand the cybersecurity workforce. "I grew up poor, and had I not been able to go to a good school, my life would have been very different," Bret observes. "My mantra is earn, learn, and return. If we are to address some of the key social problems that plague this country, we've got to get at the root causes of inequity, and financial aid – and schools like WMS – are key."

"Having an adaptive mindset means being able to see valid points in multiple perspectives."

Readjust, Reframe, Reimagine, Refocus!

Pat Shure '52

"Math was definitely not one of my best subjects," says Pat Shure, a surprising statement for someone whose 40+ year career in math teaching was significant enough to warrant a Wikipedia entry, not to mention an award from the Association for Women in Mathematics. It's also somewhat surprising that her undergraduate degree is in anthropology – but she went on to obtain a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Michigan and made serious progress toward a Ph.D. before life's events overtook that plan.

Pat entered St. Mary's as a freshman in 1948. "My father was headmaster of a pre-prep school in Connecticut, and at the time there was a system of reciprocity among boarding schools for the children of teachers," she explains. "My mother wanted me to go to a finishing school, but I'd grown up spending a lot of time in the outdoors with my brothers, was very independent and had other ideas. After doing a bit of research, I found St. Mary's, which looked exciting."

At St. Mary's "We read Latin and climbed mountains," and explored progressive ideas. "We were given reading assignments from *The New York Times*, which we then discussed in class. That wasn't done at any finishing schools, I assure you!" she says with a chuckle. "My political sensibilities emerged, and I developed an awareness of social justice issues." Another memory: "There were no bells or buzzers! To wake us in the morning, they played classical music over the speaker system. As a result, I know every note of a wide range of classical music, even if I don't know the names of the pieces."



Pat's parents divorced in 1945, not long after her father returned from the Pacific Theater of World War II. "In 1948, the year I entered St. Mary's, my mother married a wealthy and well-known man, Ralph Ingersoll," she recalls. "Ralph was the founder and publisher of *PM*, a very liberal New York City daily newspaper that ran from 1940 to 1948. All of a sudden, there was a home in Pennsylvania, and a fancy brownstone on the Upper East Side. Roald Dahl lived on the top floor, and I used to go to the movies with him when I came home for visits!"

"It was a big change in our standard of living," Pat reflects. "I had to reframe a few things. Events happen in your life – good, bad, boring, exciting – you just have to switch gears and adapt."

When the time came to go to college, Pat was ready for a change. "I didn't want four more years of boarding school. I wanted to get out of New England and go to school with boys. It was time to move on!" she remembers. "A friend at St. Mary's was from Michigan, so I applied there. The applications for places like Wellesley and Vassar asked what fiction you'd been reading. The application for Michigan asked, 'Are you married?' and I thought 'Well! This is the real world!'"

Pat and her brothers were expected to help pay for their own education, so she worked during her undergraduate years. "I discovered that I was a pretty good waitress, but I wasn't a very good salesgirl. Then I got a job with a naval research project related to the cold war. I have great

She believes strongly in the value of a good education, and in particular, one that instills an appreciation for informed decision making.

“This is something we learned at St. Mary’s...”

hearing, and at first, I helped test signal detection theory. Then the statistician quit, and they asked me to step into that role. I said, ‘I’m an anthropologist, I can’t do stats!’ and they said, ‘Don’t worry, we’ll teach you,’” she recounts. “I started taking one math class at a time, and I noticed that there wasn’t any particular reason not to continue. I was getting better grades than people who were going into fields that required math. So, I decided to keep going!”

Having completed her anthropology degree, Pat realized that her career options were limited. “All my classmates wanted to be Margaret Mead, but there wasn’t enough research money to go around. I knew that if I had a math degree, I’d always have work, so I applied to the graduate program for math.”

Today, a person with an undergrad in anthropology might not be able to pull that off, but her request was so novel that they let her try. “It turned out that I had enough math credits and skills to handle the coursework,” she clarifies. “We used slide rules – we’d made our own slide rules in chemistry class at St. Mary’s, by the way, because we had to use log scales – and if you wanted to find a trig value you had to use a book to look up values in tables. There were 75 graduate students, but only three of us were women: me, a nun, and a lady who wore a fedora and carried a briefcase and never spoke to anyone. None of us got our doctorates.”

At grad school, Pat met and married a nuclear physicist, and after graduating in 1960, the newlyweds went to Princeton for a year on her husband’s research fellowship. “The move disrupted my studies. As a non-student, there was no way to stay connected to academics because grad students didn’t teach back then. Teaching assistants didn’t really exist because the math requirements were nothing like what they are today. Math classes weren’t required for most college majors – not for the arts, not for architects, not for business majors. You only took math if you were going into physics or engineering.”

The other life event that disrupted Pat’s studies was the arrival of her first child in 1963. “Over time, I drifted away from academia. When we returned to Michigan, we

attempted to restart my doctoral studies, but one thing led to another, and I gradually sputtered out. I did less and less with my Ph.D. thesis and eventually threw it away.”

After a few years’ hiatus, Pat found a way to put her knowledge of math to use as an instructor at The Roeper School in a suburb of Detroit. “It’s a wonderful, highly progressive school, and I wanted all three of my children to attend, so I taught in exchange for their tuition. It was a long commute from Ann Arbor, but other teachers and I as well as a bunch of kids did it every school day for many years.”

In 1982, with her eldest off to college, Pat once again changed gears and took a role as the director of math and science curricula for the University of Michigan’s Comprehensive Studies Program (CSP), which is designed to support underrepresented minority students who are not as well prepared academically as their more privileged peers. “Many of the students I’d worked with at Roeper were people of color, so I leveraged that experience to design approaches and programs that would help close any existing educational gaps.”

The program was housed in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, but originally Pat’s job included “a token quarter-time appointment in the math department.” Gradually, it became half time, and eventually she was full time in the math department and director of the department’s introductory program where she developed curriculum, trained instructors and wrote exams. “All along, I continued to teach classes that were designated as CSP sections of the larger course, so I could give my students additional time and attention.”

In contrast to Pat’s own experience as a university student, when relatively few students took math classes, by the mid-80’s, virtually all degrees included some math requirements. “By the time I was teaching at Michigan, the world had changed. For example, our freshman calculus course had a fall enrollment of around 3,000 students. Most universities our size had large lectures, but we didn’t. All of our classes, whether they were CSP or not, had about 24 students, and all of the students used the same text, did

the same assignments and took the same exams. I oversaw all of this, and it kept me busy!”

In 1992, Pat and two colleagues began work on what became the “Michigan Calculus” program, a style of teaching calculus that combines “cooperative real-world problem solving by the students with an instructional focus on conceptual understanding.”

The program included extensive professional development for faculty members and graduate student instructors, and Pat was a member of a nationwide group of professors who authored math textbooks. “We pioneered an approach that now has a fancy name and is very much in vogue: the flipped classroom. We made sure that the students read the book rather than having the instructor introduce the material. Then in class the students sat at tables and worked on problems together while the instructor supervised. The idea is to put the responsibility for learning on the student.”

Pat retired in 2006 but keeps busy working with the Michigan League of Conservation Voters and various political initiatives. “My real passion, however, is running the math program for Girls Group, an organization whose goal is to help young women graduate from high school and become first-generation college graduates.”

She believes strongly in the value of a good education, and in particular, one that instills an appreciation for informed decision making. “This is something we learned at St. Mary’s, and it was reinforced at The Roeper School. George Roeper used to say that the purpose of education is to teach students how to make informed decisions. It requires curiosity, investigation and drawing information from a variety of sources...skills that are increasingly important in our modern world, which is awash in ‘news’ and ‘information’ that varies widely in its quality and veracity.”

Looking back on the many phases of her life and career, Pat feels that many words that begin with “re” sum up her approach to having an adaptable mindset. “Readjust, revisit, reimagine, reassess, refocus! When your situation changes, you have to sit back, take stock and formulate a plan to go forward.”



Helping Each Other Adapt to Stressful Times

Cortney Lo, Ph.D. '86

Most of us don't think twice about seeing a doctor if we develop a persistent cough or a new pain in our knee. We acknowledge that our bodies need care, and if something's not right, we get help. Yet for much of our modern history, the same has not been true for mental health. As a society, we've attached a lot of stigma to seeking support if we aren't feeling OK emotionally. This leads to repression of mental health issues, which tends to exacerbate them.

Fortunately, views on mental health have changed dramatically over the past few decades, and this is particularly noticeable among teenagers and young adults, who more easily embrace diagnoses, therapies and medications as tools to help ensure their emotional and cognitive well-being. I hope these trends continue, and that judgment or criticism related to mental health issues become things of the past.

As someone who's spent more than 20 years in the field of psychotherapy, I can attest to the fact that our mental and emotional health is every bit as important as our physical health, and indeed, the former affects the latter. The physical impacts of neglecting to prioritize our mental health can be serious, whether they manifest directly in the

form of high blood pressure or heart disease, or indirectly through coping mechanisms like excessive eating and drinking or engaging in risk-taking behaviors.

My work as a psychotherapist has given me an interesting vantage point from which to view the multiple stressors of the past few years. The pandemic, increasingly strident and divisive politics, concerns about social justice and climate change, and more recently, inflation and the war in Ukraine have pushed many of us to our limits. We've been in a state of ongoing and elevated daily stress with no relief on the horizon.

The good news is that greater acceptance of therapy as a valid tool for care means more people are seeking care for their mental health. Business is better than ever. The bad news is that my colleagues and I are all booked solid and having to turn clients away, something that no therapist ever wants to do.

Truth be told, I'd rather be out of a job. Ideally, what psychotherapists know and do would be integrated into society. There would be more resources, freely available to everyone, and the fact that each and every one of us is dealing with varying degrees of mental health issues at all times would be understood and normalized. So too would acceptance of neurodiversity (or as I like to say, the diversity that not enough people are talking about). Some of us are wired to be more prone to anxiety or depression, and these differences should be no more remarkable than hair color. But I digress – my point is, in a perfect world, we'd all care for one another. In that spirit, here are some thoughts on how we can help each other adapt to stressful times.

First and foremost, I believe that adaptability and compassion are two sides of the same coin. The ability to be compassionate makes us more flexible, more resilient, more adaptable. Second, compassion begins within. We all talk about compassion, but in the context of something that's directed outward. Most of us need to turn a bit of that kindness and empathy inward, and work on cultivating a healthy emotional ecosystem. Doing so will foster a wellspring of understanding that we can use to help others.

Where to begin? An important first step is simply tuning into your inner world, giving yourself space to feel emotions and assigning value to them. Next, listen to your internal dialogue. We all have voices that are quite self-critical – you can ask them to take a pause and encourage other softer, gentler voices to speak up. This rebalancing of our internal voices is an important part of strengthening our emotional resiliency and developing our ability to feel compassion for ourselves and others.

Although as a society we're becoming more open about discussing stress and anxiety, many of us “cope” with things that make us uncomfortable or unhappy by repressing our feelings and soldiering onward. The pandemic is Exhibit A in illustrating the extent to which our busy lives are a coping mechanism. When many of us suddenly had less to do, we reverted to less-than-helpful strategies like overindulging in food, drink or streaming channels to manage stress and overwhelming emotions.

While getting through the day and getting stuff done may feel like victory, it's a Pyrrhic one. We can try to minimize or deny our grief, anger or anxiety, but at some point, the parts that have been held under come up for air – and it may not be pretty when they surface! Just as with our physical bodies, ignoring mental or emotional issues doesn't make them go away. They only become more serious and entrenched and take a greater toll on our well-being.

Some of us are fortunate enough to have strong support networks that give us what we need most of the time. But many of us don't, or we have neurologies that require extra support. Or perhaps we've suffered trauma and we need help to break down our mind's protective scar tissue and heal. All of that is OK, and that's what psychotherapists are here for.

I myself first discovered the amazing world of psychotherapy as a patient. I'll never forget my initial session with a gifted therapist. I felt so seen, known and understood. It was terrifying and wonderful all at the same time! The experience changed my life – it sparked my passion and catalyzed my decision to become a healing agent for others.

Today, I feel like a seasoned healer, and my practice is based in simple truths. We heal in relationships. Being vulnerable means being both soft and strong. The heart of healing is what drives me professionally – and the heart of healing is in you, just as much as it is in me.

The world is pretty crazy these days. We could all use a little extra help dealing with it. I encourage you to cultivate compassion for yourself, and to then share that gift with others by talking with them, being present and curious, and finding ways to connect. But remember – emotional energy is like a bank account. If you only withdraw to give to others, and never make deposits on your own behalf, you'll exhaust your resources and be unable to help others.



Adapting to a New Culture

Amin Arabzada '20

The White Mountain School has hosted many international students over the years, although not many of them have come to the school from a war zone. In 2015, Amin Arabzada's home city of Kunduz, Afghanistan was taken over by the Taliban. "I was a 13-year-old kid, but I couldn't do anything," Amin recalls. "We sat in the basement for two weeks. My father wouldn't let me go outside because one of my friends was killed by a stray bullet."

Life in Kunduz was hard and wrought with uncertainty. "Every morning when you left to go to school, you had to think that it might be the last time you might see your family members," Amin says. "And after school, no one hung around. Everyone would quickly disperse to avoid being in large groups that were an easy target. It didn't take long for me to decide I wanted to leave Afghanistan."

Two of Amin's sisters were already in the U.S. attending college courtesy of scholarships provided by The School of Leadership Afghanistan (SOLA). "At first, I explored the possibility of getting some kind of scholarship or assistance through the government. Unfortunately, although those programs were good in the beginning, by the time I was ready to apply, there was a lot of corruption in the system. I didn't want to pay bribes, and I didn't have the money to do so anyway, so with my sisters' help, I just applied directly to some schools, including WMS."

Accepted for admission as a freshman in the fall of 2016, Amin was met at Boston's Logan Airport by Joshua Pelkey, the head of admissions. "Coming from Afghanistan, even Logan Airport was kind of mind-blowing, and Boston was really incredible. I wondered how long it took people to get

up to the top floors of those tall buildings!” he remembers. “I was the last international student to arrive that year, and I got to the school in late September. I was surprised at how warm it was. But not long after that, the snow came, and there was a lot more than I was used to.”

Amin didn’t speak a lot of English when he arrived at WMS, but he didn’t let that slow him down. “Once I got to WMS, I latched on to every opportunity to practice, and I’m sure I annoyed the heck out of a lot of people in the process!” he says with a laugh. “When we had alumni or parents’ weekends, I would just sit myself down at tables and try to have conversations with anyone I could – even older adults – as if I were their peer. I’m the youngest of nine children – my parents were 45 and 57 when they had me – so I was comfortable speaking with people in their 60s and 70s. I was extremely respectful of everyone, especially my elders. That’s something that is very important in my culture.”

Life in a new country and new environment brought freedoms that many American high-school students take for granted. “In Afghanistan, we weren’t allowed out at night, so at WMS, I took advantage of every opportunity to go for walks in the evening. On weekends, we could stay out until 11:00 p.m., so I went for walks just because it meant I was doing something I couldn’t do at home!” Another thing Amin hadn’t done before was wash his own clothes. “One laundry day, all my shirts turned pink!”

Of course, Amin had to adapt to many different cultural norms as well. “I had never seen women wearing swimsuits or revealing clothing before, and as a religious person, I felt uncomfortable at first and looked away. I also didn’t know about LGBTQ rights or communities. But I could see that this was a group that was being discriminated against in some parts of society, so I joined the LGBTQ ally group on campus.”

“I really lacked a lot of information about life in other parts of the world,” Amin continues. “But I quickly realized that we’re all human beings, and it’s OK for people to be different and live the way they want. At WMS, I would wear my Afghan clothes – a tunic shirt and pants, called a perahan tunban – for special occasions. In 2018, I wore my Afghan clothes while visiting my sister in Washington, D.C., and someone gave me the middle finger, but I didn’t think it was a big deal or let that stop me. It’s much more comfortable than a suit!”

Amin has fond memories of his four years at WMS and remains amazed by the hard work and commitment of the teaching staff. “The teachers put so much time into us! As students, we were spoiled. Now that I’m an adult, I struggle with time management and getting everything done, and I’m in awe of the fact that our teachers always had time for us.”

Another surprise was that the WMS teachers didn’t get angry with students if they didn’t get their homework done. “They were much more caring and compassionate than the teachers I had back home. So many teachers and staff helped me out. I am very outgoing, and not long after I arrived, I knew everyone at the school.”

After graduating from WMS, Amin relocated to Canada to seek refugee status, and has since brought his parents over to live with him. He’s pursuing a degree in mechatronics – a branch of engineering that brings together multiple engineering disciplines, including mechanical, electrical, computer, and robotics engineering – at Mohawk College, as well as working at the college’s student association. His parents are adjusting to their new lives but miss their homeland.

Amin has had to adapt to a lot in his life, but it’s clear to anyone who meets him that his ebullient personality and positive attitude are central to his ability to thrive in changing circumstances. “I keep things in perspective. I’m just happy to be someplace where I don’t have to worry about my physical safety,” he reflects. “I can focus on my future.”





Small Acts of Kindness Had a Big Effect on My Life

Beth Kingman '90

I came to WMS because I had difficulty adapting to a major life change. In my first semester I had to make several adjustments to how I thought about myself and the world, but the school's nurturing and supportive environment helped me come through with flying colors.

In 1984, my family relocated from the Midwest to New Hampshire. I was twelve, and it was a tough change at a difficult age. Although I had been a straight-A student prior to moving, my grades plummeted at my new middle school. I missed my friends and felt I didn't fit in. I was depressed.

My father was an Episcopal priest, so he knew about WMS and a similar school in the area and suggested looking at them. As soon as I visited WMS, I thought it felt right. I loved the small size, and it seemed much more welcoming than public school. I entered as a freshman in the fall of 1986 and attended for all four years of high school, which made me a "lifer" – of our graduating class, only five of us had that distinction!

I was thirteen by then and being away from home for the first time was hard for me. I was homesick, anxious and overwhelmed at having to figure out how to do everything for myself.

One Thursday night about a month into my first semester, I was mildly horrified to discover that my seat assignment for that week's formal dinner was at the headmaster's table. Jack Hood compounded my fears by proceeding to sit down next to me. He looked right at me and said "Good evening, Beth. How are you?" My palms started to sweat...he knows my name?! We had a nice conversation throughout the meal, and after dinner he asked if he could give me a hug – and from then on, whenever we saw each other, we'd exchange hugs.

The dinner was an eye-opening experience. For the first time in my life, I thought "People see me!" I wasn't someone who excelled in sports or music, and I felt invisible and inconsequential. When Jack spoke to me like an adult – like his peer – it was transformational. He continued to engage with me like this throughout my time at WMS. I had never received this kind of external validation from someone who wasn't my parent. I began to realize that I didn't have to do anything special or out of the ordinary to be accepted – I could just be me, that was enough. I could be comfortable in my own skin.

The second major event that changed my life happened early in my sophomore year. I'd always been interested in science, even as a kid, and by the time I arrived at WMS I was ahead of my peers in biology and physics. Chemistry, however, was a different story – I struggled with it, to the point where I was getting Ds.

My teacher Jim Kelley was a very patient and gentle-hearted soul. He was also a dorm parent for one of the boys' dorms and invited me to come see him for some tutoring. I was ashamed – only dummies need tutors – but accepted. I remember that session like it was yesterday. He looked right at me and said: "Chemistry is a tough subject. Not everyone gets it, but I know you can do this. And when you get it, it's going to click and come to you instantly." This sounded preposterous to me, but we worked through several problems, and I pretended I understood, even though I didn't. Afterward, I went back to my room and decided to do one more problem. I looked at the question, looked at my notes, and saw the answer. Then I second guessed myself: That can't be right! But I was tired, so I wrote the answer down and went to bed.

The next day in class, Jim asked "How many were able to solve the last problem?" To everyone's surprise (including my own), no one else had an answer except me – and it was correct! From that moment on, I was an A+ student in

chemistry, and I knew exactly what I wanted to study in college.

Those two interactions with Jack and Jim changed everything for me, and I just took off. I entered WMS as a very shy, insecure thirteen-year-old who was unsure of who she was. When I graduated, I was self-assured, determined and directed – and confident that I was prepared for what lay ahead of me. I wonder how many high school students can say that? WMS equipped me to tackle the rest of my life.

Beyond simply teaching me to be organized and responsible, WMS taught me that it's OK to speak up and give your opinion, although you also have to be willing to accept criticism. It's also OK to ask for help, and to make mistakes, because you learn from them. I believe I had a leg up on my freshman peers at college because of the preparation I received at WMS.

I'm approaching the 30-year mark in my career in chemistry, and I currently work as a synthetic organic chemist – it's a fancy way of saying "lab rat," but we deal with some pretty complicated stuff. Adapting to life at WMS helped me discover and strengthen internal qualities that have been very important to my work. Jim Kelley saw that I had sticktoitiveness bordering on stubbornness. I hate to throw in the towel when I can't get something to work, and that – along with the confidence he instilled in me – comes through in my approach to challenges in the lab.

I stayed in touch with Jack after leaving WMS, and Jim and I were able to reconnect through social media and see one another from time to time. I'm so grateful to be able to spend time with someone who inspired me and had such an influence on my life!



Attitude is Everything

Vendula "Vendy" Pospisilova '20

In 2016, Vendy, a native of the Czech Republic, was 14 years old and attending eighth grade in Prague. Many of her classmates had siblings who were two years ahead in school, and one day it seemed that half of the older class had disappeared. Where did they go? Had they been abducted by aliens? It turned out they'd all left for the U.S. to participate in programs for foreign exchange students.

When she mentioned this at dinner that night, her father said "What a coincidence! I just read about a huge boarding school fair that will be held in Prague in a few weeks. Would you like to go?" Vendy was unable to attend, but her father did and brought back a huge booklet with dozens of options for boarding schools. "I looked through it, and WMS was my first and only choice. I've always been a big fan of freestyle skiing, and it seemed like a great fit."

Less than a year later, Vendy was packing a big red suitcase and preparing to fly to America alone. "I'd traveled internationally with my parents, and thought I was going to be fine traveling solo for the first time, but the night before I had a bit of a meltdown, not least because I was intimidated by the prospect of a layover in Amsterdam. But I had some ice cream, got over it, and here we are!" she recalls with a laugh.

Adapting to living away from home in a new country went fairly smoothly, as did transitioning into the American way of studying, which felt less taxing. "In the Czech Republic, a student in middle school or early high school would typically have 15-20 classes a year – 8-10

classes a day – because subjects like algebra, geometry, chemistry, biology and physics are all taught at the same time, instead of splitting them up across years as is done in the U.S.,” she clarifies.

One assignment precipitated a mini-breakdown, however: writing an outline. “I now understand this is a very simple task, and a no-brainer for most U.S. students, but I just couldn’t wrap my head around it. How can I know what I’m going to say about a topic before I’ve written my paper? It blew my mind. I stressed out about this for a couple of weeks. I was so upset that I called my mom!”

Once she’d conquered the basics of creating an outline, Vendy greatly enjoyed her studies at WMS – until Covid threw a gigantic spanner in the works and disrupted her senior year. “Everything was going fine, even after the Christmas break. Then a field course that involved travel to France was cancelled, and we all thought ‘Hmnm. That’s serious!’ When spring break came, I made the unusual decision to travel home. Thank goodness I did, for if I hadn’t, I might not have been able to go back for several months. I said goodbye to my best friend Charlotte before leaving, and although we’re still in touch, I’ve never seen her since!

“Of course, we didn’t return to campus at the end of spring break, and I finished my senior year on Zoom,” she continues. “Morning meeting happened around dinner time for me, and I was doing my homework during the day while everyone in the States was still asleep. It was difficult to adjust to our new reality. Everyone had already been accepted to college, and we only had a couple of months of classes left, so it was hard to stay engaged and motivated. It was very depressing!”

Today, Vendy is pursuing a BA in theatre practice at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and is looking forward to a career as a stage manager. Now in her third year, she’s focused on completing work-study assignments, the first of which was at the prestigious and historic Globe Theater in London.

“The stage manager synchronizes all aspects of a production and makes everything go at the same time,” Vendy says. “I serve as the central point for any and all technical aspects of the production. If a small thing in one department changes, whether that’s a prop, a costume, or how a performer places herself on stage, I have to know, because it can affect everything else. It requires a lot of flexibility and thinking on one’s feet.”

Vendy’s three-week stint at the Globe in late August illustrated this in spades. Her work-study began when the theater was conducting final rehearsals for what *TimeOut London* dubbed “the most controversial play of the year.”

Reflecting on her decision to attend WMS and the adaptation that required, Vendy credits it with bringing about significant personal growth and teaching her to be flexible – a quality that’s made her choice of career possible.

The production, *I, Joan*, presents Joan of Arc as non-binary, and the role is performed by a non-binary actor. Although intended as a tongue-in-cheek “romp,” the play triggered quite an uproar on social media. Given that at the Globe some members of the audience are right next to the stage, the cast and crew were concerned about the potential for acts of protest or violence.

“We had several meetings to discuss how we would handle different types of incidents. Fortunately, there have now been several performances without any issues, and things seem to have calmed down, but it was a great example of planning to adapt to unpredictable circumstances!” she explains.

Reflecting on her decision to attend WMS and the adaptation that required, Vendy credits it with bringing about significant personal growth and teaching her to be flexible – a quality that’s made her choice of career possible.

“The Czech system is more regimented and structured – the American way of doing things is much more free form by comparison,” she observes. “Going to WMS required me to adapt to a lot of new things at an important point in my life. It was tough, but I knew my parents had invested a lot to send me to school, and I felt a responsibility to come through for them. I couldn’t just throw in the towel and give up because it was hard!”

“Even the experience I had with the outline was instrumental,” Vendy says. “I had to figure out a way forward, and it taught me to accept that situations are not always going to conform to what you want. I’m still not a fan of change – it can be scary and unsettling – but I’ve developed skills for handling life when things don’t go exactly as I’d planned. In the end, attitude is everything. If all you can think about is how horrible things are, you’re in trouble. But if you say, ‘This didn’t work, what’s another option?’ then you’re primed to work it out.”

Helping Others Visualize Change

Fatimata Cham '19

Fatimata Cham was born and raised in the Bronx, New York, to parents who had immigrated from The Gambia. She attended public school from the eighth grade and was involved in many extracurricular enrichment programs because of her good grades. She learned about The White Mountain School through a program that helps people of color (POC) apply to private boarding schools across the country.

“My best friend Djenebou and I visited the WMS campus with her father and my mother,” Fatimata recalls. “I’m a city kid, so seeing nature up close like that really made an impression on me!” Both she and Jenabu were accepted for the freshman class of 2015 – “We were kind of a package deal!” she says with a laugh.

As with any new student, settling in at WMS required some adjusting. As the second oldest of six children, Fatimata had had responsibilities around the house from a young age, so looking after herself was easy. However, the school and surrounding community were much less diverse than NYC. At the same time, this was her first experience meeting and interacting with international students from Asia and Europe.

Outdoor sports were another novel experience. “Jenabu and I decided to sign up for rock climbing, thinking that we’d be inside. You can imagine our surprise when after our first day, our instructor Hiapo (Emmons-Shaw) said we were headed outside!”

WMS also offered Fatimata the opportunity to get involved in community service. “I helped with after-school trips and activities at schools in the area,” she explains. “For many of the kids, I was the first observant Muslim they’d met, so they had a lot of questions! I also hadn’t been in places where I was the only person who looked like me, so I think it was good for me as well as for them.”

Fatimata was already a disciplined student when she arrived at the school, so she had no problem keeping up with her classwork but says that “Being at WMS definitely pushed me to adapt and not be afraid of things I wasn’t familiar with. I became stronger over the years, more confident in applying and reaching for things that were new and beyond my comfort zone.”

Today, Fatimata is completing her bachelor’s degree at Lafayette College, where she is double majoring in government and law as well as women and gender studies. In the summer of 2021, she interned with Bloomberg Philanthropies, and in 2022 she returned but switched



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Helping others visualize change and think differently is an important part of this.
”

over to the for-profit side, interning with Bloomberg L.P.’s campus recruiting team where she’s “learning about how they build partnerships with schools in NYC, as well as how they reach students of color and low-income students.”

“I wanted to see what life is like in the world of business,” she says. “What I’ve found is that just because I’m not, say, a finance person, that doesn’t mean that I can’t find a role in a finance department, even if it’s simply helping someone who looks like me see that they could fit in and be welcome here, too.”

As a 2022 Truman Scholar, Fatimata is looking forward to pursuing a master’s degree, most likely in global affairs with a concentration in women and gender studies and expects she will go into non-profit and social justice work. This impressive achievement is all the more remarkable given that she is a first-generation American whose parents had little formal education. “My father came to the U.S. first and worked and saved until he could afford to bring my mother over. Both of my parents have always valued education and wanted what’s best for us.”

Fatimata believes strongly that an adaptable mindset is vital to addressing social injustices and is engaged in several efforts to promote gender equality and Islamophobia. “We have to be flexible in how we interact with one another,” she observes. “Helping others visualize change and think differently is an important part of this.”

One Family's Experience

Anne Bridge, St. Mary's-in-the-Mountains '68

In September 1966, my parents drove me from home in Walpole, NH, up to St. Mary's-in-the-Mountains to start my junior year. I remember wearing a pink shirtwaist dress that I had made myself and Capezio flats on my feet. We unloaded my things into my room on the second floor of the still new Burroughs House, I met my roommate Karen Walsh of Bridgeton, ME, and my parents drove off and left me. They were experienced at these drop-offs, my two older brothers had both gone away to boarding schools at younger ages than I.

A few years before, my mother had hoped to send me to Concord Academy, but that was not the place for me. During my interview I sensed there was a lot of social pressure amongst the girls, heavy academic pressure, no skiing, and worst of all, room and board was very expensive, so I would not live on campus. I was to live with family friends who had two little kids who were to be my responsibility in exchange. What else would I do but act immature and uninterested during my interview? Whew, my application was declined.

I was so happy and challenged during my first few weeks and months at St. Mary's. I joined the choir, the glee club, was invited to become one of the Octets, learned to play soccer, found other guitar-playing-folk-song lovers, took art history, studio art and modern dance, took part in school committees, and read amazing literature. None of these things were available to me in my local high school. Only risky behaviors afforded some excitement there. And though I was unaware, I was lonely for the company of other girls, having grown up surrounded by boys.

The company of girls! How I relished my new community for the next two years. As with any experience, there were high points and low points. Rules that were meant to be followed, and rules that were meant to be challenged. I learned early that my sense of optimism overruled my fears and I preferred to focus on the high points, the positives. I spent time and energy on those friends and teachers who today we'd say "sparked joy"! The late 1960s were a time of enormous change, and young women were still told what to do with their lives. I managed to find the things that worked for me within that framework. I learned to love music, to love print-making, and was first introduced to weaving via a woman who taught tapestry weaving between two sticks we found in the woods. In the St. Mags "garden," I managed to weed all the rows in front of me and take advantage of what worked for me. And the golden treasure I took from my time at St. Mary's was and still is, the friendships I kept for a lifetime.

Twenty-three years later, when he was 14, my older son Leighton Paulsen '95 came to me with a request to go to WMS for his 9th grade year. I remember staring at him in amazement. I was a single parent, working to make ends meet and be a good mother. "What? You what?" As with many things at that time, I discussed with Nan Bacon '68, Leighton's godmother. She said "why not??" She took him up to the School; Leighton and Head of School, Sam Robinson, met and decided WMS was the place for Leighton. Generosity set in, and in the fall of 1991, I drove up and left Leighton in the Annex with his own future lifetime friends. Leighton had chosen to leave the public school of his small city hometown, and the stress of managing quite a lot of unsupervised time with other unsupervised kids. You'd think this would be a desirable situation for a young teenager. Leighton knew there were better things in store. He too found life-long friends (teachers and peers) who shared his love of skiing, kayaking, and love of adventure. Leighton's future life and work has been grounded in the lessons he learned in all the "classrooms" that WMS offered. He took full advantage of every kind of learning experience – intended and unintended, that life in a boarding school offers.

Midway through Leighton's WMS experience, then Development Director Marylou Krambeer called and asked me if I wanted a job and did Eliot want to enroll as a 9th grader? A few months later, I quit my job in print sales, we packed up and rented out our house in Newburyport, MA, and moved into Vaillant House to begin a 4-year family experience at WMS. I as the Alumni Director, Eliot as 9th grader and Leighton as a junior. So much about this experience sounds perfect, but it was a huge adjustment for all of us. Mom around all the time, 100 or so new neighbors, yearly changes with administration and faculty, and the usual financial and enrollment challenges for a small school, which WMS has always met head on.

My second SMS/WMS experience drew to a close in 1997. Leighton had graduated in 1995, Eliot in 1997, and I moved to the Monadnock Region to take a job at the Dublin School and be closer and helpful to my aging parents. We all took really valuable life and educational experiences, networks, and friendships with us.

Life hummed along. I moved to Harrisville, NH. Leighton moved to Puerto Rico, started a business, married and started a family. Eliot explored the world, climbed mountains, and settled in Australia where he married and started a family.

Our friendships and WMS networks have played a role in each of our lives. Our lessons and lifelong love of the outdoors amplified during our experiences at WMS have given us all a “home improvement” tool.

Then this happened in 2019. Leighton’s daughter Annie Paulsen ’22 had this to say:

Growing up, it was in the back of my mind that attending WMS was an option for me. Having heard all the stories from my father and grandmother, it was clear how much this school had positively impacted them as individuals. When I started my freshman year at a public high school, I realized the learning environment and culture at the school was not for me; I needed something smaller and more personalized. I started applying to boarding schools around the area, and when I got accepted into WMS, it became clear to me that I wanted to follow in my family’s footsteps.

I remember being super excited to leave home. Not only because being independent and being on my own was appealing, but I didn’t have friends and activities that tied me to home. I was excited to try a new experience!

I moved into Hill House in the fall of 2019. Nervous at first, I questioned whether WMS was the right decision for me. My first field course, a music improvisation course that took place on an island in the middle of Squam Lake, settled my fears. Not only did the entire group get along, but everyone there had a passion for creating and playing music. Following my graduation, I am still close with some of that group. The special sense of community that WMS has sustained my feeling of being at home and being in the right place. That trip was just one of the many beginning moments where I would begin to experience this feeling.

Enter the Covid-19 pandemic. During my junior year (2020) school life was really difficult to navigate for me and for the School. Hybrid learning and isolation disrupted the special sense of community. But by the end of that year, my friends and I got creative. We couldn’t rely on town trips or school-sponsored events so we spent nearly every day outside on Hoods Hill. For me and others, this was how I recovered from the depressing feelings of isolation.

During my senior year, the students had a collective need to repair the damaging effects of the pandemic and return to the happiness which we knew in the WMS community. With restrictions lowered, we were able to bring back the important things like field courses that make WMS a unique learning environment.

As someone whose defining moment of being in the right place was a field course itself, this was a significant and meaningful moment for me and WMS; to bring back what was once lost, and to aid the student body in key real-world learning experiences and connections.

—Annie Paulsen ’22



My family each had unique experiences at WMS, though collectively we improved and responded positively to changes unique to our times. Our friendships and WMS networks have played a role in each of our lives. Our lessons and lifelong love of the outdoors amplified during our experiences at WMS have given us all a “home improvement” tool. Annie is now a freshman at Lewis & Clark College, where she’ll study sociology and has used her WFR certification earned during her senior year to qualify for work-study in the college’s sports medicine department. Her father has used his creativity, observation and people skills throughout his career to move through transportation, logistics, and operations management here in New Hampshire. Annie’s uncle Eliot, uses his right-brained creativity, puzzle solving, and physical training in his work as a carpenter, building homes including his own now in Colorado. And he relaxes and uses his left-brained, quick comeback skills in an Improv group and of course skis each week. I retired from Independent School Development work in 2016 and find time to weave nearly every day and through my work on the New Hampshire Weavers Guild board, share my knowledge and love of the craft with others. I wouldn’t have guessed that my 16-year-old self would keep returning to SMS/WMS with progeny who through their WMS experiences would also gain tools to see opportunities, overcome difficulties and make enduring friendships.

Ensuring the Continuity of WMS's Vision and Values

WMS's incoming student council on the importance of adaptability as well as continuity

By the time most people have finished school and started a career, they've had to adapt to a number of life events – and for older alums, this is even more true. But what about current WMS students? What do they think about adaptability, and how do they see it manifesting in their young lives? To find out, we talked to the student council for the 2022-2023 school year.

For her part, Isa (pronounced ee-sa) found that coming to WMS helped her make a more conscious connection to her cultural identity. "I grew up in a predominantly Latino community, so I didn't have to work to connect with my culture," she reflects. "When I came to WMS, I had to be more intentional about it, because I wasn't immersed in it. Being away from my culture made me value and appreciate it more." Apparently so, because her friends all affectionately refer to her as "the Dominican Queen!"

Unsurprisingly, family moves and school changes have been the biggest causes of adaptation for these students. "My family has relocated several times and moving to Massachusetts from Texas was a really big shift,"

Alexis remarks. "Compared to that, coming to WMS was relatively minor. Changing to a boarding school environment was an adjustment, and I had to live up to different expectations, but being in a small, tight-knit community was familiar because the town my family had moved to in Massachusetts was also fairly small."

Sade also feels that family moves for her parents' work gave her a lot of experience adapting to new environments – which is a good thing, because "Being on the student council requires you to be very adaptable!" she says. "In my case, as social chair, I have to have a switch. One minute I might be doing my own thing, but then someone will walk up and ask me to schedule a weekend activity, so I have to stop, talk to them about it and enter their request into a spreadsheet on my phone before I can go back to what I was doing."

“I know that I have to take my role seriously, but I’m also just a kid, and I want to have fun!”

—Sade Thomas

**BASED ON
INTERVIEWS WITH:**



Isabel "Isa" Garcia, '23
PRESIDENT



Alexis Uyi-Osagie, '24
VICE PRESIDENT



Sadie "Sade" Thomas, '23
SOCIAL CHAIR



Yusei Usui, '23
JUDGE

Sade served as the chair of last year's prom committee, a role that produced some great examples of adaptability in action. "We had one student join the committee a few weeks after everyone else, and her ideas were very different from what the rest of the committee had already agreed on. So, we adapted by putting that person in charge of decorating the dining hall on campus, while the rest of the committee focused on decorating the prom venue," she recalls. "Then, the day of prom we discovered that the decorations were not what we expected – they looked different, and many of them broke as we were trying to put them up. Having all this happen just hours before the prom was super stressful, but as a committee we adapted and made it work."

"Coming to WMS definitely required me to adapt," says Yusei. "I had only lived in big cities before coming here, but I discovered I really like living in a more rural environment and having the opportunity to do outdoor sports." In addition to his home country of Japan, Yusei also spent several years in Singapore, and has attended more than 10 schools, so he is accustomed to adjusting to new environments. "WMS is very different from schools in Japan, which are highly traditional and strict. People at WMS, and in America generally, are much more open and willing to get close to one another, which I like."

In thinking ahead to the 2022-2023 school year, the council members agree that welcoming several new faces in the administration and faculty, as well as new

CONTINUITY

students, will require adaptations all around. "Our role as the council and as students who've been here for a few years is to keep things stable," says Alexis. "We can help link the past to the future by being a bridge of continuity."

Being on the council offers the chance to explore avenues for personal growth, but it also involves responsibilities that can be tricky to balance at times. "When you're a student leader, teachers expect more of you," observes Sade. "I understand that, and I know that I have to take my role seriously, but I'm also just a kid, and I want to have fun! You have to wear two hats, and sometimes we feel pressure to uphold certain standards."

Those standards, balanced against freedoms and opportunities, are an important part of what makes WMS special, and when they're breached, it falls to the student council to help recommend appropriate consequences. "I feel the system for resolving conflicts is pretty good, but think we can improve it," comments Yusei. "I think that having attended a lot of different schools and being exposed to different cultures may help me to be less likely to rush to judgement and may make it easier for me to be impartial in my role as judge."

Preserving and sharing WMS's "live and let live" ethos is at the center of what Isa hopes to achieve, this year and beyond. "Dominicans are very friendly, hospitable and accepting," she explains. "I want to bring that world view to my role as president and use it to help people come together to peacefully coexist. That's something we do well at WMS, and it's something society in general needs to get better at. It's wonderful to celebrate our differences, they're beautiful, but at the end of the day, we all have much more in common than we realize."

ADAPTABILITY

Celebrating the **CLASS** *of* 2022





“Remember this is your school, it’s been your unique experience and I hope your memories will stay with you long into the future.”

—Debby McKenna

The White Mountain School is delighted to announce the graduation of 33 students in the Class of 2022, who were recognized on Saturday, May 21, at White Mountain’s 136th Commencement exercises held on-campus. The ceremony began with the Invocation by Abby VanderBrug, Holderness School Chaplain. Alumna Deborah Logan McKenna ’69 welcomed the community. Debby reflected on her time as a student and since graduation, “High school behind me, I was ready, as I know all of you are, to get on with it with all the competencies I gained here. The threads that wound through my life that I attribute to my time here as a teenager revolve around the natural world, skiing and my love of French, both language and culture. I mention that because you too will hold dear the many things you learned here, some of which may not become apparent until later in life. And when I say learn I don’t just mean in the classroom, but on the fields, in the garden, in the ilab, and with each other. Remember this is your school, it’s been your unique experience and I hope your memories will stay with you long into the future.”

This year’s Commencement Address and Senior Commencement Address for the Class of 2022 were delivered by Amy Bannon ’14 and Sylvie Cromer ’22, respectively. “And lastly, love is not impermanent. We may become surrounded by new people, go far from home, and forget things about where we once were, but those who have loved us are always with us, just as we are always with those we have loved. Simone Weil once wrote, ‘Love is not consolation. It is light.’ That light burns brightly in my chest today. I am so grateful to carry the love I felt here wherever I go,” Sylvie said in her address.

Preceding the Commencement ceremony, The White Mountain School welcomed the community to our Baccalaureate Ceremony. The Faculty Address was delivered by Matthew Toms, School Counselor and Class of 2026 Parent. Senior Tributes from Senior Advisors also took place.

The 33 members of the graduating class represent eleven states and four countries. After White Mountain most of the graduating class will be attending college or university in the fall.

CLASS OF 2022

Claudine Aoun
Bethlehem,
New Hampshire

Phoebe Barrett
Westmore, Vermont

**Jason Gosselin
Blackmer**
Needham, Massachusetts

Mateo Cabedo
Montreal, Quebec

Lillian Cadwell
Waitsfield, Vermont

**Jennifer
Carretero**
Manhattan, New York

**Ellen Kathryn
Carroll**
Seattle, Washington

Hazel Chambers
South Bend, Indiana

**Sylvie Gray
Cromer**
Charlottesville, Virginia

Dana Cummings
Milton, Massachusetts

**Hayden Leeds
Detenber**
Washington,
District of Columbia

Olivia Dow
Lunenburg, Vermont

**Hayden Follett
Ellinwood**
Concord,
New Hampshire

Yaoyuan Fan
Zhoushan, China

Jack Howard
Keene, New Hampshire

Una Kaeck
New Haven, Vermont

Isaac Aaron Klar
Newton, Massachusetts

Katerina Knihova
Liberec, Czech Republic

Leah McKean
Aberdeenshire, Scotland

Jayson Ogilvie
Invington, New York

Ricky Ollerman
Littleton,
New Hampshire

**Anne Elizabeth
Paulsen**
Keene, New Hampshire

**Tiblier Bement
Pepper**
Hanover, New Hampshire

**Vivienne Eve
Joyflower
Pinkham**
Bethlehem,
New Hampshire

Carson D. Rebar
Darlington, Maryland

**Erika Marie
Rupp-Coppi**
Madison, Connecticut

Lily Mireille Seale
St. Johnsbury, Vermont

Ben Stanley
Tolland, Massachusetts

Katherine Suh
Manhattan Beach,
California

**Ryan Cameron
Trinchet**
Hingham,
Massachusetts

Sophie Turnbull
Chatham, California

Weihaio Xia
Chengdu, China

Oliver Yeomans
Orinda, California

“We may become surrounded by new people, go far from home, and forget things about where we once were, but those who have loved us are always with us, just as we are always with those we have loved. Simone Weil once wrote, ‘Love is not consolation. It is light.’ That light burns brightly in my chest today. I am so grateful to carry the love I felt here wherever I go.”

—**Sylvie Cromer '22**



THE ETHEL W. DEVIN PRIZE*for Excellence in English:***Olivia “Liv” Panos ’23****THE VALPEY PRIZE***for Excellence in History:***Hazel Chambers ’22****THE PHILOSOPHY AND
RELIGIOUS STUDIES PRIZE:****Sylvie Cromer ’22****THE RICHARD J. HAYES PRIZE***for Excellence in Mathematics:***Katherine Suh ’22****THE FREDERIC L. STEELE PRIZE***for Excellence in Science:***Carson Rebar ’22****THE JACK COOK
SUSTAINABILITY PRIZE:****Claudine Aoun ’22****THE ALICE C. HUMPHREY PRIZE***for Excellence in Spanish:***Ana de Oliveira ’23****THE MOUNTAINEERING AWARD:****Oliver Yeomans ’22****THE SAMUEL ROBINSON II***Community Service Award:***Elena Dolige ’23****MALE IDENTIFYING ATHLETICS PRIZE:****David Gao ’23****FEMALE IDENTIFYING
ATHLETICS PRIZE:****Leah McKean ’22****THE HAMISH MACEWAN PRIZE***for Excellence in Art:***Christine Martin ’23****THE PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE
IN PERFORMING ARTS:****Lily Seale ’22****THE CAROLINE O. MCMILLIAN ’47
MUSIC AWARD:****Hazel Chambers ’22****THE COURAGE PRIZE:****Richard Ollerman III ’22***Presented to the student who exemplifies perseverance, citizenship, and leadership in all aspects of the School.***THE ROBIN MCQUIRE PEARSON
AWARD:****Hazel Chambers ’22***Presented to the female-identifying student in the graduating class who has shown the greatest perseverance in her studies and life at White Mountain.***THE LT. MICHAEL S. PIERCE ’82
AWARD:****Katerina Knihova ’22***Presented to the student who has achieved the most in one year at White Mountain in academics, athletics, and personal maturity.***THE BISHOP’S PRIZE:****Ryan Trinchet ’22***Presented to the student who has the highest scholastic standing.***THE FACULTY AWARD:****Sylvie Cromer ’22***Presented to the student who has, in the opinion of the faculty, demonstrated excellence in both attitude and performance in scholarly and athletic endeavors.***THE HEAD’S AWARD:****Lily Seale ’22***Presented to the student who best personifies the mission of The White Mountain School.*

SENIORS’ NEXT STEPS

Our seniors are heading off to do exciting things post-White Mountain! Many have decided to enroll in one of the colleges or universities below.

Bard College**Brandeis University****Community College****Concordia University, Montreal****Earlham College****Florida State U-Tallahassee****Hampshire College****Indiana University****Johnson & Wales****Lees-McRae****Lewis and Clark****Middlebury College****Norwich University****Plymouth State University****Quest University****RPI****Sarah Lawrence****Scripps****Skidmore****St. Joseph’s College of Maine****The New School****Tulane University****UC Davis - Case Western Reserve****UIUC****UNH****University of Utah****University of Vermont****Utah State University****Western Washington**

class notes

1941

Mary Pease '77 writes, "It is with sadness that my mom, Penelope Curtiss Pease '41, at the age of 98 passed away peacefully in her sleep at her home on Martha's Vineyard on August 1st. She attended Saint Mary's in the Mountains back in 1941. She then went to Ethel Walkers in Connecticut because her parents wanted her closer to home during the war. She said she was not happy with that because she loved being up in the mountains and being able to go skiing. The last time she was at WMS was when I brought her for the 50th celebration and memories and laughs were had by all. We will miss her feistiness and the twinkle in her eye. Her grandchildren nicknamed her the Graminator."

1952



Patricia Doolittle Shure '52 writes, "we've lived in Ann Arbor ever since I left St. Mary's and came to the University of Michigan as a freshman in 1952. My husband, Fred, was a nuclear physicist here. Now my three children (+6 grandchildren) are scattered around the West Coast and Brooklyn. Most of my past professional life was centered around teaching and mathematics. My responsibilities in the Math Department at Michigan included lots of teaching and many years as director of the large, multi-sectioned pre-calculus and

calculus courses. Although many college instructors nationwide get little or no preparation for teaching, our Department developed an intensive Professional Development Program for faculty members and graduate student instructors. Over the years, I did a lot of traveling (China, Tanzania, Antarctica, Cuba, Iran, Morocco) but now, of course, I travel less. As with many of my classmates, I left boarding school with a deep love for the outdoors and a lifelong commitment to social justice. Currently, I work with the Michigan League of Conservation Voters and various political initiatives. But my real passion is running the math program for Girls Group, a local organization whose mission is to help middle and high school girls graduate from high school and become first-generation college graduates. Now there's a big change coming. I'm going to move into a condo in downtown Ann Arbor – selling my home of 59 years, where my kids grew up. I'm excited to be done with falling trees, leaky roofs, and antique plumbing. My new place is a loft in a rebuilt old factory just a few blocks from Main St. What's more, it's just a 2-minute walk from a farmers market and a block from an ice cream shop. The start of a new chapter for me." Please see **Pat's** contribution to this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

1955

Roberta Waterston Britton writes, "David and I will be moving to Cumberland Crossing in Maine. Keep in touch."

1956

Please see **Christina "Stina" Engstrom's** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

Georgia Doolittle McDowell

writes, "66 years post St. Mary's graduation and still going strong. Winters in SC and summers at the lake in NY. Continuing with nursing as a volunteer in a local free medical clinic. Some golf, some travel and lots of reading. I visited The White Mountain School a few years ago (my daughter lives in NH) and was amazed at the amount of growth and the eco-friendly new buildings. Very impressive."

1957

Judith "Judy" Dorr-Stewart, '57



1958

Karen Naess Budd writes, "Following a move back down to the Philadelphia area, my husband, Boyce, and I did a 2-week bike trip in Puglia, Italy. Wonderful scenery, good exercise, and plenty of good food and wine! We now have 9 grandchildren, all of them scattered all over the country. It's hard trying to keep up with them all!"

1959



Carolyn Dorr-Rich writes, "The world has certainly been disrupted by COVID and it seems to continue in a less frightening manner. It is nice to be able to enjoy socializing with family and friends. The calendar for August was loaded. I hosted 20 family members for the first weekend. I had a yard full of tents and

shared food preparation. I even have a swimmable small pond. The second weekend we headed to Maine and a gathering for the Rich family. The third weekend I was off to Crawford Notch in Northern NH to join a long-time group of ladies who like to hike. I must admit that socializing and short walks seem to be our present agenda. My sister, **Judy '57**, and her family joined us for the first weekend."

Barbara Hamilton Gibson writes, "Still busy volunteering at church, being Secretary of the Board for the Chatham Creative Arts Center—painting (happily won second prize for watercolor in All Cape exhibition and first prize for the Creative Arts Center summer show – very affirmative). Exhibit with the Chatham Guild of Painters on the Methodist Church Lawn every Friday and some Saturdays through Labor Day. We meet such interesting folks and they do buy our paintings. Enjoying summer on the Cape – hosted two choir members from Christ Church Cambridge University Choir overnight after they performed at St. Christopher's in Chatham. So far have dodged COVID but still being careful. Am member of two book groups, and a knitting group, and still keep up my Rotary membership. So, life is busy and good here with Laney the dog and all our summer visitors."

1961

Lee Ware Bryan '61 writes, "I'm still living in Stowe, VT, with husband, David. After years of teaching skiing and then working as a family mediator and facilitator of conflicts, I am retired and volunteering with a restorative justice organization. My son and his family live just outside Boston where the oldest of my 3 grandchildren just graduated from high school. My son works for an organization placing teachers in independent schools around the country and reports that the White Mountain School is doing good work. That is great to hear."

1963

Martha Ritzman Johnson writes, "We've had a productive and healthy year and returned from our winter residence in Venice, Florida back to Hopkinton, NH, having recently moved back after 9 years on Nantucket. I had the great fortune this summer to fly (by myself, always a scary prospect) to Barcelona for a week where I met my son and granddaughter who live in Fairbanks, Alaska. We had a wonderful multi-generational trip which included guided tours (my interests), Tapas and paella, beers and Sangria, and many walking miles between restaurants (Thomas' interest) and vintage clothing shops (Siri, age 15, interests) all in very good humor and we walked off all the extra calories. I can't wait to plan another trip next summer!"

Jana Mara Coffin writes, "Well, nothing to offer in the class notes means that we're all busy leading productive lives or simply binge-watching Netflix, something we'd prefer not to admit to all and sundry. Speaking of all and sundry, it's an old English (as in Olde Englishe) saying dating back to the 1300s and, just coincidentally, here I am in Merrie Olde Englande myself. After a covid hiatus of 3 years, Jon and I are back at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Harrogate. Harrogate is in the Dales which will mean something to those of you who watch or have read the series *All Creatures Great and Small* by James Herriot. Jon and I volunteer. He ushers and I sell tea and coffee. In exchange, we get to attend all the shows and other events. G&S operettas were the satirical social commentary of England in the late 1800s under Queen Victoria. Clever, witty, and as applicable to today's politics as it was then. If you're interested in finding out more, go to www.gsfestivals.org. You can also join us and other G&S enthusiasts on cruises. That info is at www.theatricaladventures.com. Gotta go sell more tea and coffee! Looking forward to our 60th reunion in 2023!!"

Kathleen “Kit” Cooke writes, “I’m still among the living, getting creakier and probably more addled by the minute. We’ve had a lovely summer here on the shores of Lake Champlain, visited by cousins from England, who were glad to escape the heat there. My brother, Jim, and I have enjoyed our lovely birds at the various feeders, especially the hummingbirds (even some babies!) and the woodpeckers. I think so often of our days at St. Mary’s-in-the-Mountains for our friendships, the close-knit community we shared, the great skiing and hiking, and the opportunity to have spent much of our growing-up years in such beautiful surroundings. Let’s all keep healthy as we look forward to our 60th reunion in 2023! Best to all!”

Barbara McFadden Sirna '63 writes, “Visited with **Paige Savage '63** in South Burlington and pictures of her beautiful New England jungle, she even has visiting coyotes! I visited Iceland in April 2022. One of the most beautiful countries I’ve been to and a fabulous 2 week trip completely around the island. Saw everything except the Aurora Borealis because of cloudy nights. Between travel, golf, and driving cross country for the 23rd year back and forth from Rye, NY, to La Quinta, CA, I’m keeping busy and healthy.”



Barbara McFadden Sirna '63



Barbara McFadden Sirna '63



Paige Savage '63



Pictured L to R: Paige Savage '63 and Barbara McFadden Sirna '63

1968

Please see **Anne Bridge's** contribution to this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

1969

Deborah Streeter writes, “It’s been a hard year as my husband Ron died and then my father also died, age 100, both guys I did much care for in recent years. Now I live alone on the Big Sur Coast, pretty happily, but wondering how I will end my days, should I live closer to my kids, daughter Norah in Portland, Oregon, or son Owen in Hudson Valley. Both have little kids, doing good work (teaching, tech.). My happiest memories of SMS are of teachers – Ms. McIlwaine, Mr. Doughty, Rev. Dearman, Mr. Gaetjens, Mr. Stephenson, Mr. Steele, and others – and just the freedom we had on weekends. I would sit outside and read non-assigned books, Graham Greene, Joseph Conrad, and others. I went from that remote sheltered spot to Stanford University, 1969, crazy, new, and had many temptations, but my SMS years kept me focused and clear. Much gratitude.”

Carmen Arsenault Perry writes, “The last couple of years have been quiet due to the “plague”! My finally was able to travel this spring and went to Myrtle Beach for a week. Most of the last year was spent with our new dog. About a year ago in June, we brought home a male brindle pug. His name is Sir Basil Pugington and he’s now 16 months old. He has kept Bill and me busy. My big news is that I finally retired on 30 September. Hopefully this will allow us to travel more. Right now I’m waiting on a visit to an orthopedic surgeon to decide if my hip needs to be replaced or not. I already have new knees and my lower spine has brackets holding it together. Getting old is not for wimps! Otherwise, life just goes on. All my children and their spouses are doing well and my grandson turned 14 and is already 5’7”!

Elizabeth Wiesner writes, “I am still enjoying my new apartment with my two wonderful cats: Simon Benjamin and Nicholas. Nicholas has been having some health issues since February, but with medication and the proper care, he is like a new cat. Simon is the cuddle bug, who loves pets and hugs, and will greet anyone who comes into the apartment, and if there is work to be done, he is always there to supervise. I have some wonderful neighbors who have become friends; it is so nice to be in a community like this, whereas before in my old house I was fairly isolated. I am still working out on my exercycle and doing core strengthening exercises,

and getting fitter. Carol MacEwan Powers introduced me to jigsaw puzzles, and I do a LOT of them! Very enjoyable. We are in the middle of a big heat wave, with high humidity and dew point, so I do not get out much in this weather. Definitely the 'dog days of summer'! I am in contact with Carol and Wendy Hand quite frequently."

Valle Patterson writes, "I met up with **Wendy Hand** for a birthday surprise. Wendy's lovely wife Claudine planned it with me, and arranged for the three of us to meet in Tallahassee for lunch, which is a 3-hour drive for each of us from our homes. We have been forever friends since day one in 1965 at Valliant House."



Pictured L to R: Wendy Hand '69 and Valle Patterson '69

1970

Cordelia Carroll Moeller writes, "Mark and I love our bird and animal-filled piece of paradise on Great Bay in Newmarket, NH. This summer we had a pond built for fish, birds, and animals to enjoy. No big travel plans except for a week at a cabin in Chatham, Cape Cod. Whale watching was spectacular off Provincetown! I keep in touch with Gail Kotch Farrell, Ruth Hawkensen, Marjorie Salzman, and Kay McGinley."



1974

Patti Knapp Clark writes, "When I was a senior at WMS, I spent the spring semester in a class called Man and Mountains. As a result of that class, I have spent a great deal of time hiking the Green Mountains, White Mountains, Swiss, Italian, French, and the Julian Alps. WMS gave me the gift of love for the mountains."

1980

Please see **Bret Arsenault's** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

Stephanie Baldwin Drieze writes, "Last year I was blessed with two grandchildren, Naomi and Ella. It is SO FUN being a Gran! My other son just got engaged. :) Really looking forward to the reunion in October, hope to see all my WMS friends."

1983

L. Brooke Boardman '83 writes, "Dinner with **Katherine Brown** and **Marta Colao** in Maine, always the best time."



Pictured L to R: Marta Colao '83, Katherine Brown '83, Brooke Boardman '83

1985

Please see **William Gadd's** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

Michelle Palanco-Kremser writes, "Well, it's been 9 years since we moved to Germany. Personally and professionally it was a great move for my husband and me, and we are happy to say we're putting long-term roots down now. In May I represented the organization I chair, English Language Teachers Association Stuttgart (ELTAS), and attended the IATEFL Conference in Belfast, Ireland this year. It was the first time out after the coronavirus and



Pictured L to R: José, Michelle Palanco-Kremser '85, and Grace

all went well. I was a newbie there, which sparked my teaching and learning interests. While there I also met up with reps from other ELTA organizations in Germany and the world! I hope to be able to attend again soon. My husband, José, and I just bought an apartment across the street from where we now live. That's how happy we are with the area we landed! It's a bit bigger and has a lovely private yard for our dog, Grace, to enjoy. I am an avid urban gardener, and can't wait to get my hands dirty over there. I am still teaching and translating to English for major international corporations, smaller tech companies and teaching at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW), which keeps me busy. While teaching at the university is done in person, I am lucky to still be able to teach with businesses online. I 'see' a lot of former classmates and schoolmates on social media, which is not such a bad way to stay in contact with the long distances involved. I do hope to be able to make it to our 40th reunion in 2025, better start planning now!"

1986

Please see **Cortney Phelon Lo's** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

1990

Please see **Elizabeth "Beth" Kingman's** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

1993

Julie Hammond Kagan would enjoy hearing from classmates at 3757 E. Turnberry Court Gilbert, AZ 85298, juliemkagan@gmail.com

1994

Please see **Alan Kumbier's** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

2002

Please see **Victoria "Tory" Amorello's** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

2004

Please see **Cameron "Cam" Dexter's** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

2005

Catherine "Cassie" Immelt writes, "I was in NH this weekend with my kids and decided to drive them up to The White Mountain School to see where I went to high school. Connor, 8, and Weslyn, 6, adored the trip and Weslyn even asked if she could be a student there one day. I'm hoping to make it up for Alumni Weekend in October."



Weslyn (age 6) and Connor (age 8), children of Cassie Immelt '05

2014

Lillian Bennett writes, “I am currently an MFA Candidate at the University of Montana. I am teaching my first ceramic undergrad class this semester. Teaching for the first time makes me think about my time at White Mountain and how that was when I realized I wanted to go into teaching for the first time. Always thankful for my time at WMS!”

Please see **Amy Bannon’s** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

2015

Rachael Moss writes, “I am currently working as a Ceramics Instructor and administrative assistant at a pottery studio in Brooklyn, NY, with my first gallery show coming up this winter. I am also an active part of a Pool league thanks to my time in the student lounge. My parents, former WMS teachers, have moved to Stamford, CT, to be closer to me and my brother, **Jacob Moss ’12**, who is currently planning a wedding with his fiancée, Samantha Howard.



2018

Grace Tamlyn writes “Hello! In the past four years I have: attained a Bachelor’s degree, got engaged, settled in Houston, Texas with my fiancé, Christopher, and been raising two dogs who are as rambunctious as they are loving. I work at my father’s building products manufacturing plant in SW Houston in inside sales, and I very much enjoy my line of work. As always, wishing everyone the best, and hope to see where others end up settling post-graduation. Best, Grace.”



Grace Tamlyn '18 and fiancé, Christopher

2019

Please see **Fatimata Cham’s** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

2020

Please see **Mohammad “Amin” Arabzada’s** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

Please see **Vendula “Vendy” Pospisilova’s** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

2022

Please see **Claudine Aoun’s** contribution in this issue of *Echoes Magazine*.

class scribes

Thank you to all of our volunteer Class Scribes. You keep our community connected and create a robust alumnae/i program for us all. Your partnership is paramount in everything we do.

If you do not see a Class Scribe for your year, that means we need a new Class Scribe!

Please reach out to carla.peacock@whitemountain.org if you would like to become your Class Scribe.

1945

Edith Williams Swallow
410-310-3421
eswallow27@gmail.com

1947

**Marian Benton Tonjes
& Jeff Tonjes**
tonjesjc@msn.com

1949

**Katherine "Kate" Gulick
Fricker**
781-862-8868
kfricker@alum.swarthmore.edu

1954

Sandra "Sandy" Clark Dodge
941-485-1786
rsdodge29@gmail.com

1955

Jocelyn Taylor Oliver
781-990-3941
jocelynliver53@gmail.com

1956

Kristina "Stina" Engstrom
413-253-3620
keng@crocker.com

1957

**Jemi Humphreys Howell
and
Judith Dorr Stewart**
802-237-2855

1958

Judith "Judy" Butler Shea
518-523-9815
Sheajudy34@gmail.com

1959

Barbara Hamilton Gibson
508-945-3633
barbgibson53@comcast.net

1963

Martha Ritzman Johnson
508-228-3893
mjohn15@comcast.net

1965

Thane Stimac Butt
802-985-3424
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1966

Betsy Parker Cunningham
781-237-4838
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1967

**Elizabeth "Lisa" Gregory
Schmierer**
631-261-0715
eschmierer@gmail.com

1968

Anne C. Bridge
603-313-0155
anne.bridge@gmail.com
and
Anne "Timi" Carter
207-712-5552
timigreensboro@yahoo.com

1969

Carol MacEwan Powers
760-360-2538
cmacpowers@gmail.com
and
Valle K. Patterson
904-614-5484
vallepatt@hotmail.com

1972

**Kathryn "Kathy" Bridge
Devine**
301-538-7100
kathy.j.devine@gmail.com

1974

Susan Hosmer
239-280-7093
sehosmer@gmail.com

1975

Catherine "Cathe" Creamer
+39 339 184 9944
c2creamer@gmail.com

1976

Mark A. Hardenbergh
523-225-8056
mahardenbergh@gmail.com

1977

Lisa Santeusano Patey
207-590-3090
Lisa@Patey.com

1978

Peter Hadley
413-225-3087
karmadogma44@yahoo.com
and
Caryl Taylor Quinn
804-405-7833
carylquinn@gmail.com

1979

Susan "Sue" Garcia Mori
301-540-3109
susangmori@gmail.com

1981

**Deborah "Deb" Cross
Gaudette**
603-669-3708
riverbear142@yahoo.com
and
Heidi Dupre' Hannah
970-879-2129

Who We Are

“



I take to heart the connection between relationships, belonging, and giving. The students, parents, alumnae/i, and friends all have a connection that

tells a story. Through these stories, we weave together the past with the present and forge a sustainable path for the future of The White Mountain School.”

— Carla Peacock, Manager of Annual Giving and Alumnae/i

“



Our department is not only here to serve our Alumnae/i, but to maintain and share their stories of The White Mountain School/St. Mary's-in-the-Mountains.

Through the school's classes, field courses, events and publications we help to capture the memories made and share the stories of our students, past and present.”

— Elizabeth Wilkins, Development Database and Research Coordinator

**1982****Richard “Rich” Devens**

484-843-0088

richdevens@yahoo.com

1983**L. Brooke “Brooke” Boardman**

917-414-4984

Lboardy2@aol.com

1984**Christina “Chrissy” Valar Breen**

207-441-8887

cvalarbreen@hotmail.com

1985**Victoria Preston Crawford**

970-728-7023

victoria@tweedinteriors.com

and**Karin Robinson Koga**

808-988-6081

1986**David Budd**

303-807-8479

dbuddphoto@me.com

1988**Andrea DeMaio Smith****1990****Callie “Callie” Phillips Pecunies**

207-824-0335

callie.pecunies@gmail.com

1992**Kevin Stack**

kkccss91101@gmail.com

1993**Jason R. Frank**

727-422-9425

jrbfrank@gmail.com

and**Jennifer “Jenn” Gilman McLaughlin****1994****Jennifer “Jenny” Halstead**

612-747-8947

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1995**Lydia Farnham Kahn**

lydia.w.kahn@gmail.com

1999**Breeda Edwards Cumberton**

617-460-6099

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2000**Catherine “Cate” Doucette**

603-991-9190

Catherinedoucettewriting@gmail.com

2001**Christine Benally Peranteau**

202-455-0067

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2002**Shannah “Shan” Paddock**

413-627-2507

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2004**Molyna Sim Richards**

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mrichards@walthamchamber.com

2005**Catherine “Cassie” Immelt**

443-243-2713

cassie.immelt@gmail.com

2006**Alexander “Alex” Foss**

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2008**Lisa Clark**

617-229-9216

lisa.clark@american.edu

2009**Davi da Silva**

301-448-2935

davi.e.dasilva@gmail.com

2010**Bryan “Bryan” Chan**

267-648-3101

bcc0531@gmail.com

and**Esthefania “Esthy” Rodriguez**

973-476-4429

er378@cornell.edu

2011**Yanina Marin Boshes, BSN, RN**

978-729-9945

yboshes@bostoncollegiate.org

and**Wilson “Will” Mazimba**

wilson.mazimba@gmail.com

and**Lina “Cathe” Rodriguez**

908-337-9324

lcredrig@syr.edu

2012**Maegan Martinez**

956-793-7697

maeganmtz@gmail.com

2014**Amy Bannon**

amykbannon@gmail.com

and**Richard Mahoney**

603-447-5504

richard.mahoney93@gmail.com

2015**Ashlea Greenlaw**

603-616-9947

ash.greenlaw@gmail.com

and**Teresa Smith**

603-991-9524

teresa.scalley25@gmail.com

2017**Cassandra “Cassie” Parker**

207-865-9576

cass.valentine299@gmail.com

2018**Pyper Williams**

603-728-7544

willowpyp@gmail.com

2022**Ricky Ollerman III**

rickyollerman@gmail.com

and**Lily Seale**

lily.seale04@gmail.com

What We Do

The Fund for White Mountain:

The School is able to offer our students a truly extraordinary educational experience through the support that The Fund for White Mountain provides to the operating budget.

Echoes:

The Alumnae/i Magazine of The White Mountain School. Published yearly.

Alumnae/i Reunion Weekend:

A fun event every October; join us for a fun-filled weekend of engagement, learning and memories! All class years are welcome to attend.

Regional Alumnae/i Networking Events:

Bringing together our community to create and build connections, socially and professionally.

IN MEMORIAM

FRIENDS WE'VE LOST

Penelope Pease '41

Penelope (Penny) Curtiss Pease died peacefully at home in Harthaven on August 1. She was 98. She was born on December 16, 1923, in New Britain, Conn., the fifth of the five children of Mary Curtiss Pease and Herbert Hoyt Pease. She attended Mooreland Hill School in Kensington, Conn., The White Mountain School in New Hampshire and, during the last years of World War II, she attended the Ethel Walker School to be closer to home. Penny married Marshall (Marsh) Adams Pease in New Britain on Sept. 11, 1948. They enjoyed a 40-year-long marriage. Marsh died in 1988 at age 69. She raised four children while Marsh was constantly on the road, selling hardware for Stanley Works. She was very active in community affairs. She volunteered for numerous local organizations, was very active in local politics and was a deacon and Sunday school teacher at First Church of Christ Congregational in New Britain for many years. Penny and Marsh led an active social life with numerous close friends. Penny was a determined, feisty and pragmatic child of the Great Depression. Ever frugal, she saved rubber bands and tin foil, made clothes for family members, stained the house herself and mowed the back field. She made clothes for family members, loved to knit amazing sweaters and sewed Halloween costumes. She was an avid skier, hiker, camper and sailor. In her teens she often climbed snowy mountains in New Hampshire with her skis on her shoulder to enjoy Tuckerman Ravine and Cannon Mountain. She loved nature and all that it offered. Bird and moon watching were some of her favorite pastimes. She was an accomplished gardener. She loved being on or in the water, most often in Harthaven and Chilmark. Penny was a supportive and encouraging spirit who always saw the best in people and brought out the best in her children. She was a generous mother to "strays," always offering a meal or bed. She was fiercely independent and opinionated but never had an unkind word.



Penelope "Penny" Pease '41 and Mary "Polly" Pease '77

At Christmastime she and Marsh took the kids caroling in the neighborhood even if she could never carry a tune. In the 1980s, after the children were well launched, she managed the books at Marsh's company, Pease Industrial Products. After Marsh died she managed the company for a short time until she retired. She left Kensington in 2001 and moved to the Carleton-Willard retirement community in Bedford to be closer to her children. In 2020 she moved to her summer home in Harthaven to be in the company and care of her three children, their dogs and the local bird population. Penny is survived by three children, Peter A. Pease and his spouse Susan, Douglas M. Pease and his spouse Richie, and Mary (Polly) S. Pease '77 and her spouse Craig. She also leaves nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband and her son Malcolm C. Pease. She was interred alongside them at Maple Cemetery in Berlin, Conn. Memorial donations can be made to the First Congregational Church of West Tisbury, First Parish in Lincoln, The White Mountain School, or to Hospice of Martha's Vineyard or to offer condolences, visit the website of Chapman Funeral Home at chapmanfuneral.com.

Audrey Chase Brackstone '50

Audrey Velma Chase Brackstone, 90, previously of Devonshire, Bermuda, died peacefully in Alpharetta, Ga., on May 19, 2022. Audrey was born Jan. 4, 1932, in Bartlett, N.H., the daughter of Ernest and Frances (Bradley) Chase. She attended school in Littleton, N.H., and worked in New York before settling in Bermuda for most of her life. Audrey made her career at Bermuda's Chamber of Commerce, which enabled her to travel much of the world and engage in local organizations. After leaving the Chamber of Commerce, Audrey was instrumental in establishing, growing, and managing Bermuda's Craft Market in Dockyard. It was at The Craft Market where she spent most of her time, dedicated to helping local artists share their creations with locals and visitors. She enjoyed singing and volunteering for the Philharmonic Choir getting to perform in Bermuda and overseas. But most of all, she proved a close and reliable friend to the many she befriended. Finally retiring at age 83, Audrey moved to the United States, enabling her the opportunity to enjoy time with her son and his family which includes her two granddaughters. She very much missed Bermuda and its activities, but she especially missed those whose lives she touched. Audrey was predeceased by her parents and sister Carolyn Kritselis (James). She is survived by her son Iain Brackstone (Jenny); Granddaughters Meredith and Paige; her brother, Bernard Chase (Sheila) of Littleton, N.H.; and nieces and nephews. To view an online tribute, send condolences to the family, or for more information, visit <https://www.phaneuf.net>.



Suzie Coughlan '77

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Mary Suzannah (Suzie) Coughlan on April 25, 2022 at Care Dimensions Hospice House in Lincoln, Mass. Suzie died peacefully with her life partner Ronnie Sandler holding her hand. Suzie was born in Montreal on May 20, 1959, to Ian

Louis Coughlan and Mary Elizabeth (Newcomb) Coughlan. Suzie grew up in Montreal and attended The Study before transferring to The White Mountain School in Bethlehem, N.H., from which she graduated in 1977. She loved the White Mountains, which became her second home later in life, and continued a passion for skiing that had first developed with her parents in Stowe, Vt. Her summers growing up were spent at Camp Tanamakoon in Algonquin Park where she rose from camper to counselor to section head and made many lifelong friends. A group of 25 Tanamakoon alumni gathered in a Toronto park shortly before Suzie's death to sing camp songs in her honor. The gathering was live streamed to Suzie's hospital bed and she sang along. Suzie attended Bishops University in Lennoxville, Quebec, before moving back to Montreal to attend McGill University. After McGill she relocated to Toronto and began pursuing her dream of being a Montessori School teacher. She taught three- to six-year-olds during a career spanning 28 years in both Toronto and later in Littleton, Mass. Her students adored her because she treated them all as if they were her own. It was with great regret that she had to end her teaching career prematurely due to declining health. But even after retiring, she kept in touch with many of her students and parents. Such was her impact that Oak Meadow Montessori later dedicated an "outdoor classroom" in Suzie's honor. Suzie moved to the U.S. in 2001 where she met Ronnie Sandler and the two fell in love and were life partners for 21 years. Suzie embraced being a lesbian and was active in the community. Suzie and Ronnie split their time between Maynard, Mass., and Franconia, N.H. Even with Suzie's IBM and declining mobility, the two continued to be active and travel to their favorite places in the Canadian Maritimes, Maine and Provincetown. One of Suzie's favorite sayings was "Do More of What Makes You Happy" and she did. Suzie will always be remembered for her fierce love of and devotion to children, both her students and her nine nieces and nephews, two grandnieces and one grandnephew. They and many of her friends later in life called her Soo Soo. They will remember her not only for her enormous heart but for her delicious Soo Soo cookies.

NEW TRUSTEES



Penelope Durand '12

Penelope Durand (she/her) graduated from the White Mountain School in 2012, after which she earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Psychology from Goucher College in 2017. Penelope was accepted into the Teach for America program in 2017 and began her teaching career in Baltimore, Maryland. There she also worked toward earning her Masters of Science in Education from Johns Hopkins University. For two years Penelope served as a Spanish teacher in the Baltimore City Public Schools system before moving to New York to be closer to family. By May 2020, she officially earned her masters. Most recently she has transitioned from the field of education into Software Engineering. During her free time, Penelope enjoys rock climbing with her husband in the local gym and crocheting sweaters. She also enjoys traveling to Peru which is where her family is from and spending time at home with her cat Marvin.

"My favorite memory from White Mountain is... when we went winter backpacking and our OLE course leader forgot the stoves so we ate cold bagels with M&Ms in the middle of the NH winter. It seems like an odd favorite memory, but we laughed so much about it. It was a great group of people so we found plenty of joy during the situation. The entire trip felt very White Mountain at its core."

I am excited to join the Board to... learn more about the behind the scenes that makes such a unique place possible.

The School has impacted my life by... giving me a new outlook on the outdoors and the sense of peace it brings. More importantly, it introduced me to rock climbing and a great group of educators that appreciate community in education.



Wilson Mazimba '11

Wilson (Will) Mazimba (he/him) is a Product Manager at GoTo (formerly LogMeIn) with a focus on the use of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence in the customer support experience. After graduating from WMS in 2011, he went on to St. Lawrence University, graduating with a BA in International Economics and Multi-language (French, Japanese, and Italian). His first job out of college was as a Business Development Representative at WorldAPP in Braintree, MA, after which he transitioned to a more hands-on role in their Sales Engineering department, building out technical demos for prospective Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 clients. Following that, he transitioned to Eze, a financial tech firm in downtown Boston where he worked as an Associate Engagement Specialist for a few years and had the opportunity to work with some of the world's biggest banks and hedge fund managers and get a first-hand look at how some of the complex financial systems work in the world today before moving on to GoTo. Aside from work, Will got married in 2018, has been doing as much travel as possible (barring Covid times), is absolutely a gamer nerd, loves health and fitness, and is most definitely a techie about new and upcoming technologies.

My favorite memory from White Mountain is... tough to choose, there are loads! But either the first day of soccer season, or that very first run down Cannon once boarding season started.

I am excited to join the Board to... learn more about what makes the school tick behind the scenes, and work with some amazingly talented people.

The School has impacted my life by... creating an environment for me to be my authentic self, and act as a wonderful platform for future success.



Anne Weathers Ritchie '70

Anne Weathers Ritchie (she/her) graduated from St. Mary's in the Mountains in 1970 and earned a BA in French from Middlebury College in 1974. Her experience includes many years of boarding school admissions at the Williston Northampton School, MA, and over 30 years as an educational consultant advising students towards the best options for high school. Ritchie has served on several boards, including Brantwood Camp, the Waypoint Foundation, the White Mountain School and the Maine Coast Waldorf School. Her tenure on The White Mountain School Board of Trustees included two Head of School searches. During one of these transitions, Ritchie resigned from the Board and assumed the position of Director of Admissions until a new Head of School was named. She currently lives in South Freeport, Maine, where she owns and operates a small landscaping business. She continues to provide educational consulting services to students and families and enjoys photography, yoga, paddling and swimming in the sea.

I am excited to join the Board to... I am thrilled to be back on the Board.



Susan Stout '68

Susan A. Stout (she/her) is a proud alumna of St. Mary's in the Mountains, class of 1968. During her undergraduate career, Stout studied Southeast Asian history and politics, and studied Mandarin; she graduated from Vassar College with an A.B. in East Asian Studies in 1972. Stout earned her Dr. P.H. in Health and Population Policy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Stout's graduate work in social psychology, family planning, and population policy prepared her to join the World Bank in the early 1980s. Stout led an initiative to evaluate the World Bank's approach to health programs, finding that programs that showed sustained improvements in health services and delivery were those that involved community participation, learning by doing, and adapting to changing circumstances "on the ground." While at the World Bank, Stout worked with others to advocate for the Bank to address HIV/AIDS in the early years of the epidemic, and later, she worked with the Afghan government and communities to re-establish and strengthen post-Taliban health services programs. Since her retirement from the World Bank, Stout has taught in the Department of International Health, School of Nursing and Health Sciences at Georgetown University, and served as a Senior Results Advisor for Development Gateway. She lives in northern Virginia with her partner of 32 years and two springer spaniels and is fully retired, enjoying turning vessels on a lathe in her woodworking shop.

My favorite memory from White Mountain is... The way the whole school took care of me and helped me around the campus, and to get up close to watch downhill races at Cannon the year I broke my leg. And being part of the Dinner Dish Team.

I am excited to join the Board to... Advocate for the school wherever and whenever I can, contribute to envisioning a vibrant and exciting future for the school community and learning more about the innovations in the school's approach to learning.

The School has impacted my life by... Sparking my curiosity in history and cultures beyond my own, encouraging me to be compassionate and caring and to face all challenges with confidence and hope.

2021-2022 Report of Giving

THE HEAD'S CIRCLE

Each year, The White Mountain School recognizes our most generous supporters with membership in The Head's Circle. Through their leadership gifts, members of The Head's Circle have a profound impact on the experience of every student.

Anonymous (3)
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Yulong Xia and Xiaoyin You
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YOUNG ALUMNAE/I LEADERS

Donors who have graduated from The White Mountain School within the last 15 years can make leadership gifts and join The Head's Circle at the Young Alumnae/i Leader level.

Jeffrey Fromuth '07

ENDOWMENT

Gifts designated to The White Mountain School's endowment are permanently invested with the principal preserved and a draw from earnings directed toward the purpose designated by the donor. Endowed funds support student scholarships, faculty professional development, facility maintenance and general operations.

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Dorothy Ellingwood McLane Scholarship
Dow Academy Scholarship Fund
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Linda Clark McGoldrick '55 Endowed Scholarship

* Denotes gifts for 5 or more consecutive years

** Denotes gifts for 10 or more consecutive years

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Linda Clark McGoldrick '55
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Cabbadetus Foundation
Audrey Houghton Duane '50‡
Susan Tracy Moritz '56 and Charles Moritz*
Barbara McFadden Sirna '63‡
Timothy Wennrich and Jessica Griffiths**

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The White Mountain School's legacy giving society was named after Bishop Niles to honor his vision and hard work on behalf of our School. The Bishop Niles Society recognizes those who provide vital resources to ensure the long-term health and well-being of St. Mary's School/The White Mountain School by including it in their estate plan.

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Nancy McCouch Davis '69**
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* Denotes gifts for 5 or more consecutive years

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by the numbers



THE FUND FOR WHITE MOUNTAIN
\$634,817

ENDOWMENT
\$128,912

BUDGET ENHANCING
\$80,000

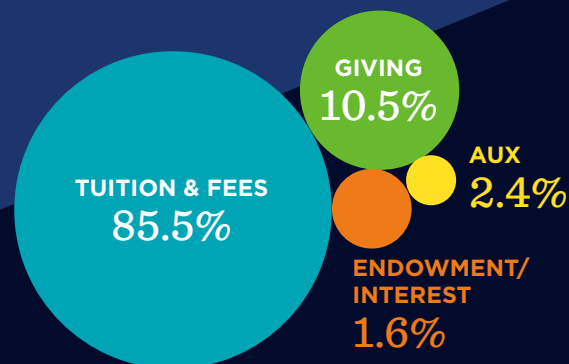
GIFT-IN-KIND
\$57,512

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\$35,000

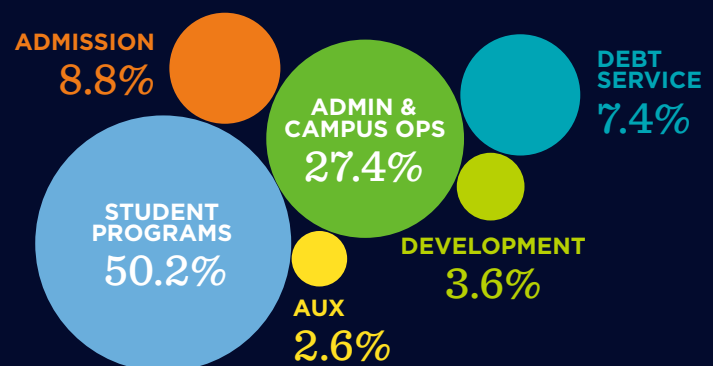
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET 2021-2022:

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