



VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL



COMMONS REVIEW

SPRING 2023

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL DEXTER MAHAFFEY

The artist comes to an empty canvas with equal measures of anticipation and excitement. So too the writer to the blank page or the musician to the recording studio. Anything is possible, but it's a *refined* anything. The artist already knows how to paint, has studied and practiced. The writer has written pages upon pages, finding their voice. The musician has worked for years at their craft and has planned what they will lay down when they enter the studio. While the moment of creation is exhilarating, it's also purposeful, a carefully crafted inflection point where anything is possible.

This moment at VCS is just that—a giddy time when we know exactly who we are as a school and we've started down the path of *anything is possible*. Is Morning Meeting—that crucial daily time when we come together to share and listen and laugh—still the heart and soul of our school? Are deep connections with faculty still formed as much on the trail as in the classroom? Does volleyball still follow the Doctrine of Goff? Yes, yes, and yes! *We know who we are*. And the 2022-23 school year has been an **amazing** time of starting to sketch out our next painting on the next open canvas.

Some of what's amazing is familiar: The return of our exchange program with Colegio Santa Ana in Perú. Welcoming guests into the building for Grandparents & Grandfriends Day. Model UN gatherings. And some of what's amazing is completely new: Home volleyball and basketball games, dances, PE, and fitness club, all in our own gym right here on campus. A budding library, at long last. Rock bands (lots of them) and vocal instruction as part of the music course offerings.

Also amazing are the forward-looking conversations we're having as a community. What do we want learning to look like at VCS in 2028? In 2033? Beyond? A gym is great, but can we create a design lab that includes a ceramics studio, so that science and art can intersect? Could new courses, a more flexible schedule, and the Outdoor Education Center combine to optimize climate change literacy in students so they can be up to the task at hand? *How do we want to fill the next canvas?*

Now, more than ever, your vision, enthusiasm, and energy for Vermont Commons' future is wanted and needed. Together, we are the hand holding the brush. Together—with mind, heart, and purpose—let's paint a new masterpiece!



Dr. Dexter P. Mahaffey, Head of School



(cover) *Encounter Week in the
White Mountains, NH*

FACULTY & STAFF

Dexter Mahaffey, Ph.D., *Head of School*
Kat Ahrens, *Math & Encounter Weeks*
Katherine Bailey, *Registrar*
Kristen Bellone P'27, *Front Desk Receptionist*
Linda Bursell, *Business Manager*
Chance Cardamone-Knewstubb, *Spanish & Facilities*
Mark Cline Lucey P'23, *Class of '20 Faculty Chair, Social Studies*
Jennifer Cohen, *English*
Adriana Comtois P'27, *Class of '20 Faculty Chair, Spanish*
Jasmine Easter, *Assistant Head of School*
Peter Goff, *Science*

Tim Harger, *Dean of Students*
Ryan Houck, *English*
Mark Keegan, Ph.D., *Science*
Courtney Lamontagne, *Learning Specialist*
Kristin Marchilena, *Music*
Kathryn McDermott, *Social Studies*
Kristofer Mohlman, *Science & Math*
Kat Nelson, *Director of Admissions*
Sharon Panitch P '22 '24 '27, *Director of Development*
Eliot Sloan, *College Counselor*
Mary Thompson, *Art*
Tonya Waldron, *Math*
Ben Wang, *Chinese & Encounter Weeks*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bethany Gibbs P'24 '29, *Chair*
Rebecca Lindy Coll P'12
Andrew Furtsch P'19
Anne Glosky
Craig Heindel P'03 '06, *Secretary*
Naomi Heindel '03
Troy Krah P'21, *Treasurer*
Kathryn McDermott, *Faculty Trustee*
Raj Rawal P'25
Kurt Schulz P'22 '26, *Vice Chair*
Kristie Stern P'23
Rosemary Webb P'16

WE ARE THRILLED TO WELCOME Kristin Marchilena (Music) and **Mary Thompson** (Art) to our faculty! Kristin is actually returning to VCS and to Vermont after seven years in New York City. Both are already making their own mark on the VCS Arts Department with innovative performance and exhibition opportunities.

Sharon Panitch P'22 '24 '27 took up the mantle of Director of Development in September. She figured that if she couldn't attend VCS, working here would be the next best thing!

THE CAMPAIGN FOR VERMONT COMMONS

This year saw the successful launch of the Campaign for Vermont Commons, a multi-year campaign to create a campus that fully supports the intellectual, social, and physical growth of our students while centering our focus on global responsibility and environmental stewardship.

The first significant step toward fulfilling this promise was opening our very own gym in November. Our students' pride in having their own gymnasium shone throughout the basketball season and the Middle School March Madness volleyball season. Additionally, we completed the local permitting process for the Outdoor Education Center, and are looking forward to studying and stewarding its 55 acres.

Energy is mounting to complete the current stage of the Campaign, thereby closing the books on the work that has been done and taking full ownership of the OEC.

Initial costs of campus expansion: \$1.5M

Raised to date: \$1.19M

Remaining to raise: \$310,000



E.E. FORD FOUNDATION GRANT

In June 2022, we received a 1:2 matching grant from the E. E. Ford Foundation, providing \$1 for every \$2 we raised in the subsequent 13 months, up to a \$100,000 total match.

Through the generosity of many donors, we met and exceeded this goal in less than a year! We are grateful to everyone who contributed in myriad ways to the effort.

MASTER PLANNING FOR THE VCS CAMPUS & MORE

Excitement is mounting for the next phase of the Campaign for Vermont Commons. Students, families, and faculty have answered surveys and gathered for brainstorming sessions about their vision for VCS's future, providing information about the community's priorities as well as an opportunity for students to think creatively about their VCS experience. Many constructive and doable ideas were generated regarding the ways we use our space and our time. Some of the more popular suggestions included offering classes in financial literacy and other life skills, creating a dedicated performing arts stage, and using our land and grounds to garden and farm.

The master planning process will continue into the fall of 2023. We hope you'll be a part of it!

HOW TO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN FOR VERMONT COMMONS

Gifts to the Campaign for Vermont Commons may be made:

By check made payable to Vermont Commons School (please specify "Capital Campaign" in the memo)

Online at www.givebutter.com/VCSRestrictedFunds

By scanning the **QR Code**:





CLASS OF 2022 GRADUATION

THE NINE MEMBERS OF VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL'S 25TH GRADUATING CLASS became the school's newest alumni on June 11, 2022. After a two-year hiatus, we were once again able to hold graduation indoors in VCS's Commons Room. Graduating seniors Zoe Hecht, Iris Lawson-Ryan, and Beaven Rutter performed a musical selection, and Simon Rosenbaum spoke on behalf of the graduates.

The Founders' Alumni Award was presented to Tyler Lemay '02, and the 2022 George and Pammella Starbuck Award was conferred upon Zoe Hecht.

Congratulations, Vermont Commons School Class of 2022!

Magnus Fitzgerald Ames*
Tess Kathleen Foley-Cox**
Zoe Rose Hecht*

Iris Aideen Walker Lawson-
Ryan
Ethan Forrester Popick

Simon Erich Rosenbaum
Beaven Clarke Rutter
Jordan Jung Rin Townsend
Finn Johan Verdonk**

*Naturalist Diploma Certificate

**Fine Arts Diploma Certificate

Multi-year Diploma Certificates are VCS's highest academic accomplishment and honor.

Collectively, the members of the Class of 2022 received 41 college and university acceptances and were offered more than \$1.9 million in scholarship and merit awards. They are continuing their studies at:

Carleton College
Mount Holyoke College
Skidmore College

Swarthmore College
University of Vermont
Vanderbilt University

Vassar College
Wesleyan University
Wheaton College



CELEBRATING A QUARTER-CENTURY OF VERMONT COMMONS!

IN JUNE, alumni, alum families, faculty, and current students and families gathered to reminisce, celebrate, and raise a slice of cake to 25 years of VCS! Alums from VCS's earliest days all the way up through the Class of '22 socialized, played volleyball, recorded tribute videos, and toured the campus. The afternoon also included the dedication of a memorial garden designed by Charlotte Albers P'07 and planted in memory of Andrew Howe '05, Peter Krag '04, Weston Lea '02, and Jessica Pomerleau-Halton '02.

In the evening, faculty and alumni gathered off campus at Karma Bird House in Burlington for a smaller social, complete with a slide show and 25 years-worth of yearbooks. With alumni asking for more organized opportunities to gather, we have made the all-class reunion an annual event!



BACK OUT INTO THE WORLD: LIMA, PERÚ

AFTER AN ENFORCED 2.5-YEAR HIATUS, we were beyond excited to resume our exchange program with Colegio Santa Ana in Lima, Perú.

In October, six students, accompanied by World Languages Department Chair Adriana Comtois, traveled to Lima, spending time at the Colegio and with their host families. Their visit was arranged to coincide with the Encuentro de Líderes Estudiantiles (ELE), a youth leadership summit that congregated ten schools from Latin America. Our students proudly shared their talents, their perspectives, and their maple syrup and Lake Champlain Chocolates. Five months later, three Colegio Santa Ana students and teacher Silvia Chávez made the trek north to experience VCS and some of the joys of winter (and the sledding hill at Burlington Country Club in particular). We can't wait for the next exchange!



CREATIVITY ABOUNDS AT VCS

VCS STUDENTS fully embraced the artistic vibe this year, bringing their creativity and their creative appreciation to Fall and Spring Arts Nights and to two newly established, student-run coffeehouses! Our two newest faculty members, Kristin Marchilena (Music) and Mary Thompson (Art) reinvigorated the student Arts Council, which took the (metaphorical, artsy) ball and ran with it. A group of parent volunteers also stepped up to support the activities of the Arts Department, producing a very successful silent



auction of donated artworks with the proceeds going to the purchase of supplies. In the last month of the school year, students also performed in a cabaret showcase and again had a slot at the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival.

GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDFRIENDS IN THE HOUSE!

IN OCTOBER, we joyfully welcomed about 30 honored guests back into our classrooms for Grandparents and Grandfriends Day! We offered the event via Zoom as well, enabling an additional 30 grandparents and friends to join us who otherwise would not have been able to. Our guests were introduced at Morning Meeting, and they then accompanied their grandchildren and young friends to their second and third period classes.

After a two-year moratorium on being together in person, it felt especially sweet to be able to share VCS with the special people in our students' lives.



STUDENT NEWS | GREEN & GRAY ALL THE WAY!



Asher on the center podium

students by helping to establish the **VCS Fitness Club** this year.

Innis Sullivan '26 boldly represented VCS at the **Vermont Cross-Country State Championship** meet in Thetford last October, bringing in a solid time in the 5000m run.

Talia Gibbs '24 earned a **Gold Key** in the Vermont Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for her critical essay *When Greed Overpowers Love*, and a **Silver Key** for her poem *We Missed the Bus*.

Tyler Loiselle '23 achieved the rank of **Eagle Scout** after earning 39 merit badges and three Eagle Palms. Tyler's culminating project consisted of designing, fundraising for, and installing new signs and accompanying flower beds for VCS's two buildings.

The VCS Players

presented John Cariani's *Almost, Maine*, directed by Ryan Houck and Kristin Marchilena. This quirky set of interrelated vignettes featured hilarious and memorable performances by seniors **Jordan Geiger '23**, **Carley Roberts '23**, and **Sophie Richardson-Shepard '23**, in addition to ten other cast members.



No fewer than five students were selected for Vermont Youth Volleyball Association All-Vermont Teams this year! Making the roster were **Emmett Cline-Lucey '23**, **Zangmu Lama Sherpa '24**, **Charlie Melamede '23**, **Anjay Mital-Skiff '23**,

and **Sofie Richardson-Shepard '23**.

It was a year of accomplishments for students in **Model U.N.**! At the fall conference

in Middlebury, **Adelie Tebbetts '24** won an award for **Best Position Paper**, **Elizabeth Poulin '25** was recognized as **Outstanding Delegate**, and **Henry Black '23** won the coveted **Best Delegate award**. This spring, a delegation of 15 VCS students attended the Dartmouth College Model United Nations Conference, sitting on committees addressing global issues ranging from rural healthcare access to terrorism in the Sahel region of Africa. **Elizabeth Poulin '25** once again was recognized for her efforts with an **Honorable Mention** for her work on the UNESCO Committee.



VYVA All-Vermont Team Members



At the Spectrum Sleep Out

Braving the elements is what Flying Turtles are all about, especially if it's in the name of helping the greater community! In late March, 12 students, along with two teachers, slept outside on a cold, wet night for the **Spectrum Sleep Out**. The intrepid group's participation raised awareness around issues of teen homelessness and raised nearly \$3400 to benefit Spectrum Youth and Family Services. Earlier in February, the **Penguin Plunge** was canceled due to wind chills of -40° (there are some elements even we won't brave), but not before nine VCS students raised nearly \$2800 for the Special Olympics.

FACULTY NEWS

Spanish and Social Studies teacher **Chance Cardamone-Knewstub** and Social Studies/6th Grade teacher **Kathryn McDermott** upped their wilderness preparedness game by becoming certified as Wilderness First Responders this year.

In March, Assistant Head of School **Jasmine Easter** attended Future FocusED, an immersive conference on expanding the nature of school. There, she became inspired to think about how school schedules can shape the student experience beyond simply determining where students should be when. On her return from the conference, Jasmine reflected, “I’m really energized to make shifts to what we do here to use time in more cohesive ways.” Stay tuned!

English Department Chair **Ryan Houck** and spouse Colleen welcomed Oakley Lincoln into the world this past March! Oakley joins big sib Atalaya in making sure their parents don’t get too much sleep.

Arts Department Chair **Kristin Marchilena** was a guest conductor for the District 1 Middle School Choir Festival in May and was asked to serve on the Secondary Choral & Instrumental Committee for the Organization of American Kodály Educators in preparation for their national conference in 2024.



Kristin Marchilena

College Counselor **Eliot Sloan** has toured numerous colleges and universities this year, and was particularly impressed by her visits to a number of “hidden gems,” those schools that may be smaller or less well-known, but that provide stellar academics and/or exceptional programs in specific areas. She has been excitedly sharing her discoveries with the faculty and, more importantly, with our rising seniors. This year, Eliot also attended conferences presented by the New England Association for College Admission Counseling and the Association

of College Counselors in Independent Schools, gaining insight into current trends and best practices in college counseling.



Ben Wang

The multitasking **Ben Wang** (Chinese and Social Studies instructor and Encounter Week co-director) became a certified Wilderness First Responder last year, and attended a National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) Professional Instructor course this past May in the Wind River Range of WY. He is looking forward to immersing himself in NOLS’s approach to curriculum, logistics, and risk management, and bringing that knowledge to his work at VCS.

CLASS OF '20 FACULTY CHAIR AWARD: **MARK CLINE LUCEY AND ADRIANA COMTOIS**

The 2022 Class of '20 Faculty Chair Award was given jointly to two of our longest-serving faculty members: Mark Cline Lucey (Social Studies) and Adriana Comtois (World Languages). With seemingly boundless energy, Mark and Adriana inspire their students and encourage them to think broadly and deeply about their subjects. Their passion is evident in everything they do. Congratulations, Mark and Adriana!

The Class of '20 Faculty Chair Award annually recognizes faculty members whose excellence inspires and embodies a love of learning and commitment to community.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

BRINGING HER WHOLE SELF: KATHRYN McDERMOTT

STUDENTS IN KATHRYN McDERMOTT'S SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES are asked to think deeply and critically, diving into nuanced issues and their own relationships with history and current events. Together, they have walked in the shadow of the southern border wall while learning about U.S. policy in Central America, discussed the history and meaning of political resistance, explored family histories of immigration and emigration, and learned about lesser-known figures in the Civil Rights movement.



Kathryn McDermott (foreground) with students at Algonquin Provincial Park

In Kathryn, students get a teacher and a guide who is thrilled to go on these physical and metaphorical journeys with them. At one point, however, she imagined a different kind of life for herself—one that included devoting herself to the world of politics in Washington. This vision, she admits, was more than a little influenced by too many episodes of *The West Wing*. Somewhere between graduation and Washington, however, she had an inkling that she “was not going to be the next C.J. Craig,” (*The West Wing*’s uber-confident press secretary). This moment of hesitation turned out to be an enormous stroke of luck for all of the students whose lives she has touched.

Suspecting that she might enjoy teaching, she applied to an internship program at the Emma Willard School outside Albany, NY. In describing her first year on the job, she said, “It was grueling, but I was simultaneously reminded of the very best parts of being at camp or on a college campus, which appealed to the summer camp part of me.” She appreciated seeing the students in their fullness, experiencing them as whole people rather than knowing only their academics.

Kathryn briefly left teaching to enroll in a graduate program in conflict resolution at Georgetown University, but even there, she admits, “I knew that I was developing a lens for the classroom, whether or not I actually did conflict resolution.”

After earning her master’s degree, she moved to Portland, Oregon with her partner Warren and got her first position at an independent day school. Kathryn reflected, “I loved the vibe at boarding schools and I didn’t know if it would be similar at a day school. But the kids demanded to know me as a whole person. And I felt like I could be my whole self there and share that with the students.” Additionally, she was able to refine her teaching skills through thoughtful systems of support and accountability that allowed her to dig deep into issues of pedagogy.

When Warren was accepted into UVM’s nurse practitioner program, Kathryn was not particularly hopeful that she would find a similar kind of school in northern Vermont that happened to have an opening. At a previous job, however, Kathryn had taught alongside Christie Howell, whose own career path had brought her to Vermont Commons as an English teacher. In connecting with Christie, Kathryn learned that there was indeed a faculty position open for a social studies/6th grade humanities teacher at VCS.

Today, Kathryn is on the verge of completing her fifth year here. She relishes having a meaningful connection between her professional life and her life outside of school, and she particularly cited Encounter Weeks as a vehicle for integrating the two. She noted, “I always felt like I had a ‘camp’ side and ‘teaching’ side, and they hadn’t always intersected. All of a sudden, being able to share that piece of myself with students felt really deep.”

...continued on page 10

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT, CONTINUED



Having found ways to bring different aspects of her life to her work, she decided that the next step would be bringing her students to some of the places and experiences that were most formative for her. One of those places was Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario where she had spent her summers as a camper and a camp counselor (and where she met her future spouse). When asked what it felt like to bring her students to a place that meant so much to her, she noted, “It was a little scary because I was introducing the kids to this place that was so important. I wondered, ‘Will they see the magic?’ On the last night, we held a gratitude circle that lasted three hours. Canoe trips are inherently powerful experiences. It wasn’t a huge undertaking but something clearly shifted for those kids.”

The moment was not lost on Kathryn; it epitomized the feeling of wholeness that she has strived for throughout her teaching career. “Together in that circle,” she recollected, “we had this feeling of ‘We shared something really powerful. We know this thing together.’” 🌿

THE VCSCA: MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER ACRONYM!

THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION was formed this year to help VCS families connect with the school and build community among parents and guardians. It’s a PTO with fewer meetings, more laughter, and better coffee!

Our thanks go to Hollie Foley P’24 ’25 ’28, Jennifer Hall P’23, Deb Hazel P’27, Ashley Klein P’28, Lauren Pricer P’25 ’29, Leda Sommerville P’26, and Liz Weir P’27 for their energy and dedication in launching the VCSCA!

VCS 2022 FOUNDERS’ ALUMNI AWARD: TYLER LEMAY ’02

EACH YEAR OUR ALUMNI COMMUNITY AND FACULTY NOMINATE an alum who is living out the Vermont Commons mission of Scholarship, Community, and Global Responsibility to receive the Founders’ Alumni Award. The 2022 winner of this honor was Tyler Lemay, Class of 2002.



Tyler Lemay and Ben Wang in the Adirondacks

Tyler’s path to being an emergency physician in Rochester, New York has been a circuitous one. He recalls fondly his classes and classmates from the earliest years of VCS, but he also recalls “barely graduating.” Tyler credits his parents and the tireless VCS faculty for teaching him about service, critical thinking, and learning how to learn. He graduated from Alfred University with a BFA in Studio Arts in 2006, focusing on glassblowing and photography. Not exactly the traditional route to medical school!

With degree in hand, Tyler returned to Vermont for three more years of study at the Community College of Vermont and UVM to prepare for medical school. He graduated from the UVM College of Medicine in 2015 and completed his residency in emergency medicine at Duke University Hospital in 2018.

The pandemic and its accompanying challenges struck Tyler's hospital as fiercely as anywhere, and drug and equipment shortages added to the stresses of the time. It was especially difficult for Tyler to know that he could deliver excellent care but for the circumstances that were beyond anyone's control. What remained in his control, however, was the ability to be present for his patients and their families. "It's rewarding," he noted, "to be a human connection for people when they're in some of the worst moments of their lives." He also appreciates the flow state that can be achieved when one is doing the work that they are trained to do, noting, "It's really nice to be able to do the things you're truly good at."

Beyond the hospital, Tyler recharges outside with his family and friends, and makes it back to the Green Mountains about once a month to spend time on his land in Hinesburg.

Looking back, Tyler credits VCS for inspiring his medical career, beginning with a Wilderness First Aid Encounter Week led by VCS co-founder Leah Mital. This spurred him to join his local rescue squad, followed by the ambulance and fire department, and then to take a job in a hospital. Although emergency medicine is his daily work, Tyler still enjoys prehospital and wilderness medicine the most. He functions as medical director for a Rochester-area rescue squad and is rejoining the Camel's Hump Backcountry Rescue here in Vermont.

VCS students and faculty have also been the lucky beneficiaries of Tyler's expertise. In 2015, he and Ben Wang co-led a winter Encounter Week ski trip in the Adirondacks, which inspired him to think about additional ways of supporting the E-Week program. Since 2018, he's worked behind the scenes with Ben and Dexter on emergency response and risk management to expand the school's capacity for managing wilderness adventures.

His extraordinary devotion to helping others and his dedication to serving the community make Tyler the embodiment of the Vermont Commons spirit. Congratulations, Tyler! 🍄

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

AMIRA SILVERMAN '17



THOSE WHO KNEW AMIRA SILVERMAN when she was a student at VCS might have thought that she left the school fully formed; she already had the skills, confidence, and experience of someone much older. But VCS was really a springboard to launch her into the next phase of her life (an apt metaphor, since Amira was a circus artist, among other things!). At Skidmore College, she found that she loved her

research-based classes, and wound up double-majoring in Sociology and Spanish, with minors in Gender Studies and Intergroup Relations, otherwise known as IGR. Says Amira, "Along with VCS, IGR is up there in terms of transformative experiences in my life." Within the supportive environment of the school, Amira learned how to facilitate dialogue across differences and appreciate the impact of identity on lived experience.

The years since college have found Amira working in social research, first at Brown University on a study of the impact of peer intervention on intentional firearm use, and currently at NYU, overseeing a team of researchers studying mental health among youth impacted by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in NYC. The NYU study will assess the effects of various supports for frontline staff in residential facilities on outcomes for the children in their care. Amira was drawn to this particular study because of its focus on structural and systemic change. She reflects, "I'm a systems thinker at heart. I have a hard time putting the onus on individuals without acknowledging the other forces at play."

Amira is currently applying to Ph.D. programs where she plans to conduct research into identity-based violence, particularly the ways in which extreme violence is mirrored in everyday violence and "how we can tackle both simultaneously." About her future field, she says, "I'll basically be going into learning as a career. I am so grateful to VCS for preparing me for this." 🍄

ALUMNI NEWS

Eamon McMahon '01 came back to VCS last January to take part in the launch of the Campaign for Vermont Commons! He shared that he is the proud dad of a four-year-old and three-year-old, and is working at his dream job as a scientific machinist at Middlebury College. In what is left of his free time, he practices and teaches martial arts.

Aislinn Wallace '05 gave us a shout-out from Atlanta, where she writes, "I've recently begun a second career - after over a decade working in higher education administration, I started a Ph.D. in Criminology. I hope to use this degree to contribute to policy work on mass incarceration."

Asher Leff '07 writes that he is living in Puerto Rico, where he started his own company, TauMat, LLC. Asher explained, "We engineer thermal management solutions for an electrified future."

Sam Barrocas '08 recently returned to Vermont and stopped by VCS to surprise Mark Cline Lucey and Peter Goff with a visit. After working on a 4,000-acre regenerative farm in Georgia, as a wrangler on a ranch in Colorado, and as an apprentice at an organic farm in California, Sam has returned to the Green Mountains to be the livestock manager at Philo Ridge Farm in Charlotte. Welcome back, Sam!

Seaman **Tommy Kalinoski '08** will soon be stationed in Seattle for three years to work on the US Coast Guard Polar Star breaking ice in Antarctica.

Former VCS Director of Admissions and College Counseling Sarah Soule wrote that she attended a virtual conference in which **Ross King '10** was a presenter. She noted, "The conference was focused on options and opportunities for non-college-bound students. Ross did a wonderful job in his presentation. It is clear he is thriving in his role at Lamoille County Mental Health."

Callie McGarghan '11 and her newly-opened vintage clothing store, Silkworm Studio, were recently profiled in the *Addison Independent*. Callie returned to the area to open her shop in Bristol after spending time in Los Angeles, working in the fashion and consignment sector. Visit her store at shopsilkworm.co.

Zannah Johnson '11 is working as an outpatient child therapist for a pediatrics clinic in Brockton, MA, largely working with recently arrived immigrant families who experienced trauma in their home countries or during immigration. She is about to become a fully licensed social worker.

Spencer Reed '14 is the Director of Partnerships for Renew US, a progressive nonprofit. Always on the move, Spencer notes that his next home state will be New York.

Mikhal Yudien '15 just completed her required clinical rotations at UPenn Perelman School of Medicine and will be applying to surgical residencies this coming summer.

Across the pond in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, you'll find **Nimaya Lemal '17** working on her master's degree in Environment, Culture, and Communication at the University of Glasgow.

Katya Marsh '17 is working as a research assistant in the Department of Psychiatry at UVM's Vermont Center on Behavior and Health, studying substance use and mental health issues in vulnerable populations.

Recent grads **Zac Hinds '19**, **Sofia Bitukendja '21**, and **Simon Rosenbaum '22** visited us in January, when they participated in the annual Alumni College Panel. They spent the morning with current juniors and seniors, sharing insights about the transition to college and life post-VCS. Zac is a senior at St. Michael's where he is studying computer science, mathematics, and philosophy. He proudly shared that after graduation he will be doing back-end programming for McDonald's, which he identified as his dream job, even when he was at VCS. Sofia is at UMass Boston, studying public health and fulfilling her prerequisites to become a physician assistant. Simon is a first-year student at

Vanderbilt, studying political science and on track for pre-law.

From Oberlin College, **Maya Akazawa '21** writes that she is studying Biology and has enjoyed traveling to Central America on her summer and winter breaks. She has also taken up parade float building with a campus club!

Rachel Bergstein '21 works as a photographer and videographer for the Northeastern University and Harvard athletic departments, in addition to being a full-time student at Northeastern.

Izzy Stearns '21 is living in Burlington and is establishing herself as a professional concert and portrait photographer. She's also brought her skills back to VCS, documenting various events and taking this year's school portraits! See her work at izzystearnsphotography.com

Former student **Eden Smith '23** took her senior year of high school at Norwich University, noting that her time at VCS had prepared her very well for college-level courses. She added, "I researched/wrote about U.S.-Mexico border policy, the humanitarian crisis at the border, and my experiences visiting the border [on an Encounter Week] for my English public issue project last semester. That trip is still on my mind daily."

We love keeping track of our Flying Turtles! Let us know where you are and what you're up to! Email Sharon at spanitch@vermontcommons.org.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

MARK HEMLEY '02 FORGES HIS OWN PATH

MARK HEMLEY RECALLS BEING FASCINATED by computers at a young age, so after he arrived at VCS, it seemed only natural to apprentice himself to Rob Skiff (one of the school's founders) and learn as much as he could about information technology.

Following VCS and some time at Middlebury College, he entered the IT field, where he has worked ever since.

About 10 years ago, however, Mark noticed that his friends all seemed to be engaged

in interesting creative endeavors, from blowing glass to making guitars. Feeling inspired to get out from behind the computer monitor, he bartered a year's worth of IT support in exchange for blacksmithing lessons, and a new passion was ignited. After several years of intensive practice, he found himself on an episode of The History Channel's *Forged in Fire* (Season 6, Ep. 25) creating a spectacular falchion, a type of sword. His love of live action role playing (LARPing) and knowledge of medieval weaponry—to that point, only crafted in foam—wound up serving him well. Said Mark, "Somehow, they made me look like a normal guy, even though I gave them all of the material to portray me as a spectacular nerd." Mark now works at NPI Technology

Management next door to VCS, but his love of blacksmithing remains; during his down time, you'll find him at his forge where he crafts knives at his leisure, enjoying the process and the artistry of his chosen craft. 🔨



ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

BY THE NUMBERS

\$3.2 MILLION

Operating Budget

107

Students in grades 6-12

302

Graduates 1997-2021

28%

Students who receive financial aid

\$12,627

Average financial aid award

\$471,635

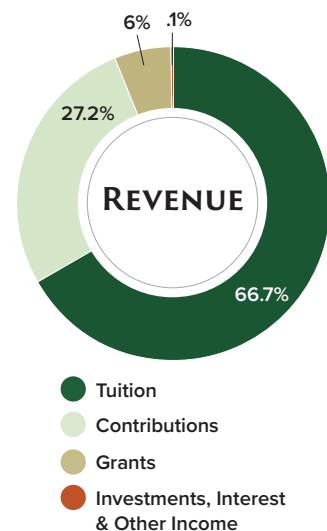
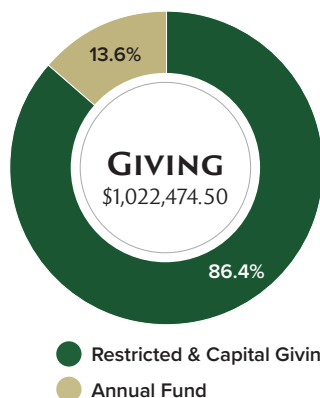
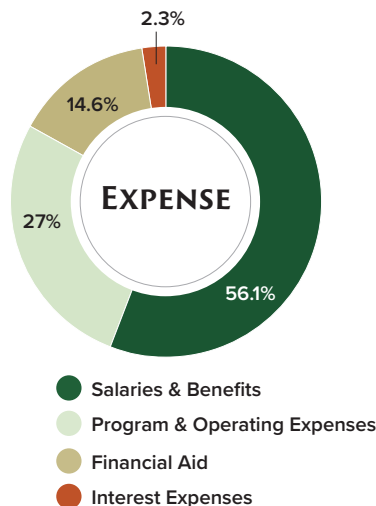
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222

Donors in FY 21-22

100%

Board giving to Annual Fund



BOARD NEWS

While **Cathy Townsend P'20 '22** has completed her service on the board, VCS will always owe her a debt of gratitude for her years of selfless dedication. We can't thank you enough for your commitment of time and energy, Cathy.

Asher Burns-Burg '01 and **Greg John '01** have also completed their time on the board, and we thank them for their contributions over the past couple of years. It's been invaluable for VCS to have our early alums return as board members and give back so meaningfully to the place that helped shape them.

We look forward to Asher's and Greg's continued participation as active alumni. VCS would not be what it is without each of you.

We are pleased to welcome VCS parents **Raj Rawal P'25** and **Kristie Stern P'23** as our newest board members! Raj has spent his career as a Global Chief Information Officer at several companies in a range of industries. He and Anne Miller are the parents of rising juniors **Sara and Brij Rawal**. Kristie is the President and Managing Partner of Green Mountain Lion Corp, a boutique talent acquisition firm. She and husband John are parents to **Andrew Stern '21** and **Kayla Stern '23**.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING VCS!

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH ZANNAH JOHNSON '11

Q: Green or Gray?

A: Green, don't be silly.

Q: What is your favorite or most vivid VCS memory?

A: I think it's a tie between three (there are just so many!)

- 1) Falling asleep in a tent with my friends snuggled up around me in Acadia on an E-Week while Jen Cohen sang us to sleep.
- 2) Every Morning Meeting. I really loved/cherished having a time to come together as a community.
- 3) My Senior Sendoff. People were crying, and I remember thinking, "Where else would you have these kids of all ages crying because they're so in love with each other, with the community that brought them together, and with having found a second home?"



Q: Why do you choose to give to VCS?

A: I choose to give to VCS because I believe in supporting organizations and places that value the things in life that feel the most important to me: kindness, acceptance of all people, community, and creative thinking/learning. VCS wholly includes and supports each of its students and wants its students to learn inside its own walls and outside in the world.

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