

AÚN APRENDO

BESANT HILL SCHOOL OF HAPPY VALLEY





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Message from the Head of School

Each year we choose a tenet, or two, from our Portrait of a Graduate to serve as our theme for the year to help guide our work, give our curriculum and co-curricular activities a unifying theme, and ensure that our Portrait is tangible. This year we have focused on the tenets surrounding environmental activism and global citizenship. Much of the incorporation of these themes can come from the teachers and be more of a top-down approach, but what I have been particularly inspired by this year is how the students have taken these themes into their own hands and run with them. They are leading us in change and taking a stance for the environment and world as they do it.



The most beautiful example of this came to the forefront recently when the student body presidents came forward and asked if they could reduce the spending and indulgence of the annual Prom. They felt like it was too much money to be spending on themselves when there are so many others out there in need. Additionally, the event produces a lot of waste, and they would like to have less of an impact on the environment during their evening of celebration. The adults in the community worked with them to find ways to reduce the impact and spending for the night, and the students brainstormed ways they could instead raise money to give to charitable causes. It's hard to describe the heartwarming wave of emotion I felt towards them. What a simply lovely example of altruism and action.

I continue to see examples of students putting change into action for the sake of the environment and the world this year. They are engaging in setting up new recycling programs in the dorms, participating in marches in town, collaborating with other schools, and in general, being an ever-present reminder of the fact they are the future and will need a planet in good shape in order to make the impact they want in the world. Let us all take their examples as we move forward into this new decade.

We wish you all a Happy New Year from Besant Hill School, and please enjoy this edition of AÚn Aprendo.



Portia Johnson
Head of School



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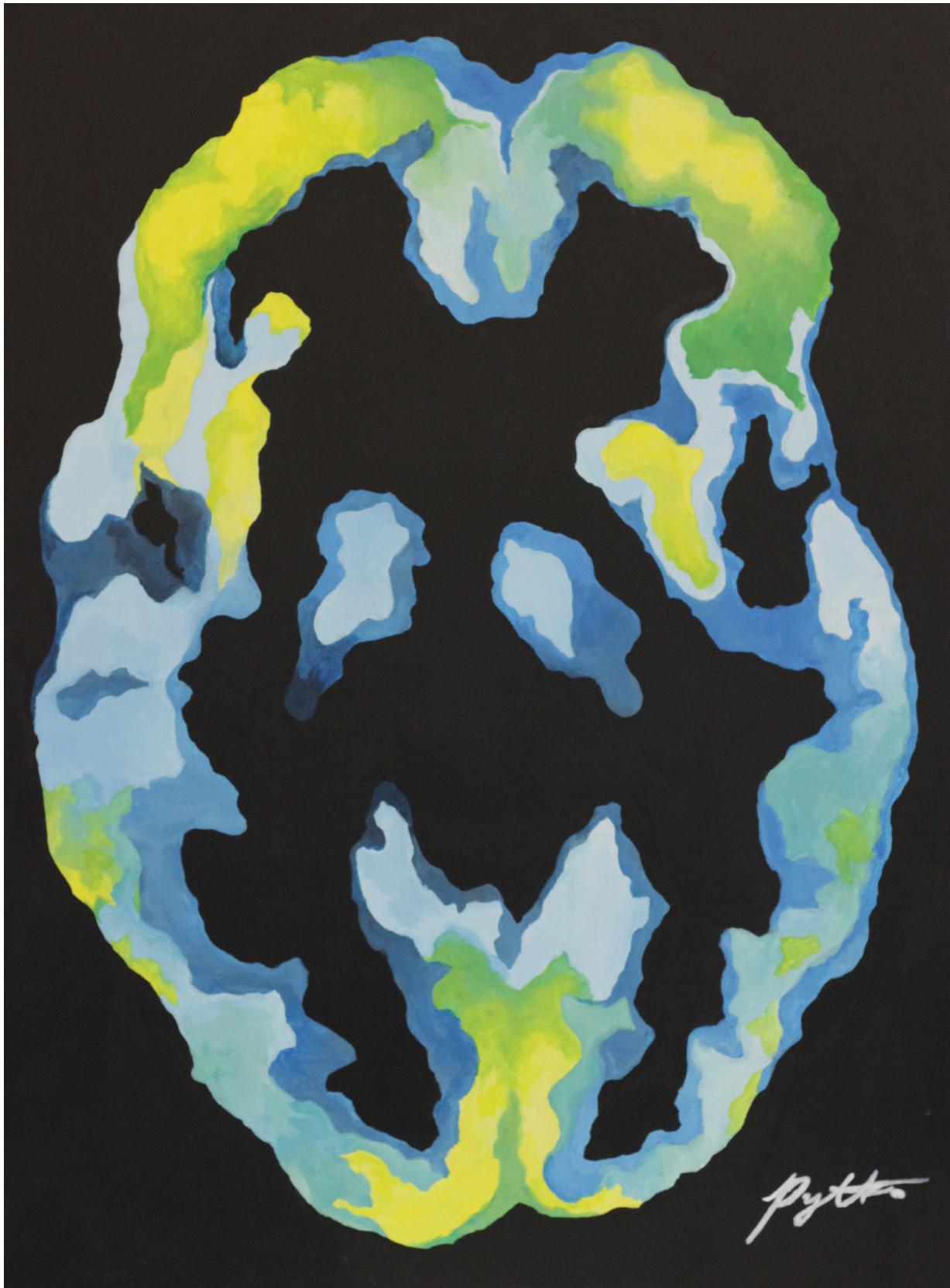
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Artist: Jessica P. '22

Jessica, Las Vegas, Nevada, aspires to be criminal psychologist, which is reflected in her series of human brains. The piece above is a representation of serial killer, Ted Bundy's brain scans and depict the frontal cortex activity found in criminals.



STUDENT GOVERNMENT CO-PRESIDENTS, SAWYER H. '20 AND MILO H.-M. '20

PRESIDENTS' LETTER

AUTHORS: MILO H.-M. '20, SAWYER H. '20

This school year has been incredible due to the positive involvement of the entire community in contributing to the enriching experience that Besant Hill School offers. Whether it be in the classroom, the theatre, the fields and courts, the music room, the wild outdoors, or dormitories, everyone puts in their effort to grow personally and subsequently reinforce the unique nature of our small environment.

Despite a grueling stretch of classwork after fall break, the students persevered to complete this first semester. Our remedy for perseverance comes in the form of both support and kindness that peers and teachers offer one another. We continually witness a great deal of selflessness from the teachers who truly want to support our students academically, socially, and athletically.

This year the student government strives to strategize events efficiently and create a healthy environment for the entire school. In addition to working holistically, students contribute their ideas, and we listen. In the first semester, the student government put together events through collaboration with

fellow schools in the Ojai Valley. One of our greatest accomplishments was creating a safe and fun dance at The Thatcher School that combined upwards of 500 students from every high school in the Ojai Valley. It is our hope to help plan fun social events that connect students from different schools, which proves to be a rich experience that expands our social interactions. In the past there was little connection with other schools, so we are incredibly enthusiastic to promote events that get us out of our comfort zone.

Personally, we do not know if there is a more supportive group of individuals who care about the personal success of their students as much as our faculty and student government. These great relationships are the factors that motivate young adults to be involved, thus creating a sense of school spirit that gives our community a sense of pride. Together we make school a fun learning environment through our enthusiasm and school spirit, giving our peers a unique high school experience. ♦

Sincerely,
Milo and Sawyer

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

Bibianna & Tindi Mashamba

AUTHOR: BETSY STIX

Our students are often recognized for their ability to advocate for their own education, but not all of them have immediate access to the financial resources required for tuition. The following article introduces two of these students. It is from the generosity of our community that we are able to offer scholarships to students like the Mashamba sisters. Their story, including their request for college prep education, has been shared by news agencies around the globe .



Bibianna and Tindi Mashsamba, two members of our current junior class, are a long way from their home country of Tanzania. As vibrant and creative Coyotes, they remind us every day to be resilient and grateful as well as encourage us to be active global citizens and to work daily to make the planet a better place.

The sisters were born in Kasitamu, a small fishing and farming village about 10 minutes from Lake Victoria in Tanzania. Their father owned a farm and grew corn, sweet potatoes, beans, and cassava as well as raised goats and chickens. The girls grew up with their three older brothers, Mayala, Simon, and Tabe, their older sister Siku, and younger sister Shihajibu. Their mother died shortly after Tindi was born, and the girls remember their father as well as their older siblings working hard on the farm and fishing in the lake to support the family. They have fond memories of their village; they swam in the lake, played tag with their brothers, and made clay dolls and sewed them clothes. They attended the local primary school, where the teachers were very strict and spanked them if they didn't finish their homework. They always finished their homework!

Bibianna and Tindi were born albino. In Tanzania, there is a superstition that if one takes an albino's limb to a witchcraft doctor, one becomes wealthy, and if one uses the limb for fishing or mining, one will be more successful in those pursuits. When Bibianna was 9 years old, her father told her about this superstition, and she started having nightmares. He told the girls not to talk to strangers and to run if someone follows them. Shortly after this revelation, their father got sick and died. The girls went to live at their aunt's house. Three days after their father's funeral, three men broke into the house at about 11 pm. While Tindi hid in the corner of the room under a blanket, the men drugged Bibianna in her sleep and cut off her right leg and two fingers. Bibianna and the girls' cousin, who also was asleep in the room, woke up and started screaming. The girls' aunt and uncle came running into the room, and the three men escaped.

The sisters immediately went to the local hospital, where they stayed for 11 months,



BIBIANNA M. '21 STUDYING FOR HER CLARINET FINAL EXAM

Bibianna receiving medical treatment and both girls finding safety. During this time, a journalist came to the hospital to interview them, and Al-Shymaa, an albino woman who had just been elected to the Tanzanian parliament, read the article. She contacted the girls' aunt, came to visit them in the hospital, and offered to be their legal guardian. She was the first other albino whom the girls ever had seen. She offered to watch over them and find a boarding school where they could be safe and learn. First, the girls attended St. Mary's Primary School in Mwanza, a relatively large city in Tanzania, for one year, and then they switched to Kongowa Adventist Primary School in Dar-essalem, an even bigger city. Eventually, Al-Shymaa found them another school, St. Anne Marie, also in Dar-essalem, where there was a community of albino students supported by a nonprofit called "Under the Same Sun." They stayed at this school for three years. The girls remember loving the city life, and it was during this time that they began becoming interested in the arts as well as activism.

While the girls were students at St. Anne

Marie, a research student from USC who was studying albinism contacted Al-Shymaa and requested an interview with the girls. By this point, many journalists had talked to the sisters, and Al Shymaa had seen them come and go without helping the girls. She told a journalist, that Bibianna needed a better prosthetic leg. The journalist, who had found out about them through a friend named Malena in Los Angeles, organized with Malena the girls' trip to Pasadena to get Bibianna a new leg. After the interview with the journalist, off they went to California!

The girls spent three months in Pasadena, Bibianna going to doctors' appointments and both girls being homeschooled. Malena asked the girls what they wanted before they returned to Africa. Tindi talked to Bibianna, and they decided that what they really wanted was to stay in California to attend school - a big request! She felt that they would receive a better education as well as being safer. Malena agreed to her request and also became their legal guardian. She started looking for boarding schools and soon found the Montessori School in Ojai, where they



BIBIANNA M. '21 AND TINDI M. '21 HAPPY TO BE PART OF AN OPEN, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

attended for a year while living with a local host family.

When it came time for high school, Tindi picked Besant Hill. The sisters came to visit and saw Senior Hill, as well as Leland doing a Biology experiment outside with a group of students. She fell in love with the campus and thought to herself, "This is where I want to be." Bibianna remembers that school was hard at the beginning, and it took her about a month to adjust, especially to all the hills—not easy with a prosthetic leg! Soon, however, it became tranquil and peaceful for her - the classes, food, surroundings. She appreciates the "supportive, open community." Tindi loves Besant because it's so easy to approach and talk to people. "I feel that I can make as many friends as I used to make in my country."

Both girls are artists and actively pursue their creative passions at Besant. They write poetry and have been published in several anthologies. Bibianna loves to dance and act; who can forget her starring role as "Medea" in 9th grade?! She was also in "Once Upon a Mattress" and "Almost Maine." She has great comedic timing! In addition, she co-wrote an autobiography with a French journalist ("*Je Ne Suis Pas un Talisman*" - *I am not a Talisman*). Tindi is a painter, actress, writer, singer, and songwriter who is constantly creating and expressing herself through these mediums. Both girls fully take advantage of our arts-based curriculum and clearly live our motto, "Aún Aprendo," every day.

Bibianna would like to attend college in New York City because she loves big cities and also wants to take advantage of the accessible public transportation system there. She plans to study forensics and law. She loves watching forensic files. "In my country from my experience forensic people are not doing

enough to solve murders and are not putting full efforts into matters that are happening. So many weird and stupid things happen, and the police are just taking notes and not solving crime." She would like to remedy this situation by becoming an advocate better criminal investigation.

Tindi likes to educate people. "I want to become a public speaker and singer. I believe that with my voice I can make the world a better place for people with albinism. I can speak against the killings and the hunting that are happening to people with albinism." She is optimistic about change. While she realizes that sad things happen, she knows that one can't change the past and can only move forward.

"Every morning I wake up in bed, and I always know that I am the voice. I want people to notice that I am albino, and I am the voice of people with albinism. People with albinism are just people like everyone else. The only things we need are sunscreen, sunglasses, and long sleeve shirts and pants to protect ourselves from the sun. The issue with albinism is a real issue, and everyone worldwide needs to pay attention to the issues that are happening to people with albinism because albinos have the right to be free from fear or to be free from being hunted or killed for our body parts."

The Mashamba sisters, true global citizens and activists, pursue their dreams every day and sincerely want to make the world a better place. They inspire us to get out of our comfort zones, let go of our self-centered concerns, and get up and do something, embodying Goethe's suggestion: "Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." The sisters are applying themselves and challenge us all to do the same every day, along with them. ♦



Grandparent Andrew “Ando” Hixon Issues 100% Matching Challenge to Grandparents Past & Present

Dear Fellow Besant Hill/Happy Valley Grandparents:

As young men... boys, really... three brothers were sent to New England boarding schools from Pasadena, California. I am one of them. I know my life has been marvelous due, in no small part, to that secondary school exposure far from home in the mid-'60s. I know... it was a different world then. All grandparents can sing that same refrain!

This one of three brothers has two sons who have four boys between them. I am astounded at my good fortune! As a “G-Pop,” I was frankly distraught by the way my grandsons were evolving. I had no faith in the educational mechanisms to which they were attached. They had no moorings. I was worried. I couldn't sleep. I was in trouble with my in-laws. Finally, their mother relented by agreeing to boarding school if I was close at hand.

My good fortune was discovering Besant Hill School. A school like no other I was aware of... unique in its energetics, its intimacy, its community, its campus, but, above all, its PEOPLE. The three oldest have been or will soon be imbued with the values so admirably provided by the devoted guides at Besant Hill. My fourth “G-Kid” is barely a year old... but I can hope for the very best, can't I? I particularly enjoy the school's balance and the intimate community that it fosters. I say this unequivocally because my evidence is crystal clear. The transformation of my grandchildren as a result of their immersion at Besant Hill is proof positive!

I was reduced to tears watching my eldest graduate two years ago now. I'm sure I'll blubber when my second graduates this year and when my third graduates in four. Why? I witnessed a transformation. I know my boys will have the tools required to advance with integrity and honor; two traits in high demand these days...

IT DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN, IT TAKES MONEY. IT DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN, IT TAKES ESPRIT.

I chaired an independent secondary school Board of Trustees when my boys were young. It is a demanding service! Tuitions alone are not enough. Goodness, I assumed they couldn't get any higher back in 1985! I repeat, tuition does not offset the true cost of educating a student at Besant Hill. That is what the Annual Fund is all about at most independent schools... filling the void between tuition and the true cost.

I dream of a sister fund to the Annual Fund... I don't know what to call it but I'm dreaming BIG! I want to encourage all Besant Hill grandparents to join me in generously supporting the school's energy and commitment with a solid donation above and beyond tuition. Let's see if we can astound our grandkids' guides and mentors as much as they constantly astound us!

Please join me in providing a special gift to Besant Hill. Envision a growing fund that stretches into the future, supported by grandparents yet to come! ♦

Sincerely,
Andrew Hixon “G-Pop”





EVIE S. '22 WITH A SUMMER READING BOOK

SUMMER READING

AUTHOR: NÉSTOR GERÓNIMO

Be a Global Citizen and Engage in Environmental Activism!

As we know, a global citizen is an individual who shows respect for other cultures, their languages, and their traditions, as well as displays respect for individual and social human rights and gender equality. Furthermore, global citizens are aware of environmental challenges and as such, practice and promote responsible consumption. A global citizen also values dialogue as a tool for a peaceful resolution of conflicts and is committed to the creation of a fair, unbiased, and supportive society.

With the intention of honoring Besant Hill's school theme for this school year, Model Global Citizenship and Engage in Environmental Activism, the Humanities Department put together a list of book titles for summer reading.

After presenting in Assembly the book choices for summer reading, students and teachers alike had the opportunity to select

a book of their liking to be read over the summer. Students were instructed that after finishing with their reading, they needed to create a writing project and a piece of art that depicted their perspective of the story.

At the start of school and armed with the knowledge gained from summer readings, students were placed in small, diversely mixed groups. Each group spent time conversing with every teacher on campus in relation to the differing perspectives regarding global citizenship and environmental activism.

The purpose of the discussion sessions was twofold: Not only did it provide students and teachers with the opportunity to get to know each other, but it also increased awareness and helped individuals discover or deepen their views on global citizenship and environmental activism. Our small discussion sessions were very productive and helped set the tone for a school year focused on becoming Global Citizens and eager participants in environmental activism. ♦



ANH-DAO TRAN SETTING UP A DRILL DURING BASKETBALL PRACTICE

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

Anh-Dao Tran

AUTHOR: STANTON SMITH

Anh-Dao Tran has completed her first semester at Besant Hill School as a teacher of Math II and Math III. She comes from New England; most recently a faculty member at Marianapolis Preparatory School in Thompson, Connecticut, Anh-Dao taught Science and Math to a school of 400 students. In addition to being a teacher, Anh-Dao provided strength and conditioning coaching to all the sports teams.

In her first semester as a Coyote, Anh-Dao has already integrated herself into the school and built close relationships throughout the community. Anh-Dao brings an awesome

“My goal is to inspire people to want to be the best they can be.”

background in athletics and education and recognizes how unique Besant Hill School is to the boarding school landscape. Coming from a larger institution, her perspective on our intentionally small student body reflects what we all cherish on campus. Beyond the Ojai weather, which she claims “always brightens her day,” Anh-Dao sees the abundant authenticity

found on campus. She says that because of how close we are all connected, everyone can be themselves without hesitation.

“Because we are small, we all really get to know each other. This creates a culture of respect, accountability, and inclusion that allows our students to thrive,” says Anh-Dao.

Beyond teaching in the classroom, Anh-Dao is the Boys Basketball Head Coach and assists with the Outdoor Education program in the spring. Her love of basketball is easily recognizable when you meet her, and our students are already excited about her ambitions for the upcoming season.

Faculty, parents, and students are raving about what an awesome addition she is to our small school. Their excitement is well-warranted, Anh-Dao is as friendly, passionate, and supportive as faculty comes. We look forward to a long future with Anh-Dao as a Besant Hill School Coyote. ♦







OPENING OF SCHOOL: Registration Day

AUTHOR: MEGAN WALTON

While most were celebrating the end of summer and Labor Day, 18 members of the Besant Hill student leadership team arrived on campus on Monday, September 2, to participate in the annual two day Student Government Retreat, 2019! The retreat marks the unofficial start to the new school year, giving these students an opportunity to gel as a group, reflect, plan their yearly calendar of service to the school, and share creative ways to serve as ambassadors in welcoming new and returning students to the school on Registration Day.

Fresh off their Retreat experience, Student Government, along with faculty and administrators, greeted students from around the globe and close to home. The usual managed chaos of move-in day was partnered with the excitement, nervous energy, and high expectations of a new year. On this steamy hot day in the Ojai Valley, parents met with members of the administrative team in the Zalk, while members of Student Government led their Class Connection groups in ice-breakers, followed by enjoyment of the real thing - Kona Ice flavored sno-cones! An introduction to residential life for new arrivals, an ice cream social in the Commons, and the year's first Dorm Meeting brought a very long day to its sleepy conclusion.

The next two days found students and faculty meeting together in classes and Advisory groups, presenting on Summer Reading, and gathering together for multiple Assembly opportunities, including the Student Government led "Passions Assembly." This presentation highlights the way each were able to discover and explore the academic or co-curricular activities that excite and engage them on the Besant Hill campus. Most of all, these returning students encouraged their peers to step out of their comfort zone and get involved!

As the week came to an end, everyone began to fall into the familiar rhythm of the ritual that is "back to school." Unlike many schools, Besant Hill has a way of wrapping everyone into a blanket of welcome, and, as we settled into that welcome, we all knew we were home. ♦



PAT O. '21 WITH A COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE DURING THE FALL COLLEGE FAIR

COLLEGE UPDATE

AUTHOR: DOUG JESSUP

The Class of 2020 has been busy this fall, engaging in rigorous academic programs, devoting extra time to college searches and admissions petitions, remaining actively engaged outside the classroom, and serving as stalwart leaders of our student body. No small task, but our seniors successfully passed the first hurdle by meeting the recent application deadlines for the UC and CSU campuses. A number have also filed applications to colleges offering ED, EA and Early Rolling admission plans, and favorable returns already have begun to trickle in. While the lion's share of application deadlines fall on January 1 or beyond, I'm pleased to report our 12th Graders effectively have been managing their time and dutifully executing their college-related responsibilities with much aplomb!

The recent months have seen a record number of college representatives visiting campus to promote their schools and engage with our students. A highlight of these exchanges was the recent Linden University Fair when all of our students had the chance to converse with admissions directors from 24 higher educational institutions from around the globe. Over the fall term, Besant hosted admissions deans from 78 different colleges and universities, representing 28 different states and 6 foreign countries. While more visits are in store for this spring, for now, autumn travel season has finished as college admissions offices turn to evaluate applicant files.

On the professional development and school representation front, yours truly participated in several opportunities this fall. Among them, I attended the National Association for College

Admissions Counseling Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, offering both excellent programming and infinite networking opportunity with 8,000 college admissions counseling professionals in attendance. I also participated in an invitation-only Counselor Fly-In hosted by the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

With respect to standardized testing, Besant Hill administered the PSAT to every 10th and 11th Grader in mid-October, and hosted the October 5 and November 2 national SAT Program administrations. Besant Hill will also serve as an official SAT Program test center for the May 2, 2020 administration.

Looking ahead, while seniors file their remaining applications, I look forward to engaging the juniors in a series of bi-weekly seminars introducing them to curricula I've devised covering all aspects of the college process. These sessions will initiate each 11th Grader's college quest in earnest. The incoming returns for the Class of 2020 will continue to be carefully monitored as each moves toward confirming final college plans by May 1, 2020, the National Reply Date.

In closing, I consider it an honor to work closely with Besant Hill students and families, and likewise my Coyote faculty and staff colleagues, who play a vital role as supportive advocates and compelling recommenders of our charges. I look forward to helping all of our students grow through the process of self-reflection and personal discovery in their journey to identify and secure admission to one (if not several) undergraduate matches where they will likely flourish. It just doesn't get any better than that! ♦

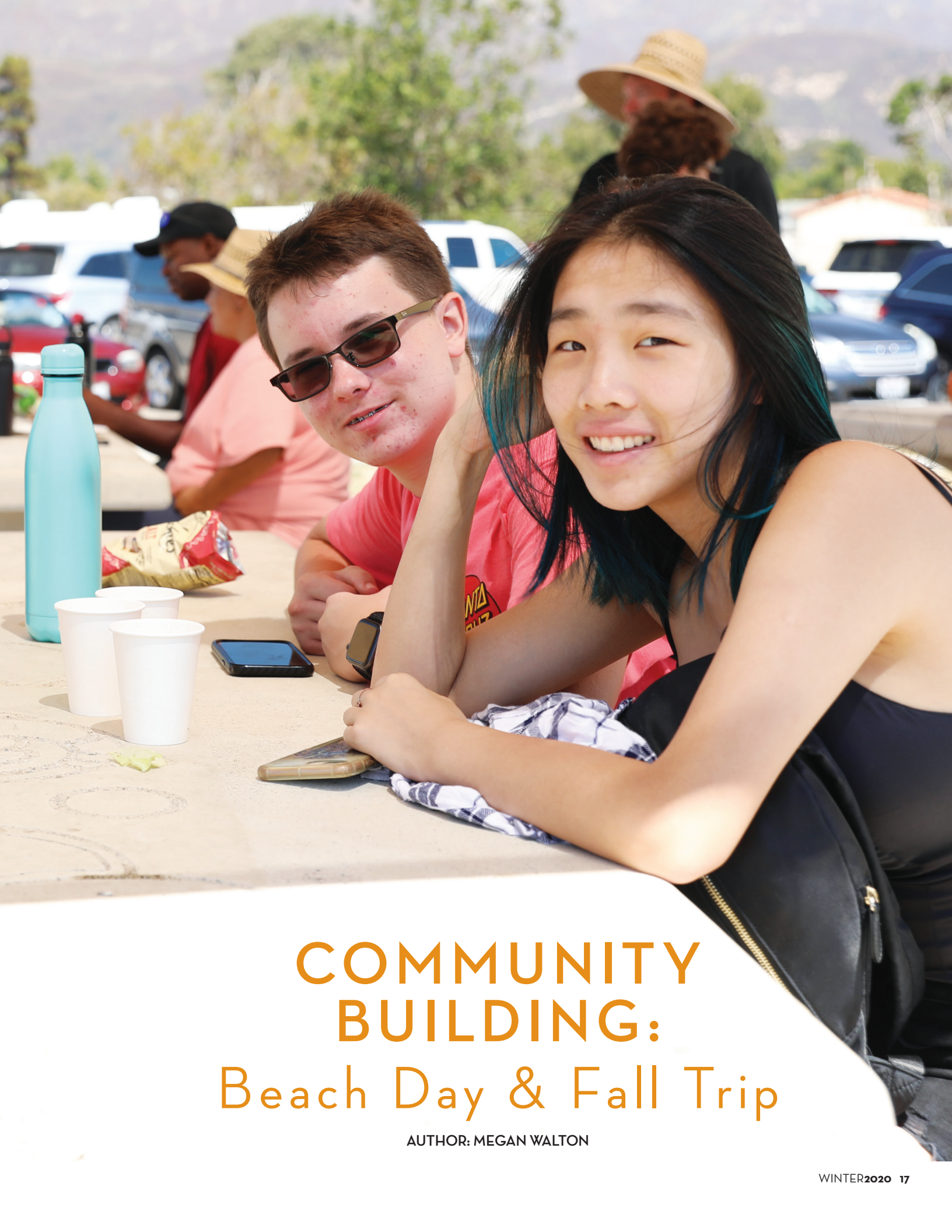


Artist: Ksusha G. '20

Ksusha, Ukraine, came to Besant Hill School with an ability to draw and paint exceptionally well. As a student her understanding of color and perspective has developed through instruction and exercises with Claire to guide her passion for art. The piece above was exhibited at the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation this fall.



STELLA G. '22, COLIN M. '23, GABE B. '23, AND HANHAN W. '23 AFTER A PICNIC LUNCH ON BEACH DAY



COMMUNITY BUILDING: Beach Day & Fall Trip

AUTHOR: MEGAN WALTON



STUDENTS PLAY IN THE WAVES AT CARPINTERIA STATE BEACH

BEACH DAY: Carpinteria State Beach

What's the best way to bring a family together?

Gather all of the group together for fun, great conversation and, drum roll, please... a delicious BBQ lunch prepared by grillmasters Portia and Megan! Whether you were a part of the beachgoing crowd- playing volleyball, body surfing or catching the late summer rays- or you were a member of the ramada brigade- playing Cribbage, strumming a guitar, or listening to Dan's dramatic reading of lifestyle magazines- Beach Day 2019 had something for all!

After an early breakfast, we all loaded up and headed out to this year's setting for the school's annual Fall Beach Day, Carpinteria State Beach Park. As Athletics Director, Mike Biermann, noted, "I've never seen so many students flock to the sand on Beach Day!" Protected by handfuls of sunscreen, our "flock" went off to renew old friendships and welcome new friends to the BHS community.

Fun in the sun and fresh Pacific air were the perfect recipe for building appetites! Director of Dining Services, Juana Juarez, provided grill masters, Portia and

Megan, with all of the ingredients for students and faculty to enjoy a meal with all of the elements for a first-rate BBQ. Burgers (and Beyond Burgers!), hot dogs, potato salad, watermelon, chips, and all of the traditional trimmings assured that no one left Carpinteria hungry!

At days end, we all returned to campus tired and happy. Beach Day 2019 is behind us, but I think we all agree that this is the tradition that truly sets the tone for community, fun, and fellowship to follow throughout the year.

JESSICA P. '22, SAWYER H. '20, CHARLIE C. '22, AND EVIE S. '22 ENJOYING PERFECT BEACH WEATHER



FALL TRIP: The Kern River

The 2019-2020 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 the breathtaking western Sierra foothills for three days of adventure and community building. Fall Trip is always packed with excitement, and this year was no exception.

Over the course of the week, students participated in rafting trips along the lower Kern River, mountain biked along exhilarating trails, kayaked the tranquil waters of Lake Isabella, and explored their creative sides by playing music and creating art at camp. Each night, the happily exhausted students and faculty would reunite as an entire community to share stories over delicious meals.

By the end of the week, new acquaintances felt like old friends, and the action-packed week of Fall Trip had passed in the blink of an eye. Students and faculty returned to Besant Hill excited for the school year ahead and ready for many more adventures to come. ♦



KALI S. '23, COLIN M. '23, JACKIE S. '23 HAPPY TO BE CAMPING



SAWYER H. '20 PERFECTING HIS FOOTWORK WHILE ROCK CLIMBING



MILO H. - M. '20, HARKRISHAN K. '20, AND PAT O. '21 RELAXING ON THE BANK OF THE KERN RIVER

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

AUTHOR: BRIAN MCCOLGAN



Sustainability Updates

The overarching goal of the Besant Hill Sustainability program is to create a culture of awareness and appreciation of the natural world, to educate the members of our community on ways to live their lives in an ecologically sensitive manner, and also to be inspired to take a proactive approach to environmental issues facing our world. Following is an update on a few of this year's sustainability activities and initiatives.

Ojai Valley Green Schools Coalition

Besant Hill School is one of the founding members of the Ojai Valley Green Schools Coalition (GSC). The student-led group is composed of seven member schools

throughout the Ojai Valley. Tony J. '20, Milo H.-M. '20, and Harkrishan K. '20 are this year's representatives at GSC meetings.

"Did You Know?" Initiative

The Besant Hill Sustainability Committee, which is composed of 12 students, teachers, and administrators, has initiated the "Did You Know?" video series. The committee presents short, interesting, and informative environmental-themed videos that are played during school assemblies.

The Circle Garden

For almost two decades, students and staff at Besant Hill have enjoyed the wonderful feeling that comes from working in The



STUDENTS AND FACULTY AFTER A SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Circle Garden. Starting this past fall, with the help and enthusiasm from the Botany class and numerous student volunteers, The Circle Garden has been undergoing a transformation and update that includes removing old fencing, building new raised beds, new compost bins, drip irrigation, birdhouses, garden art, signs, greenhouse repair, and the planting of additional fruit trees. Come by to take a look, and feel free to lend a hand.

Ojai Creek Cleanup

In October, the Ojai Valley Green Schools Coalition, in conjunction with the Ojai Green Coalition, and the California Coastal Commission, organized and took part in a

creek cleanup in downtown Ojai. Twenty Besant Hill students participated in the event!

Phasing Out Single-Use Plastic Water Bottles

Following the lead of several universities, by the year's end, Besant Hill Students have agreed to phase out our use of single-use plastic bottles. In addition to pollution created during production and transportation, plastic bottles are the third most common item found in ocean debris, and though they are recyclable, many never are. Plastic water bottles break down into increasingly smaller pieces, but never really go away. As a result, microplastics have become a major issue in marine environments. ♦



MAKO K. '22 AND NAKANO K. '23 CLEANING THE BEACH IN VENTURA

COMMUNITY SERVICE

AUTHOR: BRIAN MCCOLGAN

The Community Service aspect of life at Besant Hill School is one that gives students the opportunity to partner with local organizations to make a direct, immediate, and meaningful impact in their community. Almost exclusively, students walk away from their experiences feeling great about themselves, and the work they have done in the local community. Though it is a requirement for students to participate in at least two community service events per semester, many of our students sign up for several of the events that are offered.

One event that always brings smiles to everyone's faces is the work students and staff do with preschool and elementary age children at the Holy Cross Elementary Harvest Festival. Other events that Besant Hill students and staff participated in during the first semester include stream analysis with the Surfrider Foundation, Marina Park Beach Cleanup with the Ventura Kiwanis Club, The Hayden Preserve Tree Planting with the Ventura Land Trust, San Antonio Creek Cleanup with Heal the Bay, The Ojai Valley Green Coalition, and the Ojai Valley Green Schools Coalition. In early December, several students had the opportunity to be

"Victims" for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) first responder training.

In October, Senior, Svea A. '20 started the student-led Community Service Club. When asked what inspired her to start the club she said, "I love community service and love to help the local community". Stay tuned for more news and opportunities as the year progresses. ♦



SOLEY D. '22 AND ALEJANDRO N. 'A. '20 PARTICIPATE IN AN OJAI RESTORATION PROJECT



KEVIN WALLACE AND KEVIN HENSCHER DISCUSS BEATRICE WOOD'S INFLUENCE ON BESANT HILL SCHOOL

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES: Kevin Wallace

AUTHOR: KATHY ZOTNOWSKI

On October 9, Center for the Arts Executive Director Kevin Wallace brought legendary ceramicist and former Happy Valley School teacher Beatrice Wood back to life for our students, faculty, and staff at the year's first Distinguished Speaker Series event. Development & Alumni Relations officer Kevin Henschel interviewed Wallace about Beato's entire life, beginning with her young years in France, relationship with famed artist Marcel Duchamp, how Beato

became known as "the Mama of Dada," and Beato's later years as a faculty member and resident of Happy Valley. Beato was beloved by generations of students, and her influence is still palpable today as current students take art classes in the "Beato Atelier" and are able to work with her original kiln and glazes at the Center for the Arts where her studio remains. The students were prepared with great questions for Wallace and an enjoyable morning was had by all. ♦



NIYATI K. '23 JOINED OUR COMMUNITY THIS FALL FROM SAUDI ARABIA

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

AUTHOR: SHANNON ROWAN

Each August I look forward with great anticipation for the Yearly Database to be shared with me. This internal document holds the names and contact information of all of our incoming students. For a teacher, it's the first glimpse of our new community members, and through the columns of basic information, a delicate framework of our classes begins to take shape. I'm always wowed each year at the number of students who come from abroad. I usually read

the list from the perspective of a mother and a teacher. The mom in me empathizes with the family decision to send a child to a faraway place requiring a maelstrom of trust in the universe that this investment and community will provide a safe and nurturing space for their teen. The teacher in me brims with excitement as I read the list of countries from where our students hail, which will provide glimpses of worlds mostly unknown to the rest of our community. This



year, I also read the list from the perspective of a Global Citizen.

We guide students at Besant Hill School toward understanding Global Citizenship, that it's a responsibility and that everyone is one. There is no "othering" or "opting out" of Global Citizenship. And as a community, we are constantly defining and redefining what that means. Responsibility is a range, a spectrum, and given the current tender political, financial, and atmospheric times, it's tricky to articulate and consider roles.

So as I was reading the long index of countries- Canada, China, Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Martinique, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam- I asked myself, what does healthy cultural integration in such

polarizing times look like? How as educators and mentors do we create the safest environment for each perspective to be valued, included, and belong?

The answer began to take shape during our annual Faculty Institute at the end of August and will continue throughout the year. The Humanities Department is working collaboratively on initiatives that involve offering diverse perspectives in literature and history classes. We're bringing in professionals from around the world to work with students and staff to better understand the balance of assimilation and cultural identity our students from abroad experience. We're planning an array of auxiliary programs and weekend offerings to expose students to cultural arts and activities. Students are experiencing a cultural integration simulation during Class Connections that provides a sensory experience detailing what it's like to feel like a stranger in a strange land. We're examining the language we use with each other and improving our understanding of stereotype bias. We're talking about white privilege.

In just the first few months getting to know our new students from abroad and reconnecting with returning students, it's clear that the initial delicate framework of the early class lists are becoming more refined and lively. Our students are unique and as interesting as ever. It's going to be quite a year! ♦

BIONEERS

AUTHOR: BRIAN MCCOLGAN



BESANT HILL STUDENTS OVERLOOKING THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE ON THEIR TRIP TO THE BIONEERS CONFERENCE IN MARIN, CA

In late October, 11 BHS students accompanied by Shannon Rowan and myself, attended the 30th annual Bioneers conference in San Rafael, California. This trip marked the 15th consecutive year Besant Hill students and teachers have attended the conference. With well over 3,000 attendees and 30 years of visionary leadership, Bioneers is the premier conference for today's climate and cultural visionaries. Besant Hill students were able to experience keynote addresses from award-winning authors Bill McKibben, Eve Ensler, Terry Tempest Williams, and Paul Hawken, as well as several other extraordinary activists.

At the conference, Besant Hill students were members of a 500+ student youth leadership alliance. The alliance was created to bring together students of varying backgrounds, who are dedicated to

social and environmental justice, scientific research, and discovering ways to create a more just and equitable society and natural environment through education and action. The youth leadership program provided opportunities for our students to participate in forums and panels with a diverse group of their peers.

We were particularly excited to hear Bill McKibben since every student is reading one of his books during Class Connections. Since Bioneers is a relatively intimate gathering, we knew it would be possible to meet McKibben and glean some insight and inspiration from the acclaimed author. What started as a simple email, informing him of our reading project and attendance at Bioneers, quickly culminated in a text message at the conference from Mr. McKibben himself, inviting BHS to meet privately with him after his keynote address. Mr. McKibben sat down



MILO H. M. '20 WITH AUTHOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST, BILL MCKIBBEN



JAAAN A. '22 WITH FELLOW PAKISTANI AND FOUNDER OF UTAH YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS, MISHKA BANURI

“Bioneers was an eye-opening experience. I met so many like-minded people and heard stories from some of the most amazing people. I hope everybody will get to have an experience like this. And if you have the chance, go to Bioneers!”
-Shayna M. '22

with us for 30 minutes and discussed our school, the books we are reading, and he provided guidance on what we can do to effect change.

Mckibben has written over a dozen books on climate change and is the founder of 350.org. *Foreign Policy* named him to their inaugural list of the world's 100 most important global thinkers, and the Boston Globe said he was “probably America's most important environmentalist.”

Students found inspiration in the many workshops they attended throughout the weekend. Risa G. '21 recalled the message of speaker Gerry Tello: “When you go to a new place you have the knowledge of your ancestors as well as the ancestors of the land you are on. So you are never alone, you

always have the support of past generations” (Gerry Tello 2019).

Bioneers is a gathering like no other and contains the spirit of Aún Aprendo, our

school's motto, in that all of the Besant Hill conference participants are there to learn about new ways the environment and the climate crisis are being examined by contemporary scientists, policymakers, activists, indigenous, artists, and authors.

The attention, joy, and curiosity our students displayed were exemplary. It was such a privilege to bear witness to their growth as students and participants at this unique conference. Collectively and individually the whole group was curious, demonstrated critical thinking, and had fun. ♦

Wendy Morgando

TEACHING AWARD

AUTHOR: PORTIA JOHNSON

Each year during our commencement ceremony, one teacher receives the honor of being presented with the Wendy Morgando Teaching Award. Wendy Morgando was a dedicated history teacher and a long-time faculty member of 16 years, and she left behind a legacy of excellence in the classroom. The recipient of this award is voted for by his or her peers and recognized for excellence in all areas of school life for their enthusiasm, leadership, and dedication to the students of Besant Hill School. This past year, ESL and French teacher, Betsy Stix, was the recipient of this award.

Betsy has been a member of our faculty

and community for the past eight years. She consistently shares with the community her enthusiasm for life, adventure, and animals. She goes beyond the classroom to engage students in learning experiences in our Class Connections Curriculum. As a part of the Humanities Department, she brings her love of literature and francophile ways to help create exciting adventures for us all during International Week and field trips, and the annual French dinner at her house gives students hands-on experience with the culture and language they learn from her. Betsy brings to our fitness program expertise in the instruction of Yoga and helps to remind our whole community of the importance of mindfulness. In addition, she has been known to lead the whole school in an epic dance party or two.

The following quote from a fellow teacher nicely sums up why she deserves this recognition. "She is an energetic, passionate, and creative teacher. Her students are always pushing themselves out of their comfort zone because of her endless encouragement. She works well with all of her fellow teachers and is always looking for an opportunity to collaborate."

Congratulations, Betsy! It is an honor to have you as a part of the Besant Hill School community. ♦



BETSY STIX SPEAKING AT THE 2019 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY



BRIAN MCCOLGAN TALKS SCIENCE WITH STUDENT FAMILIES DURING FAMILY WEEKEND

FAMILY WEEKEND & FALL CONCERT

AUTHOR: MEGAN WALTON

If ever there was an opportunity to exemplify the AÚn Aprendo experience, the 2019 Family Weekend fit the bill! The largest turnout of family and friends in this author's memory celebrate the academic, musical and artistic talents of our Besant Hill School students. Parents, siblings, grandparents, and friends were treated to the legendary BHS welcome, a friendly invitation to become a part of this incredible community of young



DAVE COSBY WITH PARENTS AFTER A PERFORMANCE IN FRONT OF TALK THEATER



DAVID Y. '21, SIENNA M. '21, SAYWER H. '20, ALEJANDRO N.-A. '20 AND AVA B. '21
JAMMING A HIT TUNE



YLLAN H. '21 JUST BEFORE THE CHAMBER SINGERS' PERFORMANCE

people and their mentors.

Weekend events began with Doug Jessup, Director of College Counseling, hosting an informative session on our students' navigation through the college preparatory experience; from awakening a sense of inquiry as a freshman through the various stages of exploration and counsel as sophomores and juniors, to the actual application process in senior year. The presentation provided parents and guests with the opportunity to ask questions and become well versed in the path their students will travel, finding the best fit for their individual pursuit of higher education after BHS.

The weekend weather belied the late October date, with temperatures soaring into the 90s! Cooler than the temps was the music emanating from the Zalk Theater on Friday evening. A plethora of BHS music students regaled the audience with cool jazz, funky pop, and the unified voices of the BHS Chamber Singers. It was hard to imagine that less than two months of preparation



DAN CALL WITH CHAMBER SINGERS DURING THE FALL CONCERT



DAVE COSBY RECOGNIZING GABE B. '23 AND NIYATI K. '23 FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING HORN PERFORMANCE

went into this performance! While there were a number of seasoned veterans of the BHS stage, the concert marked the first live performance for many. Bravo to all!

Saturday began with the ever-popular coffee cart and annual Family Weekend Parent Meeting, followed by mini-classes pairing students' classes with their parents and visitors. After a delicious lunch on the Commons Green, parents had the opportunity to meet with their student's Advisor and participate in the faculty/parent vs. student Volleyball game while enjoying a much appreciated shaved ice!

As one parent remarked at the end of the day, "It's amazing that one small school can make such a huge difference in a family's life." That's the power of small and the magic of Besant Hill. ♦



EVAN H. '21, AND PAT O. '21 FOCUSED ON THE GROOVE



EVIE S. '22, ALEJANDRO N.-A. '20, JESSICA P. '22, AND BEN L. '22 IN THE CREATIVE ZONE OUTSIDE

VISUAL ART

AUTHOR: CLAIRE LOWNDES

The focus this year for Besant Hill School Visual Art students is PASSION. The students will find their PASSION, embrace their PASSION, and then share their PASSION.

BHS Visual Art students are developing their talent and connecting with their peers through learning-focused conversations,

reflection throughout their journey, and considering what art means to them.

BEATRICE WOOD CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The students have the unique experience to attend workshops and this semester Risa G. '21 embraced the workshop led by Natasha Dikareva, and Ksusha G. '20 attended a workshop led by Julia Feld. These are amazing opportunities that unlock further motivation and passion while enriching Besant Hill School students learning.

STUDIO ART

Within studio art, the students have embraced many challenges, from developing their technique, control, and expression to creating vibrant art inspired by food displayed in the commons. In addition, they have investigated a personal topic of interest, based on the environment. This project has encouraged the students to think outside the box, challenge their ideas and unlock a thoughtful connection with their creations.

ADVANCED STUDIO ART

This semester the students have been given the challenge to explore a variety of



BELLA L. '21 USING RECLAIMED CARDBOARD TO REFLECT HER FAVORITE LOCATIONS AROUND THE WORLD



MILO H. - M. '20 IN THE CAROLYN GLASOE BAILEY FOUNDATION EXHIBIT WITH HIS OJAI INSPIRED LANDSCAPES

ways to share their new understanding of visual communication. They aim to connect with their audience on a deeper level, via personal message, emotion meaningful themes, inspired by the concept of the power of image.

CERAMICS

This has been a busy semester for the ceramics class. They have gained a technical understanding of a complex medium, through experimentation and determination. They have enjoyed experimenting with glazes and stains to create a series of unique outcomes. In addition, they have had a lot of fun on the wheels and they have been working with Patti to improve their throwing technique.

PORCH GALLERY

Studio Art students received an insightful tour of Beatrice Wood Exhibition with Lisa at the Porch Gallery, leaving them inspired by the playful and exciting etchings.

THE BROAD

In collaboration with Freddy at The Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation, the students embraced a VIP trip to The Broad in Los Angeles. The Broad is not only architecturally outstanding, but it also contains a unique collection of art, from Jeff Koons to Jean-Michel Basquiat. It was a day filled with inspiration, intrigue and it developed their understanding of art and the importance of art appreciation. ♦



CLAIRE LOWNDES AND TINDI M. '21 AT THE OPENING RECEPTION AT THE CAROLYN GLASOE BAILEY FOUNDATION EXHIBIT



SOPHIA G. '20 AT THE BROAD MUSEUM IN LOS ANGELES, CA

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES: JULIET LITMAN

AUTHOR: KEVIN HENSCHEL

On Friday, December 1, we had our second Distinguished Speaker Series event. We were honored to host Juliet Litman, Head of Production at The Ringer, a sports and pop culture website and podcast network, as well as a celebrated podcast host in her own right. Juliet spoke to Development & Alumni Relations Officer, Kevin Henschel '93 about her upbringing in New York, the teachers and school counselors who positively influenced her life choices, her experience at Northwestern University, and her incredible work experience as a journalist, editor, and American media personality.

We all enjoyed her insight on how she turned a true hobby and interest into the work she enjoys today, and we had a good laugh over Juliet and Kevin's story about their shared summer camp experience. Great questions from the students followed their discussion. We were all overjoyed to have her spend some time with us! ♦



JULIET LITMAN, PHOTO CREDIT: TONY J. '20



TEREZA J. '20 AND HAYATO A. '21 KEEPING WARM



JACKIE S. '23, MAKO K. '22, HANHAN W. '23 ON THE TOP DECK



PORTIA JOHNSON, MEGAN WALTON, KELLY HENSCHER AND JULIANNA LAMB ON THE STERN OF THE ISLAND PACKER



PAT O. '21, MONTSE S. '20, EMMETT J. '21, HARKRISHAN K. '20, SAWYER H. '20, NATE K. '21 HAPPY ON THE BOW

ALL SCHOOL FIELD TRIP: Channel Islands

AUTHOR: PORTIA JOHNSON

On November 14, the Besant Hill Community headed to the Ventura Harbor for our first All School Field trip of the year. Hosted by the Math and Science departments, the day was filled with fun activities and discoveries about the beautiful and unique Channel Islands that lie right off our coast. We began the day with a three-hour-long boat trip out to Anacapa Island. On the way, we enjoyed feeling the ocean spray and sharing the view on a very smooth day on the water. When we arrived at Anacapa, the boat's captain gave an informative talk about the history, geology, and unique flora and fauna of the islands. The climax of the trip was the stunning 360-degree view of the 40 foot tall Arch Rock natural bridge and iconic Anacapa lighthouse. On the return trip home, our timing could not have been better as we came across a superpod

of common dolphins. Students and faculty alike stood at the rails in awe as the dolphins played in the surf for as far as the eye could see. After arriving back on land, we enjoyed lunch on the beach and then engaged in a series of activities lead by the Math and Science departments. Students recorded biodiversity in the intertidal zone, tested the water quality of the ocean and the harbor, cleaned up trash on the beach, and visited The Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center. Following these activities, we returned to campus tired but excited by the day's adventure and learning. Our all-school field trips are a shining example of our Aún Aprendo Experience where student learning continues in and out of the classroom, and the power of small truly comes alive when the whole school is able to engage in a shared learning experience. ♦



VISITING MUSICIAN

AUTHOR: DAVE COSBY

On September 22, The Besant Hill Community was very fortunate to have pianist Tomer Gewirtzman, a virtuoso pianist who had just performed as part of the Concert on the Mountain concert series, come to play and answer questions from our community at a special assembly. Born in Israel, Tomer started his musical education at the age of 8, with Ms. Raaya Shpol at the Rubin Conservatory in Haifa. From 2008 to 2011, he served in the Israeli Defense Forces, in the "Outstanding Musician" program, where he combined regular military service, with extensive music studies at the University. After completing his bachelor's degree at the Buchmann-Mehta school of music in Tel-Aviv, he earned his Master's degree and Artist Diploma at the Juilliard School, where he received the prestigious Kovner Fellowship award.

Tomer began his presentation by giving some biographical information about himself and his music education. He continued by sharing some background information about the musical elements of the piece from which he was to play several excerpts. Tomer to focus his presentation on Carnival, Opus 9 by Robert Schuman. Schuman is one of the most highly regarded composers of the Romantic period and was known to write both programmatic and absolute music. Carnival is an excellent example of Romantic programmatic music, as there are musical characters throughout the piece that Schuman named and developed throughout the composition. Tomer chose a

thorough explanation of each character and then perform the piece for the audience. This approach to performing the piece gave lots of musical and critical insight into the musical genius of Robert Schumann. Throughout the Masterclass, Tomer took numerous questions from students and faculty ranging from his favorite pieces to perform to his philosophies on practicing. It was really inspiring to hear some of the profound questions that students asked him during the masterclass.

The Special Assembly was a wonderful opportunity for the Besant Hill Community to see and interact with a world-class musician. Due to the size of the theater and the arrangement of the seats in the Zalk Theater, there was not a bad seat in the house. One of my favorite fun facts about the event was when Tomer was asked what he likes to do to relax. His reply was that he was fascinated with math and that he loved to do math problems for fun which brought great laughter and cheers from the Math Department. Not only did Tomer spend the morning sharing music with our community, but he also stayed for lunch and continued the dialog about music and math for nearly another hour with students.

Everyone was really grateful for Tomer Gewirtzman's time and talents, and we all greatly look forward to the next Masterclass/Special assembly featuring Chamber on the Mountain performers. ♦

ADMISSIONS UPDATE

AUTHOR: KRISTEN KASCHUB

ON THE ROAD

The admissions team has been busy this fall spreading the word of Besant Hill School. It remains our goal to continue to bring diverse, interesting, and engaging students from all parts of the globe to enrich our community. 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 admission office at admissions@besanthill.org. We would love to hear from you!

OPEN HOUSE

The fall Admission Open House last October 14 was a huge success. Families had a chance to speak with administrators and tour the campus, students visited classes, and many even enjoyed lunch in the Commons. The day was beautiful, the campus looked great, and a special assembly allowed our 25 visitors to experience why Besant Hill School is such a special place.

KEY ADMISSION DATES

February 1: Priority Deadline

March: Rolling Admissions continues

March 10: Admission Decisions sent to new students

June 1: Enrollment forms available online ♦



PORTIA JOHNSON INTRODUCES BESANT HILL SCHOOL TO A PROSPECTIVE STUDENT AND FAMILY



FALL PLAY:

Dirty Works at the Crossroads

AUTHOR: DAN CALL

The Performing Arts Department at Besant Hill School presented the melodramatic comedy *Dirty Work At The Crossroads*, written by Bill Johnson, on Friday and Saturday, November 8 and 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the Zalk Theater on the school campus.

Dirty Work At The Crossroads told the melodramatic story of Nellie Lovelace, an innocent country girl. Munro, the viper, his wife Ida Rhinegold, Belle of the New Haven Music Halls, and Adam Oakhart the handsome blacksmith's son with a heart of gold. The play was presented in the style of old-fashioned melodramas and the audience was encouraged to "Boo" the villain and cheer "Hooray" for the hero.

Dastardly deeds were afoot when Munro began his get rich quick scheme to gain control of Nellie's home so that he could sell it to the railroad that is being built. Betrayal, poisoning, murder, and redemption were all part of the broadly portrayed adventure.

The cast included Angus P. '21 as Munro Murgatroyd, Ava B. '21 as Nellie Lovelace, Emmett J. '21 as Ida Rhinegold and Milo H.-M. '20 as Adam Oakhart. Rounding out the cast is Stella G. '22 as Leonie, Tony J. '20 as Mrs. Asterbilt, Alex N.-A. '20 as Fluerette, Jana A. '20 as Little Nell, and Tarek S. '21 as Mookie McGuggins. ♦



TINDI M. '21 AND AVA B. '21



MILO H.-M. '20



AVA B. '21



TAREK S. '22 AND ANGUS P. '21





TINDI M. '21 SINGING WITH DAN CALL PLAYING PIANO

FALL VARIETY SHOW

AUTHOR: DAN CALL

The fall semester Variety Show was presented on Friday evening December 13 in the Zalk Theater. Acts were performed by students, faculty, and staff and included music, film, and skits. Besant Hill School's Variety show is a unique showcasing of students' interests and talents, as it provides students the opportunity to share the art they engage outside of class and on their own time. It was a fabulous evening full of fun, laughter, heartfelt emotion, and dance. The evening concluded with snacks in the Commons for all.



PAT O. '21 SINGING A SOLO PIECE

The Emcees for the show were student government co-president Sawyer H. '20 and freshman Penny A. '23.

The other participants in order of appearance were: Jim Termondt (Kitchen Staff), Tindi M. '21, Tarek S. '22, Tony J. '20, Jackie S. '23, Mako K. '22, Angus P. '21, Mary Spence, Dave Cosby, Keoni L. '22, Pat O. '21, Alex N.- A. '20, Milo H.-M. '20, Ivan W. '20, Ava B. '21, and David Y. '21. ♦

CROSS COUNTRY

AUTHORS: MARY SPENCE & BRIAN THORNHILL

This year's Cross Country team had a collective goal of learning to love running, improving their running times, staying healthy, and building teamwork. In addition to weekday practices after school, our kids ran races at Dunn, Cate, Midland, our home course at Besant Hill, and the final meet at Ojai Valley School. Many students saw personal bests in reaching their goals, which included running an entire 3.1-mile course without walking, catching up to a certain runner on a different team, and gaining strength and flexibility. Several students downloaded apps on their phones to track their mileage and pacing, and students who experienced shin splints and ankle injuries worked hard to regain health by swimming and stretching so that they could return for the final meet. As coaches, we saw our fastest runners complete longer practice runs and bring water bottles to the rest of the team as they finished, we watched our students cheer one another on at starting and finish lines, and we saw kids run extra hill sprints, 6:00 a.m. Friday runs in the dark, and weekend laps around campus. Senior Tereza J., in her first year as a Cross Country runner, finished tenth overall in the final meet, which included five competing schools, and Junior Hayato A., a third-year runner for the team, finished eighth overall. Senior Svea A. was a high-energy and inspiring captain, and she kept our team, which included Sophomores Charlie C. and Jaan A., Juniors Akari I., Dan N., Angus P., and Pat O., and Seniors Jana A. and Emma Z., motivated and positive. Between the hot afternoons and early morning sunrises, our students became joyful runners, and we were so grateful to share time, miles, post-race meals, and stretch sessions with this wonderful group. Aún Aprendo! ♦



HAYATO A. '21 SETTING THE PACE AT THE HOME MEET



AKARI I. '21, JANA A. '20, TEREZA J. '20 AND EMMA Z. '20 CHEER ON THEIR TEAMMATES

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

AUTHOR: MIKE BIERMANN



The girls volleyball season for 2019 was filled with anticipation to begin the season due to the number of girls who signed up to play, as it was very encouraging. Eighteen girls attended the first practice with many new faces along with returning players from last year. The girls worked hard in the beginning of the year. They were eager to learn the skills necessary to play and to enjoy the game more as the season wore on. That is the nature of sports at Besant Hill. As long as a player respects the game, their teammates, coaches, and opponents and they represent the school well during competition, then the success of the season has been achieved. The volleyball program continues to grow. We have fielded both Varsity and Junior Varsity teams each year since girls volleyball was organized. The girls play for the pure joy of being together and having fun in athletics. It's nice to see girls of all skill levels wanting to play the game. This year's teams followed everything the coaches asked of them in terms of being on time, participating, and being prepared. It was an enjoyable season for the girls, and we wish happiness and success to our three graduating Seniors. ♦



KARINA K. '22 SERVING DURING A HOME VOLLEYBALL MATCH



WAITING FOR THE NEXT SET OF WAVES ON THE VENTURA COAST

WILL F. '21 AT THE END OF A SUNSET SESSION AT MONDOS

SURFING

AUTHOR: CHRIS CAIRNS

The 2019 Surf Team had an impressive fall season this year. Coaches Tyler Turner and Chris Cairns made the most of the near-perfect conditions for several weeks in October to maximize everyone's beach time. Sawyer H. '20, Keoni L. '22, Angelica G. '20, Nate K. '21, and Will F. '21 all made standout improvements throughout the season. Many surfers made the transition to shorter boards pushing each other's performance levels to new heights. Newer surfers made excellent progress with everyone leaving the beach with smiles on their faces. Harkrishan K. '20, Risa G. '21, Sophia G. '20, and Peter C. '21 all showed continued progression riding soft-top longboards at Mondo's. With the big swells of winter starting to show, the surf team members will be seeking the outer limits of their skills as they challenge each other to see who can have the most fun! ♦



DANCE

AUTHOR: LEAH SELLERS

It is such an honor and privilege to bring the art of dance to the Besant Hill School Community. Dance is not only a classic art form, but it is also a way to communicate feelings and emotions, explore creativity through movement, and develop the creative brain in new and different ways. As the famous modern dancer Martha Graham would say, "Dance is the hidden language of the soul." During our time together, students have the opportunity to explore different styles of movement from ballet, jazz, musical theater, commercial dance, and more. They

also have the opportunity to explore their own creativity by choreographing their own dance pieces. Often, students are not given the opportunity to experience dance. Some may see dance as being a "hobby" or an art form to explore only as young children. Being that BHS is an international boarding school, students from around the world who may never have or never will have the opportunity to experience dance now have the opportunity to learn, explore, and experience the classic art form that is dance. ♦



DANCE CLASS HAVING FUN WITH A HIP-HOP BEAT



ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT:

Abrah Cate Steward '17

AUTHOR: ABRAH CATE STEWARD '17

Post-high school life has proven to be a constant ebb and flow, full of growth, self-discovery, challenges, and a pursuit of balance. I find that now more than ever, our motto of *Aún Aprendo* rings true in my life as I near college graduation and once again prepare to head out into the unknown. This journey of constant learning and relearning led me to UC Berkeley after graduation from Besant Hill. I am now studying the sociological and political aspects of Agroecology (B.S.) with a minor in Forestry and Natural Resource Management. I am on track to graduate Spring 2020, a full year ahead of schedule!

Additionally, I am working for an incredible professor, Dr. Carolyn Merchant, who has been a pillar of the ecofeminist movement, helping her to publish a never released edition of Hugo Illis' book *The Life of Mendel*, exploring gene theory and debunking myths surrounding race and genetics that were prominent in Nazi Germany.

I also have been an active member of the

Berkeley Student Food Collective since my time at Berkeley, where I have served on the board for two years as the Director of Policy (2018-2019) and the Director of Membership (2017-2018), continuing to use many of the leadership skills I learned at Besant during my time on Student Government while also fighting for food justice and sovereignty in the Bay Area!

Also remaining dear to my heart after leaving Besant is the knowledge that a strong community fosters strong individuals who act with individual responsibility and collective accountability. That being said, I have found a strong community in the Berkeley Student Cooperative, a housing cooperative where I have lived with 123 other students, cooking together, cleaning together, and gathering weekly for all house councils for the last year and a half.

Much of what I learned during my time at Besant Hill has remained with me, and I look forward to visiting soon! ♦

ALUMNI UPDATES

ALUMNI CAMPUS VISITS

Nina de Creeft Ward '52
 Marion Miller Martin '57
 Raymond Neutra '57
 Jan Caldwell Thorpe '60
 Terry Elguera '60 • Marion "Ruth" Weil '60
 William Kaplan '63 • Ken Tennen '66
 James Li • Ulrich Kerick '93-'94
 Jesse Kaplan '00
 Thibbodee (Top) Honglawan '08

ARTHUR HUGHES

Dear Friends & Family,

Our memorial gathering in Washington to celebrate Marni Hoyt's life (Kate Hughes Rinzler's '55 daughter) was held after the Folklife Festival's "Social Power of Music" concert. The concert honored Pete Seeger's contributions at the "Rinzler Stage" outside the Smithsonian Castle. Here is the full schedule for the Folklife Festival: festival.si.edu/schedule. The Seeger concert ended at 2:30, so our Marni event was after that.

Lanie & I stayed at the Holiday Inn

Washington Capitol, 550 C Street SW, arriving Friday. It was walking distance to the Festival.

Thank you to all who were able to join us.

Best regards,

Arthur

NINA WARD '52

Is busy with her clay work and printmaking. She is still a long-time member of the Happy Valley Foundation Board of Trustees and added that Portia and Alex are doing a wonderful job!

DAVID CHRISTENSEN '55

Is living in Port Townsend, Washington and currently working with Port Townsend High School as a mentor. It has given him time to learn and explore current high schools and high school students. He is working with a group called "Skillmation" and wrote an article for them called Post-Secondary Options for Seniors at PTHS.

BRUCE BLOMGREM '64

Is living "his best life." I, together with Kim Garner (also an alumna of Happy Valley), are back and forth between San Diego and Florida.

AL FRAZIER '91 (FORMERLY CROSBY)

Al is living in Seattle. Even he is surprised that his life's work has led him to help the homeless. "Being on the front lines is a surreal trip most days." It is hard, mentally tasking work, but he finds the work challenging and worthy of pride. He goes to bed every night tired and not sure how or why he continues to work in this field, but then he wakes up ready to dive in all over again. The homeless he works for may never know his struggle, but he doesn't mind as he has made their lives better, if even in small ways.

ERIC TOOKE '94

Is living in Arizona and is having a great

PABLO ARIMANY '15 AND MICHELLE WIDMER '15 IN THAILAND



time spending time in the outdoors with family and at play with his vintage Bronco. When he made the purchase, the dealer had all the original owner paperwork. The original owner was the Pollock/Zalk family. He had a handwritten note from them to another former owner. As Eric said, "When I realized this, I did some research as the name was odd. I was shocked to learn that the truck I bought 40+ years after the original purchase was owned by an HVS alum/board member. Small world ... and a Bronco meant to stay in the Happy Valley Family!"



LINDSEY SOLEIMANI '00

(FORMERLY MASSARELLA)

Is "busy raising 2 crazy boys and has just joined the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Santa Barbara County." She loves the work and feels

the work CASA does is so important.

YURI HOWARD '13

Is living in Los Angeles and recently married. He is still playing basketball and is an Artist as well. "Sir NZEUSSEU" is his producer name. He is also a Mentor; he mentors a lot of kids in basketball, so his life is busy with music and life in general. He is just using his testimony to save one life at a time. Yuri is also a shoe designer. He has been working on it for quite some time and finally, an Italian company emailed to give him a shot. Yuri is very active with youth and has dedicated his work to help out children. He currently is developing a project with Metta World Peace to give back in Cameroon and expand his brand in Africa.

ALLY FITZMAURICE '14

Is living in Oakland now and managing commercial office buildings for work. She says it is a lot of fun. In her free time, she says she has taken up rock climbing now that her volleyball days are done (for now!).

NICK DEMETRIADES '14

Served four years in the Marine Reserves, graduated college, and currently is working away at a startup and a nonprofit. He feels Portia will be a great leader!

MOUSSA SY '14

Moved to Syracuse to attend Syracuse University for his Master's degree. He joined a lab where he will be conducting research on calcium ion batteries. Moussa and some friends also started a company called Dalilou Energie. Their goal is to help villages have access to energy through solar power and batteries in Africa. Currently, they are working in Mali, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso.

DANIEL WALLOCK '14

Is living in New York City and currently working for a market-leading beauty and hair-care company. He works directly with the CEO managing the Digital Marketing Operations.

PAM QUENZER '14

Has been in NYC for just over a year. She just started her Master's in Global Affairs with a concentration in Transnational Security at NYU and is really enjoying it so far.

ILANA ARIEL '14

After Besant Hill, Ilana spent one year at Hendrix College, then transferred to Blinn College, a junior college in Brenham, Texas. She spent three years there, obtaining an Associate's Degree in Theatre Arts. Afterward, she transferred to the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, where she is currently studying and will be completing her Bachelor's in Theatre Arts, with a concentration in Performance and a minor in English. She lives in Denton with her lovely cat, Zuko. She is hoping to pursue voiceover acting, doing voices for animation, video games, audiobooks, commercial work, and the like. Her end goal is to work for a video game company.

FAITH ROSE '14

Is living in Ojai doing psychic medium work as well as massage therapy. She runs her own practice and her own business and specifically helps people who have pain trapped in their bodies from past experiences, specifically relating to trauma, relationships, etc. She is able to see the pain in the body and remove it. For her psychic medium work, she does what she always did when she attended Besant Hill, she talks to the spirits every day and connects them to their loved ones who want to talk to them. She does a lot of practice around that gift and makes sure those who are seeking her gift be open-minded, as sometimes this will be very triggering for some people. She specifically helps people who want to gain clarity.

MICHELLE WIDMER '15

I attached a picture of us, it was taken while we were in Bangkok. We actually started our trip to Bangkok and then made our way to the islands, where we visited, Koh Samui, Koh Phangan, and Koh Tao. We explored the islands and snorkeled a lot! After that we flew up to Chiang Mai, where we did a trek in the rainforest, and even got to swim with some elephants! During the trek, we stayed with local people who live very simply in a hut in the rainforest. And our last spot was called Pai, a smaller town

also in the North of Thailand. We had a great time and it was nice to see Pablo again after three years! Even though we haven't seen each other for a few years it felt like we have just seen each other!

OLIVIA BILES '15

I am currently in school at Loma Linda University for Dietetics. I am very much passionate

about food and health education and management.

MAX WANG '15

I am working on my FINAL THESIS FILM in Los Angeles right now. I am about to graduate in September. Trying to work hard every day and get everything done as soon as possible.

SIMEON HU '16

Recently finished a film he shot on the Happy Valley land. He is currently in China this fall, having a gap semester to work a little bit and take some time off to get ready for graduation. He found this summer was really interesting because he connected with several friends from BHS. He found It was very cool to catch up with everyone!

TRAVIS CHAN '16

Is currently in his senior year of college. He is still planning to pursue a medical career and hopes to get into medical school after college. He misses the community and that feeling and warmth of home.

AARON BERNHARD '16

Is in school at the University of San Francisco studying architecture.

ELIZABETH SNETT '16

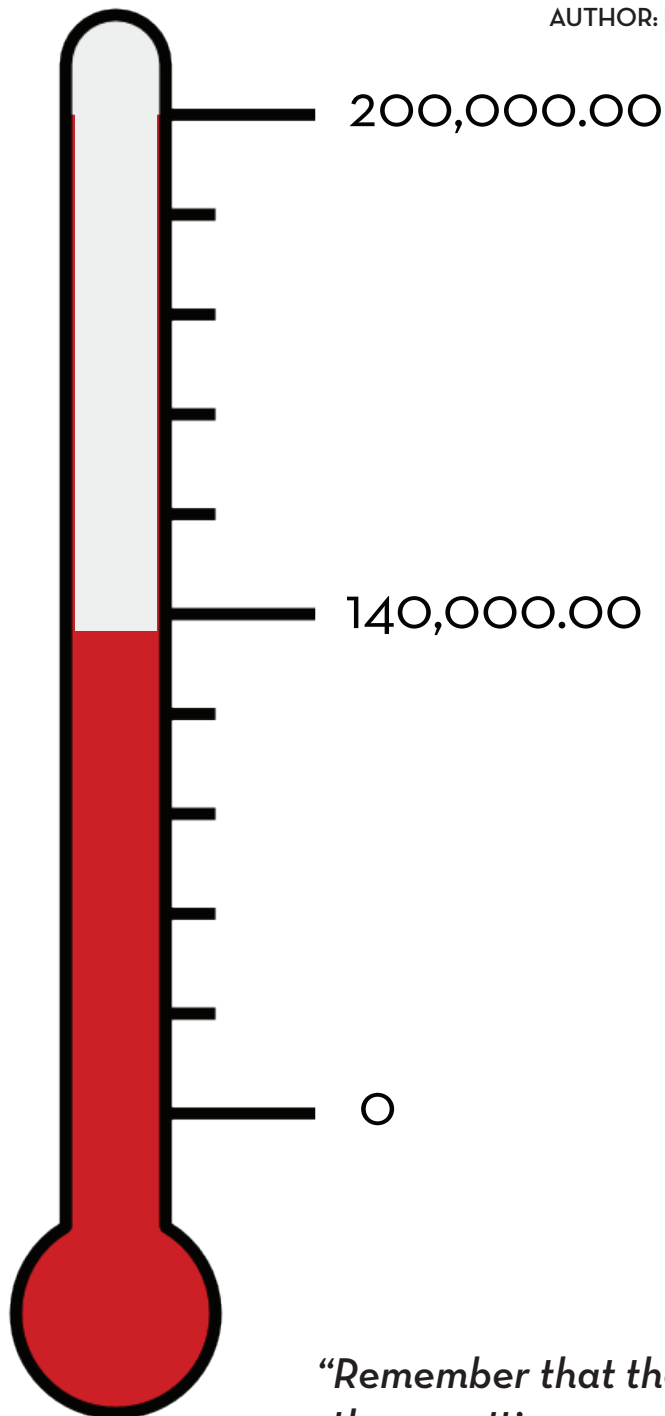
Is doing well at Kent in her senior year. Her junior year was a great experience of learning/growing. She got the chance to study abroad in Italy for a semester, then New York. While in New York, she interned at Adam Selman (a small fashion design house). She really enjoyed the internship and decided to stay with the company for the summer, while also working at Nordstrom Men's. She has decided to take the BFA degree path. It means she will be dedicating her senior year to making a 6/8 thesis piece collection. She shared that Fashion Design has been a great choice for her and has flourished in a creative environment. She is grateful for getting the chance to study at Besant and carries fond memories of attending the school. ♦



JORGE URIBE AND WIFE AT THEIR DAY OF THE DEAD CELEBRATION

ANNUAL FUND UPDATE

AUTHOR: KATHY ZOTNOWSKI



It's been an exceptional start to our 2019-20 Annual Fund Campaign: "Giving Like There's No Tomorrow." Kicked off by generous contributions from our alumni, especially John S. Brown, Jr. from the Class of 1967, a special Matching Challenge to grandparents past and present by current grandfather Andrew Hixon, and our Faculty & Staff, the campaign is "trending" in the words of "Generation Z." The HVF Board of Trustees and Current Parents jumped in during Family Weekend and brought us to just over the half-way mark. Our annual "Contest Between the Classes" begins in January and we're seeking out parent volunteers to assist in building the participation percentages that are so vital when soliciting foundations and granting organizations. Giving to the Annual Fund opens doors for our students, providing even more educational opportunities immediately in the year that the funds are raised. We couldn't do it without our entire community giving as much as it does. We are grateful.

With appreciation,
Your Annual Fund Team

"Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more."

-H. Jackson Brown Jr.

2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT

It is hard to believe that we passed the two-year anniversary of the Thomas Fire on December 4. Last year at this time, thanks to our alumni, current families, faculty and staff, friends of the school, and HVF Board Trustees, we were able to meet the \$50,000 match from alumna Marion Weil '60 toward the Dr. Randy Bertin Legacy Fund. Additional gifts through the end of the fiscal year put us over the goal and over \$250,000! It is with the deepest gratitude that we thank each and every community member who generously donated. Whether it was a gift to the Fire Fund, or our Annual Fund Campaign: Rising from the Ashes, a capital contribution or in-kind donation, each and every gift ensured that our students continued to receive the extraordinary educational experiences found only in the Happy Valley ... "happiness doubled by wonder!"

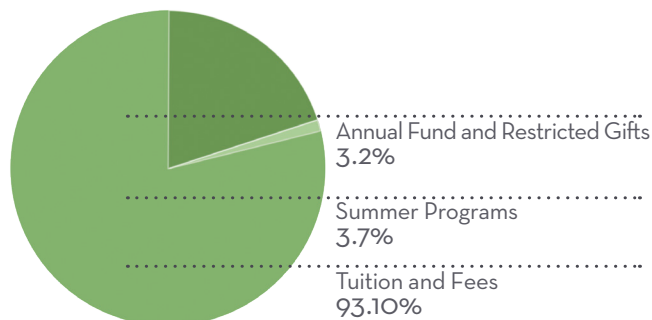
Thank you.

Kathy Zotnowski

Director of Development & Alumni Relations

REVENUE

ANNUAL FUND
\$202,359.00



EXPENSES

49%
INSTRUCTION &
OPERATIONS

43.5%
SALARIES
& WAGES

7.5%
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, 2018, and June 30, 2019, and includes all gifts made to the Annual Fund, all capital drives and restricted gifts during the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

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

Heritage Club

John S. Brown, Jr.
Marion Miller Martin
Mary Myers
Mary Keith Osborn
Kate Hughes Rinzler
Lee Sanders
Marion Weil

Anacapa Level \$20,000 and above

John S. Brown Jr.,
In honor of the Class of
'57
Marion Weil

Topa Topa Level \$10,000—\$19,999

Kazuya Kawamata
Martha & Ronald Doornink,
In honor of Randy Bertin
Xiao Yi Yan & Ling Xia Gu
Qiuling & Qingyi Zhu

BHS Benefactor \$5,000—\$9,999

Grandparents of
Marie Herron
Akiko & Yasumasa Saito

Founders Circle \$2,500—\$4,999

Anonymous
Kristen & Peter Althausen
Kurumi Anami
Dr. Randy & Karen Bertin
SeungChaul Her
Nadio No & Joseph Kim
Alix Marcaccini

Head's Circle \$1,000—\$2,499

Anonymous
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Anne & Tony Thacher
Jan Caldwell Thorpe &
Larry Thorpe
Liping Zhang & Jianli Wang
Tracey Weisberg In honor
of Randy Bertin &
Megan Walton
George Winston

BHS Patrons \$500—\$999

Anonymous
Anonymous
In honor of Judy & Bob
Stix
Nicole & Chandler Buie
Gail Cottman
Kelly & Kevin Henschel
Gobind & Siri Khalsa
Kristen Kaschub
Ari Krantz & Margo Kushel
Claire Noyes Lewis
Wade Lyle
Christina Morelli
Ken Tennen
Megan Walton &
Kim Reichenbach
Kathy Zotnowski &
Philip Nemy

*“I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought,
and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.”*

—Gilbert K. Chesterton

BHS Donors Circle

\$250 - \$499

Oliver Althoff

In honor of David Anderson

Lynn & Devan Beck

Patty & Dave Cosby

Colin Daigre

Lanyard Dial

Richard Ehrman

Lila Francese

Mark Freiborg

Lisa Anctil & Nestor Geronimo

Mark Haller

Mellanie & Chet Hilgers

Natasha Lavine & Mark Aronica

Brian McColgan

Rossy Martinez & Rene Ochoa

Maureen Milligan

Fred Rothenberg

Brian Skaggs

Betsy Stix

Nina Ward

In honor of my mother,

Alice de Creeft, who taught

at HVS

Michael Lombardo &

Charles Ward

BHS Friends Circle

\$1 - \$249

Anonymous

Anonymous

In honor of Bip Sokol

Anonymous

In honor of Megan's house

James Adams

Mariam AlZaabi & Adel Alraqam

Kimberly Berry

Susan Bruce

Dan Call

Carmen Cantor

Fran Chamberlain

Sheila & Sidney Cohn

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V. Gallia

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Yurika Gomez

Jesse Grantham

Alan Greenberg

Lori Haleen

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Adrian Sweet Hovard

In honor of Marion Weil &

her generosity

Tony Huang

Douglas Jessup

Gerald Johnson

In honor of Lucas Johnson

Juana Juarez

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Thomas Keen

Melanie Krinsky

In honor of Rebecca Krinsky

Julianna Lamb

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Tessie Morgan

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Neutra

Mary Keith Osborn

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Sheryl & Kevin Wallace

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Marion Weil

Dane Whinnery & Dani Shriver

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Jesse Kaplan

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In honor of Rebecca Krinsky

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Trader Joes Newbury Park

Ventura Hay Co.

Vons Ojai

Jeffrey Zurofsky

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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

(805) 646-4343 Ext. 131

[kzotnowski@besanthill.org](mailto: kzotnowski@besanthill.org)

www.besanthill.org

**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 (kzotnowski@besanthill.org).

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



Artist: Sophia G. '20

Sophia, Palo Alto, California, uses her art to express her perception of reality and the beauty she sees around her. Art has been a constant in her life to express the things she believes when words could not suffice. The concept behind this series is the ideal of humans living in harmony with the world around us.