

PUTNEY POST



MEND





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Self-portrait by Isabelle '24, created
in painting class, fall 2020.

TOC photo:

Putney students help create a Black Lives
Matter mural in the town of Putney.

MENDING

DEAR READER,

You're reading this in 2021. We're writing it in 2020, eager to walk through the door to the new year. There is no net we can cast that is wide enough to encompass the last year. Pandemic? Racial injustice and inequity? In-person school? Each of these could fill our pages and fully consume our time. Yet we could not write about any without including the others.

We, like you, have trudged our way through 2020, trying to stay healthy and happy, committing to change, working to see through a different lens, and understanding more deeply the racial inequity that has been ever-present but often under-seen, both in our country and at our school. And, of course, we have been engaged with our students, who we were delighted to have on campus with us last fall and who return to campus on February 1, as this issue lands in your hands.

Amid the chaos, fear, and sadness that the pandemic brought, the single thread—the siren—of racial injustice rests at the heart of that pain, and 2020 illuminated the absolutely non-negotiable truth that we, Putney—the institution and its people—must commit to change.

"*The Putney Post* was not enough." These are the words of Nkomo Morris '94, chair of the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee on The Putney School board of trustees. Her letter on page 10 leapt at us and shook us with its exhaustion, but also with its hope and determination. Read it, and read it again. And while we have dedicated space here to addressing your many questions, we acknowledge that a few magazine spreads are not a substitute for work. We thank the alumni who have reached out to us, who are working in their own ways, and who demand more of Putney.

Amidst all of this, we brought students back to campus for the fall trimester. No doubt, reopening the school required a leap of faith. An unseasonably warm fall combined with hard work and a creative spirit created a once-in-a-lifetime (we hope) Putney experience for teachers, staff, and students.

In the pages that follow, we move from pandemic to racial inequity and back to the pandemic and back to racial inequity. These are the themes of the moment, and the themes of this issue. We are mending our society, our school, and ourselves, hoping to be whole after a year (and years) of illness.

Today, a grey day in mid-December, we continue to take the pandemic one day at a time, with hope about vaccinations in the back of our minds. We are inspired by the connections and passion of Putney people in this issue. And we remain open to hearing from you when you have something to say.

ALISON FRYE
Editor

DARRY MADDEN
Publisher







C. Lee Cohen '03 helped
bring order amidst the chaos
of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CRITICAL CARE

STORY BY DARRY MADDEN • PORTRAITS BY CHANNING JOHNSON

IN MARCH 2020, when New York's eight million residents locked their doors and pulled their curtains closed, the city's subways went dark, and its streets emptied out, the rest of the country held its breath, unsure of the scale of the tragedy that was about to unfold. A limp federal response aggravated the tremendous fear. For want of leadership, doctors and nurses wore trash bags and homemade masks.

At least, that is one piece of the story—chaos and disconnection.

At that moment, C. Lee Cohen '03, a critical care and pulmonary specialist at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, was attending to her father, Brian Cohen, who was receiving cancer treatments at her hospital. (Many readers know Brian from his decades of service to The Putney School in many roles, including as printmaking teacher and writer for this magazine.) She had paused her duties caring for other patients in order to limit her exposure and keep him safe.

It was in this unexpected space that another story in the pandemic was born, one of order and partnership, duty and responsibility.

Because she could not participate in clinical work, Cohen spearheaded covid-protocols.org. Don't be fooled by its quiet and unassuming name. Or the fact that it is a website among billions of websites. Covidprotocols.org is a mammoth feat, containing many textbooks' worth of clinical care information about caring for COVID-19 patients, that has been used by hundreds of thousands of doctors and nurses.

The first information was up online within the month of March. Initially, it contained the best knowledge in critical care that Cohen and her colleagues could discern from their own experience and their conversations with others in Seattle, New York, and Wuhan. But as the weeks turned to months, Cohen and her team of nearly 300 were able to compile much more data and knowledge and covidprotocols.org expanded from how to handle a crisis, to a much more nuanced set of standards for caring for COVID-19 patients from nearly every medical vantage point.

COHEN LEFT PUTNEY with an appetite for stepping out of her comfort zone (to which she gives some credit to AM barn duty).

First, she pursued a degree in development economics and international development at Brown University. This took her to Mali, in West Africa where, after working in healthcare delivery, she founded Mali Health, a healthcare delivery not-for-profit organization that developed innovative strategies for child survival in resource-poor urban areas. She wound up supporting health care workers who were doing contact monitoring and contact tracing during the Ebola outbreak—her first exposure to pandemic response. She also became involved with a diagnostic device startup that creates point-of-use (versus lab-based) blood tests for the developing world.

What began as an interest in global development became a passion for global health. When she returned to the U.S., she entered medical school. And if things were not sounding ambitious enough, she paused medical school between her third and fourth years and completed an MBA at Harvard Business School. She says this path ignited her interest in infectious disease diagnostics.

"I think it's one of the true problems that we as a society are facing—antibiotic resistance and infectious disease testing. It's one of the only fields of medicine that's actually moving backwards, not forwards," said Cohen. (Today, in the last year of her fellowship, she's also working as a researcher at the Broad Institute, an infectious disease lab.)

Cohen speaks quickly. She moves quickly. She has many irons in the fire. At 35, she's an MD/MBA with a few careers already behind her and it's unclear how many in front of her. Her earliest life, however, was less worldly, more bucolic, tucked up on the hill on Putney's campus. Her father, Brian, explained that she was raised there until the age of eight. They lived in John Rogers dormitory, surrounded by kids and adults and a contingent of family friends by whom she was "sort of adopted and doted on and taken seriously," said Brian.

"She was kind of a free spirit," said Brian, describing an early childhood filled with curiosity.

She returned to Putney for high school. Kristin Dawley was Cohen's rowing coach and history teacher at Putney.

"She was really coachable and really teachable," said Dawley. "Some kids are so smart and so smug, and she had every right to be smart and smug with me—she's really smart—but she never was smug."


Dawley describes a naturally gifted student, but also one willing to work at it. An independent study course that Cohen designed for herself was dedicated to revising papers she'd written for previous courses. She involved three or four teachers and enlisted them all in the effort. She wanted to figure out how to be a better writer. "It wasn't high school-level stuff," said Dawley.

In her own self evaluation, Cohen owned up to not being a "natural" athlete.

"It was not easy for her. But she would show up, work really hard, train, and bring her full self to every practice. And she did really well. She was a really strong member of the team. I think that was it—it's not that this person is completely superhuman in her brilliance. She's superhuman in her ability to show up to everything she does with her best self."

BRIAN, COHEN'S FATHER, was hospitalized in early February of 2020, just before COVID-19 hit New York and shut down New England. He was undergoing intensive chemotherapy, and had minimal immune system function. Cohen had done some time in the ICUs at Brigham and Women's but stopped for fear of bringing the virus to Brian.

It was during one of these days that she showed up at Brian's bedside and began to cry.



“I think we all felt a huge obligation really early on to do a thing that was bigger than the immediate care of patients.”

prophylaxis against clots, but not full-blown therapeutic anticoagulation.

Cohen is one of about 5,000 pulmonary critical care-trained people in the U.S.

“I think we all felt a huge obligation really early on to do a thing that was bigger than the immediate care of patients as people who had the closest thing to expertise in critical care management of this type of patient,” she said.

As of this writing, the first COVID-19 vaccines have been administered, treatment has improved dramatically since the early days of the virus—intubation usually happens later, and steroids are a part of treatment (“a huge paradigmatic shift.”)—and Cohen herself is back

in the ICU. Brian is home, retired from Putney, and doing well.

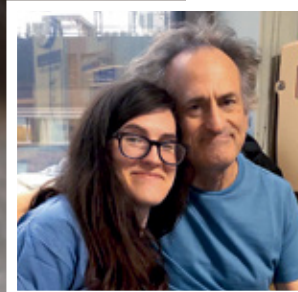
She says that, in some ways, this has been professionally rewarding. But it can also be “really, really hard,” she said. “A lot of people were left traumatized by not being able to see their loved ones at the end of their life, and that’s been traumatic for clinicians, too—to be the arbiter of that experience for people and the only point of contact in that moment.”

Is hers a Putney path? We don’t often think of the frontlines of medicine when we talk about the “outcomes” of a Putney education.

“What is a Putney path?” asked Cohen. “Because I think I have a very Putney path. It’s been an itinerant career, and an atypical medical path—I’m much older than the other people in my fellowship year.”

“Especially if you’re not great at drawing or milking cows, Putney’s design is teaching you a really foundational lesson that I don’t think is replicable,” she said.

She believes that the breadth of experiences Putney requires forces students not only out of their comfort zones, but into a place where success *and* failure are well-tolerated—even welcomed—as key to progress. ■



Inset: Cohen and her father, Brian, at Brigham and Women’s during his chemotherapy treatments.

“The thing she hates most in life is to feel sidelined or useless, and she did, to a certain extent. Because she wasn’t in the clinic anymore,” said Brian.

This was the moment the protocols arrived on her doorstep.

“I ended up taking on the synthesis and integration of a lot of literature and data, and then talking to all of the authors and asking if they wanted to make it publicly available, which they did,” said Cohen.

More people than expected were interested in the information. Cohen explained that the many smaller hospitals across the country have one, maybe two, intensivists working full time in their ICUs. They don’t have the time to spend hours reading and poring through the data.

Early on, covidprotocols.org was addressing clinical care concerns like how early to

intubate a COVID-19 patient, how much fluid should be given or not given, and if antibiotics have any place in the treatment of patients with this virus. It also covered infection control in ways like recommending fewer CAT scans for COVID-19 patients, because transporting a patient to a CAT scanner is difficult to manage without exposing more hospital staff and the patients who follow.

The protocols became more robust and specific as more information became available, and now contain information from the different medical departments—endocrinology, cardiology, hematology, neurology. For example, COVID-19 affects how one metabolizes glucose. So if a diabetic patient has COVID-19, that changes how you manage a diabetic crisis. Another example is therapeutic anticoagulation. Patients clot a lot with COVID-19. The protocols suggest higher than normal



HELPING PUTNEY WALK ITS TALK

With work and
determination,
is it a time of
rebirth for Putney?

BY NKOMO MORRIS '94

Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

The Putney School Board of Trustees

I have never been more desperate for some 2020 hindsight.

I don't need to list for everyone, again, all of the traumas we've all been experiencing either directly, vicariously, or both, since March. The litany of facts, numbers, names, policies, politicians, histories, grievances, murders, funerals, and horrifyingly heartbreaking memories are well known to us all.

But, murder and illness and systemic racism and homophobia and transphobia and misogynoir and classism and sectionalism notwithstanding, some good has come of this year.

Yeah, really.

Contrary to what so many have said, I do not believe that the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Brayla Stone, and so, so many others brought sudden worldwide attention to the pain Black folx have suffered here and abroad for hundreds of years.

Rather, *forced* empathy made it happen.

All of those murders, and the countless others before them, compounded with the worldwide trauma of COVID-19, that opened everyone's eyes to the reality of structural racism. And yes, I say everyone, because plenty of Black folx had their eyes opened as well. Not to the presence of racism, but to their own agency, and sometimes unwilling complicity in it. I can say for myself that I gave up on trying to make my white friends comfortable when I talked about race. And I gave up on trying to make myself comfortable, too.

Warning: I'm going to be a bit vague here. Not because I don't have specifics in mind, but because I'm not interested in calling people out and because I know that for every person I do call out, several more will feel that I am not talking about them and even myself. But I am. I'm interested in shining a light on what's been happening in the Putney community since COVID-19 hit.

Before the pandemic was a political flashpoint, it was an empathy builder. We all felt such great sadness, which allowed us to feel the profound sadness of others. We all know racism existed before the pandemic.

It certainly wasn't the first time the world had heard that law enforcement and regular civilians often kill Black people for ridiculous reasons. But suddenly non-Black people could feel it in a new way; it wasn't abstract. They were primed to feel Black pain, and because we were all stuck at home, we all witnessed so much Black death online almost simultaneously. There was no way to pretend you didn't know.

Similarly, Black progressives like myself felt invigorated in a new way. Action, many of us realized, meant risk, discomfort, and difficult conversations with colleagues, bosses, on Facebook, and with family members. Personally, I found myself gently confronting fellow teachers who grew angry about the destruction of property in May/June because protesters "should get their points across more peacefully," as if the civil rights movement hadn't happened, as if there haven't been hundreds of years of articles, organizations, books, talks, TV specials, poetry, curricula, movies, and other forms of art dedicated to peacefully decrying structural racism. I lost some friends.

But this year also meant self-education, and remembering that we are all caught in racism's web. That you can't point at someone else's failure, but refuse to do any reading or building yourself. That you can't demand folks make big changes but refuse to, for instance, talk to people. That we can't simultaneously ask peers to broaden their

circles of friends while failing to broaden our own. That part of being anti-racist is recognizing that there is something fundamentally discriminatory about attending a tiny private school in a town in Vermont, and that we need to all own our privilege. These are hard truths to recognize. But it's beautiful that we are recognizing them, some for the first time.

Black connections in the world at large and in the Putney community specifically grew during this time. We've had three Black alumnx meetings since September. We're deciding what we need to do, now that we are a We. We're building community. It's been beautiful and moving.

It became clear to more non-Black people than ever before that talk was not enough, that hashtagging and virtue signalling were not enough, that knowing Black people or having travelled to Africa, or even having married a Black person was not enough, that saying "people of color" when you mean to say "Black" is not enough. That feeling uncomfortable saying the word "Black" is a sign of a larger problem in your mind and in society, and until you've addressed that, you haven't done enough. So wearing a Black Lives Matter T-shirt isn't going to help stop structural racism quite as much as having a good hard look at who attends our birthday parties, our children's birthday parties, our churches, synagogues, temples, and our board meetings. And yes, I say we, because I, a Black woman, have been guilty of having mostly white friends in the past. And I'm not the only one. That's no longer the case.

The hard fact is that there is never enough. The work is never done. The fight against structural racism doesn't end, because embedded in that fight is the fight for equality of all groups, because all groups include Black people.

Those of us most directly involved with the school felt the pressure to DO SOMETHING to fix structural racism on campus. Putney alumnx less directly involved with the school felt an equally strong urgency to DO SOMETHING. No one outside of the school and the board of trustees knew what Putney was doing.



The *Putney Post* was not enough.

For many, the urgency to end racism RIGHT NOW has dissipated. This is unfortunate, but not surprising. Those of us in it for the long haul are continually re-finding our bearings as the COVID laws change and rearrange.

As the current head of the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) committee on the board of trustees, it's been my work to help Putney walk its talk. We won't undo 400 years of slavery in a year or two, during a worldwide crisis. But we are doing what we can, given very limited capacity. Board members work for a living. Certainly Putney staff and students also do quite a bit of work. COVID is happening. Even at the best of times, life at Putney means constant overwhelm with chores and schoolwork and relationship building—even more so for teachers, who must do the same while acting as emotional containers for the students and for their own families.

Just like childbirth is painful for most and fatal for many, but usually leads to the creation of something new to be nurtured, I'm eager to look back and see 2020 as a year of rebirth for The Putney School, and for the United States as a whole. Maybe the world.

Up next: adolescence. ■



BUT THIS YEAR ALSO MEANT SELF-EDUCATION, AND REMEMBERING THAT WE ARE ALL CAUGHT IN RACISM'S WEB. THAT YOU CAN'T POINT AT SOMEONE ELSE'S FAILURE, BUT REFUSE TO DO ANY READING OR BUILDING YOURSELF."

JOY + JUSTICE

Joy and justice live in the intersection of Putney today and Putney tomorrow.

Recently I came across an old article written by educator Linda Christensen titled “Joy and Justice.” These words resonate with me. Most learning, growth, and change require active, deliberate, difficult work—and that is certainly true for equity and inclusion work. We need joy to be present and visible as we pursue justice. This, in turn, has led me to think and borrow from the author, activist, and facilitator adrienne maree brown, and to consider how as a community Putney intentionally makes joy part of our DNA as we strive to “combat prejudice and injustice.” What can joy and justice look like at Putney today? What will Putney look like through an equity lens in five, ten, twenty years? How will our efforts today set a path for Putney’s future?

Change is the only constant and the work of equity and inclusion is about change. It requires us to be always mindful of who is with us. Here are some ways that joy and justice live in the intersection of Putney today and Putney tomorrow.

- **Being Seen.** We want all students to feel that they belong at Putney. No one should feel they have to change to fit in. In the fall of 2020, affinity groups offered moments of joy. Students connected and shared experiences and strategies for supporting one another. We facilitated affinity groups for BIPOC, lower-income, chronic-illness, disability, and Spectrum.
- **Being Wrong.** It’s hard to be wrong, but it’s critical to learning and changing. Rather than defend the past, be present, and do better. Our intentions are not as important as our impact; our missteps are opportunities to grow and learn from each other. There is joy in course-correcting, reimagining, and evolving. Alumnx,

families, students, faculty, and staff have generously shared their good thinking about what is missing in Putney’s equity and inclusion work—specifically, listening and amplifying the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color that have shared their experience of Putney and what is needed if Putney is to deliver on the commitment to equity and inclusion today and in the years to come. Listening and amplifying the voices of BIPOC students and alumnx is essential to chart our course of action for Putney’s future.

- **Art is Not Neutral.** Putney’s commitment to arts education offers a clear path to art as activism. adrienne maree brown states that art “either upholds or disrupts the status quo, advancing or regressing justice.” Watching students create art together is a privilege. It is joyful.
- **Cultivating Small Practices.** Showing up for equity and inclusion is a simple and powerful first commitment. Showing up signals the willingness to engage, prioritize, and build community. Last fall students and adults showed up and engaged in a variety of ways. We hosted intentional dialogues about what it means to be anti-racist in a predominantly white school. Students and faculty spent time around identity work and micro/macroaggressions, unpacking and learning from these painful moments using real stories that have happened on campus to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. In the second half of the year, using the practice of Dr. Eddie Moore Jr., we are challenging the whole community to engage in a 21-day equity habit-building challenge as one way to build a personal small practice.


- **Deep and Intentional Work.** In leading equity and inclusion work, there is both the urgency of better serving every student today and knowing that the work to do is ever-changing and never-ending. This work is messy and disorienting. At times there is non-closure on a discussion or issue. This year the work centers on our NAIS climate survey and a program audit.

Equity and inclusion work requires joy, connection, commitment, collaboration, and actions that bring transformative change. Becoming comfortable with uncomfortable conversations about race and racism, systemic oppression, and inequitable practices that have plagued our country for centuries—that is the work. And the work toward justice is joyful. This is a critical piece of our collective work if we are to realize a school community where the outcome is affirmation and belonging for a range of identities and experiences. Today Putney is in the process of responding to issues that require both immediate action and long-term strategy. It will take a commitment from every one of us to build a community where everyone feels that they belong, everyone has access to opportunity and learning. It will take collective vigilance to be present and do better.

The Putney School Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion webpage highlights many of our campus efforts. (www.putneyschool.org/dei) I hope you will read it. ■

BY LISA MUÑOZ, Director of Equity and Inclusion





Lisa Muñoz (pictured left) helped organize Putney School students' involvement with the painting of a Black Lives Matter mural on the road next to the Putney Central School.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN ALTMAN

ON-CAMPUS WORK

In the spirit of "The more work we do, the more we realize how much work needs to be done," here are some of the many offerings in summer and fall 2020 relating to racial equity, as well as opportunities for our students and faculty of color to deepen their connection to each other and to Putney.

Full Campus Presentations/Conversations

- Micro/Macroaggressions
- Hakeem Rahim
- Ashray Cooper
- Black Lives Matter mural in Town of Putney
- Indigenous Rising: Voice, Vote, Act
- Indigenous People's Day workshops
- Anti-racism in agriculture
- Raising racial awareness conversation
- All-school inclusion survey
- Abenaki language lesson
- Open discussion on race

Screenings

- *A Most Beautiful Thing*
- *America to Me*
- *Coded Bias*
- *John Lewis: Good Trouble*
- *Time for Ilhan*

All Faculty/Staff

- Ongoing meetings—anti-racist learning and planning
- Black@ microaggression session
- Curriculum assessment
- Town of Putney anti-racism book group
- Review of school's collegial agreements

White Anti-Racist Faculty Group

- Review inequity in student book ordering
- Anti-racist book group: *How to Be an Antiracist* and *We Want to Do More Than Survive*
- Building Anti-Racist White Educators guidance
- Role-playing scenarios

Professional Development Workshops

- AISNE Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Conference
- NAIS People of Color Conference
- So You Think You're an Anti-Racist?
- Decolonizing the Classroom: What Indigenous and African Ancestral & Activist Lenses Offer to Modern Education

CONTENT



**Kate Knopp, dean of faculty,
and Lisa Muñoz, director of
equity and inclusion, discuss
the Putney School curriculum**

PURPOSE

In the last year, the Putney community—its teachers, students, families, and alumni—engaged in a deeper look at the racial inequity in our country and at our school, both historically and currently. Worth noting are the number of alumni who asked the school for information and action, including the over 200 alumni who signed the “Resetting the Vision...Restoring the Future for Black and African American Students” petition. Stated broadly, the questions raised by the Putney community address admissions, hiring, campus climate, student experiences, and the big picture.

The *Putney Post* will dedicate space to answering these questions in depth over the course of the next several issues. In this issue, we start with the curriculum. Below, two faculty members pull back the curtain and tell us more about how the school shapes and re-works its curriculum.

What questions does Putney ask when reflecting on its curriculum through a lens of equity and inclusion?

Kate: There are some principles of curricular design that we’re embracing, principles that ask, “What’s the role of white supremacy in America’s existence? Whose story is being told? Whose stories are missing? How is this important to democracy?” For example, one of the intents of our ninth grade curriculum was to teach how colonialism shaped the globe—empires, nations, economies. How we approach the information, of course, which lenses we use, is critical. We are reviewing and revising it continually. But the idea behind its design is to help students understand how capitalism, imperialism, and settler colonialism have shaped our current world.

Lisa: The faculty is taking a hard look at the content we’re teaching and the framework around it. They’re asking, “Why is it important for students to know this information? What should students take away from it, and can they articulate that reason?” Inquiry is at the heart of progressive education. We have to ask ourselves why we are doing what we do. It’s not done simply because we’ve always done it. There’s content and purpose. That’s the beginning of the work.

Kate: The cool thing about curriculum, especially at a John Dewey school that leans into project-based learning, is that content is fluid, and should be. We are meeting students where their interests are; teachers are in dialogue with students and learning new content and helping students build context for it. Most schools don’t have that freedom. With that freedom comes the responsibility, for example, to find inspiring, innovative Black people that students can see in the world doing work right now rather than relying on the same stories over and over again—teaching Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman is critical, but it’s just a beginning. What you read with a particular group of students might change year to year, might even change course to course, depending on who’s in your classroom.

**How has the Putney curriculum evolved?
How is it different from other schools?**

Lisa: One important point of progress is that every syllabus now has an equity and inclusion statement. Now, having that on the syllabus does not necessarily do the work, but it is stating that every teacher has to be competent at building an inclusive classroom to the best of their abilities. [See sidebar]

Kate: Listening is iterative. Teachers get to know kids, watch them grow, have a working theory about who they are in the community and whether things are going well. Students are breaking your working theory of them all the time—think about the growth that happens from ages 14 to 18. Teachers have to listen and let go, and listen and let go, and listen and let go.

So if you thought you had a student figured out in October, and you know their interests and how to give them feedback, and you know how to challenge them and support them, that's maybe not who they are in April. You have to throw it all out and start listening again. It's complicated for teachers. It also means teachers have to really be organized content-wise so that they can arrive at class and be present, and can follow up with a kid to say, "I don't think that went that well. Let's connect this afternoon or tonight and figure out what just happened between us."

Curriculum is the teaching. We have that great luxury at Putney in that we don't race through content here. The kids march through less factual content at The Putney School and get much more time to learn how to think. They have unlimited access to content; we're helping them get in touch with their own capacities as learners. And I love that. Because it's not about the content. It's not about which books you're reading, it's about what questions you have and how you go about using your talents in the world.

How can we make Putney more inclusive?

Lisa: I learned a lot last year about the alumni perspective. I heard from alumni who viscerally recall the times they felt like they didn't belong. We looked at what was being taught at that time. We asked what's in the way of students having access to the Putney experience? We think of books and texts and conversations, but the question is, "What blocks the access to that experience?" It is a really white space, and students feel

like they're navigating that, so they don't get to have the same experience.

Kate: We do curriculum reviews because the curriculum is not static, and the curriculum is only as good as the teacher in the room.

To me, the curriculum is not the experience the kid has at the horse barn or the book that they're reading, but how the teacher opens that up, gives the student access to that experience or that text. Curriculum is the synergy that happens in the space between the text and the teacher. That's what makes that student light up or shut down.

If students are walking around feeling like they have to perform in order to be here, then they're not going to want to share their story, they're not going to be vulnerable enough to stretch and grow.

That's why all of the little interactions are hugely important. If a kid has two or three bad experiences then they're not going to open up for, say, six months, if you're lucky. That's why teachers have to be better. That's why there needs to be more people of color. Period. Stop.

What are the school's next steps in this work?

Lisa: You need data to do equity and inclusion work, to move justice forward. Assessment and self-reflection on the curriculum are important for both students and teachers. It's a 1–2 year process (and the recent NAIS self-study is a part of it). If you don't have the data then you're just working with feelings. We're really working on the data right now.

Kate: Putney has incredible potential. When it's really working it's about pulling kids into a community and saying, "You can do more than you think you can. You don't even know who you are yet. Come and play here and figure out your creative process, and then go off into the world and make it a better place." ■



We hope people who are interested will visit a webpage we created in the hopes of being transparent about admissions data, the board of trustees' strategic planning and re-writing its equity and inclusion action steps, and our ongoing work toward a more just and inclusive school. www.putneyschool.org/dei

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY + INCLUSION

BY ZOE PARKER, ENGLISH TEACHER

It is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that your learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this distance class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is also my intent to create (with you) an atmosphere that is respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, neurodiversity, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

Communication, compassion, and empathy are guiding my day-to-day goals for learning in this class. I look forward to our time together and the various ways it will take shape as the trimester unfolds.

THIS IS HARDER.

“My moods today have swung wide—from fear and frustration to faith and hope, and I just want to share my love and gratitude to y’all for making school go. Launching school is always hard work; this is harder. And we are doing it.”

KATE KNOPP, dean of faculty, September 7, 2020

AND

STORY BY
DARRY MADDEN

PICTURES FROM
FALL 2020 TRIMESTER

WE ARE DOING IT.

REOPENING THE CAMPUS after its closure in March required a delicate, coordinated effort from every corner of the school.



From an operations standpoint, a simple dictate—everyone must remain six feet apart at all times—was a deceptively complicated problem. It meant that dorms, classrooms, and the KDU could no longer operate as they normally do.

“We had to create space by adding square footage, as well as time in the day,” said Randy Smith, chief financial officer and assistant head of school.

Four tents and a portable classroom were erected. Excess classroom furniture was stored to add usable space. One-way traffic patterns were established. One dorm—Old Girls—was taken entirely offline to act as a quarantine space in the event of an outbreak.

The school also nearly doubled the staff in the health center and the KDU to maximize the chances of staying open.

The infirmary managed random community COVID-19 testing every week throughout the fall, also testing the entire community twice after a case was detected in a staff member. (No other cases were reported.) The additional staff also added coverage to reduce overwork in the event of an outbreak or if someone in the infirmary tested positive.





FALL 2020 BY THE NUMBERS

134
BOARDING
STUDENTS

16
STUDENTS
attending classes
fully online (some of
Putney's international
students were not able to
get to Vermont this fall.)

ONE
SKATE PARK
repurposed
for portable
classroom space

1,607
COVID-19 TESTS
performed
(students and staff)

ONE
POSITIVE TEST



The KDU went from a self-serve system to one where staff served each individual, which required two additional staff per meal serving food in the dining room and two in the kitchen. Students were not permitted to work in the KDU, a major change in both kitchen operations and the student experience. The increase in staffing also created two separate crews, in the case of a positive test in the KDU staff. (The one case detected on campus in the fall did happen to be in the KDU.)

All told, pandemic-related operational expenses will total more than \$650,000 for the academic year.

How the community would experience these and other changes was even harder to anticipate.

“There was a loss of natural bonding rituals in the community,” said Head of School Emily Jones, citing no more meals crowded around the table together, assemblies in the Currier Center, dorm meetings in the common rooms and, perhaps most sorely missed, Sing.

“We needed to find new ways to gather and provide that sense of belonging to something larger than yourself,” said Jones.

Another hurdle for the community at large was a loss of autonomy. Where once faculty and staff (and students to a large degree) were trusted to do their work as they saw fit, they were now all subject to a long list of policies and procedures.

The one piece of this complicated puzzle that was effortless, however, was the weather. A seemingly endless string of warm, blue-sky autumn days allowed for classes to be held outside for nearly the entire trimester. Faculty made the most of our expansive, open campus and any given day one could see students learning on the lawn and under trees.

Students will return to campus in shifts in early February. While much of the work of transforming the campus for the COVID reality is complete, much work remains to be done, and we trust that this community will once again meet the challenge. ■



**“WE HAD TO CREATE SPACE
BY ADDING SQUARE FOOTAGE,
AS WELL AS TIME IN THE DAY.”**

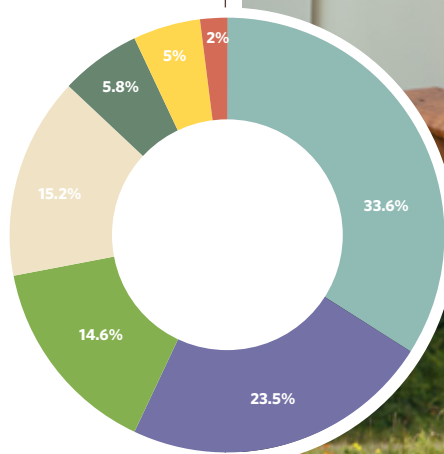
RANDY SMITH, assistant head of school





COVID EXPENSES BY CATEGORY

Testing	\$220,000
Labor	\$154,000
KDU, Classrooms, and Reconfiguration	\$96,000
Airflow Improvement	\$38,000
Storage	\$33,000
PPE	\$15,000
Other	\$100,000



\$656,500
TOTAL PROJECTED
EXPENSES FOR
2020-2021
SCHOOL YEAR



Q+A: CAMPUS LIFE

JADYN '21

What has been a positive surprise or silver lining of your Putney experience amid COVID? I've been helping Lisa, who is in charge of making the dorm snack arrangements. She saw me driving one of the school's electric Gem cars one day and asked if I would be able to help her deliver dorm snacks to each dorm. Of course I said yes to driving a golf cart around campus every day each week.



"I WOULD MUCH RATHER BE ON THIS BEAUTIFUL CAMPUS THAN COOPED UP IN MY ROOM."

JADYN '21

What has been one of the biggest challenges so far this year? I have found myself getting homesick, but as the time to go home approaches, I get less excited.

How has your communication or relationships with those around you changed? Being here, I feel a little more secure in the practices that we are doing in the community to not get COVID. From the plane ride I have to take home, to breathing Georgia air, the likelihood that I or someone in close proximity to me will contract the virus is very scary and stressful.

What has COVID made you more aware of or less aware of as you go about your daily life? You often feel stuck at boarding school but usually you can manage to escape to the Co-Op or something. Not so much anymore. So driving is decompressing because it feels like I am going somewhere when I'm really not—and I provide my peers with much-needed dorm snacks.

How has COVID impacted the way you learn? Being a senior during this time has been especially challenging. While having a full day is rewarding, it's also tiring.



I feel like I am working a lot harder than my peers who are applying to college while doing online school. I have yet to see how all this "hard work" is going to speed up my college process, but I would much rather be on this beautiful campus than cooped up in my room.

JASON '22

What has been a positive surprise or silver lining of your Putney experience amid COVID? Dorm snack boxes! Although I miss our fresh baked goodies from the KDU, I do enjoy our daily package of candy and health bars. The novelty has worn off a bit, but I was completely stunned on night one when our dorm snack was potato chips and Sour Patch Kids.

What has been one of the biggest challenges so far this year? Have you ever tried to run a dorm deep clean? Okay now imagine that every night. Now try that socially distanced in the extremely narrow Old Boys hallways. And now add the fact that our plumbing and washing machines have teamed up to flood us three times this trimester. Keeping the dorm clean and functioning has been a headache, and I'm so grateful for my awesome co-dorm head, Jaden.

How has your communication or relationships with those around you changed? It was so jarring to find out we weren't having conference blocks. That's been crucial to my communication with teachers and homework completion, and I wasn't sure how I was going to manage. Thankfully, nothing's gone too wrong in the homework part of my Putney life.

I've had a few conversations with the two freshmen who live in my dorm and realized that they don't know many people outside of the dorm. COVID has kind of destroyed free time to form friendships with people you might not have class with or live with, and that's sad to me. I've taken to just pointing out random people to those two freshmen, like, "That's Lane, and that's Emmanuelle, and we all lived together our freshman year."

What has COVID made you more aware of or less aware of as you go about your daily life? At the start of quarantine I was quite aware of my mask and how it factored into my life. It was a bit irritating in the heat, and an added weight on my face. I didn't leave the house that much, so I never really got used to wearing one, but once I arrived back on campus in September, my mask went on and it stayed on. Sometimes my roommate and I catch ourselves lying down in bed with our masks on, or trying to drink water through them. It's become an extension of me, and although I'd like to see everyone's faces, it's not a bother. Masks also serve as a way of visually reminding yourself when it's time to stay six feet away from people. Once you're in your room and it's safe to take your mask off, you can give your roommate a hug.

How has COVID impacted the way you learn? While on campus, the only real change I still recognize has been cleaning and distancing protocols we follow while in class, but there still is a real fear that there'll be a spike and we'll be remote again. That's going to be another relearning experience that I don't want to be doing halfway through junior year.

What do you hope remains in place after COVID is over? No Saturday classes while still having a half day on Wednesdays! I am but a simple teenager with one request—please let me sleep.

ELFIN '24

What has been a positive surprise or silver lining of your Putney experience amid COVID? Improvement of time management. Since the number of students in classes are limited, our classes are divided into two groups and each group has a study block every day. As a result, we need to plan what we are going to do during this block according to the teacher's schedule.



What has been one of the biggest challenges so far this year? Adapting to a brand new culture. As an international student, I do not know a lot about the cultural background and don't have much life experience here. Adapting to a new culture and having more communication with local students is my big challenge.

How has your communication or relationships with those around you changed? Since this is my first year at Putney, everything is new to me. According to my friend who is in tenth grade, I can tell that the connection between classmates has changed a lot. For example, students used to be able to go to other dorm's common rooms to chat with their friends, but now it is not allowed.

What has COVID made you more aware of or less aware of as you go about your daily life? My awareness of cleaning. I used to be careless about washing my hands and cleaning my things. Now every time I come back to my dorm or go to have my meals, I clean my hands carefully.

How has COVID impacted the way you learn? I mentioned that our lessons are becoming smaller and we have a study block. In addition,

this year we need to do our project week at home, instead of doing it on campus.

What do you hope remains in place after COVID is over? I hope that we can still keep sanitizers on campus, which are helpful to raise students' awareness to wash their hands and keep clean.

HENRY '23

What has been a positive surprise or silver lining of your Putney experience amid COVID? Zoom. The utilization of online school will open so many opportunities. I'm sure in the future when a student is suspended or there is a snow day, say, they will be able to attend classes online. I think having that opportunity to continue to learn when you normally couldn't is and will be very helpful.

What has been one of the biggest challenges so far this year? It's harder to have a good social life and a strong social connection through all the mask wearing and social distancing. It is a lot easier to be shy, and to convince yourself that you don't need as much social interaction.

How has your communication or relationships with those around you changed? My relationships with classmates that I was close with before COVID have stayed strong. It seems like even through all the social distancing and protocol it's still easy to be with those people because you already know them. In my opinion it's been harder to make new social connections. This is really too bad because a lot of new people come into the school every year.

"IN MY OPINION IT'S BEEN HARDER TO MAKE NEW SOCIAL CONNECTIONS. THIS IS REALLY TOO BAD BECAUSE A LOT OF NEW PEOPLE COME INTO THE SCHOOL EVERY YEAR."

HENRY '23

What has COVID made you more aware of or less aware of as you go about your daily life? COVID has made me aware of how much I'm on my phone. It's interesting because I always knew I was on my phone a lot. But for some reason during COVID, the isolation really makes you realize how much time out of the day you're spending on your phone.

How has COVID impacted the way you learn? I have noticed that I've been a lot more motivated. Since there's a big lack of social interaction outside of school, I have been able to spend more time on my homework. Since I've had this extra time on my hands I've been able to become more focused and efficient.



What do you hope remains in place after COVID is over? I think that the online learning aspect of COVID will definitely linger after the pandemic is over. And I really do hope this is true because I know that when I have missed school in the past it feels like I have a lot to catch up on when I get back. ■



Putney Post

PUBLISHED OCCASIONALLY BY PUTNEY SCHOOL
PUTNEY, VERMONT

JANUARY, 1958

Jack Caldwell

After an illness of just months, Jack Caldwell died last September 15th. Until a fore his death, he worked up for the school, giving us all ing example of courage, ch and hope.

For two-thirds of Putney's was its business manager, coach, ski-meet major de counselor to countless studet interested in village affairs elected year after year to ac erator at Town Meeting. And last, he was the father of family, every member of v been or is vitally connected school.

During the fall the alumnn uted over eleven hundred de gift to Dorothy; and at it meeting the Board of Truste lished the John H. Caldwell Fund which will be used th years for purposes appro Jack's memory.

All of us want to express to Johnny, Pete, Ruth and Bill and lively appreciation for J. ing contribution to the Putn

Winter Term Enterta Schedule

Jan. 14-Tue: Students return from
25-Sat: Mr. Maitland Edey
his experiences on the Mayf

Feb. 1-Sat: Ski Party
8-Sat: Movie

15-Sat: Dr. A. D. Gurewitsch will talk on
his recent trip to the Soviet Union
22-Sat: Washington's Birthday Party

Mar. 1-Sat: Movie

4-Tue: Town Meeting Day

8-Sat: Play Reading

10-Mon: Stowe Ski Trip (return Wed.)

15-Sat: Square Dance (College Boards)

22-Sat: Students leave for spring vaca-
tion

Apr. 2-Wed: Students return

June 6-Fri: Graduation Day

Miscellany

Exchange Student from India: C. N. Jairam, popularly known as Jerry, of the Lawrence School at Lovedale in southern India, is entering Putney some time during the winter term. "Head Boy" of his school, Jerry is a keen athlete holding a number of records in track events; he is also much

Flu Epidemic: On October 14, two days after Harvest Festival, students began coming down wholesale with the flu, and before the outbreak was over two and a half weeks later, 120 out of our 181 students and 14 staff members had been stricken. Soon the infirmary, a music room, assembly hall, old girls' dorm and half of the KDU were filled. During the height of the epidemic three doctors were paying two daily visits each, and fifteen extra nurses and aides were helping with the necessary twenty-four hour care, with faculty and staff members serving meals and doing the cleaning. Skeleton classes and activities were held throughout, and the able-bodied population had meals in two shifts in the waiters' and back dining rooms. The convalescent period dislocated our schedule further, but most of us had recovered in time to put on and enjoy the Thanksgiving festivities. With the booster shots of flu vaccine, we hope to prevent a second wave.

largest sum yet achieved during an annual drive.

Approximately the same number of donors (377 in all) contributed in 1957 as in 1956, but a few gifts of \$1000 and over helped to boost the total. The backbone of Annual Giving, however, has always been the many smaller gifts from parents, alumni, camper families and others.

Twenty-seven percent of the alumni

The John H. Caldwell Memorial Fund: The trustees of the school established last fall the John H. Caldwell Memorial Fund, as noted in another column. This is a continuing fund, to be administered by the trustees "for purposes fitting to Jack's memory." Contributions to the fund are welcome at any time from parents and alumni who may wish to express iation of Jack in this way.

Award: Last year the azine, *Putney*, received a ward in the literary maga- n, given by the Columbia 'ress Association in its na- tion for high school pub- avid MacDougall '57, now was editor-in-chief, Patty '57 was manuscript editor, Satterthwaite '57 (Univer- inia), the managing editor, ible for the magazine's de-

interested in subscribing to e this year (\$2.00 for two write Michael Roos, Bus- ger.

Review: Every two weeks taff gets out a five or six graphed issue of the *Put-*, which gives a good pic- daily life, from the stu- of view. It reports school discusses school problems, ned by letters to the editor ts and faculty with "things nd." Parents, alumni and subscribe for the rest of r 50 cents. Address Dave no Business Manager.

ntinued on page 6)

GOAL BY \$4,800

ng 1957

over \$3200 of the total. coeducational boarding count on such a percent- sses of 1947 and 1941 lead

the list, with 40 percent of their mem- bers giving.

Putney's lack of an endowment makes a successful Annual Giving program imperative, and in these days of rising costs, we will need a continually rising total in contributors and money. The response to our fourth drive is heartening for everybody connected with the school - - and we hope for even greater results in the fifth!

A LOOK BACK

The fall of 1957 saw a flu pandemic spread worldwide, and The Putney School had its first case two days after Harvest Festival. Below are memories from the class of 1958 about that experience, as well as the flu's coverage in the January 1958 *Putney Post*.

DAPHNE HARWOOD

I was one of the very first to come down with the flu in 1957, so I wound up in the infirmary. I got to hear about the KDU and so many beds there.

Where did the school find them?

<<
January 1958 issue
of the *Putney Post*'s brief
mention of the fall '57
flu pandemic.

JOHN MCEACHERN

I remember being a nurse's aide in the KDU, with rows of canvas cots and multiple patients to tend to. Our patients were well-behaved, took their aspirins, and mostly dozed from fatigue and boredom. "Meals" consisted of soup, rolls, and apples. We served soup in cups, as bowls were too difficult to manage.

PETER USHER

I was one of the late ones—pleased with myself to be doing barn work while most others were in the KDU, but soon enough, I wound up in the infirmary. My main memory was playing endless games of crazy 8s with, I think, Jim Richardson '59. I don't remember anywhere near the panic and anxiety that people are feeling now, but then we were young and presumably our parents and teachers were bearing the brunt of anxiety. Looking back on it, we were probably fortunate to be at Putney under the circumstances, and I have no reason to recall the school handling the matter with anything other than professionalism.

1957 PANDEMIC

MERIDEE NOYES BRUST

My most vivid memory, apart from seeing the rows of beds and some stern, grouchy-looking nurses in the KDU, was about my brother Eli Noyes '60. While he was recovering, he was put upstairs in the infirmary. Seeing me pass by one morning, he called out the window that he wanted some knitting needles and some yarn, which I then brought to be taken to him. When I came back later in the afternoon, he tossed his knitting project out of the window to me: a little navy blue rectangle about 5" x 3" with the word "Hi" in white, in the middle. I vaguely remember going to some class with only three of us, but don't recall the two others, or the unlucky teacher, or the subject. Is it possible they tried to keep a normal class schedule? They must have, but how? Does anybody else remember?

SUE STEIN ELMENDORF

I vividly remember lying on a cot in the KDU and the presence of hovering nurses who frequently took my temperature. I do not recall being dreadfully sick nor feeling panicked. At the time,

Putney's robust actions to deal with the epidemic did seem unnecessary.



THIS IS JUST THE BEGIN- NING

TAKING ACTION IN THE FIGHT FOR EQUITY

STORY BY HALLIE HERZ '07

ILLUSTRATION BY AARON MARIN

IN AUGUST OF 2014, I moved to Baltimore for a teaching job. Days after I arrived, Michael Brown was murdered in Ferguson, Missouri, and the movement for Black Lives gained national attention. In the spring of 2015, Freddie Gray was killed by Baltimore police, and the city rose up in anger and grief.

It's shameful to admit, but that year was the first time I began to feel rage about systemic racism. I'd lived most of my life in northern New England in rural, mostly-white towns where it was easy for me, a white person, to intellectualize racism—to see it as separate from me, to think of it as existing in textbooks, in the past, or in between individuals in bigoted interactions.

After my move to Baltimore, I saw racism everywhere—woven into the fabric of my city. On bike rides across the city, I'd glide through the clean and flat streets of the predominantly white neighborhood I'd moved to. After a mile, I would cross over into a Black neighborhood with public housing projects and bumpy streets, bike up a hill past the jail, and onto smooth pavement in another mostly white neighborhood. I had never lived in a place where racial segregation was so obvious. I soon learned it was by design.

Baltimore, like many other American cities, had been segregated in the early twentieth century through racist zoning laws, restrictive covenants, the GI Bill, and redlining—a practice that allowed banks to refuse housing loans to cities' Black residents. Now illegal, all of these practices profoundly shaped the Baltimore I live in: where the high-paying jobs are, where the well-funded schools are, and who gets to be safe. During my first year in Baltimore, I began to understand how unequal our country is and how dangerous that inequality is.

The system that violently oppresses my Black neighbors was the same one that had allowed me to see police as protection instead of the threat that they represent to so many Black folks. This system starved public schools in Black Baltimore neighborhoods, leaving students and teachers in overcrowded classrooms with outdated textbooks and technology. It also gave certain white families the resources to pay for their children to attend

the expensive private school where I taught—and it allowed me, and many other wealthy students, to attend Putney, where a year of tuition is more than the average American worker's yearly income.

The more I learned, the more angry I became. This was so clearly unfair. And it didn't just exist in Baltimore—why was I just learning about it now?

IN 2017, I got a phone call from a guy who introduced himself as “Scott, your dad's financial advisor.” Scott said I was about to inherit over \$100,000. Although I knew my family had money, up until this moment, the most money that I'd ever had access to at one time was a few thousand dollars. With this inheritance, I, personally, would be rich—among the richest top 10% of people my age in the U.S.

For many people my age, this money would be a godsend. For one, it would allow them to pay off student debt. Because of my family's class privilege, I have never had to take out a loan for my schooling—my parents had paid for Putney, college, and graduate school. I was doing fine on my teacher's salary.

Hearing from Scott threw me off. This sounds naive, but I wanted to live in the same world as my friends—stressing about bills and car payments, saving a little, and living paycheck to paycheck. In reality, I was never in the same boat as most of my friends—I didn't have student loans, I had the security of my parents' wealth—and receiving

this inheritance bumped up hard against my values and who I saw myself to be, especially because, since moving to Baltimore, I had gotten involved in racial justice organizing. How could I be rich and committed to racial justice when I know about the racial wealth gap? How could I be rich and live with integrity?

A quick history lesson (for more on this, read Nikole Hannah-Jones's essay, “It's Time for Reparations”): Today, the average Black family holds about a tenth of the wealth of the average white family—a result of centuries of unequal policies and practices that have disadvantaged Black families while advantaging white families, allowing the latter to pass down land and wealth through generations. Of course, the full story is more complicated—class and race are not the same, and there are many wealthy Black folks and poor white folks. But it's important to understand the origins of the racial wealth gap we see today.

Throughout our country's history, Indigenous Americans were pushed off their land and forcibly relocated to make room for settlers. Through the Homestead Act (and others like it), the government gave white settlers “free” land. The settlers earned money by working the land they had been given. Almost 20% of white Americans, including many Vermonters, can trace their lineage back to these homesteaders.

Other policies, practices, and moments in history follow this pattern. Because of racist redlining maps, 98% of loans insured by the Federal Housing Administration from 1934–1962 went to white people. The GI Bill, a program aimed at helping World War Two veterans accumulate wealth, did just that—but only for white veterans. All of these policies, and more, are what led to the enormous racial wealth gap we see today.

History lesson over. Back to 2017, where I wasn't ready to address how this legacy allowed my white family to build wealth. So, I procrastinated on signing the paperwork and pretended the money didn't exist for the next year. It grew, as large amounts of money tend to do, and I ignored it.

I understand if this is the moment where you stop reading. Complaining about how being rich made me uncomfortable—during a global pandemic where people have lost jobs, money, family members—sounds pretty self-absorbed and insensitive. But the reason I'm sharing this is because I know that there are other Putney alumni out there who may be wondering how to align inherited wealth—or other elements of class privilege—with their values. I can only speak from my perspective as a white inheritor of wealth, and your experience might look very different. But, if you have wrestled with similar questions, stay with me, because grappling with them is what led to action.

IN LATE 2018, a friend recruited me to attend the annual conference hosted by Resource Generation, an organization that brings together young people with access to wealth or class privilege to redistribute wealth and power. It was the kick in the pants I needed. I realized that I couldn't hide any longer. Talking about money allowed me to begin to work through the ways wealth has shaped me. I realized that to live my values, I needed to commit to wealth and resource redistribution.

The system that forces some people to be poor is the same one that allowed my family to gain wealth. I want to do my part and start redistributing my own money, and I'm still figuring out what this means for me. Should I keep some of my inheritance

THIS GROUP AND THIS WORK HAVE BECOME A PROFOUND SPACE FULL OF JOY. THROUGH OUR EFFORTS, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO CONNECT WITH OTHER ALUMNI AND TALK ABOUT CLASS AND REPARATIONS.

for a down payment on a house, knowing that other people don't have that privilege, or should I try to give it all away? I don't have answers yet. But, to date, I have redistributed over one-fifth of my inheritance.

One other important thing happened at that conference. I ran into fellow Putney alums Rose Pytte '14 and Flannery McDonnell '14. We talked briefly about the potential of bringing together Putney alumni to work together towards wealth redistribution. But when the conference ended, we dropped the Putney ball.

IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR, I heard from Rose. She and a few other Putney alums had been talking about organizing Putney alumni around wealth redistribution and reparations. I jumped at the chance.

The first few Zoom meetings of our group (pictured) were exciting—and a mess. We didn't really know what we were organizing towards. We shared what we remembered about our time at Putney (spanning from 2003–2019) and the different types of messages we had received about class and wealth. We bonded over our shared love of the Putney landscape—our memories of the barn, getting lost in the Putney woods—and how Putney shaped the way we are in the world.

We also shared the feeling that Putney had taught us to care about, and for, our communities and the larger world, but hadn't effectively prepared us to use our privilege to address the larger systems that contribute to inequality. There were (and are) so many wealthy students at Putney. But, in our time at Putney, nobody had talked to us about wealth or class.

So, as Putney taught us to do, we took responsibility for our own learning. This summer,



ROSE PYTTE '14



HALLIE HERZ '07

during the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter Movement and at a time when the Putney alumni community was talking about race and racism, we came together to help each other talk about wealth and class privilege and to begin to move our resources and power towards reparations and redistribution.

We landed on two steps: leading a learning and action group of class-privileged youngish Putney alumni, and fundraising for an Afro-Indigenous queer and trans Vermont land project. As we said in our letter to Putney alumni from the classes of 2003–2019, "We feel that, as Putney alumni, investing in reparations is a way for us to honor the deep connection we feel with the land and express the heartfelt gratitude we hold for Putney...and to acknowledge and...address the lasting legacies of Indigenous genocide and slavery that have created the



FLANNERY MCDONNELL '14



MARGARETE WOLFE '19



MARGI DASHEVSKY '05

unequal distribution of wealth and power that allowed many of us to attend Putney." The Vermont we know today was shaped by government policies that gave land to white people, denied land to Black people, and took land from Abenaki people; we feel a responsibility to return rightful land stewardship, and the wealth derived from it, to people who for generations have been denied it. So far, we have raised over \$140,000 towards this goal.



ROSA DONALDSON '13



EMMA SHEREFKIN '12



MORE READING:

- "You're in the richest top 10%," Resource Generation website
- "It's Time for Reparations" by Nikole Hannah-Jones, *New York Times*

This group and this work have become a profound space full of joy. Through our efforts, we've been able to connect with other alumni and talk about class and reparations. I've found that every person I've talked to, no matter their class background, is hungry to talk about these topics.

As a society, we're bad at talking about money, allowing wealth to remain unequally distributed. Through addressing it head-on, Putney alumni can work to, as Carmelita Hinton wanted, "combat prejudice and injustice wherever it appears." We're not sure what's next, but we do know this is just the beginning. ■

Student self-portraits in charcoal, from fall 2020 drawing class.

ON THE HILL



LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

DEAR PUTNEY PEOPLE,

One of the positive outcomes of the pandemic has been that we have all had more time for communication with those we don't see often, and it has been wonderful to hear from many of you on many different topics. I have heard a fair amount of criticism, making clear that what Putney does matters to people. I have also heard many ways in which Putney shaped people's lives, and what they hope for our current students.

By the time this *Post* is out, we will have received and analyzed the results of the NAIS Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism, a survey that was completed in late fall by students, faculty and staff, current parents, and graduates from the classes of 2010–2020. This will help guide our work on diversity, equity, and inclusion, both at the board level and on campus. Our DEI work so far this school year has focused on curriculum, strategic planning, and professional development for trustees and faculty. While the challenges of the pandemic are still considerable, we will also spend the winter and spring on research and response to the many questions we have received. We are currently working as a community on a 21-day equity challenge designed by Lisa Muñoz.

We are also extracting as much learning as we can from the experience of living with COVID-19.

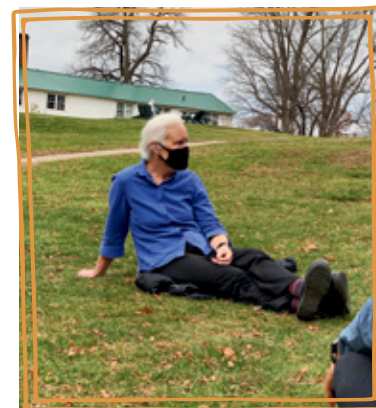
Much of this issue of the *Post* is dedicated to people with creative solutions to current problems, and we are in that mindset as we start back in February for the second long stint of sheltering in place at Elm Lea Farm. We were making it up as we went along through the fall, and it was hard to get out of anxiety mode, but while we don't want to become complacent, we are doing our planning this time with better understanding and more experience.

Thank all of you who have been so supportive this year in so many different ways. Thoughtful critique is an important kind of support, as well as all the many acts of kindness and generosity which have come our way. I am looking forward to the next year and a half, the last of my tenure as head of school, and all we can accomplish in that time.

All the best to all of you,

EMILY JONES

Head of School



“Thoughtful critique is an important kind of support, as well as all the many acts of kindness and generosity which have come our way.”

Calling the U.S.

Here in the gymnasium turned socially-distanced classroom turned phonebank, a group of about ten students spent their fall Wednesdays and weekends calling voters. While they primarily worked for the presidential campaign, they also made calls on behalf of races in Maine and Vermont.



“We had ambitious plans to travel to swing states and work on the ground. I think that would have been the most effective way to participate in the election—face to face. But after being bound to campus we wanted to stay involved. I think we made a real impact.” LEDLIE '21



FOOD DONATION

4,000
POUNDS
of fresh
produce
donated

Our farm and garden crew worked hard through the spring, summer, and fall to feed the community. By mid-fall, they'd donated 4,000 pounds of fresh produce and 2,658 eggs to the Putney Food Shelf, hundreds of pounds of tomatoes to the Vermont Food Bank, and more to Groundworks in Brattleboro, as well as bouquets of fresh flowers to hospice.



FIRED UP!

Ceramics students hosted a sale this fall, with all proceeds to benefit the following organizations: Ali Forney Center for LGBT Youth in New York, Root Social Justice Center in Brattleboro, and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.



Pictured are the hay bale toss, a longstanding Harvest Festival event, KanJam, and the slow bike race, introduced this year.



Harvest Fest

For the first time in its history, Putney was not able to host a public Harvest Festival, with family, friends, alumni, and community joining in the celebration. But staff and students joined together to create a smaller version, and the tradition continued.

LARAMIE PROJECT

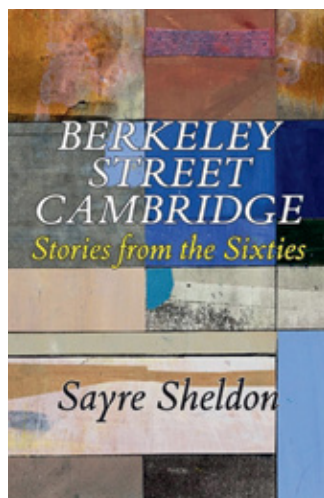
The two guiding questions that went into selecting the fall play this year were: What can we do safely? And what will speak to the current moment in U.S. politics and in the lives of our students? “The Laramie Project,” about the murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard, emerged as the clear choice; the lack of scenery and the way the actors speak directly to the audience were a perfect fit for physical distancing. The actors also wore clear masks during rehearsals and performances.



ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Hillary Foxweldon
and Emily Ekman '04,
road-tripping west to
east across the country,
at the Grand Canyon

ALUMNI BOOKS

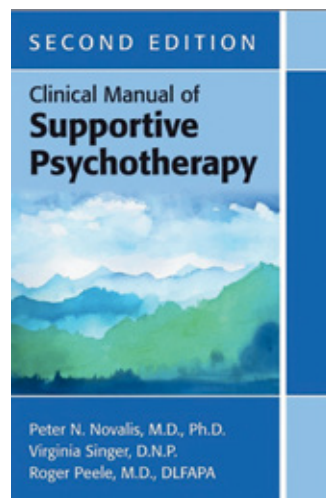


Berkeley Street Cambridge: Stories from the Sixties

Sayre Phillips Sheldon '44

Wilderness House Press, 2020

A compilation of memories from the years Sheldon raised her family on Berkeley Street in Cambridge, it is not just a memoir, but a history of the '60s and '70s. Called "riveting" by reviewer Kathleen Spivack, who also notes, "In this extraordinary memoir of a unique time and place, you will find steadfast love, the role that alcohol and drugs played, family mental illness, the changing role of women, literature, art, politics—against a background of family loyalty and obligation." After graduating from Radcliffe in 1949, already married to a veteran and starting a family, Sheldon got a graduate degree in literature at Boston University and went on to teach literature and women's studies there for many years. In 1980 she became the founding president of Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND),

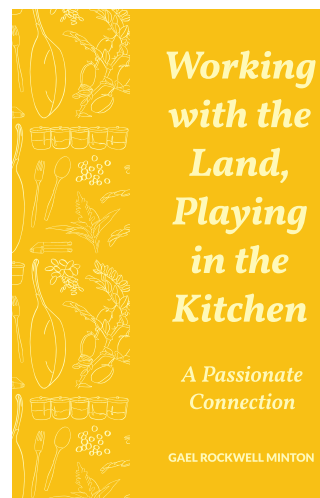


speaking for peace and representing WAND at the United Nations. She published an anthology, *Her War Story: Twentieth Century Women Write About War* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1999). Her writing and political activism continue into her nineties, motivated by her determination to contribute to a world that has provided her with so much.

Clinical Manual of Supportive Psychotherapy, Second Edition

Roger Peele MD '49 with Peter N. Novalis, M.D., Ph.D. and Virginia Singer, D.N.P. American Psychiatric Association, 2020

Updated for the first time since 1993—and still the only comprehensive clinical guide to supportive psychotherapy—this new edition features updated and new chapters, vignettes, tables, and resources that reflect current best practices. Where once it was reserved for use with severely

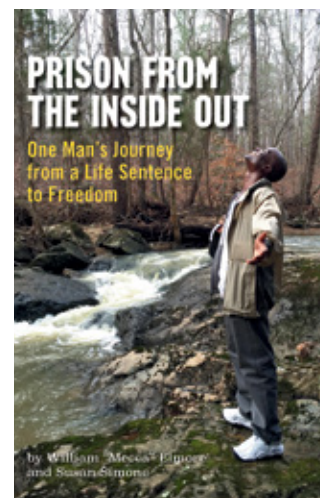


impaired patients, supportive therapy has come to be recognized as the treatment of choice for many patients, and supportive techniques underpin a great many other psychotherapies. As a result, the academic literature, both on specific populations and on technical issues, has mushroomed. In this manual, the authors—all of them practicing mental health clinicians—distill the most relevant information that nonpsychiatric physicians, psychiatric residents, and experienced psychiatrists and psychotherapists need to fully understand this specific modality.

Working with the Land, Playing in the Kitchen: A Passionate Connection

Gael Rockwell Minton '60
Dog Soldier Press, 2020

This book is a testament to Gael Minton's love of growing and preparing food. Her recipes show her love of fresh, varied fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, and animal foods with

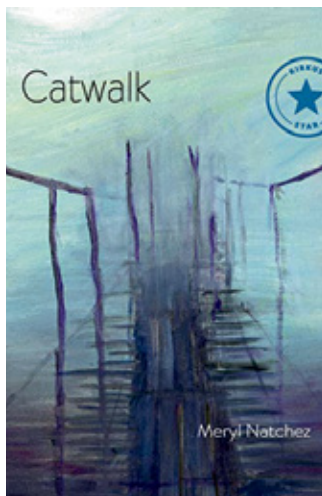


generous use of herbs and spices including edible flowers. The preparation process is clear and emphasizes simplicity and creativity. Menus are designed with the four seasons in mind and include favorite recipes from her family members. Professionally, Gael was a clinical nutrition and environmental health educator who concurrently practiced organic, regenerative land use and devoted herself to the small-scale farm movement. Photographs and illustrations throughout the book bring color and vibrance to the text. It is clear that Minton hopes to inspire young people to garden and prepare delicious food.

Prison from the Inside Out

Susan Suchman Simone '65 and William "Mecca" Elmore Human Kindness Foundation, 2021

Mecca was sentenced to "mandatory life," a sentence that meant he would spend the rest of his natural life in



prison with no possibility of parole. *Prison From the Inside Out* tells the story of how that sentence was served, using the tools of oral history. Mecca and Susan are collaborating writers. Susan is the narrator, but not a mediator or modifier. *Prison From the Inside Out* tells difficult and very personal truths about mass incarceration as it is experienced by the convicted and their families. What's written down comes directly from each of the people in this story. *Prison From the Inside Out* is both a book and an act of trust: A Black man from New Jersey and a white woman from New York meet in a workshop at a North Carolina prison. They decide they have something to tell the world about incarceration, self-esteem, personal growth, survival, and the power of trust. Together they created this book.



Catwalk

Meryl Natchez Rafferty '66
Longship Press, 2020

Here are poems of tenderness, wit, and insight that capture a lifetime of close observation through an offbeat lens. This is a book of love poems, elegies, odes, and wry political commentary that engage and uplift the reader. Natchez's humor shines through even her darkest work. This is a book that leaves you wanting more. *Catwalk* has been selected as a Best Indie Book and received a star from Kirkus Review, which noted it contains "Outstanding poetic musings that strike at the very core of human connections and contradictions."

Atmosphere

David Moyer '76
Published independently, 2020

A scouting mission lands on Chara IV and makes a very unusual first contact. Says the author, "I began by studying fine art at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. After moving to



Tucson, Arizona, I pursued a career in painting. In 2005 I bought a DSLR and followed my camera around the world for 12 years. During that time I discovered a love for the written word. That, combined with a lifetime passion for science fiction, led to this book. I am currently working on the sequel, and have the seeds of a third volume germinating in the deep recesses of my brain. COVID permitting, I will finish the second and third volumes from beautiful Ciudad Oaxaca, Mexico."

FORMER FACULTY

Can't Even: How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation

Anne Helen Petersen
Houghton Mifflin, 2020

An incendiary examination of burnout in millennials—the cultural shifts that got us here, the pressures that sustain it, and the need for drastic change. While burnout may seem like the default setting for the modern era, in *Can't Even*,

BuzzFeed culture writer and former academic Anne Helen Petersen argues that burnout is a definitional condition for the millennial generation, born out of distrust in the institutions that have failed us, the unrealistic expectations of the modern workplace, and a sharp uptick in anxiety and hopelessness exacerbated by the constant pressure to "perform" our lives online. The genesis for the book is Petersen's viral BuzzFeed article on the topic, which has amassed over seven million reads since its publication in January 2019. *Can't Even* goes beyond the original article, as Petersen examines how millennials have arrived at this point of burnout (think: unchecked capitalism and changing labor laws) and examines the phenomenon through a variety of lenses—including how burnout affects the way we work, parent, and socialize—describing its resonance in alarming familiarity. Utilizing a combination of sociohistorical framework, original interviews, and detailed analysis, *Can't Even* offers a galvanizing, intimate, and ultimately redemptive look at the lives of this much-maligned generation, and will be required reading for both millennials and the parents and employers trying to understand them.



Have you written a book?
Let us know by contacting
alumni@putneyschool.org.

PUTNEY POST

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WINTER 2021

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May Lillie (pictured)
nurse

Maria Ogden
nurse

Jessica Taylor '94
mental health
coordinator

Katie O'Connor
mental health
counselor

The Putney School's nurses deserve special thanks and recognition. The extensive hours they spent last summer and fall planning, testing, communicating, and spreading cheer buoyed our community and made it possible for us to be together on campus. Our most sincere appreciation goes to Putney's nursing staff, as well as those who looked after our campus mental health (see list on the left).

PHOTO COURTESY OF MAY LILLIE



Reunion 2021

UPDATE

Putney will host an all-classes virtual reunion in June. Stay tuned for more details. We remain hopeful that we will be able to welcome alumni and friends to campus for Harvest Festival in October 2021.

In the meantime, we hope you will stay in touch with your Putney friends, and we're happy to help you connect if you'd like to reach someone. Find us at alumni@putneyschool.org.



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