

Taft

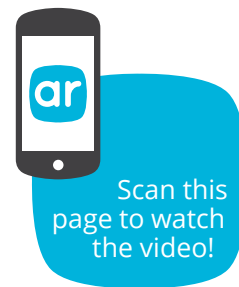
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Service in
Guatemala

FALL 2017

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Taft
BULLETIN

FALL 2017



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Media Credentials

How a trio of Taft alums—Ryan Osborn '97, Braden Cleveland Bergan '92, & Jon Dann '70—stay ahead of the big story.

By Neil Vigdor '95

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A Decade of On-the-ground Service in Guatemala

Taft students and faculty help impact quality of life.

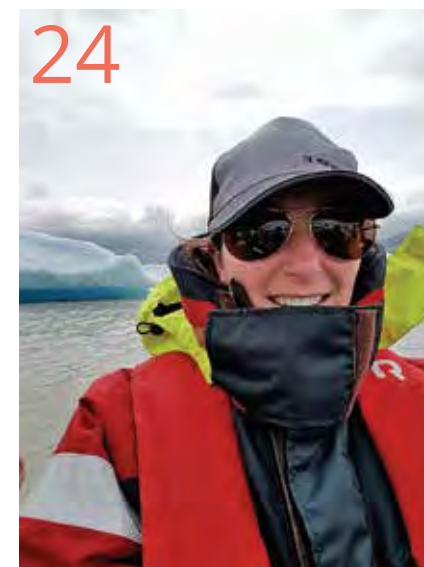
By David Dethlefs

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We'd love to hear what you think about the stories in this *Bulletin*.

We may edit your letters for length, clarity, and content, but please write.

Linda Hedman Beyus, editor

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ON THE COVER

Taft students help construct a home from scratch in Guatemala on one of many service trips to the country, where they also learn about the culture in the city of Antigua and the surrounding area. DAVID DETHLEFS

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On Main Hall

A WORD FROM HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78

EACH YEAR THE HEADMASTER ADDRESSES THE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AT THE SCHOOL'S CONVOCATION. AN ABRIDGED VERSION OF THIS YEAR'S TALK FOLLOWS.

ON CONVERSATION AND COMMUNITY

As the faculty know, I am really interested in the *power of conversation*: how I can become better at it, how you can develop the skills needed for it, and how a school becomes a community through it. And to start the year, I'm going to offer a challenge and a goal around conversation.

Perhaps because I've been so dismayed by the quality of much of the national conversation and by the scarcity of good models from all corners of the political landscape, I returned this year thinking that perhaps we here, individually and collectively, might achieve a very different kind of discourse. I felt we could improve our own conversational abilities, individually and institutionally—and that's very Taft, this idea that we can always get better. I returned with the commitment to share an explicit goal: that each of us, at some time and hopefully often, engaged in conversation that *bettered us, others, and the school*. So there it is. I've said it. That's my goal for the year.

Conversation can be intellectual, emotional, spiritual communion, the verbal acts by which we illuminate differences, find common ground, and deepen understanding. You know this. You've been part of such conversations. You put your device away. A topic surfaces. You look someone in the eye. You speak. You listen. You debate. And maybe some bond draws you together, a light falls on an issue, the horizon suddenly opens.

We are so blessed to live and learn in this school, all of us, students and faculty alike. Everything about this place serves to create conversation. The design of the campus brings us into perpetual contact with each other. The Main Hall and the pathways are like rivers where we flow shoulder to shoulder, under the flags of nations hanging like leaves, find ourselves pausing together on corners, eddied in small groups when the current slows. Our classes are small, and teachers construct them to draw you out, to ask you to speak, to encourage you to respond. Our traditions—like School Meetings, sit-down dinners—make it impossible not to engage each other. The dormitories, common rooms, benches all pull us together, day and boarder, boy and girl.

And so Taft is about conversations, and conversations are how a community is built, how we enhance our understanding of each other, how we develop the skills of respectful debate and

“We need to recognize that we communicate a lot more with fingers to screen than just a few years ago, and so we will have to make a *shared effort to reclaim conversation.*”

“What I am urging is that you see your days here as a rich opportunity to engage and converse with students and faculty, of all backgrounds and perspectives, to encounter ideas that are new, to find common ground, to deepen understanding, and to solve problems.”

empathic listening, and how we raise understanding of complicated ideas, how we encounter experiences beyond what we know, in and out of the classroom.

What if we committed to elevating the art of conversation? What if each of us committed to talking with and listening to others, especially those with whom we appear to have little in common? What if we put aside our devices and were locked in, alert, focused—uninterrupted and fully present? What if every class was a conversation of different insights, even opposing views, and every idea was voiced and every idea heard? What if the dining hall tables were crowded elbow to elbow, not with all girls or all boys or all teammates or all juniors, but with wonderfully different students who had something new and different to say to each other? What if in June, every one of us could say, “I was part of conversations, formal and informal, planned and unscripted, academic and personal, *that bettered me, others, and this school.*”

What I am describing is *not* something tangential to our work; it *is* our work. The education here is in an ancient tradition of the liberal arts, a conversational model that dates to the Greeks and Romans. It is an education aimed at creating a citizen able to think clearly, communicate cogently, debate respectfully, and collaborate fruitfully—and achieved through open and ongoing dialogue.

The founder of the school, Horace Taft, was shaped by tradition, and this school began in a small house in 1890 with a handful of students, talking around a dining room table. Taft was committed to the education of the whole student—that’s still our mission today. That’s what happens when you find yourself talking with someone who has an experience that’s different than yours. It’s liberating: we develop the skill and courage to go places we once feared. It’s exciting.

And that can happen and only will happen, if to every class, discussion, and conversation you bring a willingness to get in and stay in conversation, especially on ideas that are new and challenging. Your experience here will at times completely discomfort you as you wrestle with perspectives different than your own, unsettle you as you recognize yours is not the only way to experience the world, challenge you as you find your own firmly held thinking shaken. You will glimpse new worlds.

What does that mean for us here?

First, we need to recognize that we communicate a lot more with fingers to screen than just a few years ago, and so we will have to make a *shared effort to reclaim conversation*. That’s why we don’t walk the halls with headphones on. That’s why we don’t use our phones in public. That’s why your teachers, wanting your deep attention and presence, ask you to leave your device on a shelf or basket when you enter class.

Second, we also need to realize how our campus and our history *beautifully encourage conversations*, and we should take advantage of these places and traditions. Perhaps no place is more important or has more potential for vibrant conversation, profound learning, expanding of horizons, broadening inclusion, advancing understanding, and the growth of communication and listening skills, than the dining halls. I wish I could shuffle the entire student body like cards in my hands and deal you randomly among the tables; imagine the conversations that would happen! You are all bright and interesting, you each bring unique perspectives, you have so much to offer and learn.

Most of all, we need to enter conversations around challenging and complex ideas, in and out of the classroom, with a combination of confidence and humility, as eager to listen as to speak, genuinely curious about others and aware that your views are not the only ones, and willing to accept in turn that you may be challenged and confront ideas that are new. No one can promise that you won’t have people disagree with you; no one can promise that you won’t encounter a perspective that really unsettles you. What I hope we can promise to ourselves as a community is that we will stay in conversations, that we will listen and respect differences, that we will debate with rigor and curiosity, that we will assume the best in others, and we might elevate our understanding of each other.

What I am urging is that you see your days here as a rich opportunity to engage and converse with students and faculty, of all backgrounds and perspectives, to encounter ideas that are new, to find common ground, to deepen understanding, and to solve problems. This not just a moral



▲ After Morning Meetings, visiting speakers often engage in conversations with the school community, as here in the Woolworth Faculty Room.

imperative: it’s pragmatic. What I am describing is a set of skills that will ultimately separate those who can lead and those who never will. You want to lead? Then just learn how to have a conversation, listen to others, explain your ideas, be open to difference, include voices, and collaborate creatively. You can start here.

To miss this opportunity—by closing your mind to new ideas, by living uncurious about others, by fearing what you do not know—would be profoundly sad. Think, on the other hand, what you might experience and what we might be if every one of us shared a goal: that we engaged in conversation that bettered us, others, and the school.

Willy MacMullen

Willy MacMullen ’78

To watch the entire address visit www.vimeo.com/taftschool

“You want to lead? Then just learn how to have a conversation, listen to others, explain your ideas, be open to difference, include voices, and collaborate creatively.”

Alumni **SPOTLIGHT**



A glimpse into the welcoming interior of The Finch.
THE FINCH

A Bistro Grows in Brooklyn

TEN MONTHS AFTER GABE MCMACKIN '94 OPENED THE FINCH, a 70-seat restaurant in Brooklyn, he received a call from Michelin inviting him to attend the launch party for its 2016 New York City restaurant guide.

The timing wasn't ideal. "I had a restaurant to run," says McMackin, whose son, Jasper, had been born just seven weeks earlier. "We hadn't seen any reviewers, and we hadn't had much attention from the press."

But a lot of people were about to learn The Finch's name, because the Michelin representative confided that he was inviting McMackin to the gala because he'd been awarded a coveted Michelin star.

"It was really not my intention to shoot for stars," McMackin says. "My goal was to play with food and to create a neighborhood restaurant that straddles the line between formal and informal service."

"You can just come in and have a great time with a glass of wine and a salad on

a Tuesday night, but if you want a tasting menu we can do that, too," he says.

McMackin got his first glimpse into the culinary world washing dishes at the Hopkins Inn in Warren, Connecticut, and he says back then "I thought of food as something we do together as a family, but I never thought about it as a career."

Following college at Skidmore, he took gigs working in the web department of *Paper* magazine and doing business development for financial services companies,

but he says he never found an "industry that gave me so much joy" as restaurants. Soon he found his way back to them and signed on for stints at Roberta's, Gramercy Tavern, and Blue Hill at Stone Barns, and as a corporate chef for Martha Stewart.

"Then I decided I was going to give it a shot myself and try to make my own version of the things I'd seen and been a part of," McMackin says. "I was really looking for the right space, and I was going to let everything else follow from it."

The space he eventually found, among a row of brownstones in a landmarked Clinton Hill neighborhood in Brooklyn near McMackin's home (where he lives with his partner, Fon-Lin Nyeu, and Jasper, now 2), had many iterations—most recently as a tattoo parlor, but



Gabe McMackin '94, chef and owner of The Finch in Brooklyn. THE FINCH



Grass-fed beef tartare with watermelon radish, smoked egg yolk, and caraway toast.
THE FINCH

preparation is designed to let its ingredients speak for themselves: "We're letting a strawberry taste like a strawberry."

Among what Michelin calls "outrageously good food," dishes such as a squid ink tagliatelle served with peekytoe crab, saffron, lemon, and basil are focused on the ingredients and not embellished with some unnecessary sauce or fussy accoutrement.

"We don't try to whisk you off to some far-off land," McMackin says. "We try to let you be most beautifully where you are."

It's a nice place to be. ■

—Sam Dangremond '05

Read more at www.thefinchnyc.com.

also a delicatessen and a barber shop.

To turn it into The Finch, McMackin raised money from family and friends and installed a Carrara marble bar and an open kitchen, where the packed dining room

can watch as he and his chefs prepare delicious and occasionally obscure dishes. After he presented a medley of tri-star strawberries and burrata with basil and peppermint, McMackin explained that the



Scan this page to hear McMackin describe his restaurant.

A Slice of Italy in Oyster Bay

ITALIAN FOOD IS THE MOST popular ethnic cuisine in America, according to a report by the National Restaurant Association.

That bodes well for Peter Van Der Mije '98, who opened Osteria Leana, a chic, casual Italian spot in the town of Oyster Bay on Long Island's Gold Coast. *Osteria* refers to a place that serves wine and simple food. Van Der Mije's restaurant, which opened in 2016, serves more than 30 bottles of white, red, and sparkling Italian wines along with craft beers and cocktails.

But the highlight is definitely the food, or more specifically the chef's pasta, which he generously serves as the anchor of a five-course tasting menu from Sunday through Thursday. For example, Van Der Mije's offerings include *cacio e pepe*

RAE OF LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY



Peter Van Der Mije '98, chef and owner of Osteria Leana, in Oyster Bay, New York. MATT FURMAN



bucatini, a rolled pasta with oxtail short rib ragu, beet gnocchi, and clam tagliatelle. The seasonal *secondi* dishes include a pan-roasted lamb loin, veal chop, sautéed local sea bass, and a tantalizing Neapolitan *uova in purgatorio* (eggs in purgatory).

Seasonality is important to Van Der Mije, who worked for notable chefs like Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Marcus Samuelsson, and Dan Kluger in New York City after attending Rhodes College, culinary school at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, and Cornell's School of Hotel Management, where he earned an MBA. But a trip to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, with seven of his Taft classmates the summer after they finished college was where he got hooked on cooking.

He says he always knew he wanted to open a restaurant—"something small, local, convenient and accessible for



Locally sourced little neck clam pasta with white wine butter sauce. SALVATORE DIBENEDETTO @ THEGRUBFATHER



Osteria Leana's stylish interior. ALLISON FORLENZA

for great food because of the availability of farms," Van Der Mije says. "The oldest clammer in the Northeast, Flower and Sons, is down the street." You won't find clam pasta fresher than that. And because of its commitment to sustainability and community enhancement, Osteria Leana is also one of two certified green restaurants on Long Island by the Green Restaurant Association.

Osteria Leana is the kind of place you want to return to on a regular basis. On any given day, there are families, couples of all ages, and large parties celebrating at the restaurant's communal table.

Long Island newspaper *Newsday* called it a "romantic hidden gem where the simple preparations done well display confidence and the skill of the chef."

Van Der Mije should be proud. ■

diners craving a city experience along the North Shore coastline"—and chose Oyster Bay both because of its proximity to his home in Locust Valley, where

he lives with his wife, their two young sons, and a rambunctious beagle, and because of easy access to fresh produce. "Long Island has a lot of potential

—Sam Dangremond '05

Read more about the restaurant at www.OsteriaLeana.com

Wineries Counsel



FOR AS LONG AS LUISA BONACHEA '00

can remember, wine and vineyards have been present in her life. “I grew up appreciating wine through my parents and my family,” she recalls. “Most of our travels involved going to a wine region. Then, I studied in Paris, and that helped move along my interest in wine.” But growing up in Manhattan, she never imagined that this lifelong passion would develop into a fulfilling career.

Now an intellectual property attorney based in Napa Valley who specializes in trademark and copyright law for wine industry clients, Bonachea was first attracted to law in college. “I was in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown,” she says, “and I worked at a Cuban human rights organization. That really drew my interest toward First Amendment rights and free speech issues. That was the start of my interest in international law.”

Bonachea also credits her parents with instilling in her a respect for the American legal system: “My parents are both immigrants. They’re very proud of the U.S. constitutional system, and I grew up with that appreciation for our judicial system.”

After Georgetown came experience as a paralegal in New York City, law school at George Washington University, and

work with the U.S. Justice Department. By the time she graduated, Bonachea’s concern for First Amendment rights had grown and evolved. “When it came to actually practicing, the closest thing for me was [the area of] commercial speech; that’s how I ended up with my interest in trademark work,” she says.

From Washington, Bonachea moved to San Francisco and took a job in litigation,

“My parents are both immigrants. They’re very proud of the U.S. constitutional system, and I grew up with that appreciation for our judicial system.”

specializing in trade secrets and patents. “It was interesting,” she says. “Sure it’s IP [intellectual property] work, but it’s also very technical, and it wasn’t for me.”

This realization helped launch the second phase of her career and allowed her to combine her legal training with her love of wine. “To be honest, it was a little impulsive,” she says. “Living in the Bay Area, I became more familiar with wine, and when I was thinking about leaving San Francisco, I realized that I was coming out to Napa a lot. So I quit my law firm job and worked at a vineyard doing sales. The community here is really wonderful—I felt very welcomed.”

But she couldn’t stay away from law

for long. Soon after her move, she met her future business partner, Daniel Reidy, who had recently opened a practice representing local wineries. “We both realized that I could help him with IP work,” she remembers, “so I started working with him, just a few hours a week.” Over time, she took on more responsibility and ultimately helped him build the practice. Today their firm, which employs two paralegals and retains a third attorney as counsel, represents wineries in California and beyond, protecting their trademarks and intellectual property in the global market.

“The heart of this industry is agriculture—producing something from the land. That’s something that I really respect,” says Bonachea. “And there is also a worldly, sophisticated element. Wine comes from all over the world, and through appreciating it, you’re also learning a lot about different regions of France, Spain, and Italy, for example.”

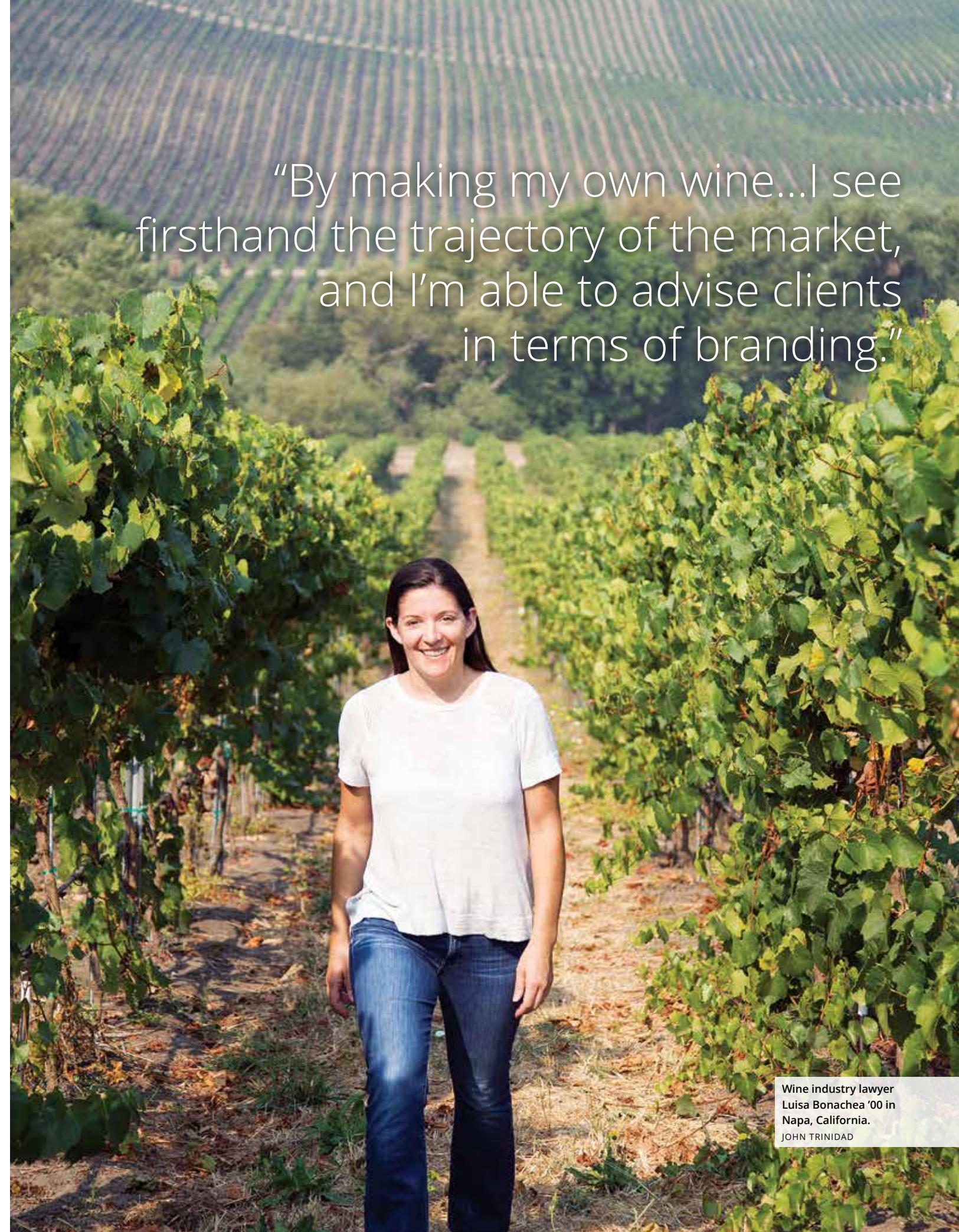
Her appreciation of wine extends beyond the office. Three years ago, Bonachea began a small wine label of her own—Etxea, the Basque word for house (her last name is actually a romanticized

version of “etxea,” pronounced eh-chay-a). Not only has this venture expanded her love of wine, it also has helped her connect with her clients on a deeper level. “By making my own wine, I am much better able to understand their timing and business strategy. I see firsthand the trajectory of the market, and I’m able to advise them in terms of branding,” she says.

“I never thought I would be this Manhattanite living in the countryside,” Bonachea laughs, but now, five years after relocating to the heart of California wine country, there’s no place she’d rather be. ■

—Christopher Browner '12

“By making my own wine...I see firsthand the trajectory of the market, and I’m able to advise clients in terms of branding.”



Wine industry lawyer
Luisa Bonachea '00 in
Napa, California.
JOHN TRINIDAD

Tap. Book. Dock.

TYLER KNEISEL '99 AND DOCKWA MAKE RESERVING BOAT SLIPS A SNAP.



Dockwa cofounders CRO Matt Fradette, CTO John Nagro, COO Tyler Kneisel '99, and CEO Mike Melillo.

TYLER KNEISEL '99 built a lifetime of happy memories on the water. Now he has built a business there.

"I grew up sailing with my grandfather in Manchester-by-the-Sea, on Cape Ann, in Massachusetts," says Kneisel. "Most of the boating I do now is on center consoles, playing in the waters around Cape Ann."

A few summers back, Kneisel and his wife were enjoying time on the water. When evening came, they began looking for a mooring in a local harbor. None were available, and, in the age of digital concierge services like OpenTable, there was no readily apparent way to book a mooring in advance.

"It made me reflect on some past

experiences I'd had cruising with my father," Kneisel explains. In one particular instance a marina actually asked him to fax a request for a mooring and to wait for a mailed response. "I became incredibly curious about whether marinas still actually made people do this. I mean, it was 2013 after all. And that was the rabbit hole I went down."

As an MBA with a rewarding career in finance, Kneisel's journey down the rabbit hole was one of informed analysis and refined business acumen fueled by wholehearted passion. He emerged a year and a half later with the launch of DockHop, a web and mobile-based marketplace that allowed boaters to find

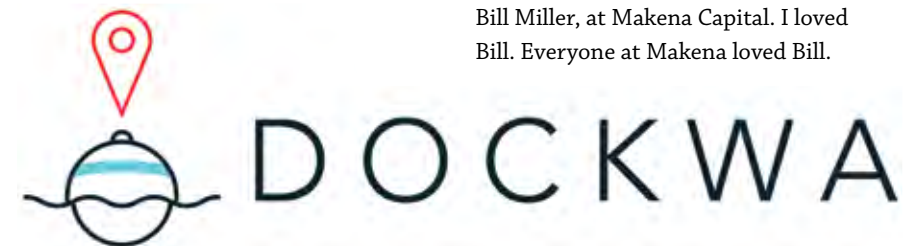
and book slips and moorings directly from their smartphones. The boating market was more than ready for the much-needed service. But as Kneisel soon learned, there was another company also working hard to meet that need.

"I launched DockHop in December of 2014, and within two weeks I read the news about Dockwa's launch in *BostInno*," Kneisel says. "We had both been in stealth mode until that point, so neither of us was aware of the other. It was quite a shock to say the least, but also somewhat validating."

Both companies were based in New England, and both were in their first year of operation.

"Mike Melillo and Matt Fradette, two of the Dockwa founders, sent me an email about meeting up at the New England Boat Show," says Kneisel. "We met, had a beer, and we realized that we had shared ambitions that extended far beyond the waters of New England. I was farther ahead on product, but they had assembled a really incredible core team, including the third cofounder, John Nagro, a whiz of an engineer from HubSpot."

The four agreed to merge their start-ups.



"We looked at the opportunity to join forces rather than compete head-to-head in our first year of operation," Fradette told *BostInno* in 2015. The DockHop technology, he said, would expedite overall product development, while DockHop's network of participating marinas would increase Dockwa's "national footprint overnight."

"I think what further helped cement the deal was that there was a natural fit for the roles we each wanted to play," says Kneisel. "Prior to business school I worked directly for an incredible COO, Bill Miller, at Makena Capital. I loved Bill. Everyone at Makena loved Bill.

They always say you know you are on the right career path when you covet your boss's job, so moving from CEO to COO just made a lot of sense to me."

The four cofounders officially launched the new Dockwa in May 2015 at Nantucket's Figawi, one of the premier sailboat races on the East Coast. Later that month the company announced that it had closed a \$1.1 million seed-funding round from HubSpot CEO Brian Halligan and CMO Mike Volpe, David Skok of Matrix Partners, and Driftt cofounder Elias Torres, along with several other private investors. That round brought the total financing Dockwa had raised to \$1.4 million.

Today, tens of thousands of boaters find, reserve, and pay for moorings in real time, using the award-winning Dockwa platform on their computers or the free mobile app. Marinas use the platform to collect payment, manage

reservations, and more intelligently optimize their occupancy. Dockwa's marina network has expanded well beyond New England, with bookable slips up and down the eastern seaboard, throughout the Caribbean, on the Great Lakes, and on the West Coast, including marinas in San Francisco and Washington. They have offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Newport, Rhode Island, and have doubled their workforce. In January, Dockwa acquired Marinas.com, an online marine directory of more than 75,000 marine locations and more than 100,000 users.

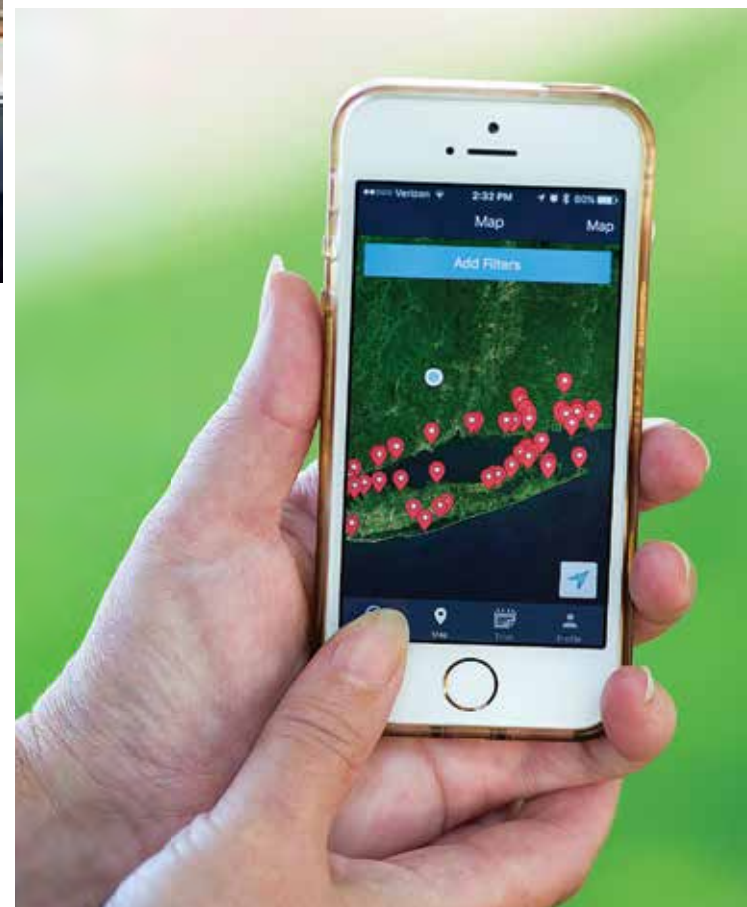
"While our focus with Dockwa has been intensely honed on transient business at marinas, Marinas.com brings an opportunity to more broadly address a lot of other facets of the marine industry that could use a boost into the 21st century," Kneisel explains. "I don't want to give away too much, but we believe the potential opportunity for Marinas.com is enormous."

Whatever lies ahead, Kneisel says, Dockwa owes to the team that is continually moving the company forward.

"I think my greatest takeaway as an entrepreneur is that it really all comes down to execution. Developing an innovative idea and creating a product that achieves product-market fit are certainly important, but without the right people to execute, that idea is almost certain to fail. We've surrounded ourselves with a group of really talented and genuinely great people that care about each other. That sounds cheesy, but the start-up grind is relentless, and without having people that are there to pick you up and/or carry the load, I know we wouldn't be where we are today." ■

—Debra Meyers

To learn more about Dockwa, Kneisel, and his cofounders, or to book a mooring, visit dockwa.com



◀ The Dockwa app allows boaters to find and reserve open moorings in a variety of ways, including destination searches and location mapping.



Leslie Herrlinger Lanahan '73 with daughter Lily '08 and husband Michael at the Taj Mahal in Agra, India.

Take Care of Your Friends

THE COMING OF FALL, with its crunching leaves, back-to-school specials, and faces of eager students, means something different to Leslie Herrlinger Lanahan '73. It was fall, specifically September 17, 2004, when her bright, beautiful son, Lynn Gordon Bailey Jr., known as Gordie, was found dead of alcohol poisoning, just three weeks into his freshman year at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Fall to Lanahan means telling Gordie's story again and again, in the hopes that she can prevent other families from enduring what she and the rest of Gordie's family have had to live with since Gordie died.

"Our lives have changed in every single way they possibly can," Lanahan says now, 13 years since Gordie's death. "There's a line before and after. It has been absolutely devastating."

Gordie, a standout athlete and actor at Deerfield Academy, had just pledged Chi Psi Fraternity at the university. As part of "bid night," Gordie and 26 other pledges, dressed in coats

and ties, were taken blindfolded to the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest where they were "encouraged" to drink four handles (1.75 liter bottles) of whiskey and six (1.5 liter) bottles of wine around a bonfire in 30 minutes.

When the group returned to the fraternity house, Gordie was visibly intoxicated and was placed on a couch to "sleep it off" at approximately 11 p.m. Fraternity members proceeded to write on his body with permanent markers—a ritual meant to embarrass brothers who pass out. Gordie was found 10 hours later, dead, face down on the floor. No one had called for help.

Lanahan, Gordie's stepfather, Michael, and sister Lily '08 channeled their grief into a foundation they created to bring awareness about alcohol poisoning and hazing. The Gordie Foundation, formed in 2005, created a national campaign to help students navigate the dangers of alcohol, peer pressure, and hazing. And every year, especially every fall, Lanahan hears of another student,



▲ Gordie Bailey, who died in 2004 due to alcohol poisoning during a college fraternity hazing ritual.

somebody's son or daughter, who has died in a similar situation. More than 1,000 students die every year from an alcohol related incident, a staggering toll.

But Lanahan understands that drinking seems an inescapable part of student life, and so rather than find ways to punish students, the current campaign, Gordie's Call, seeks to empower students to take care of their friends. The message is simple: call 911 if you have a friend who has had too much to drink. Gordie would be alive today if someone had called for help.

The Lanahans produced the film *HAZE*, which has been shown on more than 1,000 campuses nationwide, with more than 1 million students exposed to the reality that too much alcohol, peer pressure, and hazing can kill. The film is also shown to Taft seniors, as they

prepare to leave school. Lanahan served for 12 years as a dedicated Taft trustee.

"I don't think there's ever an end to this," Lanahan says. "This is something that has to be done every year, over and over. [When we hear of] somebody making a call—that's a success story. Somebody has heard of Gordie's story and made

each year the center provides educational material such as *HAZE* as well as alcohol check cards that describe the symptoms of alcohol poisoning, and encourages bystanders to call 911 if they believe someone is in danger. National Gordie Day is held every September during National Hazing and Prevention Week.

"We've learned to live with this tragedy," she says. "We're doing as well as you can do. Over time [the fear is] that people forget. People do forget, so we hope and feel like we do our part so that people will remember." ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

"This is something that has to be done every year, over and over. [When we hear of] somebody making a call—that's a success story. Somebody has heard of Gordie's story and made the call."

the call. A lot of them we don't know."

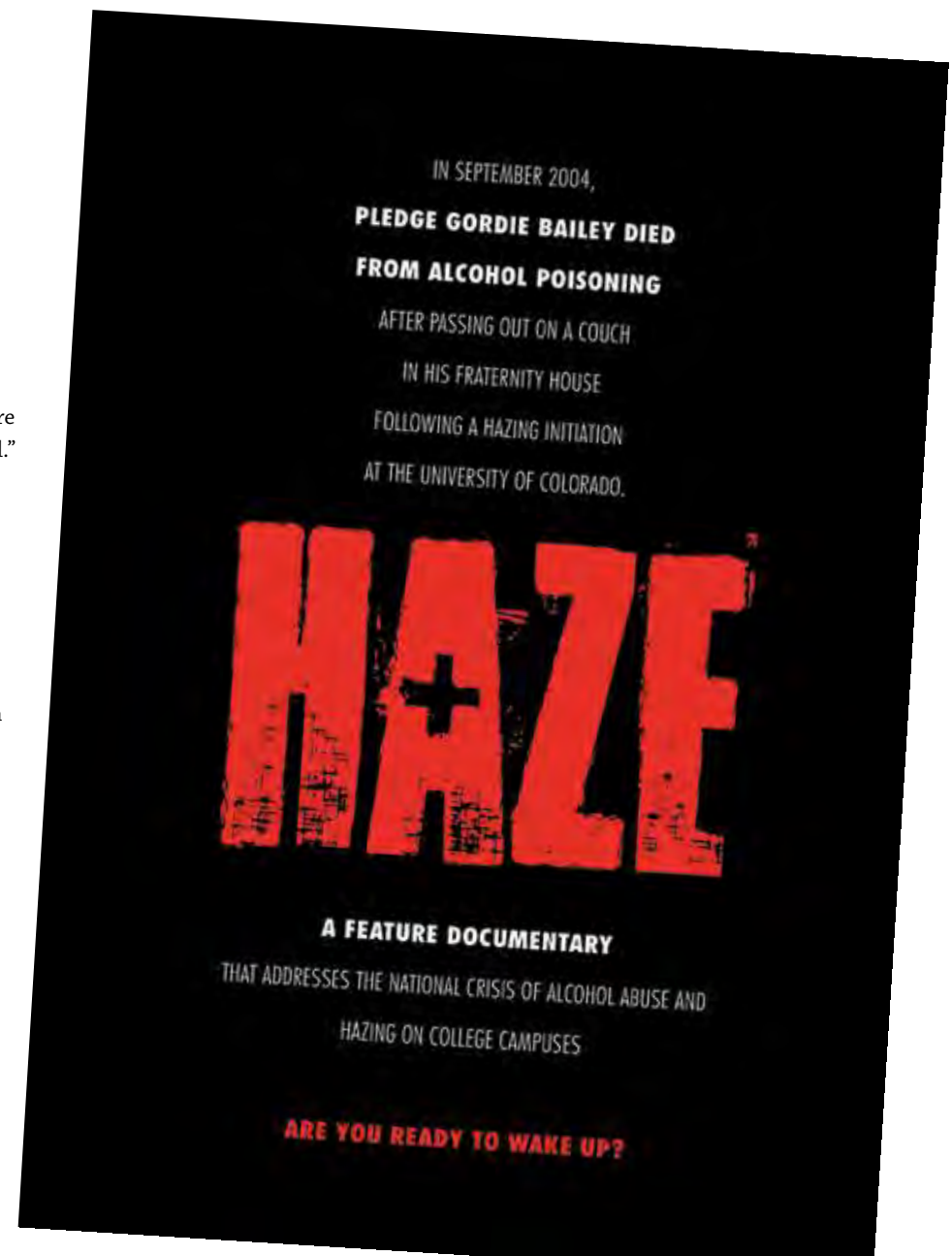
It's called bystander intervention, and Lanahan and the Gordie Center help support organizations that are trying to influence state legislators across the country to provide immunity from underage drinking charges if a bystander calls for help. Fear of getting in trouble keeps many from calling when someone could be saved, she said.

"The kids are afraid to call 911," she says. "It's about exactly that—taking care of your friends. Save a life, make the call."

Gordie's family attempted to seek justice for Gordie's death from the fraternity, but didn't get much satisfaction. "We were not anti-fraternity," she says, "but the fraternity [world] is turning their backs on these kids."

Today, Lanahan has reduced her involvement with the Gordie Foundation that she and her husband, Michael, founded after Gordie's death; it merged in 2010 with the University of Virginia's Center for Alcohol and Substance Education. Now known as the Gordie Center for Substance Abuse Prevention,

▶ *HAZE* is a feature documentary produced by Michael and Leslie Herrlinger Lanahan that addresses the crisis of alcohol abuse and hazing on college campuses. The film is available through the Gordie Center at UVa.





Pilot Doug Ellis '54, who volunteers his flying experience and plane for Angel Flight, with a patient he transported for medical care.

Serving in the Skies

AFTER NEARLY 40 SUCCESSFUL years in the textile industry, Doug Ellis '54 asked himself, "What do I want to do in retirement?" He decided it was an ideal time to return to a passion he first developed as an upper mid at Taft and continued at Princeton: flying.

So he bought *Cricket*, a small Piper Archer plane. A few years later, Ellis learned about Angel Flight, a national organization of volunteer pilots that offers free transportation to patients whose financial and/or geographical situations prevent them from receiving necessary medical treatment.

"Our task is to pick up patients who are too sick or too injured to drive a long way or fly on a commercial jet and take them to and from the hospital," says Ellis. "About 40 percent of our patients are children, about one-third are cancer patients who are going to the hospital for chemo or radiation, and about 20 percent are patients with burn wounds."

Ellis flies for Angel Flight Soars, the

chapter that covers North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Headquartered in Atlanta, where he lives, Angel Flight Soars works with 175 pilots or so in these six Southeast states who not only volunteer their time and effort, but also pay for all expenses, including fuel. This past year, the group flew more than 3,000 missions—that's eight missions a day, seven days a week.

When possible, Ellis tries to do one mission per week and averages about 30 to 40 a year. He checks the website to see which missions are available, how many passengers will be flying, the total weight, and where they're going. Ellis explains that his small plane has a weight limit of 400 pounds in addition to himself and a full tank, so he can typically accommodate the patient and a caregiver. In 10 years with Angel Flight Soars, he has completed between 300 and 400 trips, some of which are repeat patients.

"There's one little boy who I've been

flying for three years," says Ellis. "I took his first flight when he was 18 months old. He has a giant mole on his back and neck. They have to remove it because it can become cancerous otherwise. There are only two hospitals that specialize in this, and one is in Cincinnati. So I fly this little guy and his mom to Cincinnati from Atlanta [for surgery] and skin grafts, and I bring them back home. I've watched him grow up. It's a joy to be with him."

Meeting patients and helping them get to the hospital and back home is a fulfilling experience for Ellis, and he encourages others to get involved—whether by seeking out local Angel Flight groups or by spreading the word about the free service to doctors and other medical professionals.

"If any alums are pilots," he adds, "go to the local Angel Flight group and sign up to come fly with us. It's a rewarding experience."

■

—Hillary Dooley

IN Print

**FRANCE IS A FEAST:
THE PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY
OF PAUL AND JULIA CHILD**
Thames & Hudson
**Alex Prud'homme '80
and Katie Pratt**

Through photographs taken by Paul Child, a photographer and husband of the famous chef, *France Is a Feast* documents how Julia Child discovered French cooking and the French way of life. Paul and Julia moved to Paris in 1948 where he was cultural attaché for the U.S. Information Service, and in this role he met Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa, Brassai, and other leading photographers.

The Childs' wanderings through France, frequently photographed by Paul, helped lead to the classic *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* and Julia's celebrated career. Though Paul was an accomplished photographer (his work is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art), his photographs were little known until the publication of Julia's memoir, *My Life in France*, which included several of his images. Now, with more than 200 of Paul's photographs and stories recounted by his great-nephew, Alex Prud'homme, this book captures a key period in the Childs' lives and Paul's talent.

Prud'homme is the coauthor with Julia Child of *My Life in France* and also the author of *The French Chef in America*.

**FIRST FOUNDING FATHER:
RICHARD HENRY LEE AND THE
CALL FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE**
Da Capo Press
Harlow Giles Unger '49

Before Washington, before Jefferson, before Franklin or John Adams, there was Richard Henry Lee, the First Founding Father.

Lee was the first to call for independence

and the first to call for union. He was "father of our country" as much as George Washington, securing the necessary political and diplomatic victories in the Revolutionary War. He played a critical role in holding the colonial government together, declaring the nation's independence and ensuring victory for the Continental Army by securing the first shipments of French arms to American troops. Next to Washington, Lee was arguably the most important American leader in the war against the British.

Drawing on original manuscripts—many overlooked or ignored by contemporary historians—Unger paints a powerful portrait of a towering figure.

A veteran journalist, broadcaster, educator, and historian, Unger is the author of 15 books, including four biographies of America's Founding Fathers.

**CREATING A PORTABLE
MONEY MACHINE**
CreateSpace Independent
Publishing Platform
**Walter D. Blake (author name of
Walter Blogoslawski '51)**

The "Blake Technique" creates a unique approach for finding moneymaking opportunities with a "high probability of success with minimized risk."

Blake breaks down the securities market, explaining concepts such as how to work with financial planners and brokers and why going that route might not be your best plan. He explains the options market and gives his own strategies.

Blake's knowledge comes from experience and many years of research. He worked as a securities analyst for a New York Stock Exchange firm and as a licensed stockbroker before running his own company. He

continued investing while leading the company, and later ran a buy-write program for a bank while serving as its director. He now shares his knowledge through his writing.

**ADDICTED TO REFORM:
A 12-STEP PROGRAM TO
RESCUE PUBLIC EDUCATION**
The New Press
John Merrow '59

During a four-decade career at NPR and PBS, Merrow reported on education from every state in the union, as well as from dozens of countries, on everything from the rise of district-wide cheating scandals and the corporate greed driving an ADD epidemic, to America's obsession with standardized testing. Along the way, he taught in a high school, at a historically black college, and at a federal penitentiary.

Now, Merrow distills his thinking on education into a 12-step approach to fixing a K-12 system that Merrow describes as being "addicted to reform," but unwilling to address the real issue: American public schools are ill-equipped to prepare young people for the challenges of the 21st century.

Merrow offers chapters that reflect his many hours spent covering classrooms as well as corridors of power. His signature candid style comes to life as he shares anecdotes, schoolyard tales, and memories that are both instructive and endearing. *Addicted to Reform* forms an astute and urgent blueprint for providing a quality education to every American child.

Merrow recently retired as education correspondent for the *PBS NewsHour*. He founded and until 2015 was the president of Learning Matters. In 2012 he became the first journalist to win the McGraw Prize in Education and was also winner of the George Polk Award and Peabody Award. He is the author of several books about education and lives with his wife in New York City. ■

If you would like your work added to the Hulbert Taft Library's Alumni Authors Collection and considered for this column, please email the editor (lindabeyus@taftschoo.org) and mail a copy to:
Taft Bulletin | The Taft School | 110 Woodbury Road | Watertown, CT 06795-2100

For more information, visit
www.taftschoool.org/news

Around the POND

BY DEBRA MEYERS



Empowering Women in Kathmandu

“Nepal is a very poor country,” notes Osi Bialunska ’19, a native of Poland now in her third year at Taft. “It is very hard for women there.”

Nepal is very dependent on tourism, Osi explains, and to compete in the tourism industry, English language skills are essential. But the cost of English language classes in Nepal can be prohibitive for many women.

“If you can afford to pay, you probably already know English,” says Osi, who spent several weeks this summer teaching English at a free school for women in Kathmandu.

“Some of the women had a good base of knowledge, so we worked on conversational English. With others I needed to start with the basics, the A, B, Cs,” says Osi. “Many of the women came every day, others a few times a week. It was very impressive to see that they were so dedicated.”

Osi also spent most afternoons in local orphanages talking to teens about self-reliance, personal health issues, and individual rights.

“Their culture is very different from ours,” Osi says. “The young women are looking for inspiration and ideas about what they can do with their lives. Many think about the American Dream—they hope to leave their country and study abroad. My story—coming to Taft from Europe—shows them that these things are possible.”

◀ Osi Bialunska ’19, in the gold scarf, served as both teacher and mentor in Kathmandu.



The streets of Havana, Cuba.

“We did some gardening with a local farm initiative that supplies food to the community,” Caleb says, “and worked with an organization focused on providing women with skills they need to enter the workforce. We met girls as young as 10 there, and women as old as 90. It was amazing to see.”

What impressed Caleb the most

was the spirit of the people.

“In many ways Havana seems lost in time. There are old cars everywhere, and many of the buildings are stark and in disrepair. But the people have so much life and so much hope. They are always looking forward to bigger and better things—the heart of the people is hopeful and energetic.”



student SPOTLIGHT



Caleb Hannon ’18 embraced the sights and sounds of Cuba.

Experience Is Indeed the Best Teacher

EVERY SUMMER, TAFT STUDENTS TRAVEL THE WORLD TO LEARN, TO SERVE, AND TO GROW AS GLOBAL CITIZENS. MANY DO SO WITH SUPPORT FROM TAFT’S PAGE, POOLE, OR HATFIELD SUMMER GRANTS. HERE IS A LOOK AT A FEW OF THE EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES TAFTIES ENJOYED DURING THE SUMMER OF 2017.



Havana Nights

Caleb Hannon ’18 is on track to earn two diplomas at commencement in June: a traditional Taft diploma and a specialized diploma, awarded by Taft’s Global Studies and Service (GSS) department. Introduced in 2014, the GSS diploma

program combines rigorous coursework with service at home and abroad.

“I like learning about different people and different cultures,” says Caleb. “I want to dig deeper and envelop myself in another culture. There is no better way to do that than travel.”

Caleb spent two weeks in Cuba, visiting cultural and historical sites in Havana, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, and the Bay of Pigs. Traveling with a program guide and a dozen students from across the nation, Caleb also spent time in service to the island nation.



City view: Lisbon, Portugal



Reduce, Reuse, ReFood

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that roughly one-third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year—nearly 1.5 billion tons—is lost or wasted. Magda Kisielinska '18 is doing something about it.

Magda traveled to Lisbon, Portugal, where she worked with ReFood, a local organization that collects surplus food from stores and restaurants, then redistributes it within the community. Founded in 2011, ReFood has 20 sites across the city that feed more than 300 people each day.

“The main focus of my work was preventing food waste and providing food to those without access to it,” Magda explains.

During her time in Lisbon, Magda did everything from washing containers and separating food into portions, to packing servings according to family preferences and delivering the food to those in need.



Magda Kisielinska '18 (left) with the ReFood team in Lisbon.

“The most amazing part of the job was seeing “the board”—a blackboard filled with names of families and people receiving food on a given night before and after each shift,” says Magda. “Three

hours later all of the names on the board would be crossed off and all of those people given the food they needed. Equally important, the food they were given had not been thrown away.”



Taking the Lead: English for All

Chris McDermott '18 isn't satisfied following a beaten path in his quest to serve—he prefers to forge his own. Chris, Stephanie Sze '18 and Corrine Bai '18 cofounded English for All at Taft.

“Our organization focuses on teaching English and providing educational supplies to Chinese students in rural villages,” explains Chris. “Each year we raise money through sales at Taft, which we use to buy education supplies, English books, and sports equipment. We apply for grant funding to cover the cost of our annual trip to China.”

For three consecutive summers, the trio has traveled to rural villages in China. Corrine and Chris visited Haikou, Hainan, in southern China this year.

“Stephanie branched out to a village

in Sichuan, China, to effect even more change on a broader scale. We also recruited two additional Taft students this year to help. Support from Kevin Lu '19 and Angelina Du '19 allowed us to teach more classes at the local school in Hainan,” says Chris.

The Taft students spent two weeks teaching English to groups of more than

50 people in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classrooms. They also tutored Chinese teachers, who will continue the lessons the Taft students started.

“I think my biggest takeaway is my realization that anyone can effect change in the world,” says Chris. “I think it is Taft's motto, *non ut sibi*, that inspired me to branch out in service to others.”



Chris McDermott '18 and Corrine Bai '18 bringing books to China.





Cetacean Conservation

Upper mids Anna Csigrinszkij and Nico Gusac traveled to Tenerife, the largest and most biologically diverse of the Canary Islands, to monitor and observe the resident communities of pilot whales and dolphins.

“Whales and dolphins are amazing animals facing growing threats,”

Anna says. “Realizing that they make up a bigger part of the world than we do—that we are the minority—I have always been fascinated by that.”

At the start of their programs, Anna and Nico learned how to photo-identify the animals and about various threats to the cetacean population, including overfishing, noise, and pollution. “This allowed us to effectively collect data to share with the local government. They will use it to develop laws and regulations that will protect the local species,” explains Anna.

The on-water cetacean surveys were

only one part of the program. Nico and Anna also performed community outreach and conducted coastal surveys from the cliffs of the volcanic island.

“We collected data about the animals and how they interacted with vessels, habitat conditions, and behavior patterns, and monitored boat and other vessel traffic,” explains Nico. “Our community outreach involved interacting with tourists to raise awareness of the issues threatening the marine creatures in Tenerife.”

“It is important for people to remember that every single decision you make might have a long-term impact on the environment,” he adds.



Africa: Heart and Soul

“I went to Africa with my family when I was nine years old,” says Taylor Jacobs ’18, “and I fell in love with it. I always wanted to go back—it stays with you.”

Warm and outgoing and with a passion for service, Taylor was eager to combine the places in her heart with the opportunity to make a difference in children’s lives.

“I wanted an experience that was more actual work than travel,” Taylor says, “something as close to raw service as I could find.”

She found what she was looking for in Tanzania. Taylor lived in a camp-style setting run by “Mama Simba.” Each day, she followed a dirt path to the local school, where she taught fifth-graders.

“Fifth grade blends students who range in age from 8 to 12, depending on when they were able to start school,” explains Taylor. “Their English language skills were also widely varied.”

During their stay, Taylor and her colleagues completely renovated a classroom, stripping walls, applying spackle



Taylor Jacobs ’18 dances in Tanzania.

and paint, and repairing cracks in the flooring. They also repaired sidewalks.

“We did a lot of hardcore handiwork, which was rewarding, but also important. Even if the children can’t hold on to all the English, at least they have a new classroom to continue learning in.”



Botany Meets Technology

Taft students have been working in the research laboratories of The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) for the past five summers, most conducting high-level research on plant genetics. This year, Ally Anderson ’18 introduced advanced technology to the equation.

Recognizing that many plants are moving toward extinction before they have been formally identified, NYBG scientists have begun building Monographia, an open source web-based application that can be used by both

scientists and the general public to collect, view, and curate plant data; easily identify plant species; and more. Ally spent seven weeks designing and implementing an electronic keying algorithm to support the Monographia project. Dr. Damon Little was her mentor.

“We picked out six different characters—things like phenology and polymorphism—and implemented them to help calculate dichotomizing

value, which then helps you see which character is more useful in determining plant species,” explains Ally.

For each character, Ally wrote an equation, found the dichotomizing values for the posed data set, then wrote the algorithmic code using JavaScript.

“I don’t think I did anything that people would really consider botany, but the usefulness it has in the field and the application to other sciences is really remarkable and overwhelming,” says Ally. “Dr. Little is publishing the algorithm in December so people will start using it then.”

The full Monographia application is expected to launch in the next 18 months. ■

Many student trips were supported by grants from these endowed funds:

Meg Page ’74 Fellowships honor her commitment to compassionate health care, and are awarded to students who wish to explore the provision of better health care.

Robert Keyes Poole Fellowships honor the memory of Robert Keyes Poole ’50, and enable Taft students to engage in travel or in projects consistent with Mr. Poole’s lifetime interest in wildlife and the environment.

William W. Hatfield ’32 Grants celebrate the ideals of Horace Dutton Taft—service above self—and are given annually to students whose commitment to volunteerism brings to life the message behind Taft’s motto.



Anna Csigrinszkij ’19 working with whales and dolphins in Tenerife.



NYBG summer intern Ally Anderson ’18 with mentor and NYBG scientist Dr. Damon Little

Faculty Travel



The F, G, H's of Iceland

From fissures to glaciers, and geothermal to hydropower, Carly Borken's trip to Iceland was a sensory overload of environmental and geography concepts. She spent time with the culture and community, learning sagas and agriculture and the importance of hot tub soaking. She also experienced the intense wonders of the natural resource provided by living on a volcano! Borken participated in the GeoCamp Iceland Institute, through the National Council for Geographic Education. Her travel was made possible in part by the Davis Fellowship, part of Taft's Professional Education Grant (PEG) program.

- ▶ Borken standing before Sólheimajökull, a glacier that is receding at approximately the length of a football field each year.
- ▼ Iceland is perhaps the only place in the world where the effects of two major tectonic plates drifting apart can be easily observed above sea level. Borken will bring her experience from the site into her AP Human Geography classroom, where study of the earth's tectonic plates is part of the fall curriculum.



Dried fish heads, some of the value-added products from the fishing industry, are exported to Africa, where they are sold in local markets.



Mthabisi "MT" Tshuma '18, Parente, and Tshuma's brother, Terrance, in Zimbabwe.



The current class of Bantu Rover Scholars.



▶ Parente with an up-and-coming player from the Bantu Rovers' youth program.



Building Bonds in Zimbabwe

Mid Class Dean and Head Soccer Coach Ozzie Parente traveled to Zimbabwe this summer, where he visited current Taft students Marvin Sibanda '19 and Mthabisi Tshuma '18, and met their families for the first time. Mid Class Dean Lisa Klein, mentor and track coach to Marvin and Mthabisi, also made the trip. The goodwill visit was made possible in part by the Sheppard Family Grant, part of Taft's Professional Education Grant (PEG) program, and served to strengthen bonds between Taft and the Bantu Rover Scholars program. A Zimbabwean premier league team based in Bulawayo, the Bantu Rovers support youth programs and promote scholarship opportunities for Zimbabwean students. Since 2013, three scholar-athletes from the program have enrolled at Taft. ■



▶ Sibonokuhle Sibanda (left), mother of Marvin Sibanda '19, traveled with Parente and Klein to Victoria Falls, on the Zambezi River at the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. "She gave us an amazing tour," says Parente. "She is an incredible woman."



Campus Pride: Summer Renovations



Opening the Main Hall wall gives better access to the reconfigured deans' suite.

SEVERAL LARGE-SCALE facilities projects were completed over the summer, bringing new life to some common spaces, and new comfort to students and faculty. The renovation of the deans' suite is perhaps the most visible and dramatic change to a common area on campus. The solid wall opposite the Harley Roberts Room was opened, creating more direct access to the office suite. The reception area includes three laptops for student sign-outs; it opens

to a larger and brighter duty office and completely renovated deans' offices. "The project, the first phase of the Main Hall renovations, makes this critical space both beautiful and functional," says Chief Financial Officer and Business Manager Gil Thornfeldt. Facilities Director James Shepard notes that the space was gutted, taken "down to bare bones," and rebuilt with new mechanicals, windows, drywall, carpets, and millwork.

"The new entry represents a logical and beautiful addition to the school," adds Thornfeldt. "The results there are, indeed, transformative."

Academic Spaces

On the academic front, two history classrooms were completely rebuilt—stripped to the studs and transformed with stunning millwork and state-of-the-art

classroom technology. Those classrooms, as well as all of the mathematics classrooms in Wu, are home to new technology and updated seating. "We collaborated with the faculty to design and build spaces that supported their programmatic needs. The history and math teachers both wanted student desks that could be easily moved around to support the kind of work they do in the classroom. The new

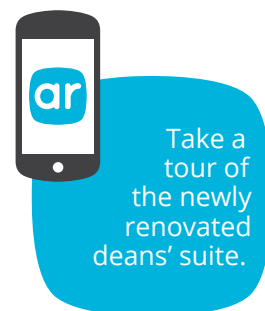


furniture can be set up in rows, pairs, small groups, or one large group, as the work demands," explains Shepard.

In the library, students will find a bright, beautiful new study space, thanks to the generosity of Charles W.B. Wardell III '63. The Wardell Study overlooks the library's main reception area and offers quiet, private space for small group study.



The Wardell Study offers a quiet, comfortable work area with a view of the library's reception area.





Living Spaces

The final phase of HDT's three-part renovation was also completed over the summer, with nine faculty apartments getting a new look, from updated kitchens and bathrooms, to the expansion of the fifth-floor apartment to include space in the sixth-floor clock tower.

"We've been thinking about opening the space on the sixth floor for some time," says Shepard. "It adds a second level to the fifth-floor apartment,



making it a perfect space for a family."

In the dorms, all 43 student rooms in Centennial got a fresh coat of paint, new carpets and window treatments, new screens and Corian window sills,

and new furniture—beds, desks, drawers, and wardrobes. Much of the old furniture was donated to our service partner, Waterbury's Acts 4 Ministry, which supports families in need.

Athletics Complex

Work on a major project in the Donald F. McCullough '42 Athletic Center is expected to wrap soon, dramatically improving the user experience in the a large, multipurpose space. McCullough is a hub of activity—on any given afternoon, groups might be shooting hoops, playing wall ball, throwing pitches, or kicking a soccer ball in the cavernous gymnasium. Once the project is complete, that space can be seg-

hoops themselves will be digitally controlled using the same system.

Other Projects

The replacement of the Main Circle sidewalk with a heated bluestone walkway; the addition of two new Suburbans to the transportation fleet; technology upgrades, including updated Wi-Fi and a state-of-the-art telephone system; and in Bingham, a new sound system and cover

for the orchestra pit round out the summer projects on campus.

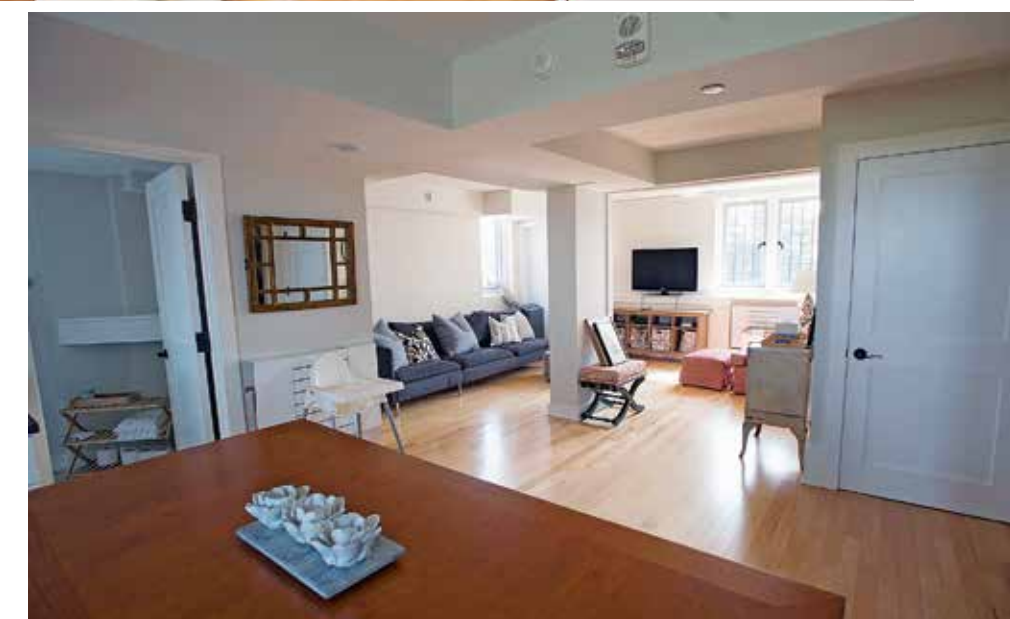
"The summer break is our annual 12-week, major project window," says Thornfeldt. "The amount of work we do in advance ensures the timely completion of the work. The planning team—including the headmaster, trustees, our architect, staff, and valued vendors who know the Taft campus—has proven to be the right formula for success." ■



mented with the push of a button.

"A drop-down netting system is being installed in the ceiling," says Shepard. "It can be raised and lowered using an iPad or mounted wall panel. The netting will function like a soft wall dividing the space into secure practice areas."

The netting can isolate large playing areas, such as those around the basketball hoops, or smaller, specific use spaces, including pitching and batting tunnels with portable mounds. The basketball





Stay in the Conversation

CONVOCATION 2017

HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78 welcomed students and faculty back to campus with a powerful Convocation message about the power of conversation.

"Each of us—at some time and hopefully often—will engage in conversation that will better us, others, and the school," MacMullen said, issuing a challenge and goal for the coming school year.

Conversation can shape a community, MacMullen noted, who called on

students and faculty to "reclaim conversation"—to engage in dialogue that will open the door to learning about others' experiences in the world, while exploring and celebrating our commonalities.

MacMullen's welcome was an extension of ongoing work the Taft faculty has engaged in over the past few months, work that includes reading Sherry Turkle's *Reclaiming Conversation*, *The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, and on-site

deep-listening workshops with the Stanley H. King Counseling Institute.

"Stay in the conversation," MacMullen advised. Listen and debate with rigor and curiosity." ■

Read more of the headmaster's comments on the theme of conversation and the Taft community in his column On Main Hall on page 3.



Website for the Win

TAFT'S NEW WEBSITE continues to earn high praise, with Glastonbury, Connecticut-based design firm Finalsité picking up an 2017 Communicator Award of Distinction from the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts (AIVA) for their work on the site.

For more than two decades, AIVA has sanctioned and judged the annual Communicator Awards, the leading international awards program honoring creative excellence for communication professionals. The Communicator Awards received more than 6,000 entries from companies and agencies of all sizes, making it one of the largest awards of its kind in the world.

Congratulations to Finalsité and to Taft's Communications team, who worked together over the past year to build a creative and innovative new website, taftschoool.org. ■



In the Gallery

THE FALL GALLERY SEASON OPENED in September with the haunting and often familiar black and white photographs of artist Christine Osinski. Taken on Staten Island during the early 1980s, the pictures document summer life in New York City's "forgotten borough."

"The pictures came out of a desire

spent time exploring her craft and sharing her experiences in the classroom with Taft students and through a Morning Meeting talk in September.

The season continues with *Portraits, Places, Buildings, and Landscapes*, featuring drawings and paintings by John W. Cocke '63. The show

from nature when I draw and paint."

As a Rockwell Visiting Artist, Cocke will share his wisdom and experience with Taft students in the same way his Taft teacher, Mark Potter '48, did more than 50 years ago.

Potter Gallery is open 8 am through 5 pm, Monday through Saturday,



Photographer and Rockwell Visiting Artist Christine Osinski (right) talks about her work with Taft students in Potter Gallery.

to learn about the place that had just become my home," says Osinski. "I took long walks, most often in the late afternoons, through various neighborhoods with the expectation that there might be something of interest around a corner or down a crooked sidewalk. It was an adventure first and became a project much, much later."

That project was the basis of Osinski's 2016 book, *Summer Days Staten Island*, and of the fall show in Potter Gallery. The images capture daily life in the working-class borough "separated from the mainland, a world away from Manhattan," Osinski writes.

A Rockwell Visiting Artist, Osinski

continues through December 8.

Cocke began studying art at Taft in the 1960s, and he continued his studies at the School of the Museum of Fine Art in Boston and Tufts University. Cocke maintains a portrait business and has built a large collection of nature pieces. He is a prolific teacher and exhibitor.

"When I sit down to start a drawing or a painting, my work largely is drawn from what I see, rather than what I think or from something in my mind," Cocke says. "Mr. Potter said to me once when I was beginning to draw, 'An object is as it appears just one time when you observe it, so draw it that way.' Therefore, observation has become critical in my departure

when school is in session. For more information, visit the Mark W. Potter Gallery page of the Taft website. ■

The Rockwell Visiting Artists Fund, which was established in 1997 by Sherburne B. Rockwell Jr. (Class of 1941) and H. P. Davis Rockwell (Class of 1944), supports a program of visiting artists who speak with students and faculty, work with art classes, and exhibit their work in the Taft Art Gallery.

Osinski's exhibit was made possible by the Andrew R. Heminway '47 Endowment Fund. In 2001, Mrs. Beverly Heminway established an endowment fund in memory of her husband, Andy. The income from this fund is used to support an annual art exhibit in the Mark W. Potter Gallery.



WELCOME NEW FACULTY! From left, Emily Li, Penn Fellow in English; Ryan Shannon '01, Admissions; Matthew Dias Costa, Penn Fellow in Mathematics; Andrew Prince, Dean of Multicultural Education, History; Jessica Shannon '01, Admissions; Garrett Farrell, Languages; Griffin Gagnon, Penn Fellow in Spanish; Nic Bell, English; Ann Bell, Admissions; and Tsar Fedorsky, Photography. ■



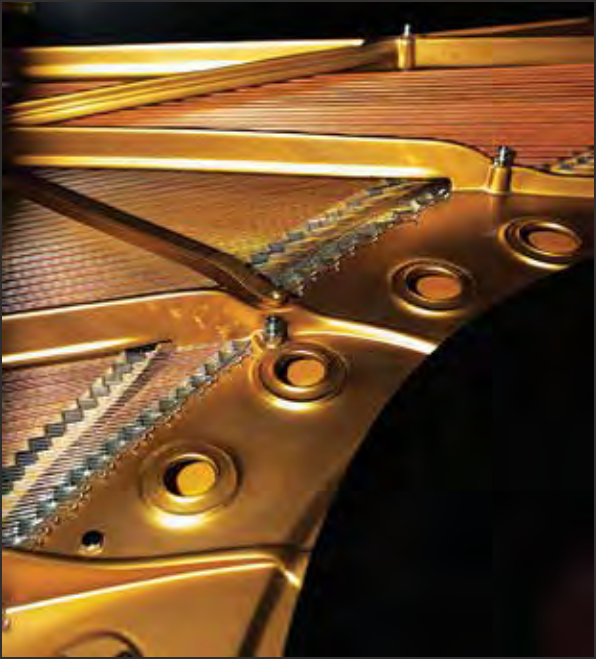
EIGHTEEN STUDENTS AND FIVE FACULTY MEMBERS TRAVELED TO ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA, in June for Taft's 10th annual service trip. The group built four homes, bringing Taft's 10-year total to 31. Read more about the annual service trip in this issue's feature story *A Decade of On-the-ground Service in Guatemala*, on page 50. ■



ARTS DEPARTMENT HEAD BRUCE FIFER AND THEATER TEACHER HELENA FIFER VISITED LONDON IN JUNE, where they hosted a reception at The Sloane Club in London for alumni and friends. ■



SHASHA ALVARES '17 (center) is among the Taft School-Police Activity League (PAL) Summer Enrichment Academy graduates who return to the program each summer to serve as teachers and mentors. The Academy was established in 2011 by science teacher Laura Monti '89 with her husband and Taft Academic Dean Jeremy Clifford. The program, which provides academic enrichment and other meaningful summer opportunities for area students, has grown from seven participants in 2011 to more than 80 this year. The Summer Enrichment Academy is supported, in part, by a grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation, which offers resources and services to nonprofits, students, and donors in 21 towns that make up greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills. ■



Music for a While

TAFT'S MUSIC FOR A WHILE CONCERT SERIES returned this fall for its 12th season, with performances by perennial favorite pianist Andrew Armstrong, folk duo Jay Ungar and Molly Mason, jazz with Sam Lardner and Barcelona, and a classical choral performance. The fall program concludes in December with folk artists Rani Arbo and Daisy Mayhem, and the 82nd Service of Lessons and Carols. The spring term schedule will be announced in January. For information on the series, visit www.taftschooll.org/arts.



TAFT TRADITIONS ARE ALIVE AND WELL, WITH SUPER SUNDAY AMONG THE MOST MEMORABLE. The sun was shining on this year's afternoon of community connections, teamwork, team-building, and Big Red Rhino spirit. ■



Scan these pages to watch Rhino spirit in action.



media

| credentials

How a trio of Taft alums—
Ryan **Osborn** '97,
Braden Cleveland **Bergan** '92,
& Jon **Dann** '70—stay ahead of the big story

By Neil Vigdor '95



■ Ryan Osborn '97 of NBC
ROBERT FALCETTI

Ryan Osborn '97

The rain chased away most of the audience members, except for a few rapt diehards outside the window of Studio 1A.

Glancing back at them—from the perspective of Matt Lauer, Hollywood actors, and NBC cameramen—was Ryan Osborn '97.

The view from the *Today* show set never gets old for Osborn, whose technological foresight and no-task-beneath-him

attitude has vaulted him up the ranks of the peacock network from humble beginnings in its page program.

"I'll forever feel like a kid over here in some ways," Osborn says. "I've grown up here. I've been here 16 years."

Osborn is vice president of newsroom product and transformation at NBC News and MSNBC. Like his previous two jobs, the position was created for him in 2014. The job, as they say, is what you

"It's the process that happens before it hits the audience that needs to be tighter than ever."



■ Osborn at home on the *Today* show set.
ROBERT FALCETTI

“We have a lot of work to do as far as educating the audience about how all sources are not the same. Not all information is created equal.”

make of it. And Osborn has more than made the most of the opportunity.

So much that NBC put him in charge of the development of NewsConnect, a collaborative dashboard used by the company’s broadcast and digital journalists across NBC, MSNBC, CNBC, Telemundo, and NBC-owned TV stations to update stories and track breaking news through social media and reporters across the world.

“It’s interesting to watch these stories take shape in real time,” Osborn says, toggling through a “hot” list of the day’s stories. “It’s the process that happens before it hits the audience that needs to be tighter than ever.”

Osborn was living 30 Rock before the show *30 Rock*. The Litchfield, Connecticut, native applied to NBC’s prestigious page program after graduating from Vanderbilt University in 2001.

Pages typically spend a year learning the ins and outs of the NBC operation, from serving as studio audience ushers for *Saturday Night Live* to, in Osborn’s case, boxing T-shirts for the “Where in the world is Matt Lauer?” segment.

“My second interview was supposed to be on September 11,” Osborn recalled over coffee inside the NBC employee café at Rockefeller Plaza.

He got the job—and soon would find himself along with the rest of his NBC colleagues not just covering the news. After 9/11, multiple media outlets and politicians received letters containing anthrax, including NBC News. As a precaution, the network handed out packs of the powerful antibiotic Cipro.

They were unsettling times, but they were also full of promise for Osborn, who met his wife, Lauren, at NBC. She had also



ROBERT FALCETTI

Osborn was living 30 Rock before the show *30 Rock*.



■ Osborn on the *Today* show’s iconic Orange Room set, which he helped conceptualize.
ROBERT FALCETTI

been a page and was Katie Couric’s assistant. They now have three children.

“One of the best parts about the page program is you learn about all parts of the company,” Osborn says.

That was abundantly clear as Osborn greeted a cavalcade of producers, camera operators, and security guards at Rockefeller Plaza, navigating concourses, escalators, and the control room of the *Today* show.

“Where my career really took off was when I was willing to work the overnight at the *Today* show,” he says.

On the set of *Today*, Osborn is at home. He ought to be. He helped come up with the concept of the Orange Room, the vivid set of NBC’s morning flagship show that was christened in late 2013. Newsmakers and celebrity guests can post pictures on a wall of the set, which even has a space for the show’s resident puppy.

Another breakthrough for Osborn came in 2007, when at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas, he met a designer of an emerging social media platform. Its name? Twitter. Osborn went home and

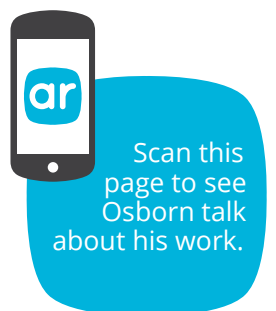
helped create and managed the *Today* show’s account. But he was still finding his voice.


“At the time, it was do I say, I? Do I say, we?” says Osborn, who became social media director for NBC News in 2009 and helped write a best practices guide for the company. “The standards team doesn’t necessarily want to hear from some kid.”

When Capt. Sully Sullenberger safely landed US Airways Flight 1549 on the Hudson River after a bird strike in 2009, it was Osborn who used his Twitter savvy to connect with an eyewitness. “I had direct-messaged him and said, ‘Hey, can we use this photo? Is it real?’” Osborn says.

At a time when “fake news” is part of the national lexicon, Osborn says there are no shortcuts. “I think we have a lot of work to do as far as educating the audience about how all sources are not the same,” Osborn says. “Not all information is created equal.”

And no one knows better than Osborn that the sell-by date on news is fleeting. “News is a calling,” he says. “If anything, it’s tough to turn off.”





Documentary film producer
Braden Cleveland Bergan '92
in her NYC office.

Braden Cleveland Bergan '92

It was a story that needed to be told. But the skills summoned by this narrative—one of shock, anguish, and emotional healing—aren't taught in journalism school.

A special kind of empathy, patience, and integrity was what it would take to tell the story of a student production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Newtown, Connecticut, 18 months after the deadliest elementary school shooting in U.S. history.

And Braden Cleveland Bergan '92, a producer of the critically acclaimed documentary *Midsummer in Newtown*, wouldn't settle for anything less.

The New York City-based veteran storyteller relocated to Connecticut for an entire summer for the project, one in which she became deeply invested. She is a producer for The Documentary Group, the independent production company behind the project.

"The more time I spent in Newtown, the more I heard from everyone there, 'You have to talk to some of the families that are the center of this,'" Bergan says. "When I did, I learned more from them than I've learned from anybody else in my adult life of what courage really looks like."

For the 81-minute documentary, which was screened at the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival, Bergan extensively interviewed Nelba Márquez-Greene, a family therapist,



"The more time I spent in Newtown, the more I heard from everyone there, 'You have to talk to some of the families that are the center of this.'"

▲ Bergan at the 2016 Tribeca Festival premiere of *Midsummer in Newtown* with the film's director and co-executive producers.

▼ A still shot from an episode Bergan produced for the Discovery Channel's *The Age of Aerospace* about the inventor of the tandem rotor helicopter.

THE BOEING COMPANY

and Jimmy Greene, a jazz saxophonist and music professor, who lost their daughter, Ana Grace Márquez-Greene, in the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre. She was 6.

"The idea behind the documentary was that the arts and performing arts can be a very powerful antidote to the worst of human behavior, and can bring people together in a way that is incredibly profound," she says. "But ultimately, even more than the power of the arts, it's about how people respond in the face of unimaginable pain. As Jimmy and Nelba told us in the film, 'You can't control

what happens in life. But you can control how you respond. How can we, in some way, reflect love and beauty through all the horror that we've been through?'"

Bergan, who went to Yale University, learned from some of the best in the business. A summer internship with *60 Minutes* had a monumental influence on her.

"I was so lucky. I got assigned to one of Mike Wallace's producing teams," she says.

An associate producer at CBS took her under his wing, teaching her how to make investigative calls, brainstorm, and pitch stories.

"I really hadn't thought about



television journalism as a career possibility until that summer," she says.

But her path to becoming a storyteller was roundabout, with Bergan teaching English in Africa and working in public relations in San Francisco before applying to be a production associate with *60 Minutes*.

"I did a phone interview with them and took a huge pay cut and moved back to New York," says Bergan, who has two children.

A year later, Bergan was promoted to associate producer on Lesley Stahl's team. "She was one of the best mentors I could have asked for," Bergan says.

In the summer of 2012, Bergan left New York to join her husband in Vietnam, where he was doing research for a Ph.D. There, she served as an editorial consultant and script

supervisor for *The Tale of An Phuc House*, an award-winning documentary about third-generation victims of Agent Orange. She also field produced a story for Stahl in Vietnam.

Bergan recently produced two episodes for the Discovery channel series *The Age of Aerospace*, one on jet fighter pioneer James McDonnell and the second on Frank Piasecki, the inventor of the tandem rotor helicopter. (Coincidentally, Piasecki's grandson, Otto Piasecki '19, is an upper mid at Taft.) The documentary series was funded by a grant from Boeing to celebrate its 100th anniversary.

"We were really investigating a lot of unreported stuff," she says. "There are no real biographies of either of these two men."

It's the untold stories that keeps Bergan dedicated to her craft.

▲ Bergan produced several episodes for the Discovery Channel's recent series.

THE BOEING COMPANY

"I was so lucky—I got assigned to one of Mike Wallace's producing teams [at *60 Minutes*]."



■ Jon Dann '70 reflected on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall. Dann produced a documentary about veterans and PTSD in 1982, when it was a relatively new diagnosis.
JULIE MALLORY

Jon Dann '70

The forgotten have a voice—his name is Jon Dann '70. From Vietnam to Iraq, they served their country valiantly, only to suffer the severe physical and emotional toll of war. Languishing in VA hospitals. Waiting for someone to tell their story. Waiting for someone like

Dann, an award-winning broadcast news veteran turned documentary filmmaker. Dann spent more than six months interviewing veterans at a mental hospital in Menlo Park, California, in 1982 when the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was then a relatively new diagnosis.

“If you want to learn the truth about combat, [a veterans hospital is] a good place to go. It ain’t Hollywood.”



■ Dann (far right) with a DEA operation during the filming of his documentary *Marijuana Inc.*
DAVID DELLARIA

“We’re all seeing how fragile the truth can be, even in a democratic society. I’m so heartened by the courage of the news media right now. It’s sort of turning into their finest hour.”

“If you want to learn the truth about combat, that’s a good place to go. It ain’t Hollywood,” Dann says. “I keep wanting to go back. These stories take a certain level of emotional courage. It’s pretty agonizing stuff.”

Dann, who protested the Vietnam War as a Stanford University student, reprised his role. He won his third duPont-Columbia Award for producing the PBS special *War Stories from Ward #7D*, which chronicled the plight of Iraq war veterans suffering from traumatic brain injuries. “These were some of the most physically damaged people I have ever seen,” Dann says.

“One of the things we do is we get to report on these stories, but we also get to walk away from them,” says Dann, who in 2013 started Jon Dann Communications, based in Mill Valley, California.

Those entrusting Dann with their stories are much more than sources. It’s a give-and-take. It’s a relationship, not a transaction.

“I always wished that there was a way to

hand out a card at the beginning of meeting someone I interview that says, ‘Trust me,’” Dann says. “In my experience there’s no other way to succeed at it, other than being really authentic and truthful and spending a lot of time with them. I would rather we both went into the interview with our eyes open. Everybody feels vulnerable.”

Dann’s career has spanned more than 30 years and taken him from radio and television in the San Francisco Bay Area to producer for *Dateline NBC* and *CNBC*. He also has done freelance investigative reporting for the *Los Angeles Times* and *Rolling Stone*.

“When I got into it, Watergate was this great moment in American journalism,” he says. “The opportunity to follow in Woodward and Bernstein’s footsteps was what got me into the business.”

For *CNBC*, Dann produced the Emmy-nominated documentary, *Marijuana Inc.: Inside America’s Pot Industry*, which has aired



■ Dann (left) with his production team at the CBS Interfaith Christmas Special *May Peace Prevail on Earth* in 2015. JONATHAN DANN



▲ Dann (far left) in 1984, with a cameraman and trailblazer correspondent Belva Davis, working on a multipart investigative report on the Oakland Police Department for then-NBC affiliate in San Francisco KRON-TV. In her autobiography Davis said Dann “was fearless... the kind of guy who was willing to crack open the earth to get the news.”

more than 100 times and was the highest-rated documentary in the network’s history.

“It wasn’t just the acceptability of marijuana, it was the degree to which it had become integrated into our economy, most notably here in Northern California,” Dann says. “Is this a good thing or a bad thing? We still don’t know. It was a moment where it all got dragged out into the sunlight. Politicians and society in general had to contend with it really as a fait accompli. It kind of forced society to reckon with it.”

Through all of the twists and turns

of Dann’s career and the evolution of the industry, there is one constant: the truth.

“It’s really rare that you can make your living by being allowed to tell the truth,” Dann says. “We’re all seeing how fragile the truth can be, even in a democratic society. I’m so heartened by the courage of the news media right now. It’s sort of turning into their finest hour.” ■

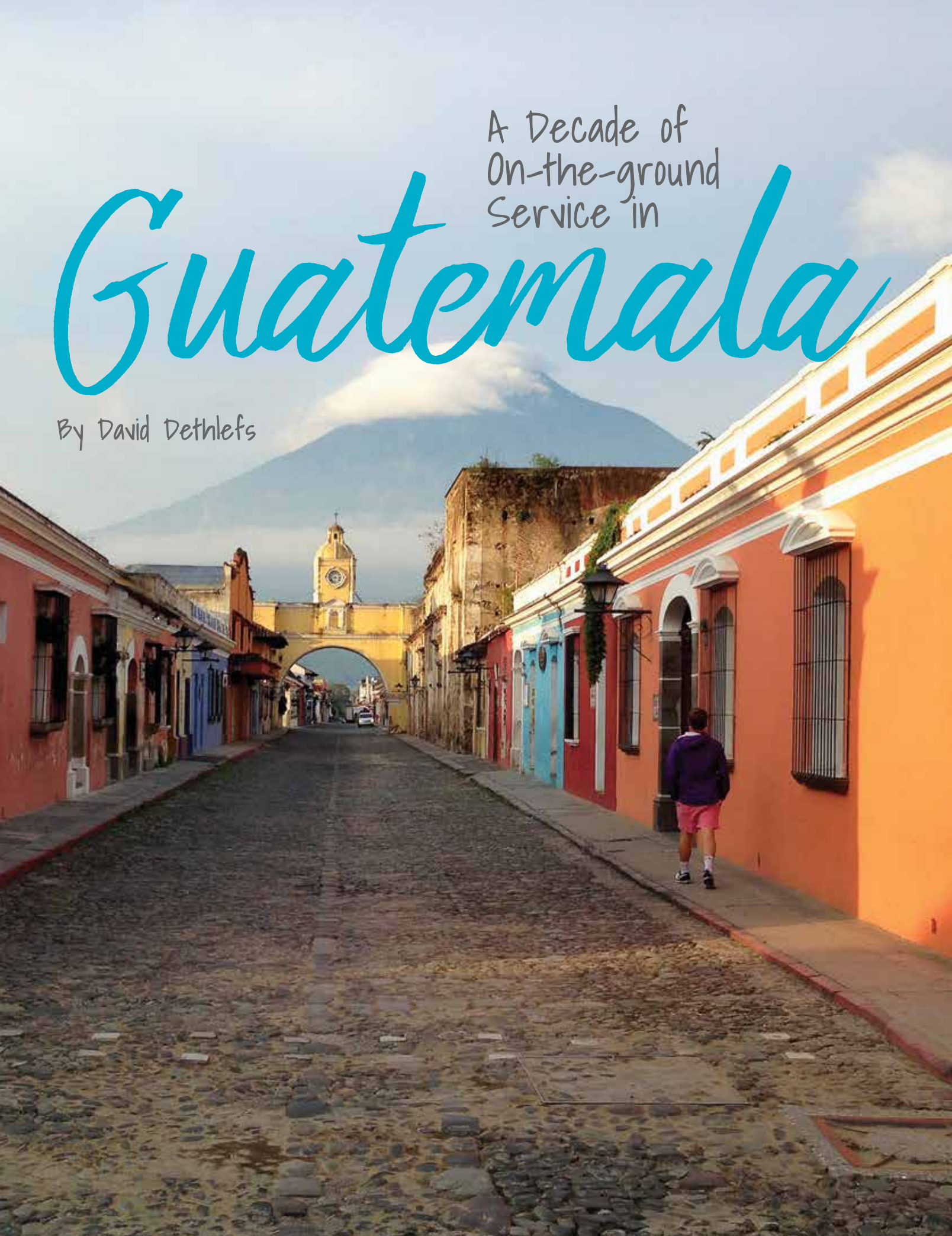
Neil Vigdor ‘95 is the statewide political writer for Hearst Connecticut Media, which owns eight daily newspapers and 11 weeklies in the state and *Connecticut Magazine*.

“It’s really rare that you can make your living by being allowed to tell the truth.”

Scan this page to watch the trailer for *May Peace Prevail on Earth*, which Dann’s team produced.

A Decade of On-the-ground Service in Guatemala

By David Dethlefs



It may surprise some that Taft students choose to spend part of their summer break getting their hands dirty in a developing country, helping lay concrete blocks for walls, hauling two-by-fours, and getting to know the grateful residents of the new homes being built while learning about the local culture.

These service-oriented Tafties enjoy it all, immersing themselves in a culture and region previously foreign to them, seeing the beauty and reality of Guatemala. Here, trip leader and faculty member David Dethlefs describes some of the experiences during the past 10 years of these annual trips.

10 years of trips

134
students



more than

30

houses built

12 faculty

(many with multiple trips)





"The service trip with the God's Child Project is remarkable in its understanding of the needs of the community, and Guatemala, at least in that region, has a truly vibrant and varied culture. Our students have a chance to see firsthand what the needs are in a developing community, and they can see that there isn't one magic bullet to meet all of those needs. At a time when we are hoping to enhance our students' capacities for empathy, global understanding, and problem solving, this service trip can be an important opportunity for our kids."

-Baba Frew
Global Studies and Service co-director

"Nestled in a valley surrounded by three volcanoes, the small colonial city is a grid of cobblestone streets and Spanish architecture."



Arrival in *Antigua*

We arrive in Guatemala a mere 48 hours after exams, so our transition tends to be an abrupt, if not jolting, experience as we process the sights and sounds of a strikingly beautiful yet staggeringly poor country. We hit the ground running, however, and don't let up for 12 days.

I marvel at the energy and the coalescing of the group. "Awesome" may be an overused adjective, but I never tire of hearing from our kids as they describe their day-to-day, if not hour-to-hour experiences. My favorite comment, which invariably comes early in the trip: "Mr. D...I had *no* idea...." Another favorite comment: "This trip should be required—for all students *and* all faculty!"

Antigua, where our trip is based, was one of the great cities of the Spanish Empire during the 15th and 16th centuries. The beauty and charm of Antigua can't be overstated. Nestled in a valley surrounded by three volcanoes, the small colonial city is a grid of cobblestone streets and Spanish architecture. It is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Although destroyed several times by earthquakes, many buildings still stand and have been restored.





Houses

The focus of the trip is service, with home building as the central experience. In addition to a crash course in construction, students learn the importance of taking initiative and responsibility. We're on a deadline, and the houses need to be finished. Construction is hard work—wood gets measured and cut (by hand!), the foundation has to be dug, cement mixed, walls framed and painted, along with a roof and the final touches. The future inhabitants, usually a young family with children, are on site throughout the process, and as we get to know them, we witness how much we are profoundly helping to improve the quality of their life. The house ceremony, when we present the house to the family, is quite emotional.

"As we get to know [the future home residents], we witness how much we are profoundly helping to improve the quality of their life."



"Reaching out to help others is what life is all about, and trips like these are simply invaluable because students and teachers instantly make the world a better place, and they do so face to face with their Guatemalan family. When you are there presenting the completed house to the entire family, they are overwhelmed with joy, and then [when] we come home and look back, we feel that same joy. We all benefit greatly. I have often said to 'Double D' how much it says about our community that literally hundreds of Taft people have sampled this kind of international joy."

-Kevin Conroy
Languages Department head



Scan this page and watch a great video by Chase Harper '19 during a service trip.

▲ One of the Taft-built houses during construction.

▶ The finished house after much hard work.



"One of the most memorable aspects of my trips was the effect that we had on the family who we were building a house for, and the relationship we were able to create with them. The family I helped build a house for on my first trip had a very shy three-year-old daughter. Each day my fellow workers and I grew a little closer to the girl—whether it was through a shared cookie at lunch or accepting her doll as a present for motivation. On the final day when the house was finished, the gratitude that the family showed us and the fact that we provided a sturdy home for this little girl gave me an unforgettable and irreplaceable feeling of fulfillment. But the best part was seeing the smile on the daughter's face as we blew bubbles on the steps of her new home in celebration."

-Pearl Young '18

"The house ceremony, when we present the house to the family, is quite emotional."

▲ Top: Students, happy after a day of house painting, on their commute from the job site.

▲ Above: Trip leader and faculty member David Dethlefs, known to the group as "Double D."

▼ A Guatemalan family at their new home with the Taft team who built it.



Dreamer Center

► A group of Taft students and faculty at the Dreamer Center.

The Dreamer Center serves as the hub of operations for the God's Child Project, which organizes the materials, personnel, and logistics to make the trip possible. The Center is a lush enclave on the outskirts of Antigua. Entering the Dreamer Center is akin to entering the Garden of Eden. Those who oversee the Project feel that the natural beauty of the Dreamer Center will enhance the life of all who enter.

It contains an elementary school, medical and dental clinics, and Casa Jackson, a residential facility for children from food-insecure families. A hospital is under construction. We start our workday here and usually find time to play with the kids—and lose at soccer! The Dreamer Center includes a nondenominational chapel that promotes reflection and is the setting for our orientation and closing ceremony.



Homeless shelter

► Spanish teacher Jon Bender and Taft students help out with food donations.

Students may be initially uncomfortable at Albergue Santa Madre, the homeless shelter, where we serve dinner and try to mingle with the indigent population. Before we visit I explain to the kids it's OK to acknowledge if you're feeling out of your comfort zone—it can be awkward. Yet I'm always so impressed by how many of our students are able to ease into the situation, engage in conversation, listen to people's stories, and play with the children. Some students find this experience to be one of the most meaningful of the trip.

"The opportunity to work alongside students and to witness their enthusiasm for serving others is thrilling."



"The visit to the homeless shelter was truly mind-changing. Hearing the life stories of others opened my eyes to a world different from mine. On top of that, it was all in Spanish! At this moment I realized I could understand people, who before Taft, I wouldn't have ever been able to communicate with."

-Jake Wasserstein '18



Clothing Distribution

► Students help out at the massive clothing distribution.

The clothing distribution is a remarkable experience bordering on both chaotic and bizarre. The distributions are held in suburbs of Guatemala City or mountain villages where we are met by a growing line that snakes its way around a city block or up a mountainside. We arrive at a municipal facility and unload bags and bags of clothes that we hastily sort into piles before the crowds arrive. Students take one person—usually a mother or grandmother—and lead them through, while trying to answer their requests and maintain some semblance of order.

► Far right: Taft students in conversation with the homeless center residents.





Cultural Excursions

During weekdays we have very little, if any, downtime. But we do have a weekend. On Saturday morning we load into a convoy of vans for the winding trip through the Western Highlands to Lake Atitlán. We break up the three-hour ride with a stopover at the Pre-Columbian ruins at Iximche, a hauntingly beautiful spot and one of the last holdouts against the Spanish in the 16th century.

After a night at a hotel on the shores of Lake Atitlán, we're up early for the ride to Chichicastenango, one of the largest indigenous markets in Central America and the chance for students to practice their Spanish. Spanish is not required but certainly helps. It's a wonderful opportunity for students of Spanish to practice what they've learned in the classroom. At times one even overhears K'iche (spoken by descendants of the Mayans). This hillside town has a fascinating church that blends Catholic and K'iche' Maya rituals.

In addition to the service components, the cultural experience is rich and varied. Host families welcome us into their homes and offer a glimpse of their lives. This past year we had a tortilla and salsa workshop that was fun and delicious.



"I think that the trip is certainly one of the fullest expressions of the school's motto of service. In Guatemala we do the most fundamental things for people to survive: we house them, we clothe them, and we feed them. Regardless of Spanish ability, the trip leaders and the students get to experience the warmth of the Guatemalan people. From the host families to our local guides, everyone we meet is friendly and welcoming. The students get a taste of both traditional Mayan and modern Guatemalan culture and the many ways that they overlap and blend together."

*-Jon Bender
Spanish teacher*

▶ Top: One of the evening activities is truly hands-on: learning the art of making and cooking tortillas.

▶ Left: After another day of gratifying work, the Taft group heads home for the evening.

"I have been on the trip twice. It provided me with the unique opportunity to explore a way of life that was completely foreign to me. I was able to practice my Spanish speaking skills, experience living with a host family, and most important, I was able to help people.

My group built a house for a single mom living with her two daughters. Every day while we worked on the house, the mom went to work and the two girls, ages 8 and 12, wandered around their small plot of dirt. When it rained, the girls would take shelter under a small structure constructed of bamboo and tin. In the afternoon the girls made fire and cooked a simple meal of tortillas. When we finally finished our house the girls presented us with drawings featuring the blue house we had built for them. I still have these drawings and the ones from my first trip to Guatemala. By the end of the week the bonds we had formed with these children was unmistakable, and it was hard to leave them."

-Grace Dreher '17



Closing Thoughts

At the closing ceremony in the Dreamer Center's nondenominational chapel, we pause to reflect on the eve of our return home. We all have so much to process—the homes we built, playing with children at the Dreamer Center or Casa Jackson, working alongside the God's Child staff, the array of experiences that are now vivid memories. We all have an opportunity to share, and I'm always so impressed with their heartfelt thoughts and feelings about what they find meaningful.

These trips have become so rewarding for what I have learned and also experienced working alongside students, colleagues, and the God's Child staff in Antigua. When I first signed on as a trip chaperone a decade ago, I had no idea that I was about to join a project that would be life-changing and one of the most meaningful chapters of my career. The opportunity to work alongside students and to witness their enthusiasm for serving others is thrilling. ■

Photos courtesy of David Dethlefs and the God's Child Project.





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Winter Events

Holiday Party—December 7, NYC
82nd Service of Lessons and Carols—December 12, Taft's Woodward Chapel
Winter Alumni Games—February 10, Taft
Parents' Weekend—February 16-17, Taft

On the road in December, January, and February
Asia • Boston • Chicago • New York City • Seattle • Washington, D.C.