

AÚN APRENDO

BESANT HILL SCHOOL OF HAPPY VALLEY



ALUMNI NEWS Distinguished Speaker Jim McHugh '66 Dazzles

ADMISSIONS Open House, Summer Institute, Registration Day and On The Road

THE ARTS Studio Art, Art History, Film, Photography, Fall Play and Concert

SUSTAINABILITY Field Research at Home and Away, Recycling the Hard-to-Recycle



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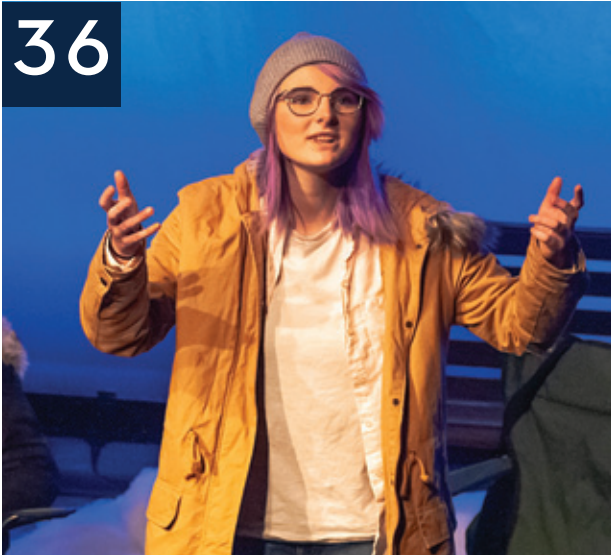


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Message from the Head of School

I was recently listening to a podcast recommended by our new teacher and alumnus Francois Tchoyi '11 about the “hidden brain” and how our brain reacts during times of scarcity. When there are things that we are in great need of, whether it be companionship, basic necessities, or time, our brain hyper-focuses on what it is that we do not have. This causes a type of tunnel vision where things outside of this priority can become minimized; as a result, our judgment can become impaired, preventing us from seeing the whole picture. Understanding our brains in this way provides an important lesson in understanding resilience. When this type of strain on resources occurs, we can train ourselves to look at the big picture and prioritize. The methods to do so are quite simple and generally good ones to live by. We can take ourselves out of our tunnel vision by being present, planning time to relax, and enjoying the companionship of those in our community, as well as leaning on others for support.

I bring up this topic because not only is it a nice reminder for important guiding principles for us to live by, but it is connected to our theme for this school year. Each school year’s theme comes from our Portrait of a Graduate, and this year’s theme is to Honor Individual Strengths and Be Resilient. When we honor our individual strengths, it allows us to prioritize what is important and what we need, both in times of abundance and in times of scarcity. Additionally, this quality is one of the foundational aspects of our school culture, and the ability to push oneself and overcome challenges allows us all the opportunity to get to know ourselves better in our strengths as well as our areas for growth. As a community, we are able to honor our resiliency as we come upon the first anniversary of the Thomas Fire. Many of the school community members have commented on the lessons learned from this tragic event, knowing that coming out on the other side is possible and that strength and endurance have helped us all to rebuild. I continue to be amazed by this community and its perseverance. Our international students have already learned lessons of resiliency, as they come from all around the world and many different backgrounds. They are truly brave individuals to come so far to attend school and learn in an unfamiliar environment. This is bound not to be their last or greatest obstacle, and the ability to work through difficulties is a skill that will serve all our students well throughout their lives. We are proud to be a school where students are honored for their resilience and personal strengths alike, recognizing that these attributes are closely linked.

Overall, the 2018–19 school year has started out very well. There is an air of positivity and productivity among the student and faculty populations. We truly have an amazing community that I feel honored to be a part of each and every day. I would like to wish you all a happy winter season. I hope the holidays brought you time with your loved ones and some relaxation.


Portia Johnson
Interim Head Of School

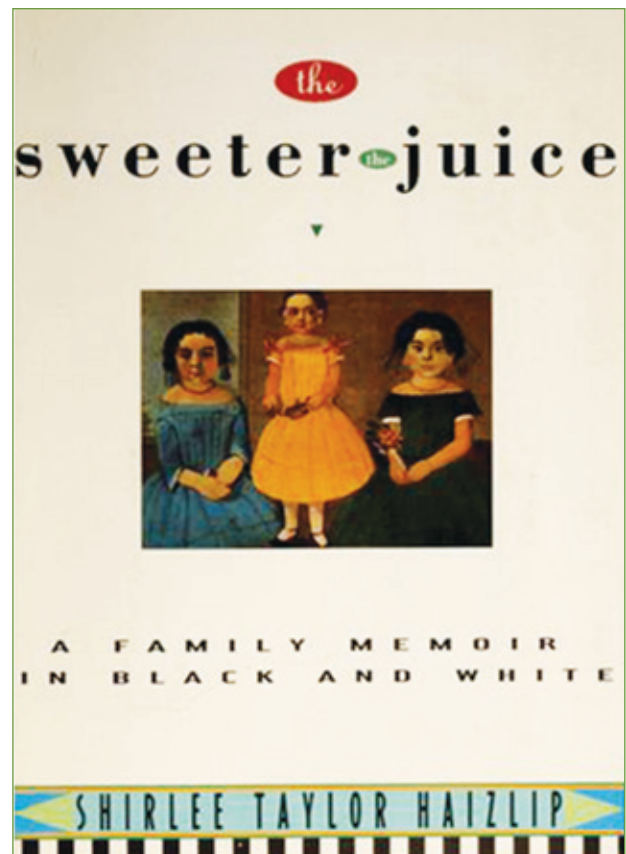
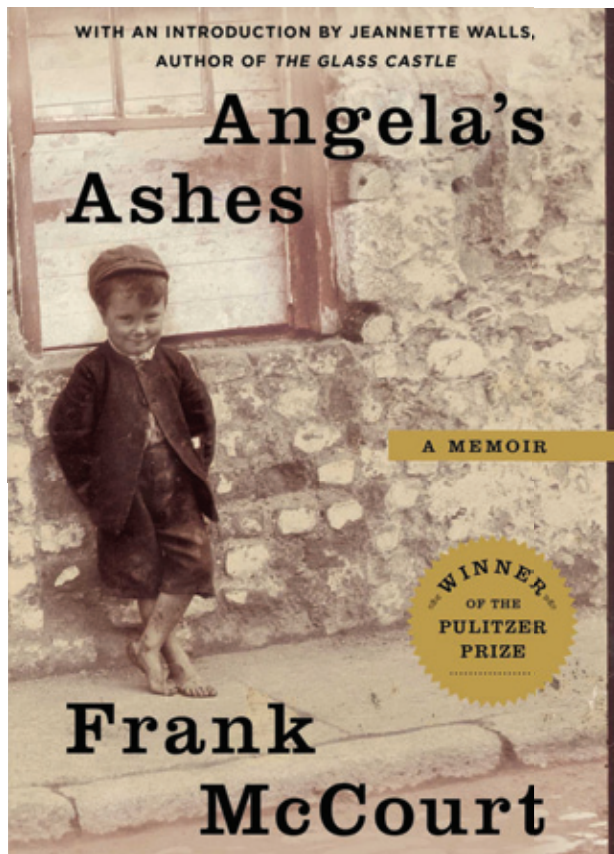
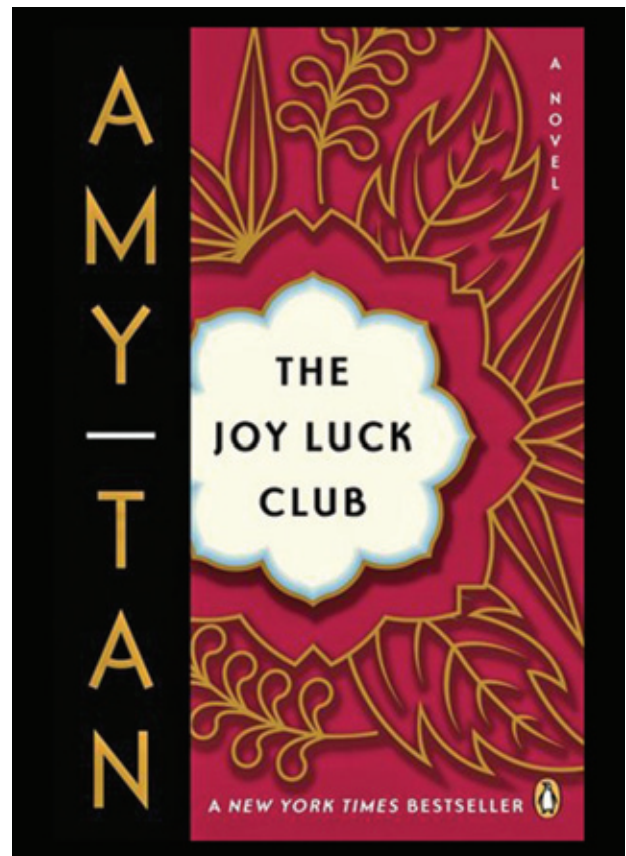
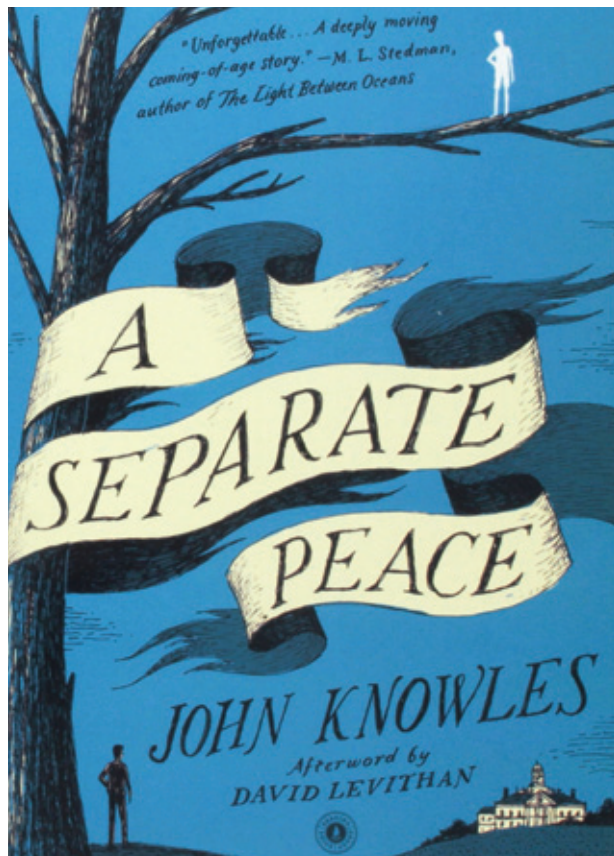




SUMMER READING

READING IS A CRITICAL PART OF EACH INDIVIDUAL'S GROWTH. READING IS ONE HABIT WE CAN DEVELOP THAT IS USEFUL THROUGHOUT OUR ENTIRE LIVES. NOT ONLY CAN READING EXPAND OUR OUTLOOKS ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS, BUT IT CAN ALSO HELP US FORGE OUR PERSONALITIES, STRENGTHEN OUR SELF-ESTEEM, AND ULTIMATELY HELP US GROW AS HUMAN BEINGS.

Author:
NÉSTOR GERÓNIMO



“Reading can transport us to a world of fantasy, bring us closer to others, and help us feel more empathy and understanding for other people, cultures, and traditions.”

Reading stimulates our minds and our lives in so many ways. Without a doubt, reading a good book is like entering a new dimension in which we can get to know new worlds intimately. Often, reading invites us to explore new perspectives and new ways of thinking that are only accessible through literature.

Reading can transport us to a world of fantasy, bring us closer to others, and help us feel more empathy and understanding for other people, cultures, and traditions. It allows us to familiarize ourselves with new experiences and has a great emotional effect on us because we are actually able to feel emotions through the characters with whom we identify throughout the stories.

This summer, the Humanities Department put together a list of books that are tied to the theme for the school year. The theme each year comes

from one of the tenets of our Besant Hill School Portrait of a Graduate; this year, it is Honor Individual Strengths and Be Resilient.

These books were then assigned to students and staff alike to be read over the summer so that they could start preparing for the upcoming school year. When we met again in the fall, the entire school was able to participate in group discussions and games and be part of a community that values reading as both a learning tool and a way to connect with others.

This fall, our entire community eagerly participated in directed, small-group discussions, as well as Jeopardy games prepared and led by our dedicated faculty. The staff received an incredible amount of positive feedback from students and felt extremely grateful for everyone's willingness to participate and make this experience such a remarkable success.

WORLD AS OUR CLASSROOM

Author:
PORTIA JOHNSON





PHOTOGRAPHER JIM MCHUGH '66 TEACHING A MASTER CLASS



EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES HISTORIC MONUMENT

Our second year of the World as Our Classroom initiative has started out strong. Student academic portfolios have expanded and now include all aspects of life at Besant Hill. Students will use the five tenets of the Portrait of a Graduate as their learning objectives and provide evidence, process, and reflection for each from experiences that they have had outside of the classroom. They can draw on content from community service, residential life, weekend activities, clubs, or advisory and will complete this work in their advisory groups regularly throughout the year. This folio-thinking will help them to connect their learning outside of the classroom to their development as individuals and members of the world community, as outlined in the Besant Hill Portrait of a Graduate.

As part of the initiative, we plan to have two all-school field trips this year. The first trip will be hosted by the Math and Science Departments, and as an entire community, we will be going to the Columbia Memorial Space Center in Downey, California, the birthplace of the Apollo Space Program. In the second semester, the Humanities and Art Departments

will host an excursion in which students will have a cultural immersion experience at Olvera Street – a historic district in downtown Los Angeles and a part of El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument. Later that day, we will venture to the Ahmanson Theater to enjoy Matthew Bourne’s interpretation of the classic fairy tale Cinderella.

Also stemming from this initiative is the inclusion of “master classes” in which guests from our Distinguished Speakers Series (<https://www.besanthill.org/alumni/distinguished-speakers/>) hold a separate, more intimate conversation or hands-on learning experience with students. For example, photography and art students were able to work directly with our last speaker, Jim McHugh, a renowned international photographer, in addition to hearing his all-school presentation.

The World as Our Classroom initiative continues to expand and offer more connections to the outside world and Besant Hill’s curriculum. I would like to thank the Curriculum Committee for their tireless efforts and dedication to this work. We look forward to more exciting opportunities to come!

BIONEERS 2018: PATHWAYS FORWARD

FOR THE 14TH YEAR, BESANT HILL SCHOOL STUDENTS AND FACULTY ATTENDED THE NATIONAL BIONEERS SUMMIT AND CONFERENCE, HOPING TO LEARN FROM LEADING CHANGE-MAKERS, VISIONARIES, AND INNOVATORS. IN THE SPIRIT OF AÚN APRENDO, OUR STUDENTS WERE INSPIRED TO DEVELOP A NEW LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND TO CONTINUE TO LEARN MORE EVERY DAY.

Author:
JOHN WILKINSON





This year's Bioneers trip included 18 students: Kylie B. '19, Tony J. '20, Elana D. '19, Emmy H. '19, Charlie Z. '19, Jin L. '19, Kusili '19, Sunny H. '19, Svea A. '20, Miang P. '21, Marie H. '21, Akari I. '21, Judy L. '19, Siena M. '21, Tindi M. '21, Yuki G. '21, Tabitha M. '21, and Louis S. '21, as well as Sustainability Director John Wilkinson and faculty member Darcy Corson.

Bioneers is famous for providing a positive platform for the environmental and social justice movements. Our students joined over 500 other young people in a celebration of hope for the future. They were treated to stand-out presentations by author Michael Pollan, botanist Monica Gagliano, Bioneers founder Kenny Ausubel, and the Ceibo Alliance, among many others.

We arrived the night before the conference to meet the other members of the Youth Leadership Program and had a chance to socialize and strategize before the conference proceedings. After a long day of speakers, workshops, and other events, we would eat a meal together and process the most meaningful moments of the day. We traded quotes and ideas that we found impactful and looked forward to sharing them with the broader Besant Hill Community. Students found it refreshing to be in a community that shared their concerns for the rest of the world.

The problems facing us are daunting. Bioneers offers students a way forward using their large network of connections in the environmental, social, and food justice communities. This inspiration will hopefully spur the creativity and environmental activism of the students and the entire Besant Hill community.



EMMY H. '19 AT BIONEERS CONFERENCE



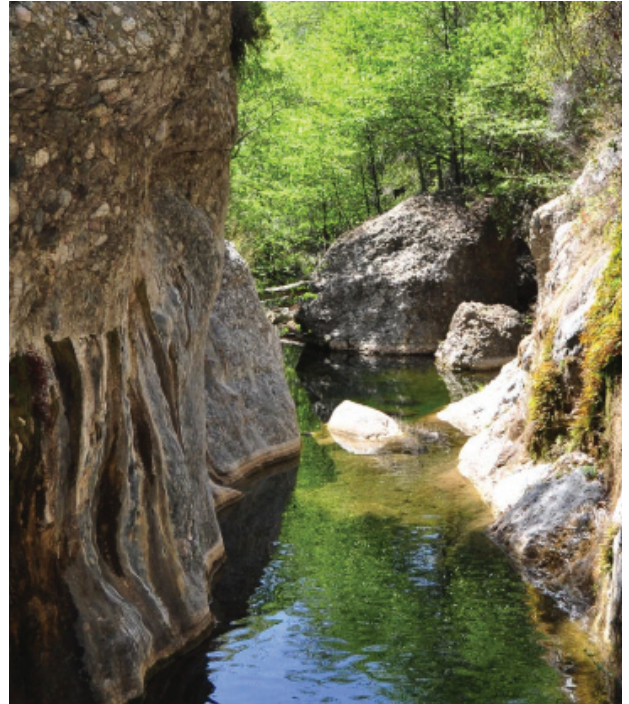
STUDENTS AT BIONEERS CONFERENCE



BIONEERS CONFERENCE 2018



PARKER L. '20 AND LELAND F. AT OJAI CREEK CLEAN UP 2018



OJAI CREEK HIKE



RECYCLING THE HARD-TO-RECYCLE



DELICIOUS VEGETARIAN DISHES ON MINDFUL MONDAYS

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Field Research at Home and Away: Director of Sustainability John Wilkinson won a Senior Fellowship with Earthwatch, a nonprofit environmental organization, this past summer to study fruit-eating behavior in birds and mammals in Costa Rica's Cloud Forest. Besant Hill students Kylie B. '19 and Elana D. '19 were intrigued enough by his experience to design their own field research study, based on the Costa Rican methodology, of the frugivory on our campus's citrus trees and Concord grapes. After three weeks of systematic observations, it turned out that citrus really is for the birds!

Ojai Creek Clean Up: Besant Hill students started the year off right with a local environmental service learning project. As part of the California Coastal Cleanup Day, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition organized volunteers from Besant Hill School and three other schools to remove litter from Ojai Creek. Plastic pollution in our coastal areas has become an issue of intense interest in terms of both its volume and its bioamplification in aquatic food webs, often ending with humans. Nine students woke up early on a Saturday morning to help prevent plastic from getting into the environment, and we are all the better for it.

Mindful Mondays: In keeping with a long-standing Besant Hill tradition, we encourage everyone to eat lower on the food pyramid every Monday. The dining hall staff have been preparing delicious vegetarian dishes every week, and we have instituted a competition between grade levels and faculty/staff to lower food waste. Congratulations to the seniors and faculty/staff, respectively, for winning the first two weeks of competition!

Recycling the Hard-to-Recycle: Besant Hill has recycled aluminum, glass, and most plastics for a long time. However, some plastic items still end up going to the landfill. Seeing this issue, Besant Hill student Tony J. '20 contacted the organization TerraCycle to expand our recycling efforts. He collects items such as daily-use contact lenses and cases and mails them back to TerraCycle for free recycling. The next step is to catch dental hygiene products, such as toothbrushes and floss containers.

Ojai Green Schools Collective: Last year, Besant Hill School helped to found the Ojai Green Schools Collective with Thacher and Oak Grove. This year, it has expanded to include five area schools, including both middle and high schools. On October 24, Besant Hill School students Kylie B. '19, Elana D. '19, and Tony J. '20 met with a dozen students from other Ojai-area schools to strategize green initiatives for the coming school year. Immediate plans include sponsoring an environmental documentary film night and pushing for the elimination of plastic straws in Ojai restaurants.

Circle Garden Revival: After it suffered some damage in the Thomas Fire, the botany and ninth-grade science classes are hard at work in the Circle Garden. Students are learning about permaculture design principles and implementing them as they read. Current activities include spreading mulch, pulling weeds, watering seedlings, and turning compost. Matthaus T. '19 has designed a slow-drip watering device that reuses plastic water bottles. Come down to the garden and check it out.

Coming Attractions: Spring 2019

The **Green Cup Challenge** in January will move from an intramural event to a competition between all the schools in the Ojai Green Schools Collective.

On February 22-24, Besant Hill students plan to attend the **Plastic Ocean Pollution Solutions Summit** in Dana Point, CA.

Besant Hill students will help to raise money for the **Ojai Land Conservancy** again this year as part of the youth Earth Day activities in April.

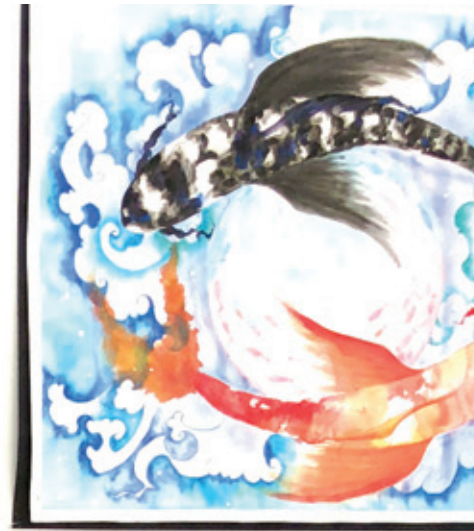
Project Day is coming! It's a great way to celebrate Earth Day and the beauty of the Besant Hill campus.

In late April, Besant Hill School will cooperate with the **NGO Citizens for Responsible Gas** (CFROG) to monitor the air quality in the upper Ojai Valley.





STUDENT ELANA D. '19/ THE BIONEERS CONFERENCE TRIP 2018



YLLAN H. '21



VISUAL ARTS

Author:
CLAIRE LOWNDES

“They are challenging their ideas to create energetic and unique artwork.”

Visual Arts: Besant Hill Art students have embraced their creativity with excitement and enthusiasm this semester. The students are focusing on developing their techniques and understanding the impact that feedback can have on their outcomes. They are challenging their ideas to create energetic and unique artwork.

Studio Art: Within this course, the students have been inspired by a variety of artists, not just for their skill but for the appreciation of why they create art. This course aims to fuel the students' passion for making art while allowing them to question what art means to them individually. The students have focused on composition, color, contrast, control, and concept within the foundation skills workshops.

Advanced Studio Art: Within this course, the students are building a unique portfolio while experimenting with and exploring techniques and concepts that are inspired by their passions. Through their personal topics, they are encouraged to make meaningful connections to their work and consider the audience's perception. Students are focusing on developing their visual communication, self-motivation, and becoming independent, confident artists.

Ceramics: This is a demanding and time-restricting course, and the students are embracing every minute. Within the workshops, they are taking 2D ideas and creating truly unique 3D outcomes. This course encourages our young artists to be playful and experiment with the materials, as the possibilities are endless. They have also had an informative master class with renowned ceramist Richard Flores at the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, which has had a big impact on how they approach techniques.

Art Exhibition Shay B. '19, Jamie C. '19, Anna Z. '19, Jana A. '20, and Dan N. '21 were selected by the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation to exhibit their art within the annual student exhibition. This was an amazing opportunity, as it enabled the students to gain a deeper understanding of the curation and gallery space process. The students received a grant for art supplies and were given the experience of potentially selling their work.

Jamie's piece was purchased and donated to the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation. This is an amazing accomplishment, as her work is now part of a permanent collection!





JAMIE C. '19 WITH JIM MCHUGH '66

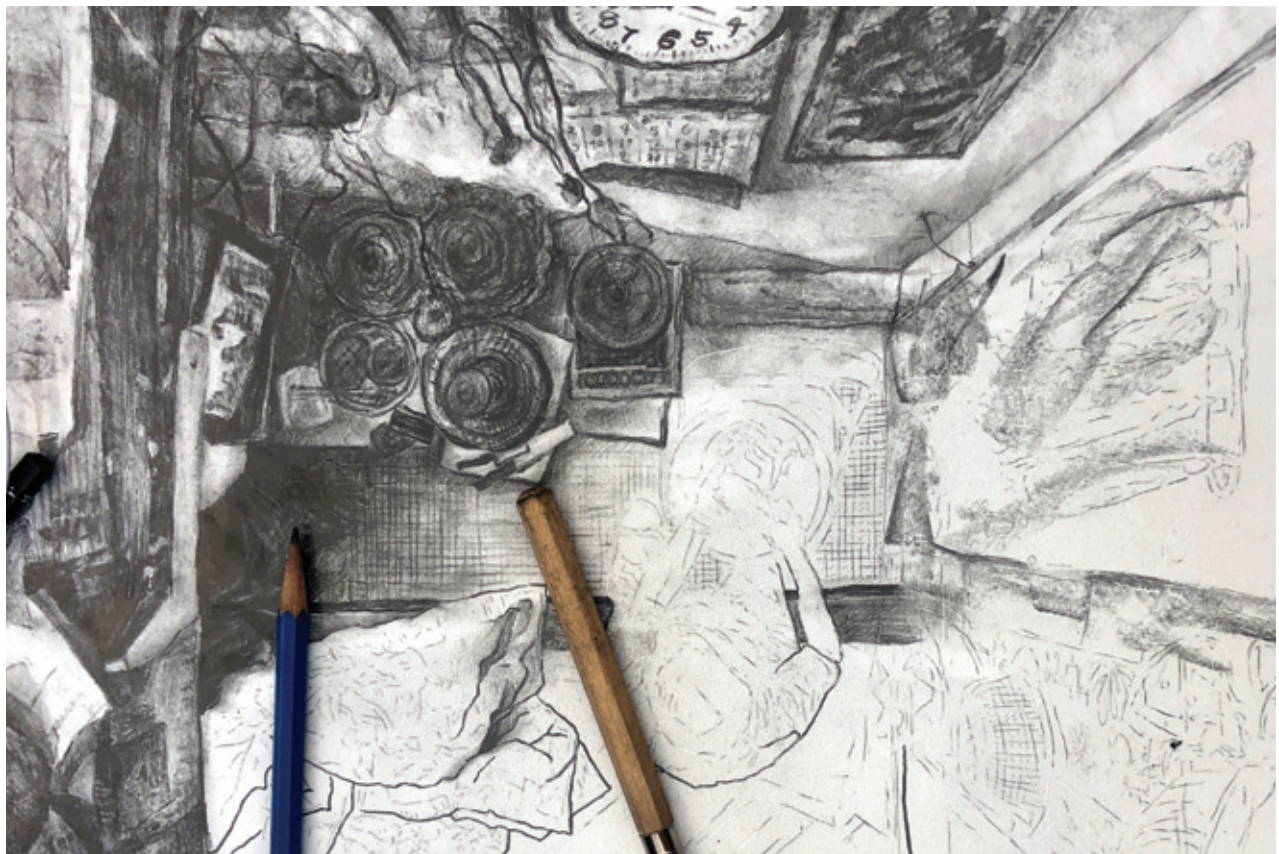


This semester, Jim McHugh '66 inspired the students not only with his photography, but with his motivating approach to the importance of developing personal passions and projects. The students celebrated him as a past student through individual painting and drawing projects based on his photography of architecture. In addition, he was given a thoughtful painting from a current student as a thank you and to make connections from the past to the present.

The students love collaborative opportunities, and the beach art, pumpkin painting, and stage set have encouraged them to do just that. It has been a busy and fun start to the academic year within Studio Art.



AKARI I. '21, HYUNSEO O. '21, ZACH W. '19, ERICH H. '20, SHU L. '19, JANA A. '20 GLAZING THEIR WORK



VISUAL ARTS STUDENT ARTWORK



HYUNSEO O. '21 WORKING THE WHEEL

STUDENT VOICES ON THE ARTS

Authors:

JAMIE C. '19, TONY J. '20 AND LAUREN S. '19



CUBIST SELF-PORTRAITS FROM THE ART HISTORY CLASS

“Art history to me is the most interesting part of history, allowing me to think deeply, connect with myself more closely, and feel joy more profoundly.”

JAMIE C. '19, A BESANT HILL SENIOR AND PROLIFIC ARTIST, DISCUSSES THE IMPACT OF ART HISTORY ON HER LIFE AS WELL AS HER ART. HER WORK IS FEATURED AT SCHOOL AS WELL AS IN GALLERIES, AND SHE PLANS TO PURSUE A CAREER IN ART AND ARCHITECTURE.

Most of the time, I view the world through an artistic lens. Art encompasses different ideas and values while emphasizing imagination and creativity. Art is essential for life.

From my perspective as an art student, artists are historians; they capture the essence and importance of life. Art history to me is the most interesting part of history, allowing me to think deeply, connect with myself more closely, and feel joy more profoundly.

The surrealist period of art has always fascinated me, with Salvador Dali being my all-time favorite artist. From my perspective, the most interesting part of how we interpret a surrealist art piece is our examination of the distinct and unique ways each artist expresses his irrational and unconscious mind, allowing for a diversity of interpretations. The works created by a surrealist artist are presented in compositions that echo reliquaries or mystifying erotic contraptions, seeking the unexpected juxtaposition of objects. In the Art History class,

we dive deeply into the period when surrealism grew out of the Dada movement. Started around World War I, Dadaism was a modern art movement that sought to renounce artistic traditions and interrupt the conventionality of modern life, weaponizing nonsense against the institutions of the war. Our lovely Beatrice Wood, characterized as the “Mama of Dada,” co-founded and edited *The Blind Man* magazine, one of the earliest incarnations of the Dada movement in the United States. After the war, many artists began to integrate the surrealist style, generating a new movement that rebelled against middle-class complacency. Surrealism was a revolutionary force within a movement intended for the wholesale liberation of the individual, not an escape from life.

We also focused on cubism, a vital modern art movement that influenced the Dada and surrealist movements. Inspired by portraits painted by cubist artists such as Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, we created our own cubist self-portraits in which a single perspective was abandoned in favor of simple geometric shapes, interlocking planes, or collage. It was exciting for me to do my first self-portrait in this class. I used some colorful oil pastels on canvas and colored in the shapes that make up my portraits in three different perspectives, following the cubist idea of looking at things from multiple viewpoints.



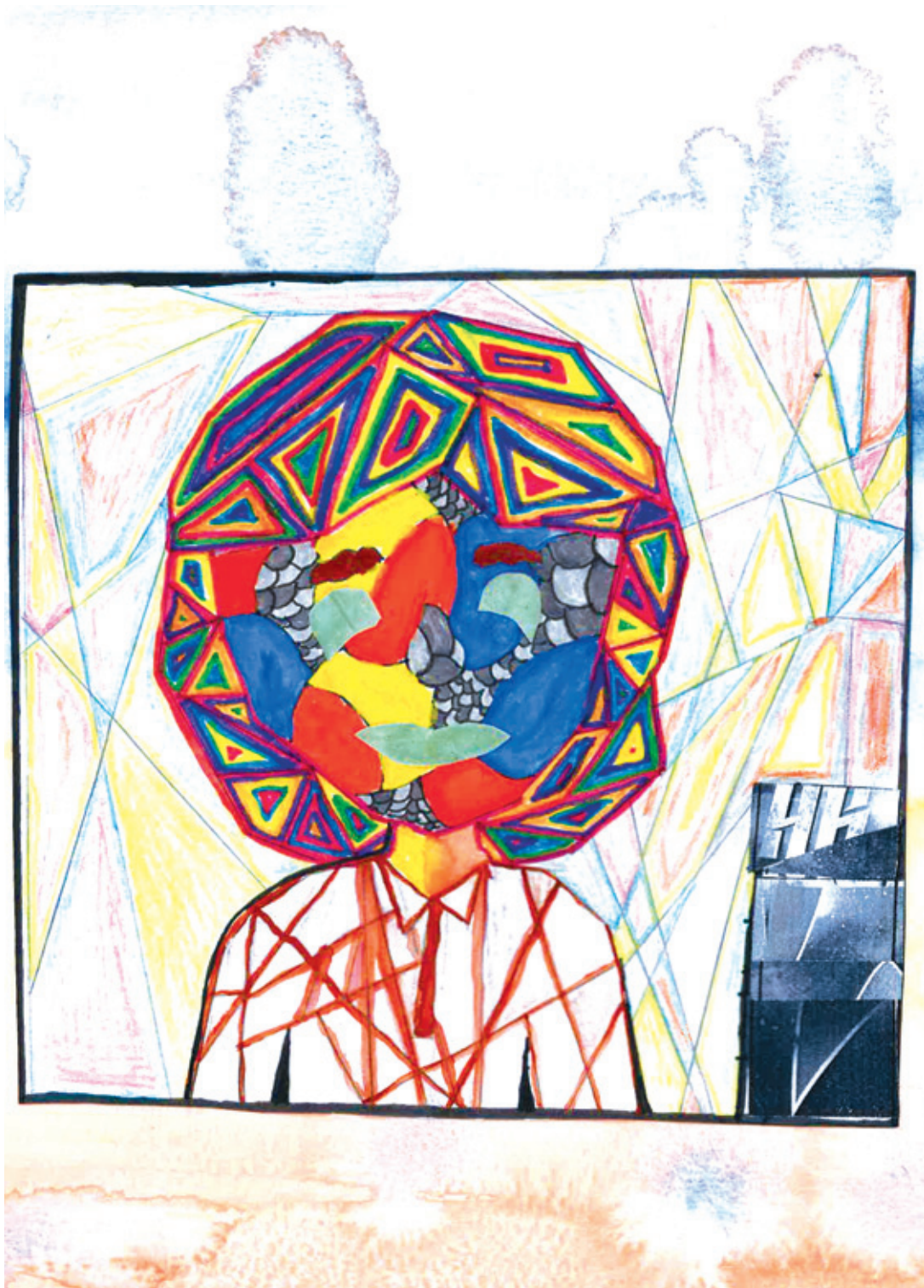
CUBIST SELF-PORTRAITS FROM THE ART HISTORY CLASS



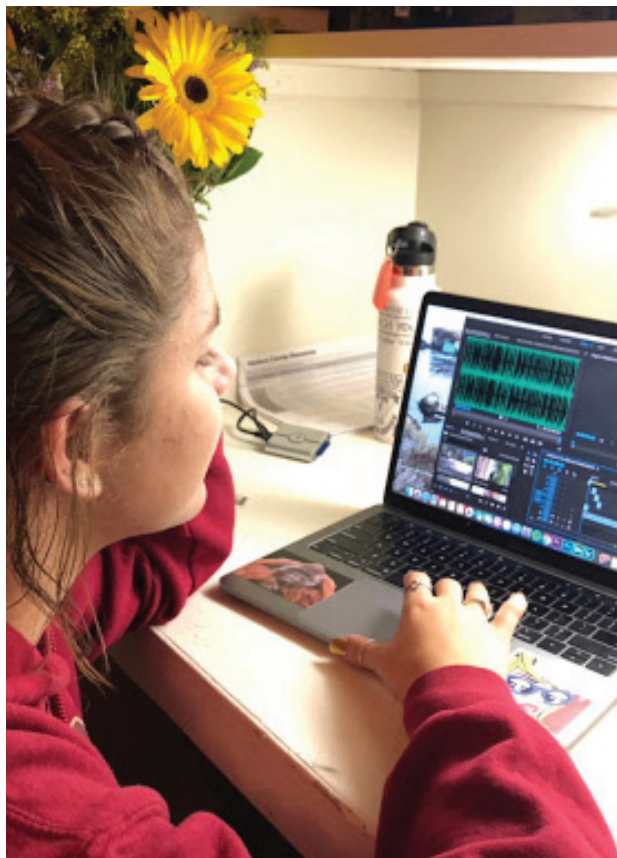
CUBIST SELF-PORTRAITS FROM THE ART HISTORY CLASS



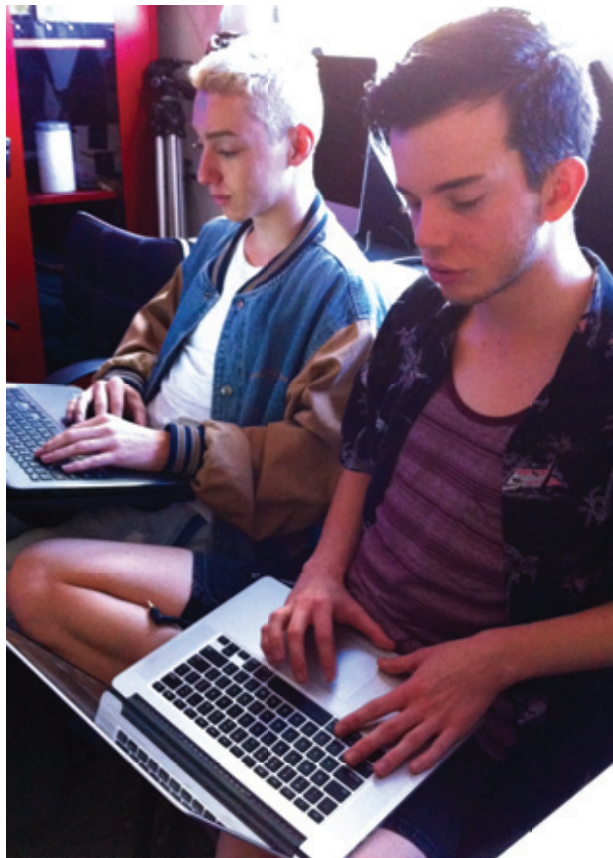
CUBIST SELF-PORTRAITS FROM THE ART HISTORY CLASS



CUBIST SELF-PORTRAITS FROM THE ART HISTORY CLASS



FILM STUDENTS WORKING ON THEIR AUTOBIOGRAPHIES



CLAY H. '20 AND TONY J. '20 WORKING IN CLASS



EVAN H. '21 EDITING FILM

“Telling someone your story isn’t the same thing as storytelling, a visual representation of your experiences.”

TONY J. '20, A JUNIOR, EXPLORES FILMMAKING AS FORM OF SELF-EXPRESSION AND AS A TOOL TO TACKLE INJUSTICES. NEVER WITHOUT A CAMERA IN HIS HAND, TONY CAPTURES IMAGES, THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS, THEN WEAVES TOGETHER STORIES FROM HIS LIFE AND COMMUNITY. TELLING SOMEONE YOUR STORY ISN'T THE SAME THING AS STORYTELLING, A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF YOUR EXPERIENCES.

In Film class, we are working on an “Autobiography” assignment. The project requires us to tell our stories in whatever way we wish. To better understand the assignment, we watched several short films including *Inocente*, a documentary about a homeless teen and her determination to strive as an artist, regardless of her circumstances. From the simple shots to the music-free narration, the film brilliantly told a story in a minimalistic style. Now it was my turn to do the same.

For my film, I wanted to write about my three-year-long struggle with anorexia and its impact on my life. The film is simple, it is composed of close-ups and pans of me as I wear baggy clothes and sit under large, interlacing mirrors, studying myself

as I give in to my illness, as well as several flashbacks of my life and vintage television adverts. In poetic format, I speak of my inner hopelessness at the time, and then how I channeled these intense feelings, which eventually lead me on the road to recovery. In the end, the spotlight on me (a symbol for the hyperfocus on myself) dims, as a present-day version of myself admits fault, and grasps determination for a positive and empowered future, with the message: love yourself now, there is no later.

In my work outside of the classroom, I have been able to document socially-important events and their aftermath. From photographing the PRIDE! Festivities, as well as the Baptist Church members who opposed them, I was able to show how even “our month” to be proud is not a signal that we have been accepted by community. I’ve also been able to interview Civil Rights movement activists and environmental advocates as they were mid-protest, which helped to spread awareness of their work and promote their messages. Thanks to filmmaking and photography, the messages of these passionate people can be documented creatively, and spread to the masses to further purposeful movements.



PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUREN S. '19 / RANCHO GRANDE



PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUREN S. '19 / RANCHO GRANDE

“My favorite form of photography is candid portraits, because I believe it’s when people’s true emotions come out; when they think that they’re not being documented.”

LAUREN S. '19, A SENIOR, IS DEDICATED TO THE VISUAL ARTS AND IS ESPECIALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY. SHE SPENDS MUCH OF HER TIME OUTSIDE OF CLASS TAKING PHOTOS AND ENGAGING IN REAL-WORLD PHOTO EXPERIENCES.

Over parents weekend, I entered into a photo competition at Rancho Grande to feature the animals that lived on the ranch. The three categories were Animals in Landscapes, Animal Behavior, and Animal Portraits. I loved being able to see all the different animals, and the way that they behaved as the day went on. It was also interesting to see how they responded to different stimulants; for example,

the parrots would say “Hello” every time a camera shuttered.

The Rancho Grande competition was an experience that allowed me to use my photography skills beyond the classroom. Photography to me is one of the most powerful ways to capture emotion. I love being able to look back at pictures I’ve taken from events I don’t even remember, but immediately know what people were thinking and feeling. My favorite form of photography is candid portraits, because I believe it’s when people’s true emotions come out; when they think that they’re not being documented. They aren’t putting masks on or fronting their emotions, and are usually being their authentic selves.



SVEA A. '20, LUISA B. '20, ALMOST, MAINE



PERFORMING ARTS: FALL PLAY

THE PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT OF BESANT
HILL SCHOOL PRESENTED (TO GREAT ACCLAIM!)
ALMOST, MAINE BY JOHN CARIANI ON NOVEMBER 9
AND 10 AT 7 P.M. IN THE ZALK THEATER.

Author:
DAN CALL

The play is written in nine short scenes dealing with love and loss. Taking place in a town called Almost in the state of Maine (the townsfolk just never got around to incorporating, so they're "almost" a town), the scenes let us peer briefly into the lives of many of the town's residents as they struggle to find and/or keep love. Most, but not all, of the scenes have a happy ending and are somewhat absurd in their presentations. Performed with minimal sets and props, the show relied heavily on the beautifully structured and detailed writing.

Many people commented on what a great show it was and how the scenes, while being able to stand alone, were interwoven with each other. "I truly enjoyed this experience," said junior Svea A. '20, "It really made me much more interested in theater."

Sophomore Ava B. '21, said, "The hardest part of it all was memorizing the lines, but I pushed through, and it really helped to boost my confidence in the end."

Senior Kylie B. '19, who is going to pursue stage management in college, said, "I learned something new every day. Once again, serving as stage manager was a valuable experience for me."

The play was first performed off-Broadway in 2006, and while the run was brief, the play has become one of the most produced plays in the country, surpassing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2017.



ELANA D. '19, ALMOST, MAINE



CALKI G. '22, ALMOST, MAINE



PAT O. '21, ALMOST, MAINE



EMMY H. '19, ALMOST, MAINE



CALKI G. '22 AND JANA A. '20, ALMOST, MAINE



PAT O. '21, ALMOST, MAINE



YLLAN H. '21 AND BIBIANA M. '21, ALMOST, MAINE



AVA B. '21, ALMOST, MAINE



SVEA A. '20, ALMOST, MAINE



LEINA'ALA R. '20, ALMOST, MAINE



EMMETT J. '21, ALMOST MAINE

MUSIC: FALL CONCERT

EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION FILLED THE ZALK THEATER AS THE AUDIENCE MADE THEIR WAY TO THEIR SEATS FOR THE ANNUAL FAMILY WEEKEND FALL CONCERT ON OCTOBER 26, 2018.

Author:
DAVE COSBY





ROBERT W. '20 AND LINH K. '19, IN THE FALL CONCERT 2018

“The fall concert was a really good experience for me, I was really nervous because it was my first performance, and I really wanted to do a good job. Of course, I made some mistakes, but the school was really supportive.”

-Tereza J. '20



“When I first began playing guitar at Besant Hill, I thought it would be a regular class; however, when I prepared for and played in the fall concert, it pushed me to get better and out of my comfort zone, and I will always use that to push myself to learn more.”

-Sawyer H. '20



HAYATO A. '21, HYUNSEO O. '21, SHU L. '19, SAWYER H. '20 AND DAN N. '21 PLAYING IN THE FALL CONCERT 2018

“The Fall Concert was truly a success; students were pushed to new limits and challenged to get out of their comfort zones in a public fashion. It was great to see students perform so well, knowing the hours of hard work and dedication that went into preparation for the concert.”

The feelings were palpable backstage while students awaited their opportunities to share some of the fruits of their hard work. For many students, it was their first time ever performing live music on stage, and both fear and exhilaration awakened their senses as they waited for their moment to take the stage.

After a brief welcoming message from Interim Head of School Portia Johnson '00, the Besant Hill School Guitar Ensemble, assisted by a few others, took the stage. Two of the members of the ensemble had never played a guitar before September of this year, and about six weeks later, they were playing in their first concert! One of the first-time performers, Shu L. '19, had this to share about her experience: “I have never experienced performing. Therefore, playing in the fall concert was nerve-racking. Before we started playing, I peeked out at the crowd and saw the number of people sitting in the audience. This had me shaking! However, once the song started and I started playing, the fear left my mind. From the experience, I felt an energy rush through me while playing, and I have noticed a new spark of interest in performing.”

The guitar ensemble consisted of Siena M. '21, Svea A. '20, Sawyer H. '20, Shu L. '19, Akari I. '21, Hayato A. '21, Hyunseo O. '21, Kaho K. '22, Dan N. '21, and Ziqi Z. '19.

Siena really seemed to enjoy performing in the concert. “The fall concert was such a fun experience, since it was my first time ever playing in front of an audience,” she said afterwards. “Although I was a little nervous, I knew that everything would go by smoothly since our amazing music teacher, Dave, had prepared us well for the concert. It was so great to get up on stage to perform in front of the Besant Hill community and show everyone what we had been working on for the past six weeks as new guitar students!”

For their performance that evening, the ensemble played two pieces: “G Blues” by Will Schmid and Bob Morris – which featured the ensemble’s diversified

roles and an improvised solo by Sawyer – and “Don’t Wanna Know” by Maroon Five, which was an interesting instrumental take on the vocal pop hit. Sawyer, reflecting on his experience performing in the concert, said, “When I first began playing guitar at Besant Hill, I thought it would be a regular class; however, when I prepared for and played in the fall concert, it pushed me to get better and out of my comfort zone, and I will always use that to push myself to learn more.”

According to Svea A. '20, “The fall concert was a great experience. It really made me learn how to compose myself in front of people.”

Following the guitar ensemble were two vocal students, Tereza J. '20 and Emmy H. '19. Tereza performed “For Music” by Robert Franz so well that hardly anyone knew it was her first time performing in concert. “The fall concert was a really good experience for me,” Tereza said. “I was really nervous because it was my first performance, and I really wanted to do a good job. Of course, I made some mistakes, but the school was really supportive.” Emmy, on the other hand, has performed dozens of times on the Zalk stage since her freshman year, but her performance of “Pie Jesu” from Maurice Durufle’s Requiem was highly impressive and moving.

The Music Ensemble II class was next to take the stage, and their performance featured three very diverse songs encompassing 50’s jazz (“Cantaloupe Island” by Herbie Hancock), 70’s folk music (“At Seventeen” by Janis Ian), and current Top 40 hit “Havana” by Camila Cabello. The members of the ensemble were Tavi A. '20, Ava B. '21, Dan N. '21, Ziqi Z. '19, and faculty member Néstor Gerónimo.

Dan had this to share about her experience: “In my opinion, playing at the fall concert was a very enjoyable experience, and I also think of it as an important mark in my learning process. Being involved in the concert gave me an opportunity to practice my performing skills and my note-reading ability.”



HAYATO A. '21, PERFORMS AT THE FALL CONCERT 2018

The final group to perform represents the highest level of music offered at Besant Hill School, Music Ensemble III. The members of this class were Emmy, Linh K. '19, Emma Z. '20, Robert W. '20, Tsunaki I. '19, Selena N. '19, Ivan W. '20, Marie H. '21, and Sunny H. '19. Their set started off with a great flashback to the funk sounds of the 1970s with "Low Rider" by the band War, which really got the audience grooving. The second song was a baroque composition by George Frideric Handel called "Themes from Judas Maccabaeus." The ensemble followed this with a rendition of "Hound Dog" based on the Big Mama Thornton version, which preceded Elvis Presley's early rock classic.

The last two songs of the concert were dedicated to the late, great Aretha Franklin, who passed away in August of this year. Emmy performed a stripped-down duo version of "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" that would have made the Queen of Soul herself smile. To close the concert, Music Ensemble III performed one of Aretha's greatest hits "Respect," composed by the R&B great Otis Redding. Looking back on the experience, Selena shared her feelings on her final Besant Hill School performance: "It was my fourth and last time to play in the Besant Hill Fall Concert, but still my heart was pounding so hard when I took a step on stage and held up my

bass. Like everyone else, I was worried that I would make a mistake. However, once Linh began her piano solo and Emmy started to sing and the beats kicked in – along with the claps and excitement from the audience – I had forgotten that I was in front of a full house. I started to hold my bass properly and just jammed with the music like I was Donald Dunn playing the bass line for Aretha Franklin!"

The experience of performing music is a powerful and memorable one for students. Linh expressed, "I always get super excited before the fall concert. It is an opportunity for us students to demonstrate all of our efforts in the music classes and to show the audience our vocal and instrumental talents. Moreover, we have learned a lot about performing skills, as well as arrangement backstage. It is unfortunate that I will not be here to perform at the next fall concert, but I will not forget such a valuable experience of being part of the band."

The Fall Concert was truly a success; students were pushed to new limits and challenged to get out of their comfort zones in a public fashion. It was great to see students perform so well, knowing the hours of hard work and dedication that went into preparation for the concert.

COLLEGE UPDATE

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION, LET ME SAY THAT WITH MY FIRST FULL TERM NOW UNDER MY BELT, I AM ABSOLUTELY THRILLED TO BE HERE AT BESANT HILL SCHOOL. I HAVE BEEN IMMENSELY IMPRESSED WITH THE STUDENTS I'VE GOTTEN TO KNOW THUS FAR, AND I AM LIKEWISE IN AWE OF THE COMMITMENT AND CARE OF THE CAPABLE FACULTY AND STAFF. IN MY SHORT TIME HERE, I HAVE WITNESSED A COMPLETE LACK OF PRETENSION AND AN EXTRAORDINARILY HIGH LEVEL OF AUTHENTICITY, FRIENDLINESS, AND SENSE OF PURPOSE THAT PERVADES OUR COMMUNITY'S CULTURE.

Author:
DOUG JESSUP





DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE COUNSELING DOUG JESSUP TALKING WITH STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE FAIR

College Admissions Cycle in Full Swing at Besant Hill

Needless to say, it has been a rapid initiation for me in these first few weeks! I am now well-acquainted with each member of the senior class, and we've successfully navigated the first round of many important application deadlines. With over a third of the senior class having filed some form of early application, life here on our Happy Valley campus has settled into a good and productive rhythm.

Besant Hill students have seen their fair share of college admissions representatives on campus this fall, highlighted by our annual Linden College Fair, where all grade 9-12 students had the opportunity to engage with admissions deans and directors from over a dozen different colleges at once. This diverse array of colleges hailed from nine different states and nearly all regions of the country (three from California and two from New York, as well as colleges from Arizona, Florida, Mississippi, Michigan, Virginia, Hawaii, and Washington), and students and admissions officers were able to further commune over lunch following the fair. We hosted a total of 41 colleges and universities here on campus throughout the fall.

In addition to attending to their scholastic and extra- and co-curricular pursuits, seniors are actively drafting, refining, and finalizing their admissions petitions to a broad range of undergraduate institutions and in some cases are still in the process

of fine-tuning their definitive college lists. For those planning to file candidacies to any of the nine University of California or 23 California State University campuses, the month of November represents the exclusive application window when their applications can be submitted.

While most college application deadlines are January 1 or shortly thereafter, the goal for all of our seniors is to finalize and submit all of their applications before Winter Break, and ideally before our mid-December finals/assessment week. Come the new year, I look forward to personally engaging with all members of the junior class as we begin to conduct a series of individual and class meetings to thoughtfully launch each 11th-grader's college search in earnest. Simultaneously, the ongoing progress and incoming college returns of the senior class will continue to be carefully monitored as members of our Class of 2019 move toward making their final post-secondary plans by the May 1, 2019, National Reply Date.

Again, let me say what a privilege and a joy it is being able to work closely with Besant Hill students, their families, and my fellow Coyote colleagues. I look forward to seeing to it that all of our students grow and gain an enhanced sense of self-understanding through the college admissions process, as well as achieve favorable, attractive, and well-matched undergraduate returns.



DIEGO G. '19 WITH FELLOW STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE FAIR

EXPERIENTIAL ED: FALL TRIPS BEACH DAY

A WARM, BUT NOT TOO SUNNY, DAY WAS THE BACKDROP FOR THE ANNUAL BESANT HILL SCHOOL OPENING-OF-SCHOOL BEACH DAY AT CARPINTERIA STATE BEACH PARK. STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF ENJOYED THE CAMARADERIE OF COMMUNITY AND A DELICIOUS PICNIC FEAST. VOLLEYBALL, SWIMMING, FESTIVE MUSIC, AND GREAT CONVERSATION GAVE EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY FUN AND FELLOWSHIP. AS ALWAYS, COMFORT AND A FEW “I TOLD YOU SO’S” WERE LATER OFFERED TO THOSE FEW INDIVIDUALS WHO INSISTED THAT SUNSCREEN WAS OPTIONAL! BEACH DAY REMAINS ONE OF THE FAVORITE TRADITIONS AT BESANT HILL. WHETHER GREETING OLD FRIENDS OR BUILDING NEW RELATIONSHIPS, FALL BEACH DAY IS ALWAYS AN AMAZING WAY TO START THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

Author:
LELAND FULTON





LINH K. '19, ELANA D. '19, BU K. '22 WITH DAVE COSBY AT BEACH DAY 2018





BEACH DAY 2018

Fall Trip: The 2018–19 school year got off to an exciting start with our annual all-school Fall Trip! Packing up tents, games, instruments, and delicious food, Besant Hill faculty and students headed out to El Capitan State Park for three days of adventures and community-building.

Over the course of the week, students participated in horseback riding tours in the Santa Barbara hills, kayaked through tranquil ocean waters, created beautiful artwork on the beach, and built wonderful memories through a myriad of other unique activities. Each night, students and faculty would reunite as an entire community to share stories over delicious meals, ending with an all-school meeting on the bluffs overlooking the ocean.

By the end of the week, new acquaintances felt like old friends, and the action-packed Fall

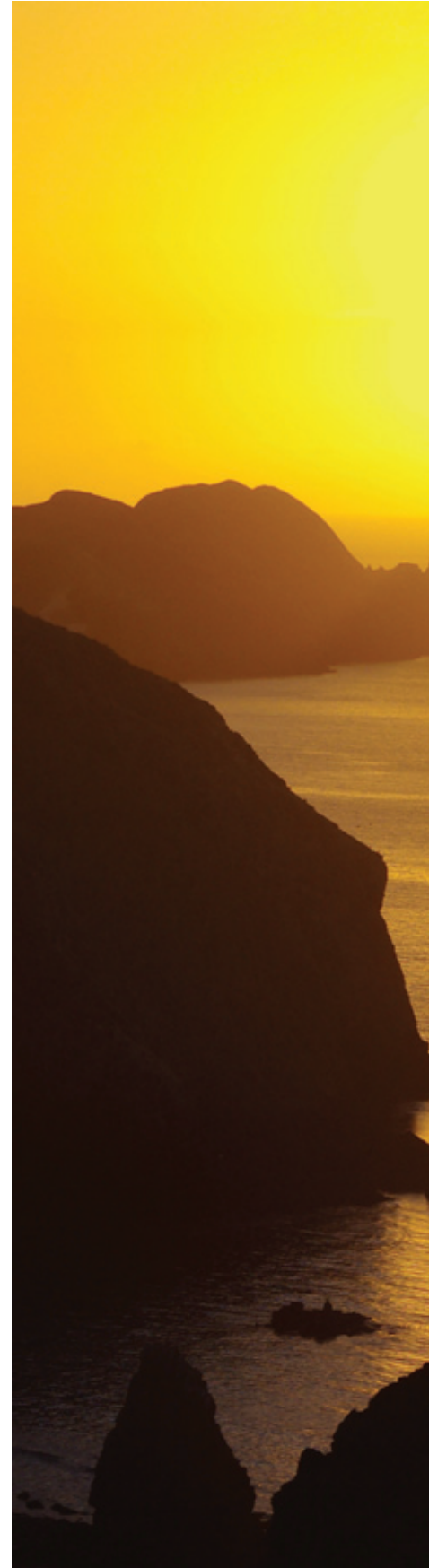
Trip had passed in the blink of an eye. Students and faculty returned to Besant Hill ready to embrace the school year ahead and many more adventures to come.

Fall Community Service: Besant Hill students are known for being involved and active in the Ojai community, and this semester was no exception. Students have volunteered to support a number of wonderful causes so far this year. The diversity of organizations being supported by Besant Hill School students reflects the far reach of their work. Local organizations such as Food Forward, Holy Cross Preschool, the Ojai Green Coalition, and the California Institute of Environmental Studies have all benefited from the excellent volunteer efforts of our dedicated and philanthropic students. Spring semester will offer many more opportunities for students to give back to their community!

COMMUNITY SERVICE AT ANACAPA ISLAND

THIS OCTOBER, BESANT HILL AP BIOLOGY STUDENTS (AND SPECIAL GUEST SENIOR EMMY H. '19) TOOK THE BOAT RIDE OUT TO ANACAPA ISLAND TO CONTINUE THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN AN ONGOING HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT.

Author:
LELAND FULTON



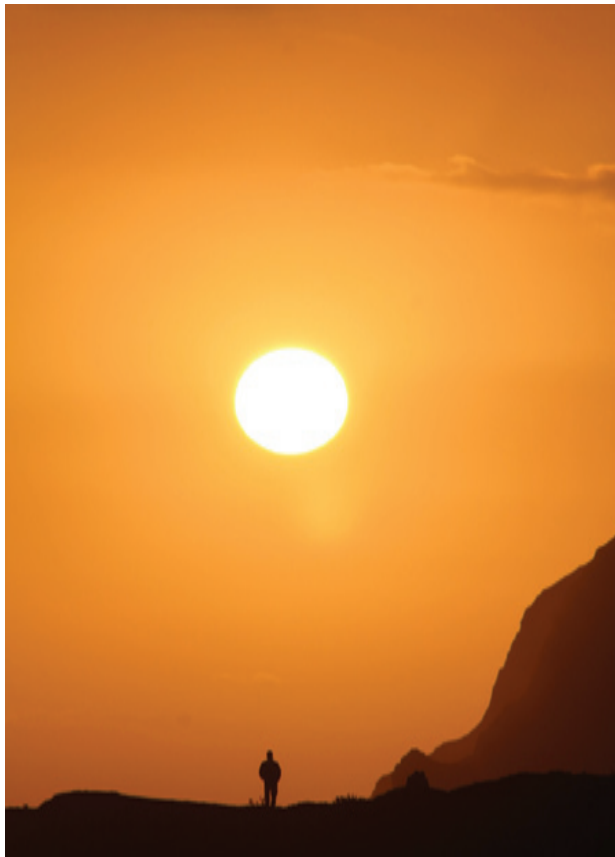


SUNSET ON ANACAPA ISLAND

This special partnership between Besant Hill school students and biologists from the California Institute of Environmental Studies began two years ago and continues to develop into something really special.

The work of the biologists and Besant Hill school student volunteers is part of a broader project focused on restoring seabird nesting habitat for the Scripps's Murrelet and the Cassin's Auklet. Students spent much of their time planting species of flora native to the channel islands. The plant species being put in the ground are critical in establishing nesting habitat for these rare seabirds and controlling the erosion of topsoil on the island.

Besant Hill school students put nearly 800 plants in the ground and surveyed the success of the planting they did a year ago at neighboring sites. The incredible success of this project from a year ago surprised everyone and reinforced the important work being done by Besant Hill school students on this unique island chain.



SUNSET ON ANACAPA ISLAND



HABITAT RESTORATION ON ANACAPA ISLAND



ANACAPA ISLAND



ANACAPA ISLAND



SHU L. '19 AND LINH K. '19 ARE ALL SMILES



JAMIE C. '19, RESTORING HABITAT



LAUREN S. '19, TAKING A DIP WHILE ON THE ISLAND



ANACAPA ISLAND



ANACAPA ISLAND



STUDENTS RESTORING THE NATURAL HABITAT ON ANACAPA ISLAND



STUDENT RESTORING THE NATURAL HABITAT ON ANACAPA ISLAND



ANACAPA ISLAND

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: MARY SPENCE

Interview by: NINA MECAGNI

What was/is your favorite work of literature in high school, as a college student, and now?

High School: *Invisible Man* by Ralph Waldo Ellison; College: *East* by Stephen Berkoff; I can't pick only one thing for now. I love anything by David Sedaris, William Shakespeare, James Baldwin, Amy Tan, Anne Carson, Sandra Cisneros, Haruki Murakami, or John Leguizamo.

What is your favorite non-fiction book?

Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer

Who is your favorite poet?

EE Cummings

What is the importance of reading?

I can't speak for others, but for me, reading changes my world by asking me to think from the perspectives of others. It demands attention, imagination, and interpretation. It helps me understand myself and my own moods based on different passages being read on different days, or at various stages of life.

Which are your top two favorite literary forms: dialog, prose, short story, verse, free-form, philosophic, or fantastical?

My top two literary forms are dramatic literature (plays) and sonnets. These two forms often contain several of the elements you have listed above.

What inspired you to become an educator?

I fell into education when I was working as an actor and director for the Arizona Shake-

speare Festival and a guest artist for the Arizona Theatre Company. They sent me, and other company members, to high schools across Arizona to give workshops, and I found great joy in teaching Shakespeare. I felt at home with the students, and I was inspired by their creativity and willingness to try new things with "old" language.

What inspired you to become an educator at Besant Hill School?

My husband, daughter, and I have been coming to the Farm-to-Table event for a few years, and we fell in love with the people, the campus, and the mission of the school.

What do you feel is the essential function of an educator?

I like the ethos of the school, which is to help students learn how to think, not what to think.

What is the most valuable lesson have you've learned from your student(s)?

That it's important for me to say, "I don't know. Let's find out about that," and, "I don't know. What do YOU think?"

One of the founders of Besant Hill School, J. Krishnamurti, often stated that the purpose of education is to bring about freedom, love, "the flowering of goodness," and the complete transformation of society. He specifically contrasted this with what he felt were the intentions of most schools, which emphasize preparing young people to succeed materially in the society that

exists (or a slightly altered one). What could be problematic about focusing on material success alone?

Material success may bring financial security, but it will not guarantee happiness, connection to others, or satisfaction. Competing with others for titles and monetary gain seems to create a distance from reality and humanity.

What role does sensitivity plays in education?

It's important for all viewpoints to be safely expressed and honored in a school community. This fosters awareness and tolerance, which are vital skills for students and teachers to take into the world. This seems especially important now, when we are so polarized and vicious with our opinions in so many ways.

Extra Credit Questions:

What is the difference between knowledge and intelligence, and does one impede the expression of the other?

Knowledge is something gained by experience and any type of study or education. Intelligence is something that can come from within and can grow when a person feels encouraged, safe, and confident. I don't think one can impede the other, but I'm certainly not an expert. I guess it seems pretty important to stay humble as knowledge grows. The number of books a person has read, the place a person has studied, or a high degree doesn't (and shouldn't) outweigh emotional intelligence and the idea that everyone has something to teach and everyone has a lot to learn.

How much can you deadlift?

I learned from taking t'ai chi ch'uan that it's more important to be able to lift my own body weight than to be able to lift big metal things. So, I guess if push-ups and pull-ups count, I



MARY SPENCE AND HER FAMILY

can lift my own weight, and I am not interested in publishing that number!

When was the last time words failed you, and what were you doing/thinking/feeling when it happened?

Last week, a student asked me, in front of the class, which of the three English III/IV sections is my favorite. I got so flustered and freaked out by trying to think of a diplomatic answer that I knocked over my metal water bottle. It was super loud and really embarrassing, and the kids thought it was hilarious.

Burpees or squats?

No, thank you. Running, please.

In a word, drawing, song, interpretive dance, or other media of your choice, define what happiness is to you.

(Photo above of my family and me after a Thanksgiving turkey trot last November. We had exercised, we were about to eat a huge meal, and we were together.)

FAMILY WEEKEND

FAMILY WEEKEND 2018 WAS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS TO GATHER IN A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF THEIR BESANT HILL STUDENTS. THE WEEKEND BEGAN WITH A STRONG SHOWING OF PARENTS FOR COLLEGE CONNECTION, DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE COUNSELING DOUG JESSUP'S INFORMATIVE PRESENTATION OF THE BESANT HILL SCHOOL COLLEGE PROCESS. CURRENTLY IN THE THICK OF COLLEGE APPLICATION SEASON, DOUG HAS MADE A SWIFT TRANSITION TO THE SCHOOL, AND HIS EXTENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE STUDENTS' NAVIGATION OF THIS EXPERIENCE WAS EVIDENT TO ALL IN ATTENDANCE.

Author:
MEGAN WALTON





FAMILY WEEKEND 2018

Other Friday events included the Welcome Reception in the Beato Atelier, where faculty, staff, and families enjoyed mingling together over a spread of delicious appetizers, followed by a community dinner in the Dining Commons. Rounding out the activities of the day was the students' Fall Concert in the Zalk Theater, featuring outstanding instrumental and vocal performances under the tutelage of Dan Call and Dave Cosby.

The ever-popular Black Sand Coffee Company cart and a delicious continental breakfast greeted parents and family members early Saturday morning. All gathered in the Zalk, where Interim Head of School Portia Johnson led the Parent Meeting and "ice-breaker" activity. Everyone enjoyed both the festive atmosphere and getting to know faculty and other Besant Hill School families. The day continued with our guests following their students' schedules, attending "mini-classes," and experiencing a day in the life at Besant Hill. An amazing lunch on the Commons lawn was followed by advisor meetings, and then the Family Weekend events concluded with a student vs. faculty/parent volleyball game and refreshing Kona Ice on the court.

We would like to extend our thanks to the parents, family members, and friends who came to campus and made this year's Family Weekend such a great success and fun time. Our students, faculty, and staff were thrilled to share all that makes this school so special!



MATH INSTRUCTOR, CHRIS CAIRNS DOING ICE BREAKERS



ZACH W. '19, WITH HIS MOTHER AT FAMILY WEEKEND



COFFEE BREAK DURING FAMILY WEEKEND



FAMILY WEEKEND ICE BREAKERS

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Just a couple months into the school year, Besant Hill School Student Government has already played a vital role in the support or direct leadership of numerous school activities and initiatives, including student clubs; Fall Open House; the annual on-campus cross-country meet; the school's Ojai Day booth; Family Weekend; Farm-to-Table: A Community Harvest; the Student Government Halloween Costume Contest & Candy-Gram Fundraiser; and the student government-sponsored Besant Hill School Student Store, where members voluntarily supervised evening and weekend sales, with all proceeds going to offset the expense of prom.

The Besant Hill School Student Government team might be the best example of students going "all in" for their community. At Besant Hill, there is no shortage of those willing to lead; through hard work, the gift of time and energy, and a willingness to serve as ambassadors of the school, this year's group of 18 dedicated students has reflected the theme for the year, to honor their individual strengths and be resilient. Their commitment to the school will continue in the months ahead, and we look forward to sharing the group's efforts with our extended Besant Hill School community.

Author:
MEGAN WALTON





STUDENT GOVERNMENT CO-PRESIDENTS

ADMISSIONS

KEY ADMISSION DATES:

FEBRUARY 1: PRIORITY DEADLINE

MARCH: ROLLING ADMISSIONS CONTINUE

MARCH 10: ADMISSION DECISIONS SENT TO NEW STUDENTS

JUNE 1: ENROLLMENT FORMS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Author:
KRISTEN KASCHUB





CHARLIE Z. '19 AND JIN L. '19 GEAR UP FOR THE FALL TRIP



STUDENTS DURING OUR FALL OPEN HOUSE HOUSE



LEE SANDERS AQUATIC CENTER AQUATIC



REGISTRATION DAY 2018



INTERIM HEAD OF SCHOOL PORTIA JOHNSON
SPEAKING WITH A PROSPECTIVE STUDENT
DURING OPEN HOUSE 2018

“It remains our goal to continue to bring diverse, interesting, and engaging students to enrich our community from all parts of the globe.”

SUMMER INSTITUTE

Besant Hill's Summer Institute began on July 1 with the arrival of students from 10 different countries! We have Besant Hill School students from the academic year, as well as those who only attend the summer program, here to learn English, participate in STEM classes, and prepare for the SAT. As in the academic year, students engage in excursions throughout southern California. The program is supported by residential advisors, including alumnus and current Besant Hill School history instructor Francois Tchoyi '11.

REGISTRATION DAY

September 5 was a perfect California day when families and students were welcomed to the Beatrice Wood Atelier by administration, faculty, and student government representatives. With cappuccinos flowing, registration went smoothly, followed by students moving into the dorms, campus tours, and an informative parent meeting. Once students went off to class for ice-breaker activities, led by student government, parents departed. It was a wonderful start to the year!

OPEN HOUSE

The fall Admission Open House on October 8 was a huge success. Families had a chance to speak with administrators and tour the campus, students visited classes, and many enjoyed lunch on the lawn. The day was beautiful, the campus looked great, and a special assembly allowed our 20 visitors to experience why Besant Hill School is such a special place.

ON THE ROAD

The admissions team, including our new member Thomas Keen, have been busy spreading the word of Besant Hill School. It remains our goal to continue to bring diverse, interesting, and engaging students to enrich our community from all parts of the globe. We have traveled all over the world and throughout the United States. If there are areas of the world you feel we should visit, you would like to connect when we are in your area, or you are willing to help us in our efforts, please contact the admissions office at admissions@besanthill.org. We would love to hear from you!

SPORTS & ATHLETICS: VOLLEYBALL & CROSS COUNTRY

Author:
MIKE BIERMANN





GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

“Often running as a unit, the girls pushed each other to race their best in every competition.”

The 2018 girls’ volleyball season ended as quickly as it began. With the CIF-SS moving the calendar back two weeks, the beginning of the season for most schools was August 11. Since we did not start school until September 7, the teams had one week of practice before our all-school Fall Trip and our first game. With a roster of fifteen girls, we divided them into junior varsity and varsity squads, with the stipulation of moving the junior varsity girls into varsity competition as much as possible. Twelve of the 15 girls are ninth- and 10th-graders, so the experience level of both teams was about the same.

All of the girls competed hard and practiced with enthusiasm to improve their skills. They enjoyed being together and showed marked improvement in each game. But unlike last season, the teams could only play each school in the league once instead of the usual two games. Our first game was on September 22, and our final game, October 10. Right when they were playing in sync and with confidence, the season ended! It was disappointing not to have more games to compete in, but it was satisfying to know they did their best each and every time they stepped on the court.

As the season came to a close, the girls continued to work hard and have fun in

their final practices. We say goodbye to our seniors, Shu L. ’19 and Elana D. ’19, and look forward to next year – with a large number of experienced, returning players – to once again enjoy the challenge, the competition, and the pure joy of coming together as a team.

Cross Country 2018 saw another successful and exciting campaign for the Besant Hill cross country team. With several new members, many of whom were new to the sport, the challenge was to use the short season to develop some endurance and to see how much progress the team could make by the end of October.

The boys’ team, led by newcomers Tavi A. ’20 and Hayato A. ’21, competed well all season long. Additionally, a strong contingent of new freshman boys bolstered an already hard-working team.

On the girls’ team, newcomer Linh K. ’19 joined returners Jamie C. ’19 and Emma Z. ’20 to lead our girls’ team to several great efforts this season. Often running as a unit, the girls pushed each other to race their best in every competition. All members of the cross country team saw considerable improvement during the short season. Way to go, Coyotes!



EVIE S. '22 SERVING THE BALL



TEAM CHEER!



AND THEY'RE OFF! GO COYOTES!



AVA B. '19





YOGA

YOGA IS NOT AN ACTION; IT IS A STATE OF BEING, AND THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF THE POSES, OR ASANAS, WE EXPERIENCE YOGA, OR UNION, WITH THE SELF. BY FOCUSING ON THE BREATH AND THE ALIGNMENT OF THE BODY, THE MIND STILLS, AND WE EXIST IN THE PRESENT MOMENT OF ALL LOVING CONSCIOUSNESS.

Author:
BETSY STIX

LILY F. '21 PRACTICING YOGA

“Convert every work into yoga with the magic wand of right attitude.”

— Swami Sivananda



“There should be a gentle Yogic touch for everything, even our spoons, forks, and plates.”

— Swami Satchidananda



KAHO K. '22, DAVID Y. '21 AND SUNNY H. '19 PRACTICING YOGA

This is not easy, and it's a lifelong practice! Here at Besant Hill, the fitness students learn and practice a series of poses – standing, balancing, seated, prone, and supine – for 10 consecutive classes so that they can practice on their own. We focus first on the breath as a tool for awareness and quieting the mind. We link the breath with the movement to calm the thoughts, and we use the breath like the string of a kite to keep the mind in the body. We learn that the mind is a wonderful tool and a terrible master!

Yoga is also therapy, and students learn which poses to use for specific physical, mental, or emotional issues. They are encouraged to close their eyes and resist the temptation to compare themselves to others. Bodies are unique and perfect, our best friends! Through these self-loving practices, students are guided to accept and nurture their bodies and minds. The practice calms the mind, and negative thoughts and emotions are viewed as clouds in the sky, constantly coming and going. Yoga helps us see these thoughts and emotions as temporary and illusory.

In addition to the breath, we focus on alignment, posture, grounding, the spine, and lines of energy. These tools encourage students to become familiar with their internal landscapes. In each pose, students imagine with the mind's eye what supports them on the earth, the extension of the

spine, and the lines of energy through the limbs and spine. When one is really in the pose and observant of all its qualities, the thoughts quiet, and yoga is experienced!

We practice the standing poses in our computing, driving, sitting, flip-flop-wearing, indoor world so that we can uncurl the spine, open the hamstrings, stand up straight, feel our feet, and slow down. Yoga is the antidote to our modern world of sitting and screen time. Once students can sit on the ground comfortably, we practice yin yoga to stretch the connective tissue, or fascia, and create more space and comfort in the body. Rather than avoiding tension, we explore tight areas of the body, and through our awareness, breath, and loving acceptance of what is, these areas soften and release. Then the mind and the body are ready to meditate and to experience our true selves in this moment. One definition of meditation is simply getting still.

I am constantly amazed by and in awe of the students here at Besant Hill. They are so willing to get quiet, drop in, and explore themselves. What a gift it is to be their teacher! The precious moments of stillness and connection at the end of class are breathtakingly beautiful and completely transcendental, and I am grateful to the kids, the school, yoga, and all my teachers for supporting health, mindfulness, and consciousness. Vive le yoga!



BETSY STIX ADJUSTS ALIGNMENT DURING SAVASANA

SUMMER PROGRAM: EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

Author:

DANA DWIRE





EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

For the second year in a row, summertime at Besant Hill came alive with the sound of music, specifically that of the Blackbird Creative Lab, an intense two-week immersion program created to inspire the next generation of classical music performers and composers.

The Lab, as it's affectionately called, is the brainchild of Eighth Blackbird, a world-renowned musical ensemble that the Chicago Tribune hailed as "one of the smartest, most dynamic contemporary classical ensembles on the planet." The ensemble got its start in 1996 as a group of six entrepreneurial Oberlin Conservatory students. Over the course of more than two decades, Eighth Blackbird has continually called into question what it means to be a contemporary chamber ensemble, presenting distinct programs nationally and internationally and reaching audiences totaling tens of thousands.

Eighth Blackbird's mission is to move music forward through innovative performance, advocate for new music by living composers, and create a legacy of guiding an emerging generation of musicians. With that in mind, the Blackbird Creative Lab was born.

At the end of June, the Lab brings together a number of artists and resources for its collaborative two-week program on Besant Hill's campus. Participants include:

THIRTY TUITION-FREE FELLOWSHIPS, INCLUSIVE OF ROOM AND BOARD: 24 instrumentalists and six composers will be invited to participate each year based on their talent, technical proficiency, ability to communicate, personality, curiosity, and creativity.

NINE FACULTY MEMBERS: The six members of Eighth Blackbird will be joined by two professional composers and one choreographer/director at the tops of their fields.

GUEST ARTISTS: Periodic and ongoing visits by creative experts in a diverse array of fields will added based on the selected fellows' creative project proposals.

KEY PARTNERS: The Besant Hill School will provide the facilities and community connections that allow the Lab to achieve its lofty artistic, educational and audience engagement goals.

Over the course of the two-week experience, fellows will participate in:

COACHING SESSIONS: Daily two-hour sessions led by faculty and guests.

SALON HOURS: Gatherings before dinner for informal performances, cocktails, and other non-musical activities.

GUEST LECTURES: Structured and unstructured opportunities to talk about a variety of musical and professional development topics with faculty and guests.

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE: Time for fellows to practice and study on their own.

PERFORMANCES: Two culminating public performances to be captured on video.

Eighth Blackbird's learn-by-doing approach, developed over many years as resident artists at the finest conservatories and music schools across the country, is based upon five core values:

Unquestioned quality, Pervasive innovation, Intense work ethic, Genuine informality, and Bold openness.

Having this group of talented musicians, who also happen to be really cool people, was truly a highlight of the summer, and we look forward to welcoming them back in the future! For more information on Eighth Blackbird and the Blackbird Creative Lab, please visit www.eighthblackbird.org.

“Eighth Blackbird’s mission is to move music forward through innovative performance, advocate for new music by living composers, and create a legacy of guiding an emerging generation of musicians.”



HOWL



Authors:
KATHY ZOTNOWSKI
KEVIN HENSCHER

SAVE THE DATE
April 26-29, 2019

“60th-ish”
Alumni Reunion
for classes of
1958, 1959, and
all those on
either side!

HVS-BHS connect is
building up steam!



HVS-BHS CONNECT

Our alumni interactive database site — where you can search for your classmates and get information about reunions, local gatherings, current campus happenings, mentoring opportunities, and job possibilities continues to grow. Watch your email for HVS-BHS newsletters and encourage your classmates to join!

Please contact Kevin Henschel with questions at khenschel@besanthill.org or (805) 646-4343 ext. 344

ALUMNI NEWS

Chris Escobedo '16 held a summer internship working on migrant worker rights and immigration. Way to go, Chris!

Ilis Gerónimo-Anctil '15 led the vocals for the Spider Queen Band, an alternative music group with bass, guitar, drums, trumpet, and vocals. They played in the Berkeley area in September while visiting alumna Emily Barry '14.

Alumnus Daniel Wallock '14 (featured in the Fall 2017 Aún Aprendo Alumni Spotlight) graduated from Sarah Lawrence College this year. Congratulations, Daniel!



ALUMNUS DANIEL WALLOCK '14

ALUMNI VISITS

Nina Ward '52
Raymond Neutra '57
Claire Noyes Lewis '60
Anne Thacher '60
Jan Caldwell Thorpe '60
William Kaplan '63
Ken Tennen '66
Jim McHugh '66
Jesse Kaplan '01
Olivia Sturm Fabian '02
Ivan Matip '10
Skyler Furguiel '13
Ilis Gerónimo '15
Mark Riedmueller '15
Sophia Von Buchwaldt '15
Michelle Widmer '15
Briggs Yahn '15



KEVIN HENSCHER '93 & SKYLER FURGUEL '13



MICHELLE WIDMER '15 & SOPHIA VON BUCHWALDT '15



OLIVIA STURM FABIAN '02 WITH HUSBAND AND CHILD



MARK RIEDMUELLER '15, DAVE COSBY, BRIGGS YAHN '15,
ILIS GERONIMO-ANCTIL '15

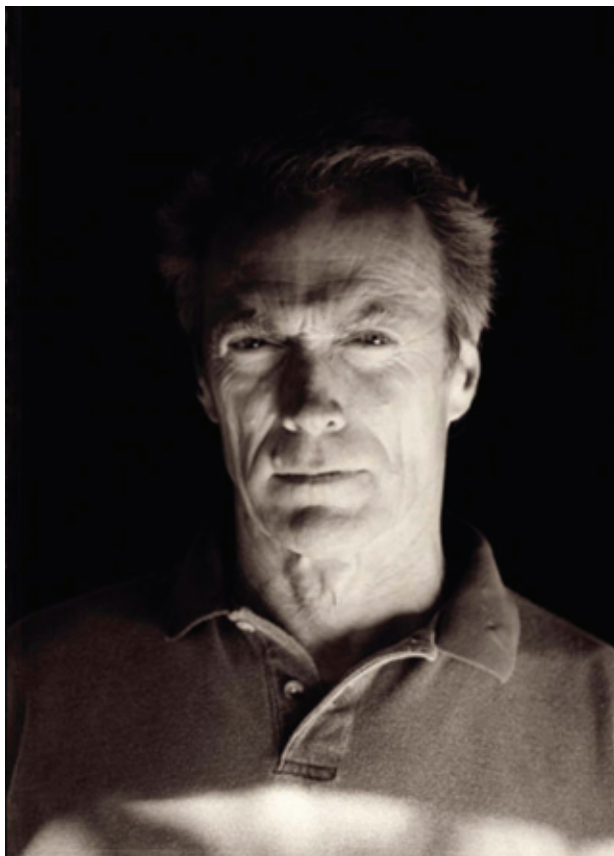
DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER

JIM MCHUGH '66 DAZZLES

Author:
KATHY ZOTNOWSKI



ALUMNUS JIM MCHUGH '66/PHOTO: TIM MANTOANI



CLINT EASTWOOD/PHOTO: JIM MCHUGH '66



DAVID HOCKNEY/PHOTO: JIM MCHUGH '66



ANDY WARHOL/PHOTO: JIM MCHUGH '66



GEORGE HARRISON/PHOTO: JIM MCHUGH '66



JOHN TRAVOLTA/PHOTO: JIM MCHUGH,'66



MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY /PHOTO: JIM MCHUGH,'66



CARLY SIMON/PHOTO: JIM MCHUGH,'66



STING/PHOTO: JIM MCHUGH,'66



THE COCOANUT GROVE, LOS ANGELES



FELIX CHEVROLET, LOS ANGELES

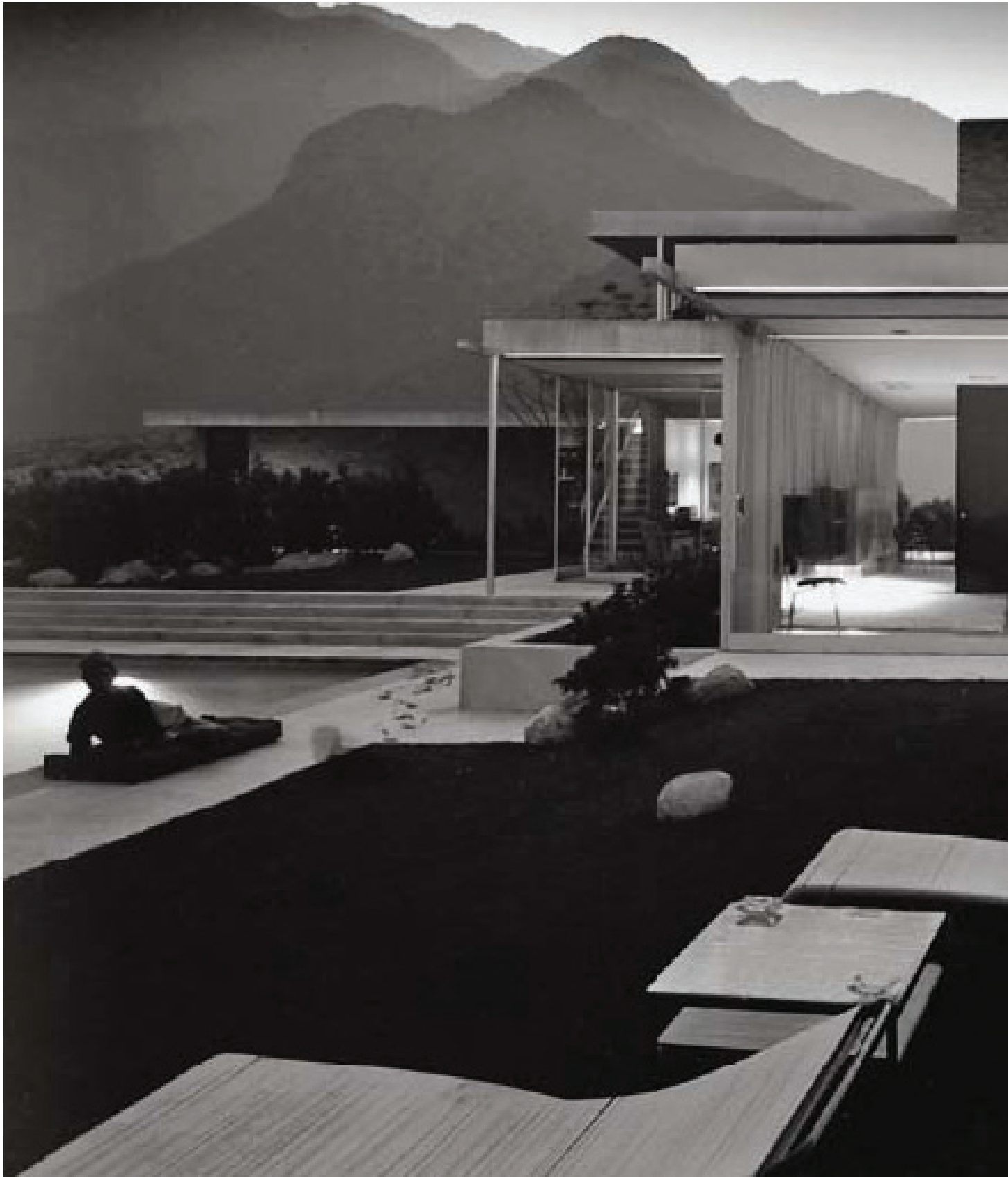


JIM MCHUGH '66, LOS ANGELES

“His DSS event was filled with laughter as Jim recounted his many adventures photographing celebrities ranging from Clint Eastwood to David Hockney.”

October's Family Weekend kicked off with a Master Class and Distinguished Speaker Series (DSS) event featuring multiple-award-winning photographer and alumnus Jim McHugh. Jim met with students from digital media and art classes to discuss everything from his work (including photographing Beatrice Wood on multiple occasions) to getting started in a career in photography. His DSS event was filled with laughter as Jim recounted his many adventures photographing celebrities ranging from Clint Eastwood to David Hockney. Jim has been honored by the United Nations with the IPC Professional Photography Leadership Award and won the International Photography Awards' First Prize for Fine Art Photography in 2007, as well as the George Eastman House Award for Best of Show in 2008 for architectural imagery of Los Angeles. Jim attended the master's program at the UCLA Film School. He went on to become one of the original contributing photographers to People magazine, an official

photographer for the Grammy Awards, and a contributing photographer to Architectural Digest. He is renowned for his large-format Polaroid images of Los Angeles, urban landscapes monumentalizing that which is now invisible and derelict. These pictures were first exhibited at Timothy Yarger Fine Art in 2010 in a show of Jim's work titled Let's Get Lost: Polaroids from the Coast. Jim is critically acclaimed for his series of artist portraits, which include Ed Ruscha, John Baldessari, and David Hockney, and he has published several books on artists. In 2011, the Yarger gallery presented Los Angeles: 40 Artists - Photographs by Jim McHugh in partnership with the Getty Museum's Pacific Standard Time program celebrating art in Los Angeles from 1945 to 1985. Presently, Jim is working on several collaborations with Los Angeles-based "street" artists. Our Besant Hill School students, faculty, and staff were captivated by both Jim's charismatic personality and his stunning images. Thank you, Jim!



KAUFMANN HOUSE, PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA/PHOTO: BARBARA LAMPRECHT



DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER

“NEUTRA AND NATURE” INSPIRES STUDENTS

Alumnus and former HVS board member Raymond Neutra '57 treated the students, faculty, and staff to a presentation on his late father, renowned architect and author Richard Neutra, and his use of natural elements as central to the environments he designed and the technologies he used to fuse indoors and outdoors.

Raymond was influenced by his father's concern with physiology and design, pursuing a research career in environmental medicine and epidemiology; he sees environmental design and public health as closely related. He has been giving this presentation to colleges and universities across the state and was asked by the Ojai Valley Museum to present as part of their monthly masters series.

Raymond graciously agreed to present to our community and spent extra time with our students interested in pursuing architectural design. An interesting discovery was also made – the designs of the new faculty houses (to replace those lost in the Thomas Fire) bear a striking resemblance to his father's designs, incorporating lots of windows and features that blend and make use of the natural indoor and outdoor environments. Thank you, Raymond, for such an enlightening and informative afternoon!

Author:
KATHY ZOTNOWSKI





DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER

THE BROTHERS HENSCHEL

September saw the return of the Distinguished Speaker Series (DSS) with Development & Alumni Relations Officer and host Kevin Henschel '93 interviewing his esteemed brother Sean Henschel, owner of Henschel Governmental Affairs. Sean brings nearly 20 years of service in California state, county, and city governments. He has held management roles in the California State Senate and Assembly, including serving as chief of staff to multiple members and as a senior consultant to select legislative policy committees. He has also worked in chief director roles for numerous political campaign offices, overseeing targeted voter outreach, registration data analysis, and large-scale mail advertising. Sean has represented a wide range of clients, including Alta Motors, Amazon.com, American Medical Response, Graphic Packaging International, Kimberly-Clark Corporation, and the Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University. Sean has over 50 bills signed into law to his credit and has delivered successful outcomes at all levels of government while maintaining positive working relationships across partisan lines. As part of this year's DSS, speakers are being asked to conduct master classes for our students as well. Sean led an hour-long discussion with Besant Hill School history classes in presidential politics. The questions asked by students and faculty were continual, and a very interesting morning was had by all.

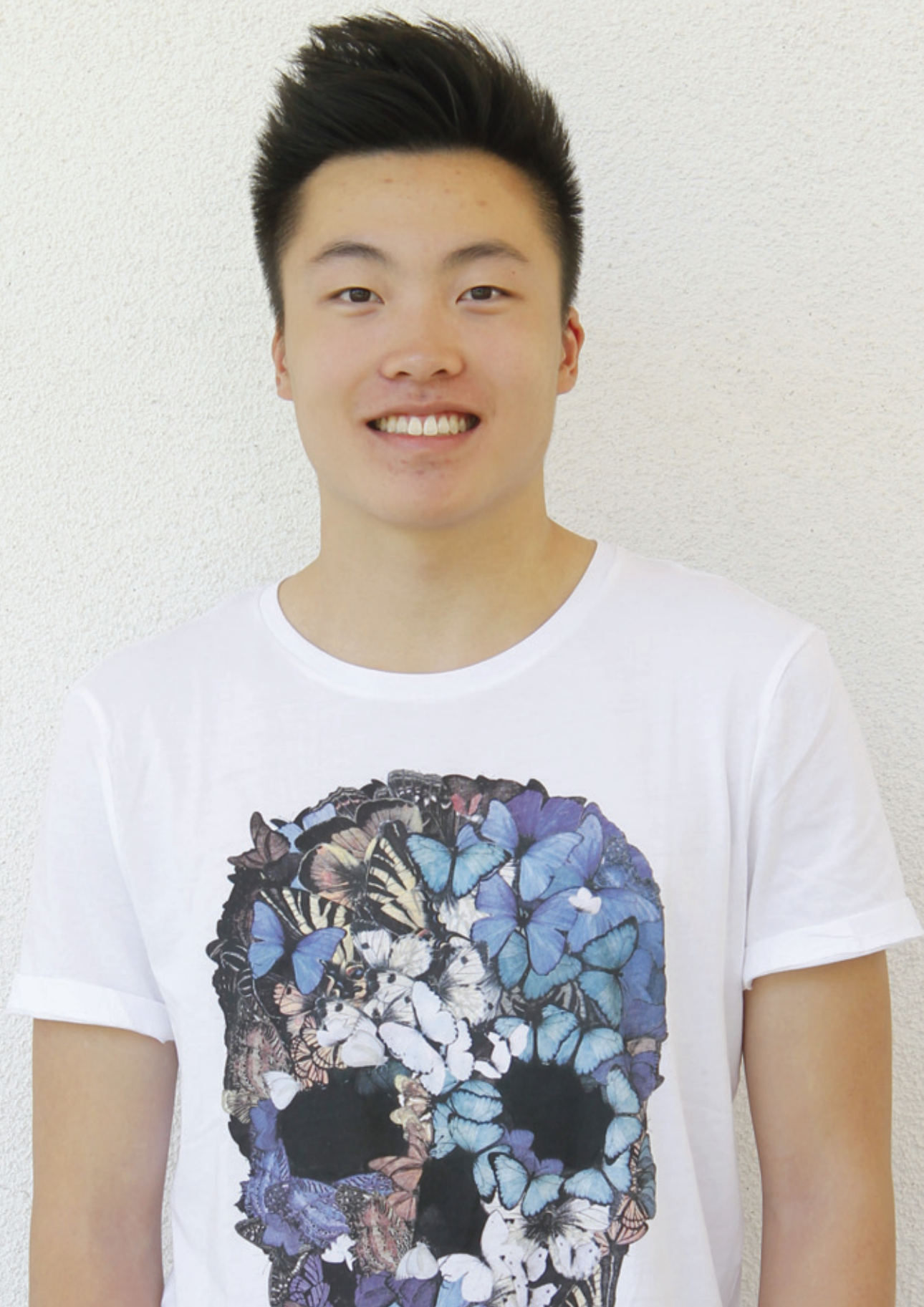
Author:
KATHY ZOTNOWSKI

SEAN HENSCHEL

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: SIMEON HU '16

ALUMNUS SIMEON HU '16, VISITED OJAI THIS PAST SUMMER AND BROUGHT WITH HIM A FILM CREW TO SHOOT ON THE BESANT HILL SCHOOL CAMPUS. I CAUGHT UP WITH SIMEON BY PHONE RECENTLY TO CHECK IN ON HIS COLLEGE EXPERIENCE, ASKED HIM TO REFLECT ON HIS TIME AT BESANT HILL, AND FOUND OUT HOW HIS PROJECTS IN FILM SCHOOL ARE GOING.

Author:
KEVIN HENSCHEL



ALUMNUS SIMEON HU '16

Where did you grow up, and when did you decide to attend Besant Hill School?

Because I was born in Los Angeles and had U.S. citizenship, it was always the plan to come back to the States at some point to pursue my education. So eventually, I decided to come during high school. I did want to learn Chinese really well before I left China. I knew I wanted to be someplace close to LA, because my aunt lives in LA, but I felt like boarding school would be a good option. So when I started looking at the boarding schools around LA, we visited all the boarding schools around Ojai. When I saw Besant Hill, I thought it was a very beautiful campus – that was my first impression. Because Besant Hill really focused on art, which is something I was interested in, I eventually chose to go to Besant. At first, it was just the campus – also, the sense of community there. In the beginning, I couldn't quite get used to the environment, because I had lived in cities, and it was very different. I had never been to a school that only had a hundred kids, so it felt very different, and I wasn't used to it in the first year. I knew I wanted to stay there as time went by, and I fell in love with the community and the environment. Now, when I look back to Besant Hill School, it feels so special to have had that type of experience in that kind of environment – to be in this type of really close community. I think about my high school experience, and it is very cool when I talk to my friends. They think it's very unique.

Do you remember the day you moved into the dorms at Besant Hill School?

Yeah. I went to the summer program before the school year started. I was exploring the campus with my roommate during the summer program. We didn't really know where the boundaries were on campus. It felt so large. The actual school buildings are centered, but there's so much land, it's crazy. We kept taking photos of the mountains and landscapes. I remember the first night, my roommate and I went for a walk, and we heard a rattlesnake just outside our room, so that was my first impression.

Talk to me about the structure of the school environment compared to the structure of the school environment you were at before attending Besant Hill School.

I attended an international school in Beijing before I attended Besant Hill School. So that felt more like just a regular school. It was a very cool school because there were a lot of international students. It was similar to the situation at Besant Hill, where we also have a lot of international students. In terms of schedules and structure, the class sizes at Besant Hill School were so much smaller. You have more time to talk to your teachers and classmates about the subject you're studying. Another big thing: I felt like I participated more in school when I was at Besant Hill, because it's such a small community. There are more opportunities for you to do things with your teachers.

Tell me about the extracurricular activities you participated in at Besant Hill School.

I feel like I was able to do more than what I did in China, like joining the basketball team. It was pretty intense, but it was a rewarding experience because you really had to take care of each other and push each other. I wasn't able to play in any of the games because of eligibility issues, but the training process was a lot of fun!

I know you were involved in the school's drama program. I remember being blown away by some of your performances. Tell me, what were some of the shows you were in, and what was that experience like for you?

The first performance I was in was Urinetown. I played a small character, but it was a lot of fun. I'd never done musicals or plays before, but it was something I was always interested in. I forget how I ended up in Urinetown, but Dan was really trying to get people from his classes, so I signed up for it.

So, do you feel like it happened by accident a little bit?

Yeah, yeah, but it was fun. People studied lines together, and we rehearsed for a long time. When we actually did the performance, it was amazing! Then I had an opportunity to do another play with Dan. It was another minor character. I played an old priest. I remember having a lot of scenes with Cate Steward, and that play was a different experience. I actually had more lines than in the first play.

What do you think those experiences in drama taught you? As a filmmaker, how did your drama experience in high school help, if at all?

I had more experience on stage. I did performances with groups of friends before I came to Besant Hill School. When I was in Beijing, we would do little band things together, so that was the only experience I had. So the whole drama/musical program at Besant Hill School expanded that more. I was more comfortable performing. Also, I think it helped you to understand how to be in front of people. You get really comfortable with that, the more you do it. I think that's definitely a big thing – working with people, learning to get along together, to pull off the whole production. Also, because I'm a filmmaker, performance is everything. It's a huge aspect of filmmaking, so my experience at Besant Hill performing in drama productions gave me the skills to work with actors.

Where did your passion for filmmaking begin? What was your filmmaking experience like at Besant Hill School?

I was already interested in filmmaking before I went to Besant Hill. I grew up in a family that does filmmaking, so I'm really connected to it. I was really exposed to that a lot and was always interested in and loved movies. Then, I just began to learn more about the production side of filmmaking and how to actually make movies. Dur-

ing the summer program, there was a film class, so that was my first introduction to Besant Hill having this type of film classes. So, right off the bat, I was very intrigued. Later, I took film class with Ray Singer, who was teaching the class, and I started to build very good relationships with both Ray and then later Chris Hutchinson. I felt like I learned a lot from them through being in their film classes. I got to see what other people in the class were doing. I learned a lot from what Michael Hopkins was doing, so I think I was very encouraged to try different things and then try to explore with film. Through the class and my friends, I definitely experimented a lot in terms of filmmaking. I also was just getting experience because I feel Besant Hill has a lot of characters. My first impressions of the students were that these people were so interesting, very unique. You don't get to see this diverse group of people in a normal school, so that was kind of the uniqueness of being in this community. You get to see a lot of interesting people, which was very helpful for me as a filmmaker to get to know these characters.

Now being a few years removed from the school, what part of the school philosophy resonates with you?

I think the school motto *Aún Aprendo* is something that will always stay with me. I think it's a very good motto, because it's very true, that it applies to your whole life. It's definitely something that I've taken away with me. I think that I would definitely follow that in the future, even after college, and also because of the nature of what I'm doing. What you learn in college is never going to be enough. It's just a warm-up for filmmaking. In the end, it really depends on yourself if you're going to keep building off of what you have already learned. Another part of the philosophy is about my relationship with nature, such as sustainability. It was something I was not very exposed to before I came to Besant Hill, but now I'm very aware of it. I know what my place in the larger environment is. I really value that.



ALUMNUS SIMEON HU '16 WITH FILM CREW ON BHS FILM SHOOT ON CAMPUS

What university do you attend?

I go to New York University School of the Arts.

Why did you choose NYU?

I wanted to keep studying filmmaking, so I started to look at the film schools throughout the United States. I think I wanted to go to the East Coast because I had been on the West Coast for a while, and I wanted to see what it's like on the other side of the country. NYU was my first choice. It's definitely the best film school on the East Coast. I applied early decision and was very lucky to get in. I didn't even know if other schools accepted me once I got the early decision to NYU. I just got the NYU offer first, so I dropped all the other schools.

Are you happy at NYU?

Yes, definitely, because New York City is a lot of fun. It has a lot of energy, and it's a very different environment than what I experienced in high school. NYU doesn't have that sense of community that Besant Hill has, but it's okay because you're in the city. That's what NYU's about — experiencing the city as you get your college education. I think it's been a very interesting experience.

What was the transition like to living in New York City?

People are so busy all the time here. When I think about when I was in Ojai, people would just say "hi" all the time and talk to you all the time.

They would be walking slowly. Here, everyone goes by super quickly, and they don't say "hi" to you. You see so many people here who are so different. There are so many different kinds of people — like in Washington Square — all together, and I see this every day. It's really bizarre, but it's a lot of fun.

What's your favorite thing about your school?

I love the program I'm in, because if I went to USC, it's a very different vibe in terms of filmmaking. It's more studio-based at USC, but at NYU, you get to do crazy stuff. You get to explore filmmaking more and learn it as an art form. There are pros and cons to it, but I'm glad that I'm doing film school now, because I get to experiment more, and it will really expand my perception of the medium. That's what I like about being in the film program at NYU.

What's the profile of a typical NYU film student?

I think you get to see all kinds of people, because the film program allows you to work with other students in different years. I work with people from my year but also all the years in the undergrad program and grad students. You get

to work with alumni and people outside of the school program too. It doesn't really feel like college. You just kind of start to really see people that are outside of school. You're not limited to your own school year.

What are the academics like? Is it rigorous? Is it tough? I guess the real question is, did Besant Hill School prepare you for college?

Yes, definitely, because I think I'd already learned a lot about myself and really knew what I wanted throughout my years at Besant Hill, because you're living in a boarding school and you're staying with people all the time — you're living with your friends and classmates. It really prepared me for the college experience. College is not that different. At Besant Hill, you're living with students and your friends. I think it really prepared me to know what I want and how to deal with people and deal with relationships. In terms of that, Besant really prepared me for life here in New York City. Academics-wise, because I'm in the film program, it really depends on me. It depends on what I want to get out of it. So definitely, I think before I came to New York University, I already had that kind of discipline, and I'm pretty clear about what I want to get out of my experience.



ALUMNUS SIMEON HU '16 WITH FILM CREW ON BHS FILM SHOOT ON CAMPUS

Is there anything you learned about the classes at NYU that you wish you had learned before you started going there? Is there anything that you were like, “Oh man, I wish I’d known this before I got to college?”

I don’t know. I haven’t really thought of it (laughter). I think I was pretty prepared. I guess something that I wish I knew and am trying to do better with is trying to learn how to pace myself; but also, the purpose of being in college is to be busy and to learn.

I think you’re hitting on something that’s important and key. Talk about the rhythm and the pacing of college.

I thought I was pacing myself pretty well. I took a gap semester in my sophomore year because I was working on a project in China. Then I came back, and I was trying to catch up on my class credits. I took a few more credits than in a usual semester. I have done it again this semester, and I was doing my project in Ojai this summer as well. It felt like there was a lot going on. Recently, I’ve been feeling pretty burnt out, so I’ve been reflecting on that. I need to pace myself better. I thought I was handling it pretty fine. I didn’t feel really stressed or overwhelmed, but now I’m starting to think about how I really need to pace myself better. I think it’s really important to pace yourself, but it’s a really valuable lesson, because this is the sort of stuff you learn in college. There’s only so much you can do.

How much do you have to study each week?

A lot of it, especially in the film program, is a lot of projects. You’re always doing projects for your class or for yourself.

So how many hours a week are you working on your projects?

It’s like 70 or 80 percent of your time. You’re always thinking about it.

Do you live on campus or off campus?

Right now I live with my friends off campus. It’s not that far from the school, about a 15-minute walk.

You were on campus this summer filming at Besant Hill School. Tell me about how that project came about and what the project is.

It started because Ray Singer emailed me about a grant from the Ojai Film Society. I got the email right after I got back to school from the job that I did in China. I was looking for the next thing, and he sent me the information about the grant and wanted me to try and get it, but I didn’t have any material to submit. So I just started to think about it. The Ojai Film Society requirement was that the film had to be under 25 minutes and it had to be shot in Ojai. So I just started to think about a story I could film there. I wanted to do something more experimental and different, because the job I did in China was more of a conventional job. It made me really think that I needed to experiment more in college. So I started to write this story about a Chinese kid and his girlfriend spending their last day together. They graduated high school together, and it’s about him thinking back about his memories with his girlfriend in Ojai, and he has to make a decision: Does he want to follow what his father wants him to do in the future, or does he want to do something that he really wants to do? That’s kind of the story. I know a lot of friends and some friends back at Besant Hill, and these are kind of the real-life obstacles that they have. This real-life issue of deciding to follow your parent’s dream or your own, it’s very common. So I thought I wanted to film something about it. I wanted the story to represent this group of people when they were in Ojai.

What’s the name of the film?

It’s called The Untitled Portrait of Red.



ALUMNUS SIMEON HU '16 WITH FILM CREW ON BHS FILM SHOOT ON CAMPUS

How much money was the grant for? It was 10K.

They gave you \$10,000? Yeah.

Simeon, that's a lot of money! That's awesome! So, you didn't have any material to show them, but you pitched them your idea and you earned the grant to make your film?

Yeah, but it had to go through a whole application process.

How did the shoot go at Besant Hill?

It was a lot of fun. At first, it was just great to come back to Happy Valley because I hadn't been back for two years and I really missed everyone there. Seeing the environment, it was very fun to be back. On the shoot, I had my friends coming over to work with me, so it was quite an adventure. We shot a lot of stuff outdoors.

Where are you at with the project now? Is it in post-production?

Right now, it's still in post-production. I wanted it to be done sooner, but it's taking more time,

and there are more challenges than I thought. School started, so I don't have as much time, so an editor's working on it right now. We meet once a week on the phone to talk about it.

I would love for you to premier it in the Zalk theater. Yeah, yeah, that would be fantastic!

What is your goal for the rest of this year, and what are your goals beyond college?

This year, I want to get the post-production done on my Ojai film. I also really just want to finish the semester. I'm doing a production class. I have to do five short films. Each one is a five-minute short for this production class. I'm just hoping these things will go well. I still have three more to do. I want to get them done. Further on beyond college, I want to write scripts. I want to have at least one feature script done before I graduate. I think it will be a good asset to have before I graduate, because writing is free and you don't need any money.

Simeon, this has been awesome! Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time and really enjoyed talking to you. All the best!

A PINK MOMENT PLANTED AT THIS YEAR'S FARM-TO- TABLE: A COMMUNITY HARVEST

IT WAS ANOTHER DAZZLING END TO FAMILY WEEKEND AS THE SUN SET AND CAST A GLORIOUS PINK HUE ON THE EXQUISITE TOPA TOPA MOUNTAINS. PARENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, NEIGHBORS, AND OTHER FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL GATHERED ONCE AGAIN TO ENJOY AN EVENING OF DINING “OUT ON THE FARM” AT OUR BELOVED ANNUAL FARM-TO-TABLE: A COMMUNITY HARVEST FUNDRAISER.

Author:
KATHY ZOTNOWSKI





FARM-TO-TABLE: A COMMUNITY HARVEST 2018



FARM-TO-TABLE: A COMMUNITY HARVEST 2018

Restaurateur, food activist, and chef Jeffrey Zurofsky (Bravo's *Best New Restaurant*); Besant Hill School Director of Culinary Services and Executive Chef Juana Juarez; and Owner/Executive Chef Nick Barainca of new local eatery Gargantua delighted the taste buds of 130+ participants with a delectable menu of foods sourced from Rio Gozo farms (located on our campus) and many other local vendors and eateries. Cantara Cellars and Topa Topa Brewing Company provided the evening's outstanding wine and beer selections, respectively. Participants sipped this year's signature cocktail, the Pink Moment, while watching the actual Pink Mo-

ment fade into a spectacular moonrise, all while listening to the musical sounds of Besant Hill School senior Emmy H. '19 accompanied by Music Chair Dave Cosby and, later in the evening, Nashville transplant Cindy Kalmenson & The Lucky Ducks. The event raised money for both the sustainable agriculture program and our fire relief efforts through the annual fund. As the publisher and editor of Edible Ojai magazine commented, "Of all the events we've attended, this is by far one of the loveliest, with attention to detail found in absolutely every element." We look forward to our ninth annual celebration and hope to see you there!



FIRE FINDS FEATURED IN OJAI VALLEY MUSEUM EXHIBIT & NEW YORK TIMES

Author:
KATHY ZOTNOWSKI

Historical photos:
Theosophical Society UK

ORIGINAL SPEECH WRITTEN BY ALDOUS HUXLEY

AUN APRENDO
(I am still learning)

Commencement Address by Aldous Huxley
June 14, 1951
The Happy Valley School
Ojai, California

seems at first sight rather paradoxical that the end of the academic year, the termination of a course of studies, called a 'commencement'. There are, of course, good historical reasons for this--reasons going far back into the medieval time when candidates for the Master's degree engaged in a public disputation which qualified them to embark on the career of teaching. For years they had been at the receiving end of scholastic education. Now, at long last, they were in a position to 'dish it out'. This was the principium, or beginning, new and, as the budding Masters fondly believed, a happier one. Hence our use of the word, 'commencement'.

It is good that the past should thus live on in the present, reminding the members of each succeeding generation that they are not the first to face the problems of human existence--that after all, this sort of thing has been going on for quite a long time. Education is an immemorial institution, and it is very interesting that, in this brand new California, we should be commemorating, albeit unconsciously, the scholastic achievements of a distant past. By ending its year on a commencement, Ojai is paying tribute to the thirteenth-century Oxford, to Bologna and Cologne. We see, then, that the word 'commencement' is derived from the Middle Ages. But, by a happy accident, it is more than a reminder of man's earlier efforts to better himself; it is also a reminder that, in the educational process, the



EPHEMERA BELONGING TO DR. ANNIE BESANT



DR. ANNIE BESANT



ANNIE BESANT (TOP ROW; THIRD FROM THE RIGHT) SUPPORTING WOMEN WORKERS OF A MATCH FACTORY ASKING FOR FAIR WAGES.

Aldous Huxley's original 1950 commencement address to the students of Happy Valley School was mentioned in the first line of a *New York Times* article (17 November 2018) about the Ojai Valley Museum's latest exhibit, 'Trial By Fire: Ojai Ablaze 1917-2017'. Huxley's typewritten speech with his handwritten notes in the margin; Dr Annie Besant's purse, coin purse and photograph; first-edition works of Krishnamurti and Louis Zalk; and relics brought back from India by Rosalind Rajagopal all survived the Thomas Fire that destroyed the rest of the then 72-year historical school archives. Mark Lewis, president of the Ojai Valley Museum Board of Trustees, visited Besant Hill School's development and alumni relations director, Kathy Zotnowski, in search

of items that had made it through the blaze. In addition to Huxley's speech and Annie Besant's purses, a half-burned bench created for Beatrice Wood by the students and faculty of Happy Valley School is also featured in the exhibit, which runs through 27 January 2019. As noted in the *Times*, as our Ojai community continues to recover and heal from last year's devastation—coinciding with the opening of the local exhibit—our hearts are with the communities in the Woolsey, Hill, and Camp Fire areas. We at Besant Hill School of Happy Valley are supremely grateful to have survived and look forward to rebuilding the entire lower campus and the archives, which have been lost but not forgotten.



ANNUAL FUND UPDATE

“There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.”

– Rachel Carson

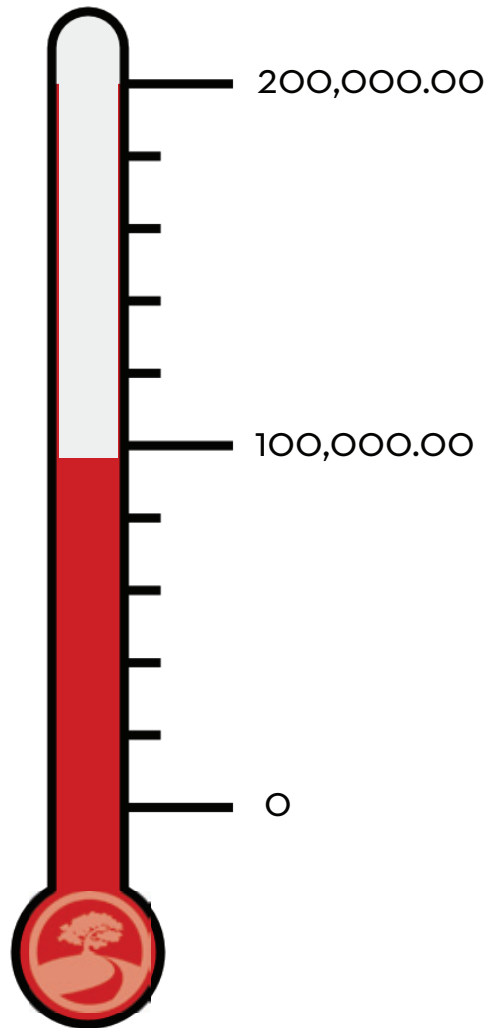
Many things are deeply reassuring as we pass the first anniversary of the Thomas Fire. The students have returned after a rejuvenating winter break and have finished their first semester; quail, coyotes, snakes, and deer grace the grounds; Farm-to-Table: A Community Harvest, which one former staffer called “the seminal event of the year,” is once again behind us; and the land continues to recover its pre-fire greens and golds.

As always, we are in the midst of our annual fund campaign. This year’s campaign – Rising from the Ashes – is off to a very good start due to the considerable generosity of our alumni. We successfully completed our \$50,000 matching campaign-within-the-campaign through the Dr. Randy Bertin Legacy Fund. Our faculty and staff are on target to reach 100% constituency giving, yet we know it will take the entire community to reach our goal.

Participation by current and former parents and friends of the school is needed. If you’ve given your annual fund gift this year, thank you! If you haven’t, please know that these funds are used immediately to fill in the gap between what tuition and fees cover and what it actually costs to offer our students an exceptional educational experience. From additional science and art supplies to requested books and outdoor education materials, the annual fund pays for all of these. Every bit helps and is truly appreciated.

With gratitude,

Kathy, Kevin, Tina, and Marion
Your Annual Fund Team



2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

“Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”

— Melody Beattie

It is with tremendous gratitude that we thank everyone who contributed to our 2017-18 campaigns. It was an interesting year with the unexpected Fire Relief Fund thrust upon us out of necessity after the Thomas Fire. The outpouring of support was monumental. We nearly doubled the donations to the Annual Fund while simultaneously raising money to deal with immediate fire recovery efforts. Led by the Happy Valley Foundation Board of Trustees, our alumni, current and former parents, faculty and staff, neighbors, friends of the school, and even some of our students and people from across the country who heard about us through other boarding schools gave generously. As we create our vision for tomorrow – the future lower campus rebuild – we are at peace today and thank all of our donors for it!

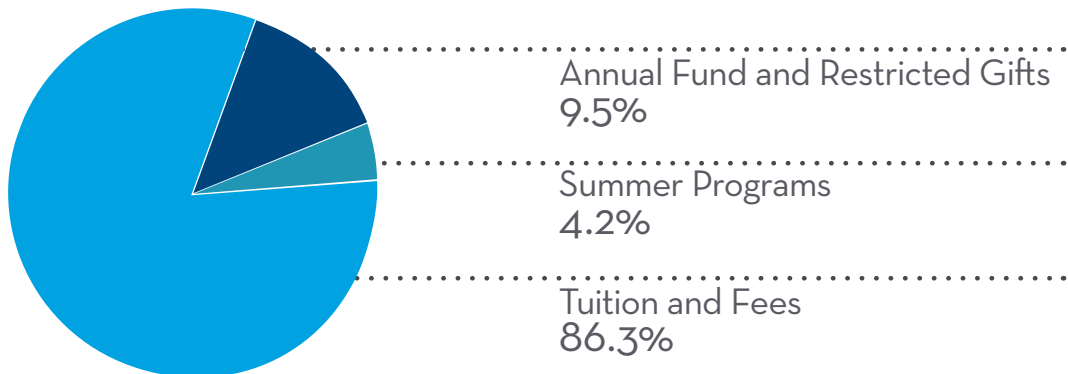
KATHY ZOTNOWSKI

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & ALUMNI RELATIONS

R E V E N U E

ANNUAL FUND
\$287,020.00

RESTRICTED GIFTS
\$326,626.00



E X P E N S E S

43.5%
INSTRUCTION &
OPERATIONS

48%
SALARIES
& WAGES

8.5%
FINANCIAL
AID

We are proud to present this Honor Roll of Donors in grateful recognition of your contributions to Besant Hill School of Happy Valley during the past fiscal year.

This report reflects gifts contributed between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018, and includes all gifts made to the annual fund, all capital drives and restricted gifts during the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Thank you so much for supporting our school. Your gifts truly have an impact!

Heritage Club

Mary Myers
Mary Keith Osborn
Kate Hughes Rinzler
Lee Sanders

Anacapa

\$20,000 and above

John S. Brown, Jr. '67
Rui Guo
Gunnar Lovelace '95
Judy & Ronald Perlstein
Neil Kreitman
James & Radha Sloss
Ye "Grace" Wei & Qingsong Wang

Topa Topa

\$10,000-\$19,999

Jingjing Gong & Jianjun Chen
Ron & Sandra Cooper
Ando Hixon
Bernard Huberman
Lovelace Social Impact Fund
Drs. Kristen MacLeod & Peter Althausen
Qiuling Zhu & Qingyi Zhu

BHS Benefactor

\$5000-\$9,999

Edwin Berkowitz
Diane Keaton
Ron Lieberman
Dr. Steve Limb
Ewan McGregor
Li Meng & Haibo Wang
Helene Zalk Pollock
Susan & Jeffrey Reiner
Martha & James Tancula
Qingyi & Qiuling Zhu

Founders Circle

\$2500-\$4,999

Amgalanbat Badamkhand
Dr. Randy & Karen Bertin
Dr. Gabriela Cesarman
Wenjing He & Delong Wang
Ling Xia Gu & Xiao Yi Yan
Linh Nguyen & Nghia Nguyen
Akiko Saito & Yasumasa Saito
Sunyo Suhaimi
Yongjuan Wang & Yongjuan Wang
Limin Zhu & Zhonghua Xu

Head's Circle

\$1000-\$2,499

Anonymous
Anonymous
Hayato Anami
Mariam Alzaabi & Adel Alraqam
Helen Bee
Kelli & John Bernhard
Bruce Blomgren
Ann Kempe Brand
Paola Scaravelli Cohen
Clotilde & William Costello
Vasanti Ferrando Fithian
Alexandra Gifford
Sasha & Hanson Gifford
Ellen & Richard Gilleland
Betsy Gornet
Qingxiang He
Amira & Darrel Ingram
Edson Kempe in honor of Jane Kempe
Anami Kurumi
Chunli Liu & Lei Zhou
Cheryl MacPherson
Peggy & Raymond Neutra
Gregory Neuwirth
Nathan Rosenberger
Small Boarding School Association
Alex Smith
Laurie Struck in honor of Natalie Cummings
Ken Tennen
Anne Thacher
Jan Caldwell Thorpe & Larry Thorpe
Tracey Weisberg
Alec Williamson

BHS Patrons

\$500-\$999

Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous in honor of Stephen Eliot,
Eric Fingersen, Joe Chow
Oliver Althoff
Margo & Mehmet Binay
Gail Cottman
Abby Croft
Jodi Grass
John Hardham
Kelly & Kevin Henschel
Sun Hee Her
Kristen Kaschub
Eve McGregor
Tom Martin in honor of Diane Keaton
Karen & Will Nash
Ojai Alisal Vineyard
Charles Ward
Nina & Bob Ward
Marion Weil
Brigette & Herb Widmer
Kathy Zotnowski & Philip Nemy

BHS Donors Circle

\$250-\$499

Anonymous
Anonymous in honor of Svea Althausen
David Anderson
Stephanie Anderson
Al & Lori Aragona
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Carolyn Bennett
Nicole & Chandler Buie
Jacqui Burge
Jeff Chen
Darcy Corson
Scott Daigre
Emily Denver
David Edwards
Joseph Ferguson
Martin Froyda
Leland Fulton
Byron Hixon
Mellanie & Chet Hilgers
Portia Johnson
Makiko Kashikura
Melanie Krinsky in honor of Rebecca
Krinsky '07
Claire Noyes Lewis
Heather Littell
Steve & Patty McGillivray
Brian McColgan
Trisha Mills
Masayo Morimoto
Rebecca & Charles MacQuarrie
Alexander Postlethwaite
Malena Ruth

Janice & William Savidge
John Starrels in honor of Happy Valley
Historical Archives
Mara Van der Pas
Megan Walton & Kim Reichenbach
Michele Willens
Laura Withrow

BHS Friends Circle

\$1.-\$249

Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous in honor of Beatrice Wood
Anonymous in honor of Grandfather
Jane Ahrens in honor of Kristen Kaschub
Piers Armstrong
Karen Ashera
Yannik Atanga
Tagg Baker
Hank & Sara Bangsor
Kim and Ross Berry
Mike Bierman
Jody Briskin
Melvin Burckes
Isabella C.
Dan Call
Lorenzo "Eric" Chambliss
Ronald Cook
Oliver Cornell
David Christensen
William & Barbara de Creft
Sarah Dorian in honor of R. Bertin & M.

Walton
Diana Douglas
Dana Dwire
Richard Ellwood
Annmarie Finnral in honor of Mary-Frances
Finnral
Richard Flores
Tom Fontana
Courtney Forbess
Peter Fox
Carol Frank
Terra Furguiel
Abigail Gagnon
Nestor Geronimo & Lisa Anctil
Cheryl Goodman
Michael Gornet in honor of Parker Gornet
Nancy Grevich
Tony Huang
Darrell Ingram
Barbara Johnson
Loren Jones
Juana Juarez
Cory Kahaney
Chris Kandziora
Lisa Krinsky Esterhuizen in honor of Rebecca
Krinsky Lushaj '07 and Eli Lushaj
Dr. Edward Krull
Helmut Krull
Helen Lamb
Julianna Lamb
John Landau in honor of Rebecca Krinsky
Kay Lau
Marcus Lay
Graham Lasser
Tina Leslie
Linda Zalk Levitt
Angela Liu
Lincoln Academy



Please support Besant Hill School of Happy Valley by using AmazonSmile for all your Amazon purchases. Through their 'AmazonSmile' portal (with the same products, prices and shopping features as amazon.com), Amazon has donated millions of dollars to charities worldwide.

When you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile foundation donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Click on the link below to join. Search and select '**HAPPY VALLEY FOUNDATION**' (our 501(c)(3) designation for Besant Hill School of Happy Valley) as your charity.

All revenue from the AmazonSmile program goes directly to the Besant Hill School annual fund. The annual fund fills in the gap between what tuition and fees cover and what it actually costs to provide the Besant Hill educational experience. It also covers the 'extras,' such as additional art and science supplies, field trips, new uniforms, etc. for the year that the funds are raised.

Visit <https://www.amazon.com/gp/>

Cheryl MacPherson in honor of
General and Mrs. John Bradley
Gail Mardfin in honor of Sasha
Vickery
Jennifer Miller
Pam Murdock
Nguyen Neill
Dung Nguyen
Olga Omlin
Mary Keith Osborn
Tarah Pollock
Paul Quinn
Tera Rolfe
Shaina Rosenthal
Shannon Rowan
Charles Roy
Fran Ryan
Daiki Saito
Peter S (60th Reunion)
Michael Scott
Richard Sherer
Zea Shimahara in honor of Dennis
Rice
Tom Simchak
Michael Sullivan
Betsy Stix
Kanae Takemoto
Tiarzha Taylor & Danny Everett
Irene Tirella

Ann Vuille
Roseanne Vattuone
Gallia & Bill Vickery in honor of Sasha Vickery
Vida
Fritz and Ruth von Fleckenstein
Cheryl & Kevin Wallace
Wasicki
Joan Watts
Dane Whinnery & Dani Shriver
Erin Whitehead
Emily & John Whitney in honor of the Bertin Family
Dr. Amanda Wickramasinghe
John Wilkenson
Margo & Brian Young
Marilyn & Robert Zotnowski
Charlie Zhu
Marvin Zhu

Foundation Gifts and Grants

Happy Valley Cultural Center
Happy Valley Foundation
Krotona Institute
Monimos Foundation
McGillivray Construction Co.
Ojai Valley Inn & Spa
Ventura County Office of Education

In-Kind Donations

Kristen Altimus
Amigo Party Rentals
Jesse Barber
The Berry Man
Chris & Mike Brown
Cantara Cellars
Caravan Outpost
Del Maguey Mezcal
Farmer Jon's
fleur santa monica
Flora Gardens
Chet & Mellanie Hilgers
Jordano's
Jesse Kaplan
Luxury Flush
Massarella Firehouse Pottery
Phil Nemy/Magic Castle
Ojai Alisal Vineyard
Ojai Olive Oil Co.
Pacific Coast Produce
Rio Gozo Farms
Seafresh Seafood
Sunbelt Rentals
Telegraph Brewing Co.
Ventura Hay Co.
Jeffrey Zurofsky

*In compiling this report, every effort has been made to ensure that it is accurate and complete. If an error has occurred, or you would like your name listed differently in the future, please contact Kathy Zotnowski, Director of Development and Alumni Relations (kzotnowski@besanthill.org).



SUPPORT BESANT HILL SCHOOL OF HAPPY VALLEY

Your contributions make an impact in building the financial strength of our school to ensure continuing excellence in our programs and activities. Please consider a tax deductible gift to one of our giving programs.

To learn more about various giving options, contact:
Kathy Zotnowski, Director of Development & Alumni Relations
p: (805) 646-4343 Ext. 131
e: kzotnowski@besanthill.org w: besanthill.org

Besant Hill School of Happy Valley is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.





SALSA RECIPE

THIS PINEAPPLE AND POMEGRANATE SALSA FROM THE GERÓNIMO FAMILY'S KITCHEN IS SIMPLE, QUICK, AND DELICIOUS!

5 OUT OF 5 STARS BY BESANT HILL SCHOOL STUDENTS

INGREDIENTS

3 CUPS FRESH PINEAPPLE, DICED
3 SERRANO PEPPERS, FINELY MINCED
3 CUPS POMEGRANATE ARILS (SEEDS)
3 CUPS WHITE CABBAGE, THINLY SLICED
3 CUPS CUCUMBER, DICED
3 CUPS TOMATOES, DICED
SEA SALT TO TASTE
THE JUICE OF HALF A LIME
TORTILLA CHIPS

STEPS

COMBINE ALL INGREDIENTS IN A LARGE MIXING BOWL.
STIR WELL TO COMBINE. SERVE IMMEDIATELY.

From:
NÉSTOR GERÓNIMO

FALL & WINTER BIRTHDAYS

November

Marie
Sawyer
"Bibi"
"Selena"
Junyri "David"

December

Jaan
Diego
Emmy
"Ricky"
Jin
"Kadu"
Matthaus
"Ivan"

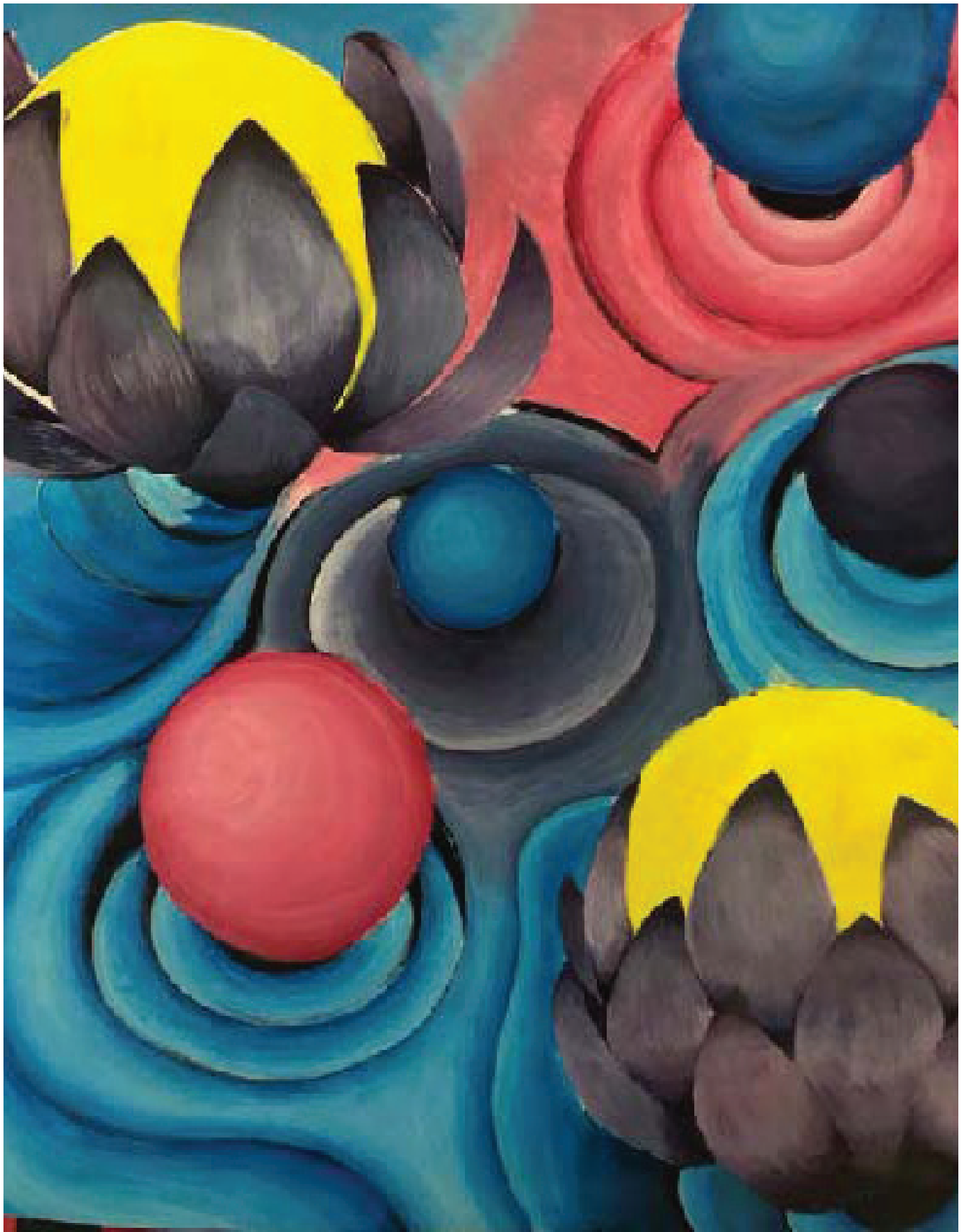
January

"Ellie"
Milo
Xiaoxin

February

Elana
Lily
Yllan
Evan
"Clay"
Duke
Harkrishan
Keoni
Inwei "Judy"
"Pat"
Lauren
Zach





STUDENT ART BY DAN N. '21