outside of comfort zones
finding courage, challenge-by-choice, and seeing different points of view

UPDATES | ALUMNI PROFILES | FACULTY
FALL 2019

The Blue & Gray is an annual publication of Friends Academy, a co-educational independent day school located in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts. Friends Academy serves students from Early Childhood through eighth grade. The Sally Borden Program is a part of the Friends Academy community.

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BECAUSE IT’S IMPORTANT.
As a part of the FA commitment to the environment, the BLUE & GRAY is printed on post-consumer paper with soy-based inks.
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Stepping out of comfort zones at FA.
08 | building program
New work on the Farmhouse and Middle School Science updates.

The "Graduation Scream" is an opportunity for matriculating eighth graders to release nervous energy before the ceremony and get excited for their culminating event. It’s also become a fun tradition!

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Dear Friends,

The 2018-19 school year began by welcoming our historic Morgan Street Bell back to campus and was punctuated by a successful re-accreditation process. Our faculty and staff had spent the prior year pushing past their own comfort zones through the scrutiny and evaluation of the work we do here.

The visiting team from the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE) consisted of six educators from peer schools. The team spent three days meeting with community members and visiting classrooms, recess, car line, All-School Meeting and every nook and cranny around campus. They then compared the hundreds of pages that we composed in our Self Study with the lived experience that they observed in their time with us. Opening the letter from AISNE in late June that began with “Congratulations!” was both welcome news and a fitting end to a comprehensive and vital process.

As with most things, with endings come new beginnings. Building from the recommendations of the visiting team, we now turn our attention to considering what is next for Friends Academy. Three questions will frame our investigation: What aspects of Friends Academy should we protect? What elements should we renovate? What new pieces should we create? These questions will be the basis of focus group conversations with the faculty and current families. We also look forward to eliciting the input of alumni, former families, and friends of the school through online surveys later this fall.

In addition to these communication vehicles, please know that I am always happy to set up a personal conversation. Whether in-person or remotely, I welcome the opportunity to hear from you as we seek to grow, push boundaries, and form a compelling vision for Friends Academy together.

Most sincerely,

Ben Kennedy
Head of School
PUSHING BOUNDARIES

STEPPING OUT OF COMFORT ZONES AT FRIENDS

KELLY PELISSIER

As Friends Academy continues to grow, our school is continually looking at ways in which we can not only stay current, but also push through boundaries as innovators. It’s a delicate balance between respecting tradition, building on what already works, and understanding what our actual boundaries are. There are all kinds of boundaries, and our recent Self Study for our AISNE certification allowed us to dive into both reflection and goal setting. The exercise reminded us what an amazing place this is and how we continue to move forward. As educators and parents, our hope is that our children will become independent thinkers who feel supported while they seek this independence.

“People talk a lot about the need for “boundaries,” but what does this word really mean? As a parent, you can think of a boundary as the line you draw around yourself to define where you end and where your child begins. This isn’t always easy. And let’s face it, kids push the boundaries every day, all the time. They are wired to test us and see how far they can go; it’s in their nature.”

For over 200 years, Friends Academy has made it our nature to see how far we can go. From our new summer program expeditions to faculty grants to foreign countries, we strive to enable our students, our faculty, our alumni, and our community to see how they can go further.

Pushing a boundary might mean asking a question in a Middle School advisory group after watching a documentary on anxiety, or it might mean volunteering to talk about a book you read in front of the whole school during Book Buzz. As a school, we push boundaries by providing training for teachers in Orton-Gillingham techniques so they can better serve students with language-based learning challenges, facilitating a diversity leadership conference for administrators, and donating tons of organic vegetables to a local food pantry. It’s about identifying our comfort zones and asking ourselves if we can grow by stepping outside of them.

You’ll find that this edition of the Blue & Gray highlights the stories of the Friends Academy community and their commitment to both exploring and pushing boundaries. From self-discovery to facing fears, from opening doorways to long-distance online tutoring, we hope you’ll enjoy a glimpse into the work that keeps us moving forward.

1https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/parental-roles-how-to-set-healthy-boundaries-with-your-child/
Parental Roles: How to Set Healthy Boundaries with Your Child by Debbie Pincus, MS LMHC

Left: Cuttyhunk Island during FA Summer Programs Expedition Southcoast, where campers spend the week canoeing and hiking the coastal areas and islands of southeastern New England.
It is often said that buildings don’t make a program. I couldn’t agree more. From my first experience with Friends Academy, it was clear that the human beings who inhabit our indoor and outdoor spaces are what make all the difference for our children. To hear my own children cheer when the answer to their question is, “Yes, tomorrow is a school day” is to know the power and impact of the human community at FA.

At the same time, our built environment has a profound impact on the human beings who inhabit these spaces. The scale of a structure, the color of the paint, the shape of a room, the style of the furniture, all influence how we feel and what we might experience. In a 2012 interview, Martha Thorne, the Executive Director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize and Dean in the architecture school at IE University in Madrid, describes good design as “intentioned. It somehow touches the people who use it and live in it... it somehow touches the human soul.”

It is in this spirit – and thanks to the generosity of a group of leadership donors – that the ell of the Farmhouse received an essential renovation this summer. This partial renovation of the oldest building on campus sought to honor the spirit and history of the structure while at the same time working to inspire and support the children and adults of today in our Early Childhood program.
The renovation brought the following improvements to the Farmhouse:

- A new and relocated kitchen offers students and teachers a safe and secure space to experience the joys of making food.
- Doubling the size of the cubbie area facilitates gear changes for the kind of outdoor exploration for which the Farmhouse is known.
- Increased capacity to better handle interest in the popular program.
- An enlarged bathroom and handwashing opportunities for children.
- The open floor plan makes it easier for students to gather for snack and meal-time, improves the supervision capabilities for the teachers, and provides a flexible community space.
- A new post and beam entry offers shelter to those entering and exiting the building as well as a covered outdoor space for the playground.
- An improved, handicap accessible entry allows for easier snow removal and a more attractive approach to the Farmhouse.
- While preserving the special magic and scale of the space, the renovation has also allowed us to see this structure in a new light. It has been wonderful to see the reactions of students and families as they enter the Farmhouse. Teachers, students, and families alike are excited by the possibilities.

So, while vibrant, contemporary facilities do not make Friends Academy, they do extend and enrich the fine work that is going on across our program. It is in this spirit that we will also undertake a renovation of the Middle School science lab next summer.

Left: Demolition in the Farmhouse required a bit of T.L.C. while removing the chimney and relocating the kitchen. A new open floor plan greets visitors just inside the new entryway.
The Middle School science lab has served Friends Academy well since the 1980s. During that time, however, science education has evolved to a point where the fixed nature of our current classroom stands as a barrier to the work that the teachers aspire to do with their students. Gutting the existing room, pushing the fixed lab elements to the perimeter, and creating a flexible floor plan will facilitate precisely the kind of teacher that a superior science education demands.

In addition, the physical location of the sciences, tucked away down a narrow hallway, also doesn’t accurately reflect their place in a Friends Academy education. Part of this renovation, then, will also explore different ways to connect the exciting work going on in the sciences with the rest of the school. As a progressive school with a commitment to the process of learning, what better way to make the process of learning visible than by showing students at work in their lab!

The buildings alone will never make Friends Academy, but they are an important teaching tool for our dynamic educators. The work on the Farmhouse and the impending work in the sciences, therefore, are about offering our incredible teachers the spaces they need to inspire. These renovations will continue to open doors for this and future generations of FA students.

Left: Renderings of the new Middle School science area feature a view through the hallway, allowing both natural light and onlookers to peek in.
TIME WELL SPENT

BY JAMIE ROSS-CORY

At Friends Academy, education is both joyful and challenging. With the pressure of high-stakes testing such as MCAS, schedules in American public schools aren’t always able to take the developmental needs of childhood into consideration.

We use time in ways that allow students to develop fully and come to understand themselves and the world around them.

The daily life and experiences of a student at Friends go beyond core academic subjects and allow our teachers to prioritize the needs of the whole child. Knowing that children have a strong urge to explore their curiosities and build strong relationships with their peers and the adults around them, we prepare the school environment for active learning each day. Without the pressure of high-stakes testing, we are able to create time for students to connect socially while engaging them in classroom activities designed to build reading, reasoning, investigating, writing, reflecting, and problem-solving skills, creating a supportive community of learners. The purpose of our work is to educate children to realize their full potential as citizens and diverse human beings.

Morning Meetings in Lower School and Advisory in Middle School help children know themselves and each other, listen carefully, respect the ideas of others, and set the stage for the academic day. Our students learn from themselves and each other as much as they do from teachers. Taking time to share ideas and stories of experiences outside of school allows us to get to know each other better and creates a support structure to help during challenging times. Our children learn how to create routines and habits that will be used for a lifetime of active learning. Flex periods in Middle School meet in Advisory...
groups, so building a support structure for learning is evident. Meeting times also include celebrations of accomplishments and progress. While Meetings and Advisory are sometimes used to examine work for each child’s Learning Portfolio and prepare for Student-Led Conferences, they also provide a routine for games and activities that meet the social-emotional development of our learners from early childhood through eighth grade. Students leave Friends Academy with a strong sense of self and responsibilities as citizens of a community.

Time for reflection is important and appreciated at Friends. As we understand that this is also one of our most powerful forms of assessment, children of all ages are taught the language and habits of reflection. Reflection journals, self-assessment checklists, and rubrics are some of the examples you will see when visiting classrooms or presenting at Student-Led Conferences. Talking openly about the process of learning teaches students that things don’t always work out the first time we try. We often have to revise, recalculate, and reconsider our approach to a project which deepens learning. Reflection is something that can be done individually, in small groups, as a whole class, or with the support of the teacher and allows students to know their individual needs as a learner. It is amazing to witness our students leading their own conferences with parents and reflect on their progress over time.

Allowing time for movement and the physical development of each child is important. Physical Education classes with Mr. Williams and Ms. Furtado aren’t the only times that the physical needs of students are taken into consideration. The addition of stand up desks in most classes are just one example of how we adapt the classroom environment to meet the physical needs of students. Scheduling work periods and flexible groupings that allow students to circulate around the room and learn in different ways respects the physical development of children over time. Many classrooms integrate mindfulness practices that provide students time to understand their breathing and connects them to their body, resulting in a more productive work environment.

Lower School art teacher Mrs. Cogliano starts each class with a mindful minute to help ease the transition from one environment to another. She has been impressed with the improvement she’s seen in how students use studio time. The teachers in our Early Childhood program value movement and exploration. Wandering Wednesdays find our youngest students exploring our campus and leading new discoveries and inquiries. This time outside is often a springboard for learning back at the Farmhouse.

As students come to better understand their responsibilities and needs as learners, they are able to become leaders of their own learning. Time for academic choice opportunities allow students to dive deep into topics that interest them,
while developing the essential skills of each grade level. This year, students in Ms. Conlon’s fourth grade class used choice time for individual or group inquiry based projects. After modeling the process, routines, and expectations of inquiry-based projects, students explored a wide-range of topics and decided how they wanted to showcase their learning to their peers. Watching this time in action demonstrated the variety of learning styles in fourth grade.

“Allowing time for choice resulted in a more connected learning experience for all students because they inspired and learned from each other,” Ms. Conlon said. “I was there to provide a gentle push to expand ideas or offer support to those who needed it, but more often the students supported each other. Since they know each other so well, they were able to provide the direct feedback needed to improve their work or accomplish their goals.” Ms. Conlon noted that building time for academic choice is as important as direct instruction with the whole class or in small groups. Conferencing with students allowed her to check understanding and support development or ideas. Ms. Conlon explained that allowing time for sharing is important because it allows teachers and students to offer advice and inspiration can be found in the work of others. Student projects ranged from slideshows, creative writing pieces, videos, formal research reports, and demonstrations. Topics were varied. Some took an advocacy approach, while others explored problems that needed to be solved. Teaching others what they learned clearly demonstrated a deep level of understanding, engagement, and joy of learning.

Students in grades four and five have a weekly activity period that is based on interest and is self selected. Activities range from Writer’s Workshop, Knitting, Kindness Club, Woodshop, Improv Class, and even Dogs Galore. The projects in each group were brainstormed and developed by the students with support from teachers. Some took on a service project. For example, Dogs Galore began as advocacy that resulted in a connection with Lighthouse Animal Shelter. Students made dog toys and presented their learning at All-School Meeting. Recess is a time of social learning and often a time to practice conflict resolution with peers. It is important to be actively observing students during recess since it can be an emotional time for children. Socially, non-academic times can be worrisome for students as they negotiate rules of play, handle disappointments when friends want to do something different, as well as being a time of joy when a game goes well or they connect with a friend. Second and third grade students learned the importance of “laws” and roles of citizens when they turned a section of our playground into forts. Working together, students built structures and experienced the challenges of weather and other human beings. Problem solving resulting in a set of rules for the fort area and an understanding that each day may present the need to rebuild.
Working through frustrations and creating solutions was exciting to watch over time.

The hours after the academic day ends continue to be busy at Friends. A large portion of our older students participate in the many athletic offerings and learn the value of hard work and endurance, as well as the responsibilities of being a student athlete while representing Friends Academy. After-School Enrichment opportunities are another way students can expand their interests. Woodshop, science, math, improv and cooking classes are certainly steady favorites, but we love that teachers and community members can offer ideas for courses based on their own interests. The hours after the school day ends continue to allow for connection and the joy of learning.

We pay attention to the needs of children when planning and pacing our instruction. We know the needs of a four-year old are quite different from a seven-, twelve-, or fourteen-year old, and opportunities are built around the capabilities, curiosity, and social-emotional needs of the children we serve.

Friends Academy students go to school for less time than public school students do.

**FALSE.**

The State of Massachusetts requires that elementary school students “are scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours of structured learning time per school year.” Friends Academy surpasses this and students receive a minimum of 1,155 hours of structured learning time each year.

When comparing the way we structure time to the typical public school, we find that simple yet mindful differences allow for balance; this is important for our students, our families, and our faculty.

How is that possible when Friends Academy school calendar typically begins after Labor Day, and ends in early June (AND does not make up snow days)?

**ANSWER:** Our school day is slightly longer than the average public school day. Except for Wednesdays, our school day runs from 8:05 a.m. to 3:05 p.m., and on Wednesdays our day goes from 8:05 a.m. to 2:10 p.m. (this allows for faculty meetings on Wednesday afternoons). Though the State of Massachusetts may require a public school to operate a minimum of 180 days, their days are shorter. At Friends Academy, this subtle time difference allows us to exceed this requirement in only 165 days while providing both a high caliber of education and a stable school community schedule.
How do you make connections with people you perceive to be different? This past fall, the seventh grade embarked on a six-week unit of study on cultural competence. Cultural competence is defined as, “The ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with persons from cultures and/or belief systems other than one’s own.” The goals of this unit were: 1) to know how to ask about difference, and 2) to learn how to navigate being uncomfortable. Our recently crafted Friends Academy statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion ends with the phrase, “By being vulnerable together, we will grow together.” In this same spirit, we provided information, tools, and practices that became a scaffold to support the students’ exploration of what can sometimes be uncomfortable or intimidating interactions. Doing this work together in a supported environment can empower students to build bridges and make connections with people within our own communities and from all over the world.

We began the unit with students answering the question, “How do you identify?” This gave students the opportunity to consider the many lenses of identity through which we see ourselves and others. Students filled in a graphic organizer of an identity chart that also allowed them to make connections between different aspects of their identities. As we discussed these identities, we also began to practice talking in ways that didn’t imply “good” or “bad” but instead were neutral observations.

Throughout the unit, guest teachers were invited to lead activities related to cultural competence. Susan Yao, our first guest speaker, used country music as an avenue for discussing how to respond to difference. Jonathan Felix taught a lesson about the human experience and connectedness. And Michael Williams taught a lesson about how we can understand and recognize implicit bias. These activities encouraged students to step outside of their comfort zone while being guided by teachers with specific areas of expertise and experiences.

Inspired by an inclusion expert, Ritu Bhasin, we introduced practical strategies for coming to better understand one’s identity that is not their own. She teaches the value in saying, “I’m sorry if this is going to come out wrong.” While seemingly a simple expression, the phrase acknowledges difference and, most importantly, expresses genuine interest. In a similar way, we practiced saying “Sorry, I don’t know a lot about X, can I please ask you about that?” an approach that empowers us to ask better questions.

Knowing the difference between “observation” and “inference” became useful during the second week when we watched a video of two people interacting where one
person was clearly making inferences about the other. In discussing the video, we talked about how the person was not trying to be offensive or rude to the other but, by making assumptions, the result was a negative experience for both people. The question became, how do we compassionately inquire about somebody’s identity? Students participated in another activity where they asked each other questions based on their identity charted. Afterward, they reflected on the following: “How did you feel asking?” and “What was it like being asked?”

Using these new strategies, we then asked students to interview faculty members, as asking someone about their cultural identities was an important part of this exploration. Faculty and staff volunteered to be interviewed by students, sharing elements of their own cultural identities. Interviewing someone about identity is harder than it might seem, and we encouraged students to work through this challenge. Followed by a journal reflection exercise around the question: “What did you learn and how does this change the way you think?” From there, students took on a broader reflection project by writing a letter to themselves.

We soon realized how valuable this unit was to our other interdisciplinary units on world cultures and geography, particularly as they relate to country research explored in both social studies and science. Finding opportunities to reexamine our pedagogy was important, and slowing down the class to “check” for cultural competency was invigorating work.

Most recently, the entire seventh grade class visited two places of worship in New Bedford to build upon these skills and immerse in an examination of world religions. We visited a Buddhist Meditation Center on Pleasant Street and Grace Episcopal Church on School Street. Learning about the practice of meditation, learning about day-to-day experiences in different faiths, and seeing the physical space of each religion and practice pushed the students toward a better understanding of the new and unfamiliar.

We continue to find ourselves humbled and impressed by the willingness with which our Middle School students approach this difficult curriculum. We, as teachers, also recognize that cultural competency is not just for students and that we have grown through the experience as well. Cultural competency, and the tools for understanding and appreciating difference, are important for our entire Friends Academy community.
The reform of dyslexia screening and identification in Massachusetts and states across the country is fueling a wave of demand for dyslexia intervention. As states move away from treating language-based learning differences at an episodic level and instead look toward systematic early identification, families and schools are searching for resources and services for these learners. Where do we, as an independent school with great expertise in learning diversity, fit into this framework? Friends Academy is driven by its mission which emphasizes service in our community, social justice, and global citizenry. This mission fuels our ability to serve a variety of learners and share our expertise with the greater community. We began considering our role by asking the questions:

*How do we, as a progressive school, continue thinking forward when our Sally Borden Program is thriving and operating at full capacity?*

*How can we serve others in our community and provide outreach to the many families who need our help?*

*What opportunities can we create for learners who cannot access our campus?*

Our answer to these questions came to fruition this year when the Sally Borden Program launched Sally Borden Connect, an extension program that aims to serve learners outside of our enrolled population. We offer support in the form of dyslexia screening and educational assessments, in-person or online tutoring, and general guidance and support. Additionally, Sally Borden Connect customizes professional development workshops and in-services for teachers and schools with the goal of bringing accurate information about dyslexia and best practices to schools.

As we continue to emerge as a school looked to as experts in our field, we are developing our presence on the dyslexia landscape. With 10 years of experience under our belt in an integrated program, which is quite unique in the industry, we have a lot to offer. Sally Borden Connect is also able to support our alumni through in-person or online tutoring as they go to high school and college. Even in the workforce, Sally Borden Connect is a resource offering feedback sessions and coaching in writing. We work with learners of all ages, including adults.

If you or someone you know would benefit from Sally Borden Connect, or if you are an educator who would like to learn about our professional development programs, we would love to connect and are here to help in any way we can. You may contact Laura Velazquez at sallyborden@friendsacademy1810.org for more information.
Fish swim in schools, birds fly in flocks, buffalo travel in herds. It’s safe for them, it’s easy, and it’s comfortable, so why should they branch out? For them in most cases, they shouldn’t. They should stay safe and secure with what they know, because they know it works. As human citizens of the world, things are a bit different. If we stay with what we know and stay in our comfort zones, we’ll never change, we’ll never grow, we’ll never experience our lives to the fullest. We have to take risks. We have to step outside of our comfort zones.

Taking risks is a daunting prospect for many of us though. We know that leaping without looking isn’t a great idea. If we plan though, and take calculated risks, the benefits can be amazing. That’s what our outdoor education program is all about. On our camping trips and through our challenge course, we work with students to help them push past the fears and limits that they put on themselves so that they can reach their immediate goals, and gain confidence to keep on reaching for them throughout life.

This isn’t about looking past fear and running into danger. It’s about looking at the task at hand – sleeping out in a tent for the first time, trying the Giant’s Swing on the challenge course - and working with your leaders and peer group to find the best way to move forward. One that’s safe, one that’s comfortable, and one that acknowledges your fears and helps you to overcome them.

We work with our students, and outside groups ranging from scout troops and elementary schools, to colleges and even businesses. There’s always a lesson to be learned about ourselves, our group, and our ability to work with others. Come check us out.
Summer Programs at Friends Academy had their meager beginnings in 2003 as a two-week offering called “Summer Friends.” Now, over 16 years later, we offer over 60 different types of camps for children throughout the South Coast. Since our programs are open to all children in the community, not just FA students, we engage local families in so many wonderful ways. In fact, each year on average, 2-3 students from our Summer Programs enroll at Friends Academy!

Our core programs are still our most popular offerings in that they offer full-day engagement and grow along with our campers.

**Little Friends** creates a nurturing first camp experience for our preschool-aged children, pacing the day so that activities alternate between active and quietly passive – helping each child navigate the day more successfully. **Summer Friends**, the camp that started it all, is both fun and educationally theme based. The small group approach allows K-3 campers to build friendships and lasting connections with an emphasis on personal attention. From Adventures Across America to Ooey Gooey Science Week, our campers always find something new to discover. **Adventure Friends** is an outdoor program that makes extensive use of our 65-acre campus; from the ropes course to the river and fields, the program is highlighted by the initiative games and low elements of our unique ropes course. These campers in grades 4-6 learn outdoor cooking skills, map and compass skills, knots and lashings, canoe and water safety, and overall how they can enjoy, appreciate, and conserve the outdoors. **Survival Friends** is offered to campers in grades 5-7 and teaches skills that will help them feel confident in their ability to survive in the woods if the need ever arose. Questions like: How do you find water in the woods when there are no rivers or lakes? How do you make sure it’s safe to drink? Can you start a fire without matches? Survival skills covered in this camp include proper care and safe handling of knives, how to construct traps and snares, shelter building, and first aid.
Recently we’ve been offering our new **Expedition Programs** to older campers. Teens entering grades 8-11 were able to participate in Expedition Southcoast, Cycle the State, or our Penikese Island Retreat. These outdoor-adventure overnight programs take campers to various destinations and create opportunities for these emerging young adults to push through boundaries of endurance, creativity, and self-sustainability.

Our other camp categories are numerous and include areas of creativity and the arts, technology, academic growth, athletics, cooking, and more.

“What I like is that I know my daughter is going to connect with others in a more meaningful way than at some bigger camp. She’ll have fun, learn something, and I feel comforted by the smaller groups. It’s challenging with two working parents to find ways to engage our kids during the summer months, and I’m so glad these programs are here.”

These summer offerings allow us to engage with the community in that our staff is made up of both FA faculty, neighboring school faculty, and local business groups. We partnered with various organizations over the years, including Challenger Sports International Soccer, the Lloyd Center, Cuttyhunk Oyster Farms, and more. Do you have something you’d like to share with our community? Want to learn more about Friends over the summer months? Visit us online, and we hope to see you when the warmer weather comes back around!

[www.friendsacademy1810.org/summerprograms](http://www.friendsacademy1810.org/summerprograms)
Last summer, we were honored to receive the 2018 Faculty Enrichment Grant for our proposal to spend three weeks traveling through Mexico and Central America with a focus on history, culture, and ecosystems.

We left Boston the evening of June 18 and arrived in Mexico City at dawn. We spent three exciting and exhausting days in Mexico City, traveling north to Teotihuacan and south to Xochimilco. The food was delicious, but most memorably Emily tried lengua (tongue!) for the first time, and we both daringly ate caterpillars in a cave restaurant. We took long bus rides...
into central Mexico to spend a day each in beautiful Cholula, Puebla and Oaxaca City, during which time Nataly learned how to knit. We then flew to the coast of Quintana Roo, where our recuperation beach day got rained out. We traveled by bus through Belize to stay in Flores, a backpacker town in the northern part of Guatemala, and took an all-night bus to get to Antigua in the south. Finally, we traveled to Honduras where we stayed with Nataly’s family in Santa Rosa de Copán and made day trips to visit local attractions including La Campa Zipline, the highest canopy zipline in Central America! We had an overnight layover in Panama City and arrived home (tired and full of reverence for all we had done) the night of July 7.

We could talk at length about any single aspect of our trip, but here are a few of our most meaningful experiences that we wanted to share with our classes and community... (continued)
NATALY’S TOP 3 CULTURAL TAKEAWAYS

FRIDA KAHLO’S CASA AZUL

After our trip to Xochimilco we decided to visit La Casa Azul. La Casa Azul was the former home of the celebrated Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, located in the Coyoacán, Mexico. This was Kahlo’s childhood house, where she lived with her family until she married Diego Rivera. A visit to her home offers a glimpse into many aspects of her life. When walking through the house we realize how proud of her Mexican culture Kahlo was. From the small details of her cups in her kitchen, through the unique folk art hanging in her dining room. Everything in La Casa Azul hasn’t changed, and is in the same place Frida left it. That was one of the requirements Diego asked before donating the house and converting it into a museum. This is one of the must-visit Mexico City sights.

MAYAN RUINS (MEXICO, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS)

Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala are some of the lucky countries that possess the most mesmerizing Ruins.

We were lucky to visit four sites. On our trip, we started with the Teotihuacan pyramids, Teotihuacan meaning “the place where the gods were created.” Walking through the structures, we had the courage to climb the Pyramid of the Sun, which is the second largest pyramid in the Americas, and the third largest in the world.

Our next ruin stop was Cholula Puebla. The Cholula pyramid is actually the largest pyramid in the world, by volume, though it is just less than half the height of the great pyramid in Giza. Like many of the ancient structures from Mesoamerica, the great pyramid at Cholula hides layers and layers of older structures that were built over and replaced as different political groups went in and out of favor.

Next, we traveled from Flores to the Tikal. Tikal is the ruin of an ancient Mayan city, found deep in a rainforest in Guatemala. Our amazing guide told us how they stopped uncovering the structures because it was destroying valuable habitat that had formed on and around them. The site’s major structures include five pyramidal temples and three large complexes, often called acropoles; these presumably were temples and palaces for the upper class. Archaeologists recently discovered thousands more Mayan Ruins hidden under the rainforest at Tikal. We can’t wait to learn about this new and indescribable discovery!

And our last ruin stop was Copán Ruinas. Copán is an ancient Mayan city, located in modern-day western Honduras. The site consists of stone temples, two large pyramids, several stairways and plazas, tunnels, and a court for playing the Mayan ball game pok-ta-pok. A major difference that sets Copan apart from other
ruins we visited are the hieroglyphics that adorn the stairs of the temples. The Temple of the Hieroglyphic Stairway is a pyramid structure that has more than 2,000 glyphs embellished on a flight of 63 steps. It’s the longest ancient Maya inscription known to exist.

VOLADORES DE PAPANTLA
One of the most amazing dances in Mexico is done in the sky, around a huge tree trunk. Four brave men and women fling themselves off of it while the fifth plays the flute and drum at the top. The main goal of this incredible ceremony is to ask for rain to fall. The four people represent the elements of the indigenous world – air, fire, water, and earth, as well as the four cardinal points. They climb on top of an 18-40 meter high pole, and are secured with a rope tied to one of their feet. The fifth person balances on the top of the pole while playing a drum and flute. He performs without a rope or safety net. The dancers throw themselves backwards into the sky and slowly start their descent, making exactly 13 revolutions around the pole, thus representing the 52 year time span of the pre-Hispanic cosmic cycle (4 dancers X 13 revolutions = 52), after which a new sun is born and life begins again. We were lucky to be at Cholula’s zocalo to watch the tribe perform the ceremony. It was an incredible experience!

EMILY’S TOP 3 SCIENCE TAKEAWAYS
BROWN ALGAE IN TULUM
Along the eastern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula are several resort towns that rely on beach tourism for their local economies. After several busy days in central Mexico, we were excited for our day of leisure on the beach, but were surprised to find the beaches covered in piles of rotting algae. At our resort in Tulum, we learned that it is a specific type of brown algae called sargassum. Normally, sargassum is a free-floating brown algae that exists in the Sargasso Sea, a portion of the Atlantic Ocean around Bermuda created by a circular pattern of currents called a gyre. This sargassum forms free-floating ‘rafts’ that support entire fragile nursery ecosystems — some organisms live entire life cycles within these floating rafts. However, due to warming ocean
temperatures over the last decade, both ocean currents and the geographic origination of the sargassum are changing. The sargassum reaching Yucatan beaches is now originating off the coast of Brazil and has been washing up on Caribbean islands since 2011. Depending on economic resources, these tourist destinations are dealing with the algae in different ways, but it’s not just affecting tourism: marine animals like turtles can get stuck in the mats and are unable to reach the surface. After reaching the Gulf Coast, some sargassum gets caught in other currents and has traveled as far north as Cape Cod and Nova Scotia.

MANGROVES AT SIAN KA’AN BIOSPHERE
Just south of our resort in Tulum was a main entrance to the Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve, an UNESCO world heritage site whose land area alone is larger than the state of Rhode Island, but which also encompasses another 500 square miles of fragile marine ecosystems. As we set out in the morning for our tour, our spirits were dampened by miscommunications with our tour guide and the heavy foreboding storm clouds lingering from the previous day’s rain. The thought of spending the next six hours on a boat in the rain was less than thrilling! Fortunately, our guide Aldo was charismatic and accommodating, and the other couple on the tour were friendly and talkative. Soon enough the sun came out and we were blessed with a gorgeous day exploring the reserve.

One of the anthropological treasures of Sian Ka’an are the Mayan Canals that bisect the reserve’s vast mangrove forests and connect various architectural ruins. On our visit, we were lucky enough to be able to float down a boat-free portion of the canal, lazy-river style! Anthropologists believe that Mayans used wetlands for agriculture to support and feed their bustling populations in cities like Tikal and Chichen Itza. Soil analysis has shown that crops such as avocados and maize were once cultivated in similar wetlands across the Yucatan. Aldo pointed out some more contemporary buildings, and told us that until the late 1980s when the reserve was formed, the primary use of this land included farming coconuts, lobstering, and fishing.

Though we were only brought through a very small coastal portion of the reserve, Aldo knew just where to find several native species. My meagre attempt to keep an ongoing tally of all our sightings resulted in this list: brown pelican, frigate bird, great egret, tri-colored heron, common black hawk, yucatán woodpecker, great kiskadee, white ibis, saltwater crocodile, tern, dwarf mangrove, short red mangrove, american crocodile, manatee, bromeliads (air plants), banana orchids, little blue heron, perch, and snapper. As home to several fragile coastal and marine ecosystems with countless species of flora and fauna, Sian Ka’an is gravely threatened by ocean acidification and sea level rise. It is sad to think many of the species within this vast, breathtaking reserve will be unable to adapt to a rapidly changing climate, despite Mexico’s determined protections.

COFFEE PLANTATION
One major intention I had when planning this trip was to see and hear about some sort of farming or agriculture first-hand, and fortunately for me, Nataly’s hometown of Santa...
Rosa deCopan, happens to be the “coffee capital of Central America!” Outside of town, on the edge of mountain highway, sits the cafe and plantation Café Rural Seis Valles. We were given a private tour by the proprietor, who also happened to have been one of Nataly’s college professors! I was especially grateful for Nataly’s capable translations during this opportunity to “talk shop” with a farmer who has dedicated his career to understanding how climate change and ecological biodiversity are affecting his coffee-growing.

They explained how over the years it has become clear to many small growers in the local industry that using “conventional” methods to grow coffee produces a poorer-quality crop. In response to my questions about shifting seasons and crop failures, he noted how major rain patterns are shifting and the coffee growing season is changing. When it rains earlier in the year, the coffee plants become more susceptible to fungal infections that could potentially be devastating if not managed appropriately.

Because of this and other factors, he has dramatically shifted the way he operates his plantation over the last decade. One of the most important changes he made was to start growing more native trees to provide shade to his crops and habitat for other animals. Overall, the increasing biodiversity of his property has benefitted the yield and quality of the coffee he is able to produce. Another method he adopted is to spray crops by hand after major rains. He admits that it is more time consuming and costly to supplement his crops this way, but that overall he uses fewer fertilizers and pest control and limits how much will run-off into the environment.

We have already seen that as climate changes, the growing range of crops such as coffee is “creeping” to adjacent regions that have more suitable growing conditions – something we are seeing globally with other commercially important species such as wine grapes and maple trees. It is therefore all the more necessary for farmers like these to continue evaluating their methods and educating others to ensure the quality and longevity of their industry!
Jeanne McCullough joins Friends Academy as the Librarian/Library Media Specialist. Originally a high school English teacher, Jeanne went back to school to earn her Master’s degree in Library Science and has spent the last five years as a Children’s Librarian at Mattapoisett Public Library. While there, she enjoyed finding innovative ways to help children to connect with great books and find joy in learning about new things. She is excited to have the opportunity to continue this work within the Friends community.

Seema Vallone joined our staff this past year as the first grade teacher. She attended University of Ottawa, Canada, where she received her undergraduate degree followed by a postgraduate degree in Elementary Education. Upon moving to the U.S., Mrs. Vallone taught second and third grade while living on Long Island, N.Y. and later in Cranston, R.I. Most recently, she was a kindergarten teacher for eight years in Dartmouth. With a keen interest in teaching literacy skills, she pursued the Orton-Gillingham approach. She worked one-on-one with students in New Bedford while obtaining her OG certification. Mrs. Vallone feels very fortunate to be part of the FA family.

As an educator, she believes that nurturing the self confidence of each student is paramount. She strives to tailor opportunities for each child to succeed. With independent achievement, the children can identify themselves as integral members of our community.

Mrs. Vallone is a proud mother of two FA graduates, Nicholas and Anthony. She and her family enjoy skiing and travelling together. Her hobbies include yoga, running, cooking, and reading.
**Chrissy Farias** joined us as a Kindergarten teacher, and now teaches first grade. She worked previously as a pre-Kindergarten teacher at The Loft School in Marion for 10 years. In this cooperative preschool, she fell in love with teaching the “whole child” in partnership with parents. Chrissy believes that character education is as important as academic proficiency, and spends time teaching her students the value of cooperation, respect, and kindness while instilling a love of learning through play and hands-on activities. As a long-time parent in the Friends Academy community, Chrissy understands the benefits of a nurturing school environment and a strong parent-teacher relationship. Chrissy earned her Bachelor’s Degree from Endicott College in Beverly, MA and resides in Wareham. She enjoys spending time with her husband Eric and their two teenage children, Alyssa and Kyle, who are both graduates of Friends Academy.

**Susan Yao** joins us as the Head of Middle School. Originally from Massachusetts, she spent the past eight years as a Middle School Social Studies teacher in New York City. As a teacher, she pursued a Master’s Degree in School Leadership from Bank Street College and took on administrative responsibilities, such as serving as the Curriculum Coordinator for Social Studies in Grades 5-8. She and her husband Graham are also proud parents of two students, Abraham (Kindergarten) and Maya Lou (Early Childhood).

“As soon as I arrived on campus, I felt at home in the warmth of all of the faculty, staff, parents, and students that I met. Philosophically, I feel completely aligned with the school’s commitment to progressive education, to service, and to educating the whole child. I look forward to supporting adolescents through this exciting phase of their lives.”
I arrived at Friends Academy in fifth grade, a shy 10 year old. I was the smallest kid there, the new kid at school for the second year in a row. I was scared, not knowing if I had the right trapper keeper or highlighter set. I was greeted by a young, curly-haired teacher, by a warm, busy classroom. It was over a decade ago, but I remember flashes of that first year. My first friend’s yellow dog shirt, her kindness during Spanish class. Running my hands along those tile-lined walls, wondering if I’d ever get to make one. I remember, faintly, the background hum of the 2008 presidential election, the buzz of the first Black president.

I left Friends Academy in 2012, 14 years old. I didn’t want to leave the cozy nooks of Stites, didn’t want to hug my friends goodbye. We were smart enough to realize how lucky we were far before it ended. We knew it was extraordinary to have teachers that showed us who we were and what we were capable of. I still think back to Mr. Walach, the first
teacher who ever took my writing seriously. I credit Mr. Zine and Mrs. Pierce with gifting me an unshakable love of science with their curiosity and enthusiasm. But after four years there, it was time to go. I was off to Tabor, ushered in by the rallying cries of a second-term Obama presidency. I paid more attention this time, but I couldn’t vote. Without this power, the future seemed predestined, out of my control.

I left high school in 2016, the most recent election already raging. My first semester at UC Berkeley was a battleground, national debates fought with fire on our main plaza. I read everything I could get my hands on, watched every debate. I voted, for the first time in my life. On election night, I watched on the big screen they set up on campus, thronged by hundreds of my peers. Trump won and the campus erupted in protest. I skipped it, my disbelief not yet crystallized into anger. The next year, I joined the Daily Californian, my school newspaper, and started participating in the journalism I’d consumed so feverishly for years.

I’ve always been a writer, but I haven’t always been political. I used to groan when my step-dad put on NPR on my way to school. I preferred fantasy to non-fiction, preferred music to news clips. There is a reality, I’m sure, where I would’ve been happy as a reclusive writer or a field biologist, hidden deep in the forest, away from the noise.

Life, by some strange accident, steered me straight into the fire. I have always been a student, my love for writing and the natural world only growing as I’ve gotten older. But none of that stayed within the confines of a classroom. Climate change has already started distorting our landscapes, and politics have started seeping into everything I read and write. My defining educational experiences have been bookended by presidential elections, each historic in their own way.

I’m living in New York, for the next few months writing about science and tech for Vice. My favorite things to write about are the intersections, where science meets policy meets humanity. Every day, I get to go into work and talk to brilliant change-makers: researchers, policymakers, activists. I can use my voice to tell their stories, highlighting the amazing work that many people might miss. I’ve long thought science was fascinating, but often taught so dryly. If we want people to care — about the planet, about new research — we need to start by making it interesting. That’s what I try to do.

I graduate next year, into a presidential race already cranking into gear. With the most diverse set of candidates in history, it’s another historic one. Climate change is finally working its way to the main stage, it’s effects no longer theoretical. I plan to keep writing, when I graduate. I’ll try to focus on what matters, what inspires. Leave the angry tweets behind.

A lot changes every four years. School, state, apartment, schedule. What I’m learning, who I see every day. Our president, our policies. How much our National Parks get funded, how strict our pollution standards are. A lot doesn’t change, too. Last weekend, one of my best friends from Friends came and shared my Brooklyn bedroom. She was the one in that yellow dog shirt, who was kind to me in Spanish class. We haven’t gone to school together since eighth grade, but I see her every time I go home. We walked around the city, talking about everything from politics to the women’s World Cup. We went to a concert in Prospect Park, spent time with each other’s college friends.

Next weekend, I’m headed back to Massachusetts for another Friends alumnus’s annual beach party, which I
haven’t been on the right coast for in years. She’s another one of my best friends, still. We haven’t gone to school together in over seven years, but we’ve spent our first two college spring breaks hiking the west coast together. We would’ve this year, but I was too far, studying abroad in Costa Rica.

This past February, before starting my semester abroad program, I traveled to Colombia for two weeks with another Friends grad. We haven’t gone to school together since we were 14 years old, but she was my neighbor and companion all throughout high school. She’s flown across the country to visit me in Berkeley, and remains one of the few people I can spend every day with without a problem. We traveled Colombia just us two, hiking glacial mountains and wandering the streets of Bogota.

My little sister is turning 11 soon, and she’s at Friends now too. She’s already had much more of it than I ever did, one of those lifers I used to be jealous of. But I’m glad I got to Friends when I did. Those four years became something to savor. They formed me in ways I can’t ever quite trace. They gave me some of my closest friends, ones that have moved through each phase of my life seamlessly.

Next year, in 2020, I will be 22 years old. I will leave another nest, be the new kid somewhere else. If things work out, I’ll be in a new city, in a new job, in a new apartment. I’ll be propped up on some old couch watching a United States map checkered blue and red. I’ll see a new president take the stage, keep track as they make speeches and pass legislation.

The details are still a little fuzzy, but there are a couple plans I don’t have to make. I’ll say I’m too busy to come home, but my bed will always be warm if I want it. It will have been eight years and two presidents since I left Friends Academy. But I’ll still see those girls on Thanksgiving, at Christmas. I’ll find moments to steal away with them, new places to travel to. I’ll watch them all fight for change in their own way, through education or healthcare or research. I’ll watch the world become better because people like them are leading it, because they learned young how to care — about people, about the planet, about each other.

Please send us news about what you’ve been up to! We want to hear about your life, career, unions, births, and accomplishments.

Alumni updates are submitted by alumni and are not verified by the editors. While we welcome alumni news, the Blue & Gray is not responsible for information in these features.

Please send your class note to our Director of Alumni Affairs, Michael Williams at: mwilliams@friendsacademy1810.org

Visit us on Facebook or tag us on Instagram: #friends1810
Recently, I had the pleasure of catching up with Anika Tullos, FA Class of 2015, when she came by to visit faculty in late May. After FA, Anika enrolled at Tilton School in New Hampshire, and there, like FA, she left an indelible mark. I asked Anika if she would share with me some of her favorite highlights and here is what I learned:

She recently wrote and directed a play that was performed at Tilton School. It was called *The Mammoth in the Moon* and she secretly wrote it under the pen name “Peter Wells.” Anika did not reveal that she was the true author of the play until the night of the show. The play takes place 20,000 years ago during the Ice Age and follows a young girl’s journey toward becoming a leader.

While at Tilton, Anika discovered her love of video editing. Over the past four years, she improved her skills and this year won a $1,000 scholarship from Cards Against Humanity for a video submission she made about how caves form.

This summer, she will be working at Buttonwood Park Zoo as a zookeeping intern, mainly with their domestic animals.

Over the past two years, Anika has published three short stories: *Can You Draw Like This?* (November 2017) online with The Telling Room, *The One With the Brightest Eyes* (Spring 2018) in print with The Claremont Review, and *A Hundred Miles North* (Spring 2019) with Skipping Stones Magazine. Woah!

Anika credits performing in *Be Careful What You Wish For* with Friends Academy in 2015 to likely what led her to continue pursuing theater in high school! She’s really grateful for that, too, since Anika ended up performing in twelve theater productions at Tilton in the last four years – every single one!

Doing so much theater allowed her to grow so much as a person, really jump out of her comfort zone, make amazing friends, and form valuable professional connections.

This fall, Anika will be attending Hamilton College, where she plans to study geoscience. In the future, she would love to pursue paleontology. Anika would also love to do research in Antarctica one day! During her sophomore year, she actually made an hour-long documentary about Antarctica called *The Forgotten Continent*.

An avid writer at FA, Anika continued in high school. Her favorite writing project was a science-fiction novel named *Angels of Apophis*. While it hasn’t been published like her short stories, she’s continuing to edit it and send it out. The best part about working on this project was that an alumnus of Tilton School, author John Perkins, took the time to read it and gave her editing suggestions. He was really enthusiastic and helpful, which in turn helped her keep at it!

During her freshman year, she was on the varsity girls’ ice hockey team, but quit after getting a concussion. As a result, Anika lost significant functioning of her sense of smell. Because of that, she did not return to varsity but instead moved down to Tilton’s club hockey team. Anika states, “I had much more fun on the club team than I did on varsity and I don’t regret the switch at all!”

Look out Hamilton College… Here comes Anika Tullos! I can’t wait to learn about all she does on campus.
Friends Academy is one of the most special places to learn, grow, and develop as a student and young adult. It has given me the intellectual confidence to succeed in boarding school, college, and now in my post-graduate life. The most important and impressive aspect about Friends Academy is the teachers. I had struggled throughout the years with ADD, and my teachers took a personal interest in my scholastic growth. They took the time to sit with me during their free time to go over concepts that I did not understand fully. Not only did they invest time in my school life but cared for my personal life. They knew how to make me feel at home and accepted as a student and a young child while at school. This atmosphere gave me the confidence to go onto exploring and learning subjects that interested me instead of subjects I was supposed to learn in college.

My favorite Friends Academy memory was after history class one day with Ms. Fair. I had been struggling with the tests in her class and she noticed what was going on. She took the time to sit me down and speak with me about it. It was
monumental because her sharing with me that she noticed what was going on showed me she actually cared. It gave me the security to feel comfortable enough to ask for help or advice in my school work. She worked with me personally on individual strategies that catered to how my brain absorbed and learned information.

Since Friends Academy, I went on to study at Berkshire School in western Massachusetts, then graduated with a degree in religious studies from Gettysburg College. My academic career has consisted of me learning only what truly inspires me. I have not picked the most popular classes or majors but rather decided I would stay true to myself and what I am good at.

My advice to young students is to follow your passion. Some of my peers questioned what I would do with a religious studies major and my answer was “anything I want.” The only way to truly enjoy school and succeed is to study something you love. It will lead you to a career and jobs that you actually enjoy doing. My undergraduate degree has lead me to social work. I am now taking a year off and volunteering with refugee at-risk youth in Israel. This experience has given me the intellectual freedom to decide what my next move is. This was not a normal post-college path for most people. It was a challenge convincing myself that it was okay. It’s alright to not do what everybody else is doing and follow what you truly want to do, not what society or your peers tell you to do. In the end, my decision to fulfill my passion for studying religion, taking a year off and deciding to embark in a career that doesn’t give me millions of dollars has made me more happy than most of my friends. Take the chance and do what you love and makes you happy – not what you THINK you should be doing.

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FACULTY TIDBITS

Congratulations to retired faculty and FA historian, Kathleen Fair, who has published a piece of historical fiction, *Princess to Prioress: The Story of Adele of Blois*. Her book can be found on Amazon.com.

Right: Mr. Pelissier and Mr. Zine share the love during one of the Summer Program Expeditions.
I graduated from the George Washington University in the Spring of 2018 with a Bachelor’s in International Affairs. Currently I am teaching Nautical Science at Tabor Academy, working for the Dominica Maritime Registry, and in the summers am the captain of S/V Fritha which is a traditionally rigged Brigantine.

1 The things I value most from Friends Academy are the values and lessons taught to me by my teachers and coaches. Quaker values such as honesty, integrity, kindness, empathy, and open-mindedness are values that are near and dear to me because of my education at Friends. These values are critical for a society like ours and ever more important in today’s world. I do my best to be kind to everyone and ensure to be honest with myself and others. I am enormously grateful for my teachers and coaches, and though I was quite a handful in Middle School, I promise your efforts were successful in the long-run!

2 My favorite memory from Friends Academy was scoring the game winning 3-pointer against Community Prep. This wasn’t just a fun moment for me but encapsulated all the hard work our team had put in to finally beat Community Prep, who we had always lost to by only a few points. We were down this game by double-digits at the half and ended up coming back to win. My shot was only the cherry on top of a hard-fought game by our entire team. To this day, whenever I get the chance to catch up with Mr. Walach, he’ll say to me “remember that game winning 3-pointer?”
I just retired from a 37-year career at the CIA. It was a rewarding career, and I’m looking forward to more time with my husband Ray and visiting our children Elise and her husband Sam in San Francisco and Jonathan in grad school in Chicago, my parents Dr. Gilbert and Timmy Shapiro—still in South Dartmouth – and sisters Karen ’76 in Needham and Ruthie ’79 in Salt Lake City. After attending Dana Hall School and Dartmouth College and moving to DC, I started as an economic analyst at the CIA and at George Washington University’s PhD program in Economics. Ray was also working full-time and attending graduate school, and it was a hectic and fun time on top of raising our two children. My last 25 years I served as a manager in the analysis area, covering areas such as foreign leadership, counterterrorism, and data analytics. In the small world category, a few years ago, Beth McDermott reached out to me when she discovered we both worked at CIA – she has worked here as an attorney.

1. The people – both teachers and students. The teachers gave us the freedom to explore ideas and be ourselves, and encouraged curiosity. Mr. and Mrs. Hankowitz (now Ms. Twitchell, a Facebook friend!) helped fuel my love of math, a field that was not necessarily welcoming for girls in the 70s – and my FA friends remain special. My family met Mike Doyle – my oldest friend since kindergarten, summer camp, FA, and Dartmouth College – in Vienna, Austria last year, where he was an incredible host. When Sarah McNally Lipton and I met up last summer in the Village, we couldn’t stop talking, and Ilene Siegal Granstein and I have a tradition of exchanging birthday cards every year.

2. Having the Head greet us each morning by name. It felt welcoming, personal, and comfortable.

Below: Son-in-law Sam Peck, daughter Elise Lewyckyj Peck, Beth Shapiro Lewyckyj ’74, Mike Doyle, husband Ray Lewyckyj, son Jonathan Lewyckyj
1 My time at Friends provided me with a sense of confidence around learning. It was there that I discovered my dyslexia as a gift. What I valued most was the classroom environment and how you were encouraged at an individual level to be yourself, ask questions, and express your opinions freely.

2 If I had to choose one favorite memory at Friends, I would have to say anytime we had P.E. class on a warm sunny day and played ‘Capture the Flag’ outside. Looking back, that is where my friends and I made a lot of memories.

After graduating from the College of the Holy Cross with a Bachelor’s in Spanish and History in 2014, I packed my bags and headed to Spain, where I have been residing for almost five years. My first two years were spent working as an English teaching assistant in high schools in Valladolid and León, respectively. After my time teaching, I took a leap of faith and decided to study a Master’s in Spanish Linguistics at the Complutense University of Madrid. I am currently working as a translator and project manager at multilingual content agency called VeraContent, which is based in Madrid.

1 I most value the confidence FA gave me as both a student and an individual. Whether it was going on class trips, trying out for a sports team, or taking on a leading role in the musical, I always felt supported and knew that it was okay to take risks; I felt comfortable even when pushed outside of my comfort zone. This is something that I still carry with me to this day. Some think it’s crazy that I’ve packed my bags and moved to the other side of the Atlantic, but I see it as an opportunity to grow as a person and learn more about myself. I’m forever grateful for the confidence both my peers and teachers gave me during those integral years of my childhood.

2 I have to say that my favorite memory at Friends was going to Chewonki. Before the trip, I had never done anything of the sort and I remember being a bit nervous about it... But in the end, it was a trip of a lifetime on which I was able to challenge myself, bond with my peers, and really appreciate the beauty of nature. It’s a memory that will last a lifetime.
Since leaving Friends, I graduated from Tabor Academy ('12) and Tufts University ('16) with a degree in mechanical engineering. After graduation, I moved into an apartment in Brookline, MA with my girlfriend and began work at a medical device design firm. I recently accepted a new job as a test engineer at iRobot – best known for the Roomba robotic vacuum – and am enjoying working in the fast-changing, consumer robotics industry. I still regularly spend weekends at my parents’ house in Wareham, particularly during the warmer months.

1 The most valuable part of a Friends education is how the teachers encouraged you to ask questions and trust your gut. I will always remember Mr. Balestracci asking fifth graders in his history class, “Are you sure?” when they would raise their hand and answer a question correctly. Then when they hesitated or changed their mind, he would snap back, “Stick to your guns! You knew that!” Even though it was intimidating to be questioned by a teacher, particularly Mr. B, it really taught me to believe in my instincts and answer questions as best I could, even if my answers were wrong.

2 My favorite memory from Friends was the one day each year where, mid-lesson, Ms. Fair would ask all of her eighth grade students to put down their laptops or notebooks and on the count of three, yell as loud and long as they could. This generally occurred in the spring, as students got more anxious about exams, leaving their friends from FA, and going off to high school. The eighth graders never knew when it was coming, but always knew that it happened – with all of the other upper-school classes in the same building, the younger students could hear that day years before ever experiencing it. Even though she was one of the harder teachers, this was a great lesson to never take things too seriously and let it all out every once in a while.

Above: Henry Gleason ’08 during his bicycle ride for the Pan Mass Challenge.

Above: Henry Gleason Class of 2008

Above: Henry Gleason ’08 during his bicycle ride for the Pan Mass Challenge.

Above: Henry Gleason ‘08 during his bicycle ride for the Pan Mass Challenge.
CLASS OF 2019  |  SCHOOLS ATTENDING

Andrew Ashekian  St. Andrew's School
Mariah Barros  New Bedford Vocational HS
Jessica Beaulieu  Moses Brown School
Kazimir Borowicz  Concord Academy
Riley Clark  Lincoln School
Lily Cogliano  Bishop Stang High School
Mia Costa  New Bedford Vocational HS
Eva Croteau  Old Rochester Regional HS
Isabella Cunniff  Mill Springs Academy, Atlanta
Carter Dennis  Bishop Stang High School
Angelina Ducharme  Dana Hall School
Kyle Farias  Bishop Stang High School
Liam Gormley  Bishop Stang High School
Immanuel Gottschick-Daskalakis  Germany
Sophia Hausladen  Proctor Academy
Jacob Hebbel  Kimball Union Academy
Noah Hemingway  Moses Brown School
Liam Hempstead  Landmark School
Madeline Howell  Eagle Hill School
Madeleine Hunt  Tabor Academy
Nicholas Hutchens  Tabor Academy
Finn King  St. Andrew’s School
Breckenridge Marshall  Bishop Stang High School
Iliana Marshall  Bishop Stang High School
Joy Mello  Tabor Academy
Henri Morrissey  Bishop Stang High School
James Nevells  Proctor Academy
Giovani Pandiscio  Landmark School
Redmond Podkowa  Bishop Stang High School
Sawyer Robinson  Portsmouth Abbey School
Martha Savage  Lincoln School
Anne Tasha  New Hampton School
Caroline Tennyson  Bishop Stang High School
Aliza Thelin  Bishop Stang High School
Luke Tougas  Bishop Stang High School
Sidra Tully  Boston University Academy
THIS YEAR’S AWARDS RECIPIENTS

(left to right)

The Friends Award:
Riley Clark and Noah Hemingway

Head of School Award:
Sawyer Robinson and Sidra Tully

Clifford Cup Award:
Mia Costa

Sally Borden Award:
Giovani Pandiscio

DREW ASHEKIAN
“You have a voice. Each time you sing your voice grows stronger and more confident... your voice impacts and echoes.”
Mr. Murdock

JESSICA BEAULIEU
“I have a memory of you – belting the chorus to “Shallow.” That is you. Relentlessly striving to be the best version of yourself.”
Mr. Murdock

MARIAH BARROS
“The changes you exhibited this year in personal and academic maturity are inspiring.”
Mrs. Velazquez

KAZIMIR BOROWICZ
“Your teachers remember your dedication, your philosophical questions, and your wisdom.”
Mr. Garfield

RILEY CLARK
Riley, “kind to everyone, and tough as nails. Others describe you as responsible, trustworthy, steadfast, conscientious, outdoorsy, funny, and supportive to your friends.”
Ms. Bookstein

LILY COGLIANO
“On the outside, you are calm and collected, while inwardly you are sharply observant, calculating, and always pushing yourself to do better.”
Ms. Bingham

MIA COSTA
“You are one of a kind and so talented: artistic, creative, fashionable, musical, and your humility is a lesson for all of us.”
Ms. Furtado

EVA CROTEAU
“Passionate, informed, and fierce – with a deep commitment to positive social change”
Ms. Lord

BELLA CUNNIFF
“In class, you have become a more independent learner and thinker, showing to all that you aren’t afraid of taking risks.”
Ms. Clegg

CARTER DENNIS
“You have the ability to become fully alert at a moment’s notice and you have learned to advocate for yourself in class.”
Mr. Lobato

ANGELINA DUCHARME
“I believe that you have since grown to see yourself with more perspective, and explore different aspects of your character.”
Ms. Bingham

KYLE FARIAS
“Who is going to handle the tech at All-School Meeting, plays and other events? When the soundboard malfunctions, you calmly step in to fix it with such ease.”
Ms. Gangi
LIAM GORMLEY
“Like an iceberg, you keep a lot hidden under the surface. Your teachers cite your depth of knowledge ranging from topics from video games to zoology.”
Mr. Lobato

SOPHIA HAUSLADEN
“You wholeheartedly throw yourself into and are a positive force in everything you set your mind to.”
Mrs. Gaudet

MANU GOTTSCHICK-DASKALAKIS
“You are super-resilient. You switched schools, languages, cultures, and continents, halfway through this school year... truly remarkable.”
Mr. Beyer

JACOB HEBBEL
“Your wide-ranging intellect brims over with knowledge and curiosity, sparking discussions about mythology, history, politics...”
Mr. Beyer

NOAH HEMINGWAY
“And talk about Empathy... you do not just care for people, but want to understand people and their experiences.”
Mrs. Bullard

LIAM HEMPSTEAD
“You remember the details of what people say, and follow up with treats to make someone’s day.”
Ms. Clegg

MADELINE HOWELL
“...you are quietly fierce, a keen observer, and a creative and hardworking student. But you also have a lighter, fun-loving side...”
Ms. van Dale

MADELEINE HUNT
“You too are smart, brave, have a sharp wit, and know that hard work and persistence will get you ahead.”
Ms. Lord

NICHOLAS HUTCHENS
“...you are still surprising us in the classroom and out. You are a good friend, a leader on and off the field, and a capable and talented student.”
Mr. Lobato

FINN KING
“There’s a saying that the journey is greater than the destination. Finn, you are a rare individual that lives by this saying.”
Ms. Randenberg

BRECKENRIDGE MARSHALL
“A sincere and modest gentleman. That actually sums you up really well. You’re honest, you’re intuitive, you’re quiet and insightful.”
Mr. Pelissier

ILIANA MARSHALL
“You...have remained a wise and wonderful soul, a dedicated student and friend, and a gentle spirit with a contagious smile that still brightens our days.”
Ms. Walker-Hemingway
HENRI MORRISSEY
“You know how to get the best from a class because you know how to give – how to reciprocate the passion – how to fuel the fires of learning.”
Mr. Murdock

JAMES NEVELLS
“Whether talking about your family or your friends, you enthuse kindness and love.”
Mr. Martin

GIOVANI PANDISCIO
“In the classroom, teachers say that you’ve had an amazing attitude, and you work so hard at what others take for granted when it comes to learning.”
Mr. Williams

JOY MELLO
“You are a compassionate friend to all, whether making time to help a peer during flex, or to walk the Farmhouse kids over to All-School Meeting.”
Mr. Beyer

REDMOND PODKOWA
“You continue to be a connector – a person who possesses a deep understanding of human experience.”
Ms. Velazquez

SAWYER ROBINSON
“Your sense of humor, approachability, and dedication are qualities that all of your peers see and value in you.”
Ms. Bingham

MARTHA SAVAGE
“Aacademically, you always work one more problem or write one more draft, because you want to be certain. Persistent.”
Mr. Murdock

ANNE TASHA
“I think we can all agree that you face your fears and say “I can” instead of “I can’t.”
Ms. Bookstein

CAROLINE TENNYSON
“When you courageously harnessed the moxie it takes to perform at All-School Meeting, we were blown away by your piano playing.”
Ms. Parker

ALIZA THELIN
“You are willing to work hard but also have fun in the process. You are straightforward and opinionated, but you are also very thoughtful of others.”
Ms. Furtado

LUKE TOUGAS
“Your teachers describe you as kind and generous, diligent, persistent, and astute. You push yourself to accomplish your goals.”
Ms. Lord

SIDRA TULLY
“You’ve taught those around you how to live unapologetically... There is no box anyone could put you in, and for that, I greatly admire you.”
Mrs. Trepanier
Luke’s photograph received an Honorable Mention in the Scholastic Art Awards this past academic year.

MADELEINE PELISSIER ‘16
Madeleine’s self-portrait won a Gold Key in the Scholastic Art Awards this past academic year. She is currently a senior at the Dublin School in Dublin, New Hampshire.

PHOEBE MOCK ‘13
Phoebe Mock ’13, daughter of Fred and Cindy Mock of Marion, received the Helen B. Rippy Award in the Art History Department at Elon University in Elon, NC on May 2, 2019. The Rippy Award is given to an art history student who has excelled in their art history classes at Elon. Phoebe will be working with her research mentor, Dr. Lynn R. Huber, reading representations of the prostitute in text and image from antiquity. Phoebe graduated from Tabor Academy in 2017 and is a member of Elon’s class of 2021. She is double majoring in Art History and Classical Studies, as well as minoring in Psychology.

LUKE MELLO ‘00
Luke’s photograph received an Honorable Mention in the Scholastic Art Awards this past academic year.

Above: Katherine Gaudet with David Murphy ’15 and Colin Murphy ’15.
Above Right: (Left to right) Lucy Snyder ’04, Casey McNamara ’04, Lauren Burke ’04, and Barrett Allen enjoy each others’ company at a recent shower.
Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous and essential support of Friends Academy this year. Everyone – from our youngest preschoolers exploring our woodland trails, to our most seasoned teachers harnessing new technology – benefits from your kindness and investment in our school. Every gift made to FA is important and valued, and every gift makes an impact on the lives of the students and faculty here.

I would also like to extend a special thanks to the many people who give their time and talent to the school in a myriad of ways. Thank you to our bakers and chefs, our musicians and artists, our scholars and guides. Your talent, skill, wisdom, and enthusiasm enrich our school and make it the special place we all cherish and appreciate.

As we look to the year ahead, we know Friends is supported by a community of parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends who share our vision to nurture every child’s innate potential. On behalf of all of us at Friends Academy, thank you for helping make possible visions both great and small.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Goodfellow
President, Board of Trustees
What is FriendsFest? FriendsFest is our annual family-friendly fundraiser for a specific, necessary enhancement/improvement on campus. Past projects have included renovating the canteen, enhancing our outdoor education program, redoing the gym floor, and restoring the Morgan Street Bell. Last year, FriendsFest raised monies to renovate our Middle School Science Lab. This was a huge endeavor for us, and one that required full community support to make it a success.

We have been working with Will Saltonstall of Saltonstall Architects in Marion, to make this project a reality. Planning will be done throughout this year with the renovation happening in the summer of 2020.

A huge thank you to all those who supported FriendsFest 2019 either by attending the event or making a direct donation. Over 450 people attended the party in February. Highlights of the event included: a magic show, a reptile show, glow in the dark mini golf, hot cocoa on the Beech Tree Terrace, stargazing, face painting, and tattoos. It is always a great night!

All totalled, we raised $67,900, surpassing our fundraising goal!

Special thanks to our leadership donors for making this project a reality.

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Thank you to all who contributed to the 2018-2019 Friends Academy Fund. Each gift, no matter the size, makes a difference for our students.

The Friends Academy Fund touches every part of the school. Gifts become opportunities to enhance our curriculum, expand our arts and athletic programs, encourage professional development for faculty, and provide new experiences for students.

The generous individuals listed here are part of an active community of donors who helped fund the school’s greatest needs in the past year.

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A special thank you to Jilline Fearons for once again chairing this event.

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For more information about development at Friends Academy, contact Jodi Pink at jpink@friendsacademy1810.org

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THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS!
All contributions to Friends Academy are sincerely appreciated. How and what you give is not nearly as important as that you do give. Friends Academy is only as strong as the support we receive from our community. It is through your gift that our mission is advanced.
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Planned gifts help Friends Academy to continue to offer an exemplary education to future generations and YOU to ensure your financial security and that of your loved ones. You can give back to the school while making sure that you have valuable income for many years.

**How planned gifts can benefit Friends Academy:**

- Secure FA's fiscal health and advance strategic goals
- Minimize tuition increases
- Sustain FA's programs and technological advances and allow us to offer more

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**Providing for Friends Academy is easy!**

- Place a call to your attorney.
- Your attorney will make simple adjustments to your current will or estate plan.
- Place a call to Friends Academy to let us know.

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www.friendsacademy1810.org