

# PrepTalk Annual Report

2019-2020

Flintridge Preparatory School



VISUAL ARTS HIGHLIGHTS



(Above left) For her AP Drawing class, Anna Turysheva '21 uses embroidery to explore growing up within two cultures: American and Russian. Translation: "Can I have Lunchables instead of dumplings?"; (Above right) Kayla Lee '24 captures joy within the home using a camera obscura her teacher, Ricardo Rodriguez, made using Prep's laser cutter; (Bottom left) Georgia Yamamoto '21 slab-rolled and cut these pieces to overlap, mimicking the movement of seaweed.

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**On the cover:**  
At the drive-thru Book Day in August, faculty, staff, and administrators distributed textbooks, class materials, and special Prep swag to our students.



## From the Head of School



### Responding with Creativity, Flexibility, and Gratitude

When I began my journey as head of school last November, I contemplated many possible challenges that I, and the school, might face in my first year. I thought about how I might build meaningful connections as an outsider. I wanted to connect with parents, faculty, students, alumni, and staff early and often. I knew that getting to know school culture would be a long process, and one that could only be undertaken from the inside out.

I wrote down a list of aspects of school life I wanted to understand, and I've kept that list handy. But I kept another list that has become far more important. It contains all the critical skills, community values, and characteristics I could think of that a Prep graduate should have in order to live an engaged, balanced, and responsible life. This list—which includes creativity, flexibility, gratitude, and the ability to listen, hear, and respond meaningfully and with care—has been the one I've returned to time and again to remind myself of my responsibilities to the community that has now become home to Susie, Anna, and me.

There is no other way to be. In times of peace and prosperity, and in times of challenge and stress, there is no other way to be. We must preach what we practice, as Angela Duckworth has famously said.

The best planning could not prepare anyone for 2020, and this time on the job has been a crash course in Prep culture and community values. As we all know, institutions show their true strength when tested, and while I'm thrilled that Prep has passed the test, how we've shown our strength is far more compelling.

I have several priorities this year. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic so that we may reopen the school safely is our number one priority. To do that, I'm working to build our leadership team capacity to rise to this challenge, and I feel honored to have such an experienced team by my side. And, as we respond to the call to action in diversity, equity, and inclusion work, we aim to engage the full community in this multiyear program and process. Finally, I will engage with and learn about the Flintridge Prep community—students, parents, faculty and staff, Board members, alumni—through frequent interaction and shared communication.

The leadership team at Prep is exceptional in every way. They preach what they practice every day, inviting critical input and engaging with some of the most complex questions any of us have faced in our careers as educators. I cannot express enough gratitude to all of them as we grapple with the challenges of educating our students safely through the pandemic, putting forward a plan to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community, and more.

I also cannot express enough gratitude to the faculty, students, parents, staff, and trustees, who have welcomed my family and me even as they rewrite curriculum, spend more time online, care for their own families and loved ones, and take on tasks that they've never dealt with before. The academic rigor of this institution remains strong. The social lives of our students have transformed because many creative minds and compassionate souls have embraced challenge instead of backing away.

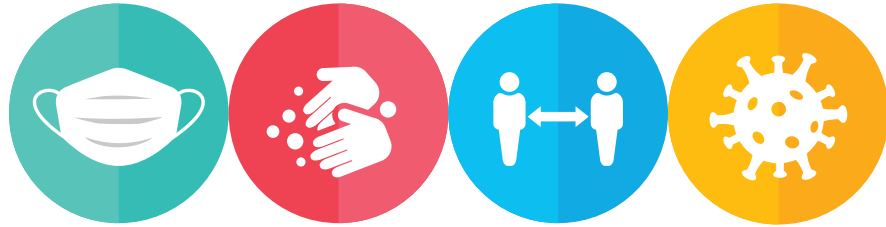
This is the stuff, the indelible stuff, that makes people speak of Prep for Life.

Sincerely,

Jim Pickett  
Head of School



## Prep's Mission in Action Responding to a Pandemic



by Mel Malmberg and  
Nicole Haims Trevor '91

Several days a week, members of Prep's COVID-19 School Compliance Task Force receive updates from Dr. Barbara Ferrer of the LA County Department of Public Health (DPH). After several months, the task force, whose focus is health, safety, facilities, academic and student life, and communication, has developed an understanding of the data, which it balances with compassion and flexibility and a deep sense of responsibility to the physical health and emotional wellbeing of faculty, students, parents, and staff.

Task force members share information with other schools, and manage the questions from faculty, parents, and students. It's a tremendous collaborative effort, and the stakes are high. They want to restore our community safely and within the law.

"Each member of the task force has a specific skillset and a unique role," says Director of Finance Theresa King. "For example, Andres Alamillo has

received a certification in contact tracing from Johns Hopkins University and developed not only our on-campus athletic conditioning protocols but also our overall campus health response. I see my job as being a facilitator as we gain new information and develop the safest path forward."

While the task force takes guidance from health experts, educational partners, campus leaders and heads at peer schools, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Association of Independent Schools, the California Association of Independent Schools, California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), the National Business Officers Association, and attorneys specializing in education, the school is required to comply with guidelines from the State of California and the LA County DPH.

The county has been extremely conservative about reopening businesses and educational institutions, and the task force watches caseloads per 100,000 residents among other key benchmarks, knowing that Dr. Ferrer is unlikely to risk the lives of students and employees in her decision making.

"It's so important to stay up to speed on all the rules and data points because they're designed to make everyone safe. This is the number one priority for the school—to maintain the emotional and physical health of our whole community when they return to campus," says Director of Operations Kim Kinder.

"It's a little like building the plane while you're flying it through a storm," says Director of Facilities Nick Adams-Wright, who has been tasked with ensuring proper air filtration and ventilation in all campus buildings. "Details shift daily. That said, I feel we have a solid plan to protect faculty, staff, and students when we return for hybrid learning."

Although the school year began with students at home, essential workers and faculty who wanted to teach from a classroom have been coming to work since March with mandatory precautions in place. Having a core group of faculty and staff on campus has created a baseline of behaviors that are intertwined with the school's community values of trust, honesty, generosity, and respect.

Assistant Heads Sarah Cooper and Vanessa Walker-Oakes and Head of School Jim Pickett respond promptly to parental concerns for their children's physical and emotional health, as well as providing faculty and staff with extensive safety protocols when they return to campus. They have spent the last seven months planning and implementing techniques with faculty to increase connection and promote community online (see pages 6-13).

"The overarching concern for all of us has been, and remains, what is best for the whole community," explains Pickett. "We have a variety of scenarios

to choose from depending on circumstances, but we believe that when we enter hybrid learning, there is a potential that we may stay there for some time. We just have to keep following the county guidelines and reducing risk both on and off campus."

Here are some of the protocols currently in effect for Prep's eventual return to hybrid learning:

- Approximately half the students will be on campus at any given time.
- Masks are required at all times, and physical distancing guidelines will be managed by COVID-19 compliance officers.
- Community members will be asked to acknowledge on a weekly basis the community expectations and personal responsibilities inherent to educating students in a hybrid environment. These include limiting interactions on and off campus, maintaining physical distance, wearing masks, and frequently washing hands.
- Before arriving to campus, community members must use the Magnus Health app symptom tracker, and anyone experienc-

ing symptoms must stay home.

- Students with health concerns will not be required to come to school when hybrid learning begins and can continue taking their classes from home until the school resumes at full capacity.
- Protocols are in place if someone becomes ill on campus and/or diagnosed with COVID-19.

The school hosted a free flu vaccine clinic in October for staff, faculty, and their families, and encourages all community members to get a flu vaccine if they can.

"The most challenging aspect of managing our response is that we cannot control what people do. We know that adolescents need social and emotional support, that they crave interaction with their peers. Our parents can support the school by modeling the safest behavior and honoring the spirit of the honor code when they agree to our weekly guidelines," says Pickett. "This is one way to protect the most vulnerable in our community, as well as loved ones at home who might have underlying health conditions."

### Stay Updated on Prep's Response

Given the changing landscape of this pandemic and guidelines from national, state, and county officials, we encourage all members of our community to visit our website at [www.flintridgeprep.org/return-plan](http://www.flintridgeprep.org/return-plan) for the latest information about the school's response to COVID-19 and updates to guidelines and protocols.

We are communicating with parents, students, faculty, and staff frequently through email. We welcome you to reach out to us at [covidteam@flintridgeprep.org](mailto:covidteam@flintridgeprep.org) with questions not answered on the Return to Campus Plan website.

We encourage all families to ensure that their email address is up to date with Flintridge Prep. If you are not receiving emails or need to update your address with us, please contact our Registrar Brenda Diaz at [registrar@flintridgeprep.org](mailto:registrar@flintridgeprep.org).

### Latest Update

We appreciate the support that parents have given to our faculty, staff, and students as we continue to focus on providing the best possible student experience. As of late October, Los Angeles County's COVID-19 adjusted case rate remains at levels that keep the county in Tier 1, the state's most restrictive tier. As a result of the increasing case rates, LA County DPH's conservative approach to reopening schools, and the approaching holidays, we do not see an encouraging outlook for our return to campus before at least January 2021 for any in-person learning. While we are disappointed with this situation, the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and families remains our primary concern. We will continue to monitor the data and provide frequent updates.

Managing health and safety for all means also providing essential social and emotional support. Our teachers have been focusing on such support in classes and extracurricular activities, our student life team recently held retreats and activities designed to connect students, and 200 high school athletes returned for on-campus athletic conditioning.

Together, as a community, we will get through this.



# LEADING THROUGH CHANGE

by Mel Malmberg and Camila Ryder

## Planning for the Future, Prep's Leadership Team Faces the Unexpected with Strength

**W**ITH ANY LEADERSHIP TRANSITION, establishing a team of experienced individuals who provide insider knowledge and a continuity of values helps create a solid foundation for the new leader, whether a company CEO or head of school. This is especially true at Prep, where planning for the transition of leadership has been underway for several years.

Providing this foundation was the primary goal of the Board of Trustees Search and Transition Committee, led by Board Chair Kris Leslie and Head Emeritus Peter Bachmann, when Jim Pickett was named the new head of school last fall. Gathering a team of dedicated, passionate, and collaborative campus leaders was paramount. With a mixture of familiar faces, some with new roles, the leadership team has formed a sounding board that Pickett can count on for support and insight.

Encompassing all aspects of Prep, from academic, extracurricular, and financial, the new leadership team includes:

- Head of School **Jim Pickett**
- Assistant Head for Academic Life **Sarah Cooper**
- Assistant Head for Student Life **Vanessa Walker-Oakes**
- Director of External Affairs **Lakshmi Dastur-Johnson**
- Director of Finance **Theresa King**
- Director of Admissions **Art Stetson**
- Executive Assistant to the Head of School **Dr. Megan Hutaff**, who joins the school this year.

The decision to have two assistant heads oversee the two most important aspects of a Prep education—the academic life and the student life—spoke to the essential mission of Prep to nurture the whole student, intellectually and emotionally.

“This administrative structure was established to sustain the school into a new era,” Sarah Cooper says. “We have a highly experienced administrative team to help carry out the vision of the school and the new head. We all have years of commitment to Prep and we’re also forward-looking with the professional growth that our faculty, staff, and administrators engage in continually.”

Though Pickett may have been new to Prep life and culture, he is not new to school leadership. While at Castilleja School in Palo Alto, Pickett was the head of upper school for eight years, overseeing the upper school’s operations and guiding major initiatives.

▶ Jim Pickett, Vanessa Walker-Oakes, and Barrett Jamison greet students and parents at the drive-thru Book Day in August.





He also spent 13 years at the Cranbrook Schools in Michigan where he taught, supervised a dorm, and served in a variety of roles, including assistant director of schools technology and dean of faculty

He worked with Bachmann throughout the last school year and got to know the team behind the scenes. Beginning in November 2019, Pickett was consulted on the planning of administrative changes. After his official arrival on July 1, he dove straight in with a leadership retreat in his first week on the job. Working with a group of people who have collaborated with each other for years has provided him with instantaneous access to Prep’s mission and culture.

Pickett’s leadership style is rooted in collaboration and open conversation, and he sees himself as a “quirkily entrepreneurial” motivator who understands when to lead and direct and when to sit back and listen. Rather than enter a conversation by stating all his ideas and answers first, Pickett attempts to get a 360-degree perspective from the assembled team around him.

“Philosophically, I see myself as a co-collaborator, but of course there are times when you need to set a clear course of action and direct people to follow that path. Even when the work is hard, you have to be able to motivate everyone to move together,” says Pickett. “There are several priorities before us, and chief among them is safely returning our students to campus. The leadership team brings together all this rich cultural knowledge and institutional memory. So much of what we’re facing is unprecedented, and unexpected, but we bring our previous experiences to the table and we tackle the challenges as they come.”

As COVID-19 evolved into a global pandemic, and Bachmann’s tenure neared its conclusion, the school had to pivot quickly, directing focus and resources to the most essential tasks of supporting the health and safety of our community, offering financial assistance to families impacted by the pandemic, and providing our students and families with the best Prep experience possible.

“As it became clear that this was an extended crisis, I worked with Peter, Sarah, Vanessa, and others to address the needs of our students, teachers, and parents,” says Pickett. “To me what was so enlightening about these early conversations was that they confirmed the impression of Prep I gained through the hiring process. Prep is all about relationships, and these relationships stand the tests and storms and challenges that come our way because the people at the center work together so well.”

## Cooper, Walker-Oakes Lead Together to Create Connection, Inside and Outside the Classroom

**IN THEIR ROLES** as academic administrators over the past few years and in transitioning to their new positions, Assistant Head for Academic Life Sarah Cooper and Assistant Head for Student Life Vanessa Walker-Oakes have been guided by a two-part question: “How are we focusing on the most essential parts of our curriculum, and how are we supporting our curriculum with the social and emotional skills we need at this time?”

“The structure of two assistant heads is a very strong structure, because Vanessa and I both have a lot of experience in what we’re working in and we work very well together,” Cooper explains. “There are some responsibilities that are very distinctly hers or mine, but there are so many topics that overlap and it’s nice to have that strength of structure to be able to address them and to support each other.”



“Having two assistant heads is important to how we create curriculum and student experience, but also essential to the life of the school,” adds Pickett. “But this isn’t merely a structural change. Sarah and Vanessa as individuals are uniquely talented in their roles, and together they provide profound insights about the student and faculty experience that are essential to the school’s success in the past, present, and future.”

As Assistant Head for Academic Life, Cooper oversees faculty and curriculum, including the STEAM and Global Studies initiatives. As the Assistant Head for Student Life, Walker-Oakes oversees all extracurricular, advisory, counseling, student support programs, outdoor education, athletics, college counseling, and the Leadership initiative.

Cooper and Walker-Oakes lead two respective committees, the Academic Life Committee and the Student Life Committee, which include department chairs and administrators (see full list in sidebar on page 10). Both Cooper and Walker-Oakes are part of each other’s committees, and Pickett will also attend both committee meetings depending on their agendas.

By sitting on each other’s committees, the two preach what Prep already practices: what students

learn inside and outside the classroom must work in concert with one another, with faculty nurturing the connection between the two.

Cooper and Walker-Oakes share similar goals in their new positions and in how they foster a growth-mindset in Prep’s learning environment, incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and social and emotional learning (SEL) into all aspects of academic and student life, successfully navigate the logistics of educating students during a pandemic, and support the relationships and connections of our students, teachers, and families.

This is not new work. Faculty—including Cooper and Walker-Oakes—participate in an impressive amount of professional growth every year. Last year more than half of the faculty attended conferences, webinars, and trainings in areas ranging from subject matter and curriculum to SEL, student life, DEI, brain development, global studies, leadership, and online learning.

“The Prep community is still the Prep community, whether we’re online or in person,” Cooper says. “The intellectual rigor and commitment of our teachers and our students do not change because we’re online.”



Sarah Cooper (left) and Vanessa Walker-Oakes (right) bring a teacher’s perspective to their new roles.



## Academic Life and Student Life Committees

The Academic Life Committee, which was previously known as Academic Affairs, encompasses all curricular and faculty work, the eight departments, the Global Studies and STEAM initiatives, faculty professional growth, and school accreditation. Led by Cooper, the team includes eight department chairs, Walker-Oakes, and veteran campus leaders in new roles, including Director of College Counseling Brooke Yoshino, Dean of Students Barrett Jamison, and Assistant Curricular Coordinator and Physics teacher Reid Fritz.

The Student Life Committee is led by Walker-Oakes and focuses on advising, counseling programs, human development and outdoor education programs, athletics, clubs and student organizations, extracurricular arts programs, community service, mentoring, and student leadership. The committee includes Jamison, Associate Dean of Student Support Midge Kimble, Yoshino, Athletic Director Sean Beattie, Performing Arts Chair Molly Mattei, and Cooper.

But, again, structure and intentionality have allowed the school to maximize impact. A new schedule was created for the 2020–2021 year that includes a late start on Fridays, providing a much-needed break for students. The late start also allows for faculty support through weekly faculty meetings. Teachers can check in with each other, receive training on a variety of topics including DEI and online learning, participate in breakout group discussions about coursework, and attend department meetings.

As Walker-Oakes points out, developing a more dynamic and interdisciplinary Student Life program that aligns with the academics at Prep is living out the school's philosophy of nurturing the whole student. "The full scope of the mission of Prep is everyone's responsibility. We all are responsible to ensure the execution of Prep's vision and goals in all aspects of the student experience," she says.

"Diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the core of social and emotional learning. Cultural awareness, cultural responsiveness, there's no way of doing SEL work well without acknowledging everyone's full identity and making that seen and heard. I don't see these two priorities, DEI and SEL, truly working to better our community and the student experience without being interwoven," Walker-Oakes says.

"Sarah and Vanessa are my partners." Pickett says, "Ensuring the emotional and intellectual wellbeing of our community, navigating the essential diversity, equity, and inclusion work at hand, this is all so important. I could not be more grateful to work with both of them." (Read more about the initial framework of Prep's DEI Board Committee on page 14.)



Peer counselors meet with 7th and 9th grade peer groups during the summer, and have weekly advisory check-ins.



## Keeping a Balance for Teachers and Students

**WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED PANDEMIC**, social unrest, and racial trauma, 2020 has been a year of challenges for the country and the world. In its fall issue, the *National Association of Independent Schools' Independent School* magazine wrote that school leaders must be asking themselves these questions right now:

*"How can everyone—administrators, faculty, students, parents—fulfill their respective roles in the educational process while they are themselves navigating such tremendous upheaval? How can the educational process itself foster the development of the skills and resilience needed to actively and intentionally participate in this still-unfolding transformation? Fast-paced social changes mean both tremendous turmoil and tremendous opportunity—how can we maximize the latter while we are acutely aware of the former?"*

Over the past few months, our community has come together with an openness, meeting and addressing these challenges with determination, care, and, most importantly, compassion.

The school reached out to students, faculty, and parents to gather feedback on the spring semester to make adjustments for the 2020–2021 school year. Regardless of the learning circumstances, the six takeaways, which became guideposts for each teacher, speak to an emphasis on individual and collective wellbeing:

- Build community
- Be interactive
- Plan for variety in classroom activities
- Encourage student-to-student contact through projects
- Be aware of screen time, and give students a chance to move around and take breaks
- Assign only what's crucial, and keep in mind that students still have full lives.





Department chairs and other administrators have worked together over the summer and fall semester to ensure that faculty are taking care of themselves and routinely checking in on their students. The relationships built between the students and teachers—and among the teachers—have created spaces of safety, comfort, reflection, and yes, sometimes venting.

Cooper's focus is to challenge faculty to engage their students in every way possible and to support faculty in this effort. "Whether that's in the form of a project that sparks a passion that students didn't know they had, through a class discussion that builds courage in expressing ideas, or by using the deep content knowledge that our faculty have to inspire students to find their own depths in whatever they want to study and commit to, it's my goal to assist with any of this," she explains.

This year's overarching goal for the Student Life Committee is to foster relationships and connection. As Walker-Oakes describes it, "how do we build, nurture, and sustain relationships and connection in an online environment in the short term, and in the longer term, how do we really grow and integrate that commitment across Prep?"

"We're thinking about ways to reach out to each and every student, through our peer counselors, 8th grade buddies, deans, and advisers, to make sure our students feel connected," Walker-Oakes shares. "Our faculty are working to create space to check in with students about their social and emotional wellness, even within the context of an academic class. In our faculty meetings, we've continually talked about how important it is to take those first five or seven minutes of class to check in with students and ask where they are emotionally.

"Gathering feedback from faculty and students to ensure the efficacy of the measures we are taking to promote student wellbeing is imperative to developing a successful, SEL-informed program," Walker-Oakes says. "Recently, in addition to gathering feedback from student organizations and individual class surveys, the student life team invited all Prep students to respond to a schoolwide survey evaluating their experience with online learning and homework. The data was then used to implement changes to Prep's homework policies this fall. Keeping the channels of communication open between students, faculty, and administrators ensures Prep can continue to adapt and iterate its program as we navigate new situations."

For some teachers, the shift to online learning meant finding creative ways to move away from the screen and nurture environments of comfort for their students. Dr. Genevieve Morgan had her English students listen to a podcast she recorded about haiku, encouraging them to listen and (safely) take a walk outside. Jodie Hare, also in the English Department, revised her essential oils cleansing that she does regularly at the beginning of class with Mindful Monday and Thoughtful Tuesday rituals. Cooper remembers hearing Mark Salzman play cello in the lobby of the new Bachmann Collaboration Building this summer, and the peace and hope it brought her.

Performing Arts teacher Jen Bascom, who taught new students over the summer in her improv and sketch comedy classes, wants to make students laugh and be present. "I want to create a playful and social mindset, to get them to laugh, do physical work like warmups and games and a lot of meditation work," Bascom says. Bascom declared in the fall that she would make the semester fun no matter what, and as we go to press, the virtual Fall Play "Most Likely To: The Senior Superlative Monologues" is being finalized.

Spanish teacher Cari Banning says, "During the spring, we had already built a relationship of trust, so it made it much easier to keep the lines of communication open and for students to be honest with me. Teaching a language is incredibly dependent on relationships of trust between me and the students and the students with each other."

Whether her students are brand new or returning, Banning is building relationships online. "I am really rethinking how I present my curriculum and how I get them to interact," she shares, adding that she thoughtfully creates small groups so students have supportive partners who help each other excel.

"One of the things I appreciate about the Prep community already is the attitude we bring to everything we do," says Pickett. "You can call it a growth mindset, or a 'yes, and' approach—the terms don't matter as much as the effect. The outcomes we expect of our students—that they be curious, entrepreneurial, and willing to listen and explore ideas they hadn't considered before—are modeled by our parents first, and then by our faculty, staff, and administration. We're flexible and responsive, empathic and compassionate. This is the best combination of skills for our community at any time, particularly right now."



*Above: Teachers and administrators recognize the importance of building relationships of trust and support with students.*

*Opposite page: High school athletes are currently participating in on-campus athletic conditioning following state and county guidelines.*



# Prep Develops a Strategy to Address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Now and in the Future

## New Board Committee and Consultant Set

by Mel Malmberg

Towards the end of the spring 2020 semester, Prep faculty and staff, joining much of the nation, began to more formally explore and confront the meanings and effects of racism. As the COVID-19 pandemic provided stark evidence of disparities in jobs, social programs, health, and wellbeing for people of color in the U.S., killings of unarmed Black people by police ignited nationwide protests, civil actions, and unrest.

Though faculty and staff have been discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion in education through individual professional development and conferences, our teachers and administrators recognized the urgency of taking greater action and holding more conversations around racism and inequities that exist in our school, our community, and our society.

At a unique point of transition between then-Head Peter Bachmann and incoming Head Jim Pickett, the two leaders came together with the school's leadership team and Board of Trustees to proactively address equity and inclusion in thoughtful, meaningful, and actionable ways. On June 18, Pickett, Bachmann, then-Board Chair David Codiga, and incoming Chair Kris Leslie sent a letter announcing the school's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiative.

The announcement came around the same time that Prep, like many independent schools, received a petition started by alumni that "respectfully implore[d]" the Prep Board and administration to create a publicly shared plan that addresses systemic racism. The letter eloquently stated the school "must usher in a new era of accountability, education, and advocacy, ensuring that the future does not mirror the past."

Altogether, 683 Prep alumni, parents and guardians, students, and faculty signed the petition, which cites Prep's honor code and culture of critical thinking.

"Your voices inspire our intentional, purposeful, and immediate commitment to this important work: to

ensure that Prep stands up against racism and makes our campus a place where everyone feels truly welcome walking through the gates," wrote Pickett in his July 20 email to the community. In that email, Pickett and the school announced the leadership and structure of a Board of Trustees DEI Committee, and sought nominations for a community-led working committee.

Headed by veteran Board member and longtime social justice and equity advocate Carol Ramsey, the DEI Board Committee was elevated to a standing committee at the first Board meeting in September 2020.

"This action reflects that this is hard and serious work that will take time, perhaps a long time," Ramsey says. "And it recognizes that the work cannot be episodic but must be both steady and steadfast."

The Board committee will also have on-campus oversight by Assistant Head for Student Life Vanessa Walker-Oakes and Assistant Head for Academic Life Sarah Cooper. This structure reflects what Pickett wrote in his August 28 email, that we at Prep are "on a journey to make Prep a place where everyone feels they can bring their whole selves to campus."

Ramsey's service and leadership in the worlds of social equity issues and the independent school landscape includes work as VP of Philanthropic Services for the Entertainment Industry Foundation, directing grant-making for Children, Youth and Families at the James Irvine Foundation, and serving as a vice president at A Better Chance and at the Council for Advancement of Support of Education. She was head of the Wilmington Friends School and worked at Vassar College and Bowdoin College.

The Board Committee has been tasked with the creation and oversight of a comprehensive action plan to examine curriculum, experience, and environment at Prep that will result in culturally competent students, confident and comfortable at the intersection of race and identity in America.

Ramsey outlines five points that her committee would first address (see box below).

GOALS FOR PREP'S DEI INITIATIVE	
INFORMATION	Identifying, and causing to be collected, relevant data.
DEFINITION	Defining what we mean when we say the term diversity, equity, and inclusion in the context of the social and geo-social realities of Flintridge Prep. This means understanding the lived experience of our community when it comes to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and other factors.
A SHARED UNDERSTANDING	We must be clear about what we intend to accomplish and how we will accomplish it. Faculty, staff, trustees, families, and alumni must have the same understanding so that all efforts converge to success.
A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY	DEI does not begin and end in a committee or class or circumstance. It is central to our total operation and must be integrated throughout.
AUTHENTICITY	The Flintridge community will decide for itself what it must do and how it will accomplish effective and sustainable diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will seek and hear the authentic voices and perspectives of our community, using as our source material the perspectives and experiences of our own students and alumni.

"We began work in the summer with a seminar and exchange among the staff and faculty who must guide the academic and extracurricular, student-centered engagement with the subjects of race and justice in America," Ramsey says. "The collection of data relevant to a review of the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Flintridge is underway. In addition to the mining of demographic data of the school and the surrounding communities, data will help the Board set discernible and measurable goals, and set standards of success and failure specific to Flintridge Prep."

More than 100 students, faculty, parents, and alumni have volunteered to participate in the working committee. Once that committee is formalized, each person will be able to provide immeasurable insight for the Board, Ramsey says, helping to "develop fact-based approaches, informed by the authentic voices of the Flintridge community."

Guided by the Board DEI Committee's parent and alumni representatives, Ramsey shares that the committee must discover, understand, and agree upon the details of inclusion: "What do we mean? How is it expressed in the experience of Prep students? What are the indicators of success?"

Much of the committee's present work will include collaborating with noted DEI expert, Pasadena native, and social justice advocate Christina Hale-Elliott, who was hired over the summer as a consultant to Prep. Hale-Elliott's work of information gathering was beginning as *PrepTalk* went to press. Pickett, Ramsey, and the leadership team are exploring how to best to use the energy and commitment of the volunteers who nominated themselves to be part of the working committee. "We are grateful for the whole community's interest, engagement and patience," Ramsey concludes, "because this is hard and serious work that will take time."

"The interest and energy around this issue reflects a genuine love of Prep and what it stands for, and can stand for, as everyone continues to reckon with the legacy and effects of racism and discrimination in this country," Pickett says. "It also asks each of us to reflect on our own lived experiences as well as those of others. We look forward to working with every constituency to understand, address, and create concrete steps forward, for as long as it takes."

*The school is committed to communicating updates. Visit [www.flintridgeprep.org/dei](http://www.flintridgeprep.org/dei) for information and updates, and contact [DEI@flintridgeprep.org](mailto:DEI@flintridgeprep.org) to ask questions and participate in the dialogue.*



## Take Note

### Faculty and Staff Retire, Bid Farewell to Prep

Librarian Reggie Ursett (see *PrepTalk* Winter 2020) and Head of School Peter Bachmann both retired (see page 44) in June 2020. Joining them was **Margie Woolley**, who served as assistant to the head for 18 years and retired on the same day as her boss.

"It was an honor to sit at that desk," says Woolley, a Stanford grad and mother of two Prep alumni. Woolley served as assistant secretary for the Board of Trustees and organized Bachmann's busy calendar, making sure the Prep trains ran on time. She offered a steady presence, attending and taking minutes at all 162 Board meetings that occurred during her tenure, as well being a kind friend, counselor, and sage to faculty and staff. Through it all, Woolley unconditionally supported Prep. "My role, as I saw it, was to get what Peter wanted accomplished, accomplished," she says.

The job at Prep came at the perfect time for Woolley. In 2002, she was a young widow who had relocated to Altadena with her kids. "I was seeking a job with purpose," Woolley says, "where I could facilitate someone else's life." It turned out that she facilitated the life of a school, as well.

"Margie came to Prep with great executive office experience and a deep knowledge of independent schools," says Bachmann. "Using her technical and human skills in multiple constituencies—with friendships and contacts that spanned colleagues, parents, and Board members—she quickly became indispensable."

Woolley is looking forward to a quieter life, riding her horse Dawson and relaxing. She notes that Prep gave her the great gift of friends, colleagues, and community. It also encouraged her kids James '07 and Kate '12, Woolley says, to be comfortable with who they are and to take risks, engage, and be resilient.

Prep also said farewell to two faculty members in June: Director of College Counseling **Gloria Diaz Ventura** and drama teacher **Rob Lewis**.



Left to right: Margie Woolley, Gloria Diaz Ventura, and Rob Lewis say farewell.

Diaz Ventura worked in the admissions office at Stanford University and in college counseling at Polytechnic School before beginning at Prep in January 2012. In May 2020, after shepherding the Class of 2020 through an unprecedented admission season, she transitioned to consulting.

According to Bachmann, Diaz Ventura brought professionalism and perspective to Prep: "Her expertise on the other side of the admissions desk helped us see what our students' applications looked like to colleges. She also expanded our outreach to colleges across the country, explaining what Prep is all about."

"When I made the decision in January to leave Prep," says Diaz Ventura, "I couldn't have predicted how the college admission process (or the country for that matter) would change. But I see nothing but opportunity. I'm praying our leaders in education, across grade levels, take this opportunity to re-write the rules and think outside the box to craft a more thoughtful and relevant evaluation and selection process."

Hired as Prep's first full-time drama teacher in 2007, Rob Lewis left for Menlo School to be closer to family. An NYU-Tisch grad who performed on and off Broadway, Lewis served as chair of Prep's Performing Arts Department from 2009 to 2019. In 2012, he earned his MFA from Roosevelt University in Chicago, presenting a production of *Metamorphoses* as his thesis, complete with an indoor pool, in Prep's Miller Theater.

The constantly smiling, always-energetic Lewis can sing, act, choreograph, and run a light board; his students could swordfight or softshoe (or maybe do both at the same time), analyze a character, land a joke, project their voices, write their truths and, most importantly, support their castmates. But his most valued gift is that he made students feel seen, heard, and accepted, while also challenging them to do their best work.

"My time at Prep was enriching," Lewis says. In turn, he enriched the community, directing 15 musicals, seven extracurricular plays, and 22 Drama 4 shows, and grew the department both in course offerings and faculty. He created a Summer Musical Intensive that brought kids from the area onto Prep's campus and worked with the Boys and Girls Club. In 2019, he helped students found Prep Radio and the Prep Arts Community, a leadership organization for arts students.

Lewis's favorite productions all had a common factor: the ability to connect with the audience through form, story, and/or performance. That is his special power, as well. "I can't say enough good things about Rob," says Bachmann, "a gifted teacher, a profound listener, he is one of the most extraordinary human beings I have ever met."

### Sandra Cisneros Shares Stories, Advice During Virtual Visit



Prep has frequently played host to some incredible figures in politics, art, literature, entertainment and more: in January, U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera spoke to students and parents, and in May, Representative Adam Schiff held a Virtual Town Hall with AP Government students. Yet, the move to online learning has allowed our students to connect with people they might not otherwise have an opportunity to meet.

Case in point: our September 9 virtual all-school assembly and classroom visits from literary luminary Sandra Cisneros.

The English Department selected Cisneros' acclaimed novel *The House on Mango Street* as its PrepReads community book, a program in its second year that encourages the community to read one book together and incorporate it into our annual theme and curriculum.

*The House on Mango Street* tells the story of Esperanza, a young Chicana girl who shares her story of growing up in a Latino neighborhood of Chicago through vignettes that explore identity, class, race, gender, gentrification, and what it means to be a young woman.

English Department Chair Dr. Tyke O'Brien worked with her colleagues across multiple departments on planning unique activities and projects around *House on Mango Street*, with the knowledge that our school might

still be virtual given the pandemic.

"We knew that focusing on not just the tales but also the storyteller would be a wonderful way to loosen up the voices in our own community early in the year and in many ways across subject, grade level, and role in the community," shares Dr. O'Brien—and what a rare opportunity Prep students had to meet the storyteller herself.

Cisneros's visit in September spanned two days and included visits to English and Spanish classrooms via Zoom and an all-school assembly, where five students were selected to ask her questions. Cisneros's assembly covered a variety of topics, from creating art to heal what Cisneros calls 'personal wounds,' to her experience writing her debut novel. Cisneros also provided a writing prompt for the whole community.

Maya Le '21 is one of the students who spoke with Cisneros during the assembly and is a writer herself. Ruminations on home, place, and family course throughout Cisneros's novel, which prompted Le to ask Cisneros about how Esperanza's story functions within the context of a pandemic, when we're all at home.

"Because I read *The House on Mango Street* during quarantine, I was particularly drawn to her emphasis on the home and neighborhood of Esperanza," Le shares. "At the time, I was also working on a project titled 'Safer

at Home," in which I wrote poetry and prose based on objects/places around my house. Because of this, my personal context of readership was one that worshipped what staying home meant—safety, family, and reflection—and Cisneros struck the same chord in her book, which made it all the more captivating."

"Any time we're creating, we're attracting light," Cisneros told Le and the over 600 attendees of the assembly.

Zoela Gullo '23 also had the chance to ask Cisneros a question during the assembly and spoke with her during a virtual visit to her English class. "I'd never read a book like hers before," Gullo says. "When I first read it over the summer, I was a little confused by the style and I didn't understand at first why she wrote it that way. When I read it again, I understood more of the significance of using these vignettes and how they impacted the reader, and I really connected more with the book."

Gullo wanted to know more from Cisneros about how her novel might have—or might have not—changed if it were written in the context of 2020, as "most of the topics that she wrote of then are still present now," Gullo explains. As a writer and poet, hearing Cisneros share her writing process was an eye-opening experience for Gullo.

To read a novel so poignant and relevant as *Mango Street* together, during a time when we feel so apart, opened a new path for our community to connect with each other. As Dr. O'Brien notes, "To have Ms. Cisneros herself, with a personality as colorful as the bookshelves behind her in the Zoom assembly, reinforce brave individuality in the assembly and class visits was truly an honor to hear and the icing on the cake."

Visit our website to read more about Cisneros's visit and to view some of the projects students created in their classes about *The House on Mango Street*.



# CELEBRATING THE REMARKABLE CLASS OF 2020



While picking up their caps and gowns to a parade of masked well-wishers (including honorary 2020 graduate, Peter Bachmann) and partaking in a virtual Senior Celebration and Commencement, we hope that our beloved Class of 2020 had a few moments to celebrate themselves, recognize their incredible achievements, and have fun. Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

“WHEN THIS CLASS took its Junior Retreat in 2019, Peter Bachmann invited them to embrace a year of leadership; throughout their final year at Prep these seniors met this challenge. Senior football players nurtured their younger teammates, senior actors set a standard of commitment throughout the rehearsal process, Kaitlyn Chen rose above the rim for our phenomenal Girls’ Basketball team, Ben Baraga took on the mantle of ‘Campus Pride’—this class led the Prep community. Last year, confronted with the confusion and chaos of the pandemic, they continued to lead, modeling intellectual curiosity and independence in their end-of-year presentations. I want to thank this class for their remarkable and courageous leadership throughout the year, and to say that I’m deeply proud to have been their Senior Dean.”

SCOTT MYERS, Senior Class Dean



## CLASS OF 2020 AWARDS

### SPECIAL AWARDS

*Benton Memorial Award:* Charlie McCormick  
*Class of 2010 Tom Fry Memorial Award:* Kristofer Chang  
*DAR Good Citizenship Award:* Ben Baraga  
*FLINT Student Leadership Award:* David Egan  
*Founders Trophy:* Maya Khurana  
*Parents Association and Fathers Club Scholarships:*  
    Germaine Harvey and Sylvie Shure  
*Scholarship and Service Awards:*  
    Ben Baraga and Carrie Luk  
*Senior Athletes of the Year:*  
    Kaitlyn Chen and Ben Grable

### DEPARTMENT AWARDS

#### English

*Senior Award:* Noelle Tamura  
*NCTE Nominee:* Maggie Cole

#### History

*Senior Award:* Jason Kreinberg

#### Math

*Computer Science Award:* Patrick Hastings  
*Senior Award:* Alex Bouquet

#### Performing Arts

*Senior Award:* Lilly Fox  
*Dance Award:* Julia Boberg  
*Drama Award:* Ryan Waldheim  
*Vocal Music Award:* Barnett Liu  
*Instrumental Music Award:* Carrie Luk

#### Science

*Senior Award:* Grady Morrissey

#### Visual Arts

*Senior Award:* Mia Bella Chavez

#### World Languages

*Senior Spanish Award:* Tess Robertson-Neel  
*Senior French Award:* Jeffrey Pendo  
*John W. Neupauer Latin Award:* Renee Ventresca

### CUM LAUDE SOCIETY INDUCTEES

Ben Baraga, Natalie Bax, Alec Bernardi, Ani Bernardi, Alex Bouquet, Violet Bretz, Pierre Cativiela, Kristofer Chang, Maya Khurana, Nick Klatsky, Jason Kreinberg, Audrey Laun, Carrie Luk, Charlie McCormick, Grady Morrissey, Tess Robertson-Neel, Reagan Schmidt, Sylvie Shure, Simon Siskel, Derek Tran

### FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS

*Andani Teaching Chair:* Julie Mejia  
*Class of 2020 Award:* Rob Lewis  
*Detoy Award:* Rita Bastian  
*Scott Studenmund '08 Memorial Award:* Andrew Phillips





Prep parents organized a PORCHtrait session with Class of 2020 seniors and their families.

## Recognizing Student Accomplishments and Engagement

While it was not possible to host an awards celebration last spring, Flintridge Prep congratulated the following students privately. We would like to publicly recognize their academic scholarship and engagement, creativity, talent, and leadership in all aspects of academic and student life during the 2019-2020 school year.

### CLASSES OF 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, AND 2025 AWARDS

#### SPECIAL AWARDS

*Academic Promise Award (7th-8th Grade):*

Maylin Chen '24  
Michelle Geller '22

*Amherst Book Prize Award:*

Malia Weiss '22

*Fathers Club Pursuit of Excellence Awards (7th-11th Grade):*

Madeline Montes '21, Hope Zionts '22,  
Christopher Fung '23, Steven Ng '24, and  
Steinunn Liorsdóttir '25

*Generosity Award (7th-8th Grade):*

Halia Benn '24  
Yitong Cao '25

*Good Citizen Award (7th-8th Grade):*

Kazuma Hakushi '24  
Carl Li '25

*Harvard Book Award:*

Claire Senft '21

*JP Blecksmith '99 Memorial Award:*

Emma Stellar '21

#### Performing Arts

*Junior Award:* John MacLeod '21

*Sophomore Award:* Nayan Sarma '22

#### Science

*Junior Award:* Lauren Ginn '21

*Sophomore Award:* Manya Lalwani '22

#### World Languages

*French Award:* Colin Mequet '21

*Latin Award:* Jackson Koos Davis '21

*Spanish Award:* Leon Kuo '21

#### Visual Arts

*Junior Ceramics Award:* Lucas Pierce '21

*Junior Drawing and Painting Award:* Anna Turysheva '21

*Junior Photography Award:* Matthew Gamboa '21

*Sophomore Ceramics Award:* Dylan Mealey '22

*Sophomore Drawing and Painting Award:* Al Shterenberg '22

*Sophomore Photography Award:* Devon Davila '22

*Video Photography Award:* John Stetson '22

#### CLASS OF 2021

*Cum Laude Society Inductees (Fall)*

Ryan Alameddine

Hudson Billock

Elaine Cheng

James Dixon

Lauren Ginn

Kate Huntley

Megan Jen

Leon Kuo

Rudy Ruiz

Claire Senft

Tim Zhang

*National Merit Semifinalists*

Krissie Essilfie

John MacLeod

Rudy Ruiz

Claire Senft

## Congratulations to the Class of 2024 on Their 8th Grade Promotion!

In May, we celebrated the Class of 2024 at their virtual 8th Grade Promotion, which featured speeches from the class speaker, Sienna Vaughn '24, presentation of the class gift by Evan Guyer '24 and Grace McConnell '24, and special tributes and videos.

We're so proud of all their accomplishments!



# In Memoriam

## John Plumb '64 and Robert Parker '78: Two Legendary Graduates Who Loved and Served Prep

by Mel Malmberg

Flintridge Prep recently lost two alumni who were also faculty and staff members: John Plumb '64 and Robert Parker '78. Loyal, passionate, and unique members of the Prep community, each impacted generations of students and colleagues. Their paths crossed often on campus; John taught when Robert was a student, they were staff colleagues, and they attended countless sports, arts, and commencement events where Robert played the music as John cheered. While the two could not be more different in their interests, they both shared a unique love for Prep as alumni and employees, and each had a unique ability to see and connect with students who needed their support and love.

A fixture on the Flintridge Prep campus since 1958, **JOHN PLUMB '64** served officially as a teacher, coach, alumni relations director, and development director. Unofficially, John was Prep's connector-in-chief.

Beginning in 6th grade as a student of school founder Doane Lowery and Head Malcolm Dickinson, he worked for a string of heads, including Ed Anderson and Peter Bachmann; his friendships with Prep alumni spanned every era.

After attending Cal Western University, John returned to Prep as a history teacher. He became alumni director in 1984 and director of development in 1985, retiring in 1990 for a career in banking. In 1995, Prep established the John Plumb '64 Endowment Fund for faculty professional growth. Proceeds from the annual Prep Golf Tournament go to this fund. In 2000, John, a founding member of the Lowery Legacy Society, was honored at the Masters Circle Dinner.



▲ John Plumb '64 (far right) attended numerous reunions, remaining close friends with teachers and Prep alumni.

John's outgoing personality complemented his voracious intellect. Classmate Ned Sutro '64 remarks, "In a life robustly lived, John Plumb assumed many tasks (teacher, colleague, confidant, friend)...in all of these roles he invoked an extraordinary gift for validation of those who were fortunate to encounter him."

John served the greater community as well, notably the Los Angeles Philanthropic Foundation, the Pasadena Child Development Associates, and the Glendale Humane Society. He was an active Mason, a member of the Shrine and the Royal Order of Jesters. Besides his service commitments, his friends, and Prep, John's twin passions were travel and dogs (he always had two). He passed away on March 5, 2020.

"The friendships I made at Flintridge were the strongest bonds I've ever had in my life," John once said of his years as a student at Prep. "I was there early and I didn't leave till late." In fact, he was describing his lifelong involvement with the school he loved, and that loved him back.

**ROBERT PARKER '78** passed away on April 13, 2020, from complications of multiple sclerosis. Robert received his bachelor's degree from Yale College, a master's degree from the Yale School of Music, and a doctor of musical arts degree from Claremont Graduate University.

Truly a jack of all trades (including magic and music) Robert worked in many capacities during his time at Prep. He taught computer science,

statistics, and music, and was deeply involved in the growing music and drama programs from September 1985 to June 1990. A composer and multi-instrumentalist (organ, keyboard, percussion, and more), Robert founded and led the pep band, which played all Prep home football games. Between 1988 and 1990 he served as Prep's director of finance, after which he left Prep to launch a career in the information technology industry. He remained a stalwart member of the Prep community, returning every spring to play the organ at Prep's commencement, a tradition he began as a student in the early 1970s and which he continued almost uninterrupted for the next four decades.

In September 2000, Robert left industry behind to become Prep's director of technology, also teaching computer science and stagecraft. He composed several choral and instrumental pieces that premiered at Prep, including the school's processional march. Prep's drama and music programs often called upon Robert's talents as a composer and musician, and he was well known outside Prep for his work in sacred, secular, and theatrical music. He was also a long-time member and volunteer at the Magic Castle, a respected speaker on the philosophy and performance of magic, and an expert in all things anime.

Robert was a committed champion of students who connected with him through music, computing, and drama. Learning of his death, they remembered him as "witty, brilliant, and talented," "unforgettable," and "truly kind." Others recalled that he made them feel "seen" and "was a huge positive influence." Classmates called him a "special, caring person," while his teaching colleagues remembered him as a renaissance man. Former faculty member John Ita shares that John's "charm was his intellect, and I don't remember him being stingy with either."

Siobhan Shier '03 writes, "His attitude and attention in my formative years was a stalwart battlement against the constant discrimination and discouragement I faced from others. He is a huge reason behind where I am today. I am deeply saddened by the loss."

A Zoom memorial was held on his birthday in mid-August with Robert's friends from college, from the worlds of magic, music, and theater, and from Prep.

Tributes included a virtual performance of Robert's "Sad Am I Without Thee" by Prep's Vocal Ensemble and

Chamber Orchestra, with Music Director and decades-long friend Steve Hill conducting. Michael Cisco '89, who says he learned to be fearless through dining all over Los Angeles with his "gastronaut" teacher and mentor, told the gathering, "If you want to honor Robert Parker, do something you have never done before."

Robert is survived by his wife Karen Kahler, a former Prep publications director and *PrepTalk* editor, whom Robert met at Yale; his parents, Joyce and Bill Parker; and his brother, Scott Parker.



▲ Robert Parker '78, at the mighty Pasadena Civic Wurlitzer organ, played his own original compositions and processions for dozens of Commencements, concerts, and school events.



# Alumni News



## Greetings from the Alumni Office!

It's been quite a year so far at Prep, and I want to thank you for your support as we navigate these challenges together! With the new Bachmann Collaboration Building as a special focal point on campus, a new head of school, and online learning (at least of this writing), much has changed. But of course, the Prep spirit and heart remain the same.

I truly missed the opportunity to celebrate spring reunions on campus and to connect in person, which is one of the best things about my job. Yet as we've all learned, virtual gatherings have their advantages, bringing Prep alumni together across the globe. I hope you've been able to deepen your Prep friendships and even create new ones these last few months.

I will keep you apprised of plans for celebrations, meetings with our new Head of School Jim Pickett, and other opportunities to connect with Prep. Whether we get together virtually or in person, I know it will be special.

Please keep in touch as we go forward, and continue to engage with Prep via email, on social media, and, someday soon, back on campus.

Be sure to update us with your email and physical address, so you can receive invitations to opportunities to connect with each other. I hope you enjoy this issue of *PrepTalk*!

Thanks, stay safe, and stay in touch!

Jacqueline Epley Tegart '97  
Director of Alumni Relations



## Stay in Touch!

Jacqueline Epley Tegart '97  
Director of Alumni Relations  
jtegart@flintridgeprep.org  
818.949.5526

**FACEBOOK:** @flintridgeprepalumni  
**INSTAGRAM:** @flintridgeprep

1981

**KIP FREYTAG** shared that "2019 was a year full of travel, family and friend visits, and enjoyment of life. We visited Myrtle Beach, SC, Colonial Williamsburg (which we love, so were there spring and fall!), Rocky Mountain National Park, and Germany, and my spouse went on a bike ride with his brother's family from Georgia to Los Angeles, hitting Texas right in time for the hurricane that hit there in September. We also celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. I can't believe so much time has passed! We had plans for Hawaii, England, Germany, Colonial Williamsburg, Rocky Mountain National Park, and perhaps something else on the fly in 2020 but it looks like this year isn't turning out the way we thought and hoped. We missed New Zealand due to a back injury, then had to cancel Hawaii, England, and Germany due to this blasted virus, but got in some National parks in Utah, saw a bit of Wyoming and spent quite a lot of time in Rocky Mountain National Park. We are just waiting to see what happens this fall, as we will go where we can. We have seen friends and family, the most important part of this year during the stressful times. Hoping for more travel next year! Hope that all are doing well."

1983

**JENNIE SINE LEE** reports that her third book, *Spark Change: 108 Provocative Questions for Spiritual Evolution*, was released in hardback from Sounds True on September 8. Read more about her books at [www.jennieleeyogatherapy.com/spark-change](http://www.jennieleeyogatherapy.com/spark-change).



1984

**JOHN CLEAVES** (above) shared, "I have been friends with **PAUL BROWNE** and his family since we first arrived at Prep all those many years ago. We were talking about software one evening when I was hanging out at their house and Paul sort of volunteered his son, **SEAN '19**. We teamed up to create Exhibit Presenter, software to help attorneys easily show their exhibits in court. John took care of design, and Sean handled the coding. See it in action at [www.ExhPres.com](http://www.ExhPres.com)."

1986

**MARK HALLY** shared, "Knowledge. Critical skills. Community values. Creativity. We learned these valuable lessons as students at Prep. This photo (below) represents these lessons put into action by lifelong friends whose bond was forged within Flintridge Preparatory School's classrooms, hallways, lunch tables, parking lots, and playing fields. These guys are not just my friends, they are my brothers. Each year we pick a spot to get together to do something we all love: surfing. After months of planning, we met the last week of



October 2019 at a clandestine location south of the border. **TOM STEWART**, who has a PhD in Baja surf exploration, brought something special for this trip, the SUPsquatch. An inflatable stand-up paddle board, the SUPsquatch can accommodate 6 or 7 full grown (some regrettably overweight) men. We hadn't tested the SUPsquatch in heavy surf before, but as experienced watermen we knew that we had the knowledge and critical skills to navigate this vessel come what may. The community values piece, however, proved to be the biggest challenge. As we paddled the 'squatch from shore we quickly realized that we had seven captains and no crew. Shouting conflicting orders at one another had us spinning in circles and in peril of getting swamped by a marauding wave before we could get beyond the break. Cool heads prevailed, and after some trial and error we managed to get ourselves in position to catch a set wave. When our wave crested on the horizon it was all systems go. **CHRIS TUCKER '87** and **GREG HALL** manned the bow with steely courage while **BRYAN BIRD** and I took the midsection, our paddle strength enabling the torque to dig into the wave. **ERIC BRANDT '87** and **TOM GILLESPIE** in the third row were our heaviest pair and provided much needed ballast. Gillespie, a little dubious about this exercise from the beginning, bailed out early and, unfortunately, is not captured in the photo. In the stern was Tom Stewart, who was the rudder and ultimately assumed command of the 'squatch. The creativity was in the endeavor itself and is expressed in the style of this epic ride and on the faces of those whose trust and love for one another keep them coming back to do more stupid things together every year."

1993



**ALINA DER SARKISSIAN DOUMANIAN** shared that her daughter, Nadia Alina Doumanian (left), was born in January. "She melts our hearts with every smile and giggle," says Alina. "We feel extremely blessed

to have this little miracle. Her arrival kept our minds off the pandemic. My husband John and I are living in the west suburbs of Chicago and enjoying Midwest living."



# Dave Mochel Shares Wellness Tips with Parents, Alumni

At a time when we're all feeling overwhelmed, we sometimes want to push away negative feelings or discomfort or view our stress as an obstacle. Wellbeing coach Dave Mochel, who spoke at our Community Speaker Series event on October 8, reminded parents and alumni in attendance that our discomfort, anger, and frustration are human emotions and are entirely okay.

During the event, Mochel guided Prep parents on practicing a hearty life for themselves to help them raise "hearty children," who approach whatever life throws at them with calm, confidence, and compassion.

We cannot predict what will happen tomorrow or in a few months, something that has become even more prescient with the global pandemic. That type of uncertainty makes for a confusing and angering process for us and for our kids. Mochel reassured attendees that being able to meet our stress with calm and compassion comes from practice. Some of his tips for how to practice this with our children comes through the OTHER approach, which stands for opening/observing, trusting, helping, expanding, and responding:

- **Opening and observing:** Relax our posture and our breathing;
- **Trusting:** Recognize that the opposite of anxiety is faith;
- **Helping:** Foster an environment of safety, belonging, and mattering;
- **Expanding:** Accept challenging emotions through self-compassion; and
- **Responding:** Respond to the world with purpose.

For parents and alumni interested in reading Mochel's e-book on wellbeing and mindfulness, contact [events@flintridgeprep.org](mailto:events@flintridgeprep.org) for more information.

## Class Notes Wanted

Submit Class Notes any time to [alumni@flintridgeprep.org](mailto:alumni@flintridgeprep.org) or by phone, 818.949.5526. Email digital images (JPEG or TIFF, 300 dpi resolution, size 5x7 inches) or send photo prints to Flintridge Prep's Office of Alumni Relations. News and photos may be reprinted in *PrepTalk* and/or our alumni web pages, depending on image quality and space availability.

*PrepTalk* reserves the right to edit Class Notes, primarily for length and style considerations, though also for clarity and redundancy. Class Notes entries are not fact-checked for accuracy, nor should their inclusion in the magazine be considered an endorsement from the school.

Please contact Jacqueline Epley Tegart '97, Director of Alumni Relations, at [alumni@flintridgeprep.org](mailto:alumni@flintridgeprep.org) or 818.949.5526.

1997

**CHRIS O'MALLEY** is the recipient of Glendale High School's Teacher of the Year Award for the 2019-2020 school year. In addition to teaching AP U.S. History, AP Economics, and U.S. History, he also serves as the Chair for the Social Studies Department and recently ended his second term as Chair for the School Site Council. He currently serves on the Town Council Land Use Committee for Altadena, where he lives with "my incredible and incredibly tolerant wife, **JENNI SMITH O'MALLEY**, and our intelligent, beautiful, gregarious son, Lincoln James O'Malley (Class of 2034), who is currently auditioning for the parts of Superman, The Flash, and Fireman Sam. Also, I read through the senior predictions in our 1997 Yearbook. Well played, LOG staff. Well played."

2003



**EMILY BAINES BALLIET** shared the great news that on March 24, 2020, she and her husband Spencer welcomed to the world Yves Theo Balliet, born 6 pounds 15 ounces.

2004

**RAMSES BARDEN** announced the arrival of the newest Barden family member in May, two weeks early (below). "We love Imani Alexander Jehiel Barden already. He and big-brother Myles have figured out how to occupy our every waking hour, ha!"



2007

**BRIAN LEE, DDS, MD**, who is pictured sitting on the far right (above), is the Western District Resident Representative for the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. Brian received his BA in 2011 from Claremont McKenna College and his DDS from the UCSF School of Dentistry in 2015. He immediately began his residency in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Loma Linda University, earning his MD in 2017. Brian will complete his OMFS residency in June 2021 and expects to go into private practice.

2016

**NORA FUTTNER** received a UC Berkeley Departmental Citation for Peace and Conflict Studies. The Departmental

Citation was initiated in 1955 by the UC Berkeley Committee on Prizes. This prestigious award honors excellence in the departmental field of study. Recipients are chosen because of unusual talents and promise, outstanding grades, distinctive work in their major, and contributions to the department. Only one student from each major may receive the award each year, and not every major makes an award each year.

**JULIA PINNEY**, who graduated from Georgetown in 2020, invites alumni in college to check out her new place of work, A Place Beyond. It was started by a friend Julia worked with at a summer camp. "We're providing an in-person learning community in Prescott, AZ for college students taking online classes. Students will have access to leadership and professional development workshops, mentorship, guided hiking, rock climbing, and mountain biking trips, good food, and most importantly the ability to live and socialize with fellow students in a safe way. I found it really difficult being home this spring and I'm excited to help students get out of their own childhood bedrooms and regain their independence. If you're looking for community, access to the outdoors, and a unique way to study online this spring,

check out their website! Feel free to reach me at [julia@aplacebeyond.com](mailto:julia@aplacebeyond.com)."

2019

**RUTH SPERA** is publishing poems under the name Magnolia Paisley, including one she workshopped at Prep her senior year.

## Can we get your number?

Are your parents still getting your mail? Then it's time to update Prep's alumni database with your most current information.

Please contact us at [alumni@flintridgeprep.org](mailto:alumni@flintridgeprep.org)

with your email address, phone number, and mailing address. Let's stay in touch!

## IN MEMORIAM

**JON BOYER '75** died February 8, 2020, at his home in La Crescenta. He was a partner in Pasadena Guitars from 2008-2014 with his bandmate Jeff Taylor. He also played in a band during his time at Prep.

**MATT DAVIS '08** died May 17, 2020. After graduating from Prep, he attended Lehigh University. His friend Denny Lowe '08 remembered his "tenaciously entrepreneurial" friend as a musician, math lover, skilled poker player, and a computer programmer, and "one of the most open people I've ever known." Matt's family sends special thanks to Mike Martel '08 for his extended visit and support. He is survived by his mother, Lora Swayne, and grandparents Louis and Lelia Swayne.

**JOHN RIDLAND '49**, Professor Emeritus at UC Santa Barbara, died on January 29, 2020. John started when Flintridge Prep had a lower school and remained, apart from one semester in Spokane, through high school. John's photos of Skillen House during the epic snowstorm of 1949 are only a few of the treasures that he gifted to Prep; the library also contains rare volumes he donated over the years. John received his PhD from Claremont Graduate School in 1964. He was a distinguished poet whose tenure

at UCSB spanned 42 years and included teaching awards. His areas of interest were Robert Frost, works by Australian and New Zealand writers, and translating Hungarian literature. In 2010, he won the Balint Balassi Sword Award, an engraved ceremonial sword bequeathed by the Consul-General of Hungary to the United States, for his work, notably the epic poem *Janos Vitez* (John the Valiant). He published six books of poetry and his poems appeared in the *Hudson Review*, *The Atlantic*, and *Harper's*. John was designated a "Mid-Coast Literary Treasure" by the Ventura County Arts Council; his professional papers are held at the UCSB Library Department of Special Research Collections. On March 4, 2020, UCSB lowered the campus flag in his honor. He is survived by his wife, Muriel, and their children, Michael and Jenny.

**BARBARA SHEINKOPF** died February 13, 2020. A graduate of Occidental College, she taught English for grades 6-12 in both public and private schools in Pasadena for 40 years, including Prep from September 2002 through January 2007. Her late husband, Stan, taught a course at Prep in 2005-2006. She is survived by her children, Stephen and Megan, and three grandchildren.





# **ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020**

**LEADING  
TOGETHER**



Leading with Gratitude

When we embarked upon the 2019-2020 school year, we knew it would be special and historic. We planned to end the year honoring a beloved school head and applauding the accomplishments of the Class of 2020. We planned to laugh, shed tears of joy, offer nostalgic stories, rejoice at accomplishments, convey gratitude, and provide praise. We planned to celebrate a successful campaign with triumph and cheer—but most importantly we planned to do these things together. Prep is a community that thrives on our togetherness, but COVID-19 has challenged our connections, our safety, and our families. To all in our community who have suffered a loss or struggled emotionally, physically, or financially, we stand with you and we are here to support you.

Times like these remind us of the things we treasure most, the love of family, friendships, our health, and our safety. We are fortunate to have a community that cares deeply and passionately about Prep. Our fundraising success during the *Enrich, Inspire, Ignite* campaign underscores this passion. During the two phases of our campaign, the Prep community collectively committed over \$38 million to ensure scholarships were available for students, arts and athletics could flourish, resources were available for faculty professional growth and innovative curriculum, and a Master Plan initially conceptualized over 15 years was completed in four years.

Phase II of our campaign began in July 2016 with a target of raising between \$12–\$14 million. It concluded amidst a global pandemic in June 2020 with over \$20 million in gifts and pledges. Our community’s philanthropy inspired and challenged us to dream big. Alumni, parents, faculty, staff, friends, and foundations all rose to the challenge and Prep is stronger for this. Today, the newly completed (and stunning!) Bachmann Collaboration Building serves as a symbol of what the collective good can accomplish.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this endeavor and donated to the campaign.

The unprecedented success of the campaign comes with a footnote. As the pandemic became a reality, Flintridge Prep made the decision to end fundraising three months before our fiscal year end on June 30. We believe we made the right choice for families, but the Annual Fund, which is the life-blood of our day-to-day expenses, had the lowest totals in eight years. In 2020-2021, we will renew our focus on the Annual Fund to support an array of unanticipated expenses, including increased financial aid for families in need of additional tuition assistance, COVID-19 safety measures, faculty professional development to support online learning, and additional technology personnel and equipment.

These are challenging times for our students, families, and the broader community, but challenging times also bring out the best in people. We have already witnessed this as our students, faculty, and staff have pivoted to adapt to new teaching platforms and prepare to teach in a hybrid format. We see this when people continue to support the Annual Fund, even in times of personal uncertainty.

While the last academic year did not end the way we intended, we are very grateful for all our donors and that our sense of community remains intact. Even if they are virtual bonds shared at an appropriate social distance, we will always be Prep for Life.

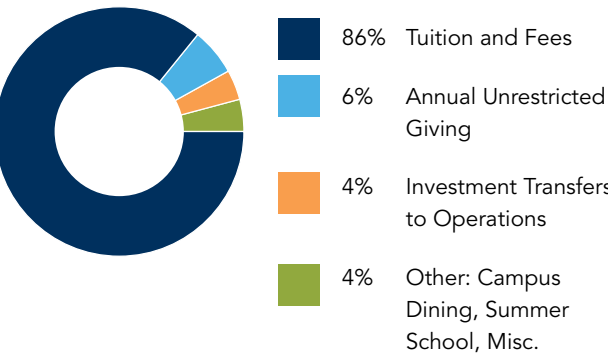
Stay safe and keep your loved ones close,

Lakshmi Dastur-Johnson  
Director of External Affairs

BUDGETED OPERATING REVENUE

Tuition and Fees	\$20,030,000
Annual Unrestricted Giving	\$1,400,000
Investment Transfers to Operations	\$940,000
Other: Campus Dining, Summer School, Misc.	\$840,000

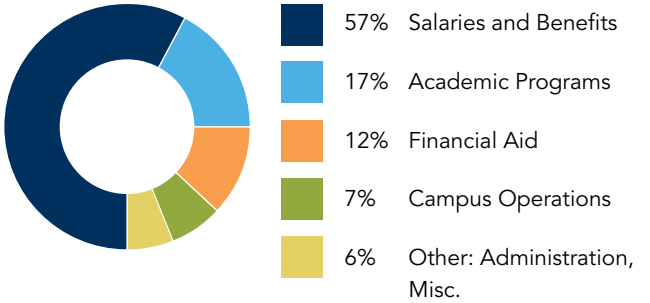
Total Budgeted Operating Revenues \$23,210,000



BUDGETED OPERATING EXPENSE

Salaries and Benefits	\$13,131,000
Academic Programs	\$4,044,000
Financial Aid	\$2,880,000
Campus Operations	\$1,750,000
Other: Administration, Misc.	\$1,405,000

Total Budgeted Operating Expenses \$23,210,000



ASSET HIGHLIGHTS

	Unaudited Amount as of June 30, 2020	Percentage of Total	
Invested Assets	\$ 37,712,000	47%	
Land, Buildings and Equipment, Net	29,013,000	36%	
Real Estate Holdings, Net	6,368,000	8%	
Contributions Receivable, Net*	3,472,000	4%	
Cash and Restricted Cash	3,418,000	4%	
Other	260,000	<1%	
Total Assets:	\$80,243,000	100%	

\* Includes campaign pledges payable in future years



TOTAL GIFTS AND COMMITMENTS

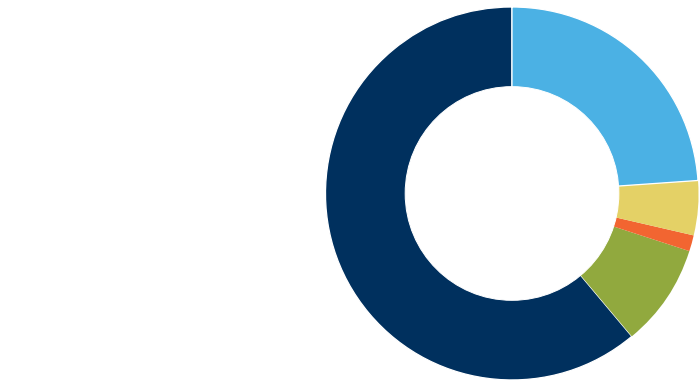
In 2019-2020, our community generously supported Prep’s general operating funds, scholarships, endowment, and construction projects by donating

**\$4,643,296** in cash.

Additional gifts pledged:

**\$1,012,000\***

\* These commitments are payable after June 30, 2020.



CURRENT OPERATIONS	
Unrestricted Gifts	\$1,113,977
Budget Relieving	224,205
CAPITAL ENDOWMENT	
Unrestricted	64,865
Restricted	414,503
CAPITAL	
Plant and Facilities	2,825,746
	<b>\$4,643,296</b>

ANNUAL GIVING

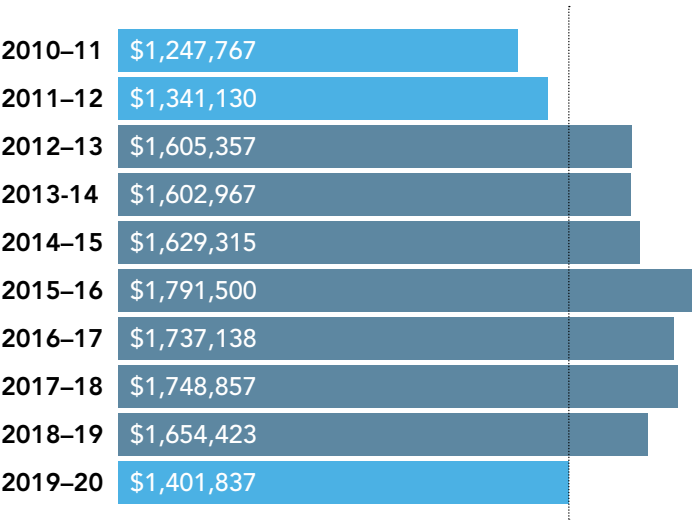
Last year, revenue received from tuition and fees covered 86% of the full cost of an education at Prep. The Flintridge Prep Annual Fund helped to fill the gap between tuition revenue and actual expenditures. The Annual Fund supports the ongoing operating needs that are the lifeblood of the school. Faculty salaries, scholarships, supplies, and other essentials are supported by the Annual Fund.

We thank the entire community for their consistent participation in the Annual Fund. The classes with the highest participation include the Class of 2025 parents (92%) and the alumni Classes of 1959 (50%), 1972 (50%), and 2003 (22%). We’re proud of our passionate parents, alumni, faculty, and staff who step up annually to support Prep.

Total Amount Raised:

**\$1,401,837\***

ANNUAL FUND GIVING 2010–2020



\* Due to COVID-19, Prep halted its fundraising three months before its fiscal year end, resulting in the lowest Annual Fund totals in eight years.

ENDOWMENT

During Phase II of the *Enrich, Inspire, Ignite* campaign, Prep received significant contributions for our general endowment funds as well as gifts to a variety of named endowment funds for specific purposes. Generous donors also created several named funds during the campaign.

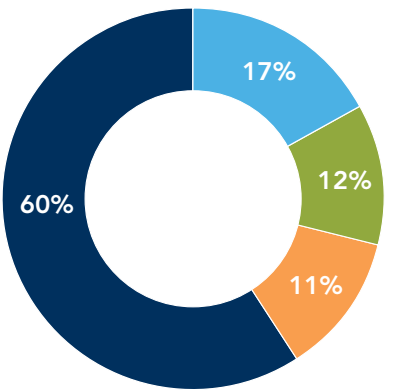
The Tsao Family Endowment for Chinese Studies was established by Carol Chen and Harry Tsao. Along with income from the Zhang-Lui Family Endowment for Global Awareness, the Tsao endowment has funded a new program in Mandarin and Chinese Studies. New faculty member Grace Qing is teaching Mandarin language courses, as well as a second semester English language course in Chinese Culture and Society.

The Alex Jacobs 2008 Memorial Endowment was established in 2020 by Paul G. Jacobs, parent of Teresa ‘91, Nicole Jacobs Martin ‘93, and Alex. Created in memory of Alex and his passion for music, the endowment will support the music program and provide need-based financial assistance for students to purchase and tune instruments.

Unrestricted endowment funds, like the Chraghchian/Markari Endowment Fund and the Gamboa Family Endowment, will provide Prep with the flexibility to direct future endowment income to where it is most needed. Endowments like these provide Prep with perpetual income for a variety of needs. These funds are especially vital in the face of unexpected expenses, such as those being generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to all our generous donors, with special thanks to those who recognize and contribute to our endowment. Your support ensures generations of students will have the very best Prep education.

A full list of endowments can be found on page 70.



ENDOWMENT VALUE AND DISTRIBUTION

Unrestricted Endowment for General Support	\$ 20,309,000
Student Enrichment Endowments	5,693,000
Endowed Faculty Funds	3,980,000
Endowed Scholarships	3,944,000
	<b>\$ 33,926,000</b>

Endowment Per Student: **\$64,000**

% Increase to Endowment: **7.0%**



# Celebrating Generosity in *Enrich, Inspire, Ignite* Campaign

After Flintridge Prep launched the *Enrich, Inspire, Ignite* campaign in 2011, we were continually awestruck by the collective generosity of our community members during both phases of the campaign. No matter how big or small their gifts, our community committed over \$38 million over the entire campaign. These gifts have nurtured our students’ passions, supported our faculty’s professional growth, and ensured the completion of campus renovations, technology upgrades, and building projects.

Bolstered by the \$18 million committed during Phase I and equipped with a new Master Plan, we dove right into Phase II of our campaign in July 2016. Since Phase II was a shorter campaign, we initially set a less ambitious goal of raising \$12–\$14 million. Imagine our excitement and gratitude when we finished Phase II in June 2020 with over \$20 million in gifts and pledges.

Under the leadership of our Phase II campaign co-chairs Orsi and Jeff Crawford ’86, Kris Anne and Mike Gitlin, and Kimberly Kenne and Richard Webster, we were able to fund and complete three major Master Plan initiatives, including the Atrium, athletic field lights, and the stunning three-story, 17,000-square-foot Bachmann Collaboration Building.

These three families banded together, launching a \$1.5 million Trustee Challenge to parents, alumni, and parents of alumni to ensure the Bachmann Collaboration Building was completed in 2020. Parents and alumni rose to the challenge, contributing \$3.28 million. A special thank you goes to the James G. Boswell Foundation and the Suzanne and Jim Boswell family for their incredible generosity to this project.

Prior to the Trustee Challenge, there were multiple lead donors to our building projects, including the Ahmanson Foundation, the Anita Handojo and Handy Hioe family, the Karen Zhang and Dongmei Zhang families, and the Wenhong Xu and Xiang Lin family. Their early philanthropy to our projects was the foundation upon which we could build.

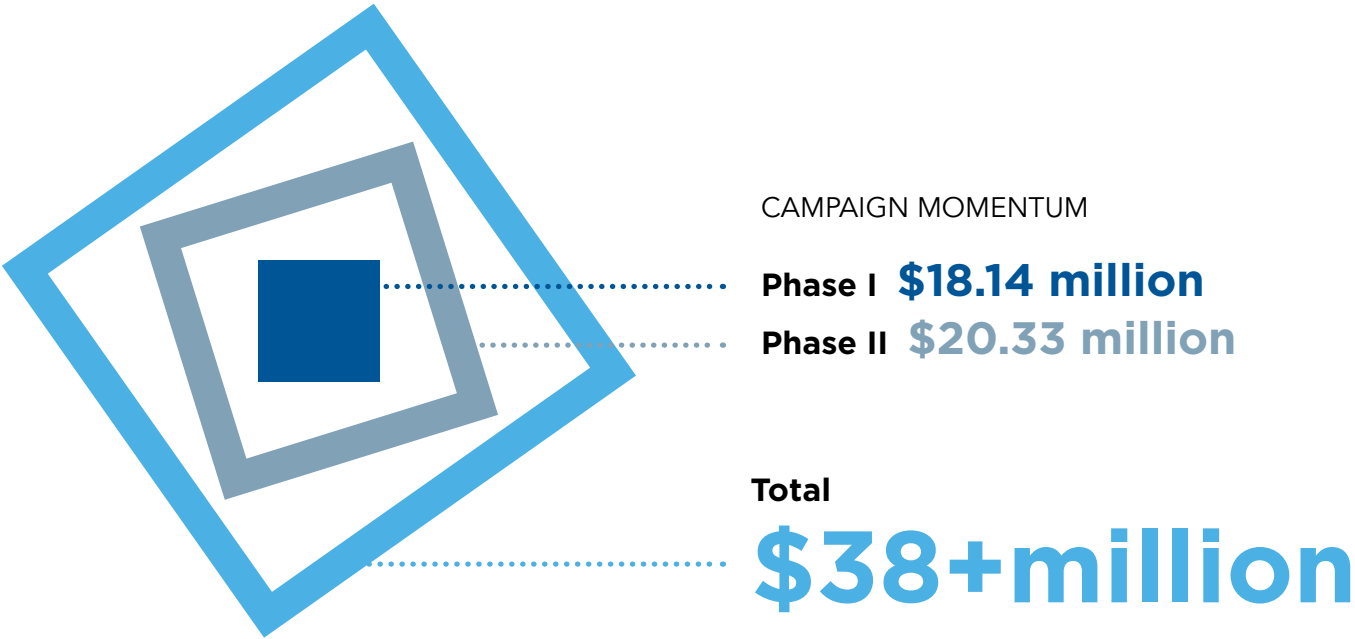
We asked people to give and they gave generously. We could not be more grateful. Along the way, we learned what inspired their generosity.

Greg and Kristin Chapman, parents of Luke ’23 and Nico ’26, as well as daughter, Reese, were inspired to give by the Bachmann Collaboration Building’s vision. The Chapman Family Global Studies Seminar Room in the building will provide a space to “give Prep students a taste of different cultures, different ways of thinking, and great learnings from around the world,” says Greg. He and Kristin took their family on a “gap year” visiting 42 countries, including four months aboard Semester at Sea, where Greg is currently the board chair. They all came away with a new sense of the world and decided to support an “openness to new ideas, and curiosity and cultural competency,” Chapman says. “We wanted to help with the final stretch of the building, supporting interdisciplinary, collaborative learning. Prep is one of the few schools that has a global studies focus. The sooner we can get students exposed to the world, the better opportunity they will have to make a difference.”

Gifts to Phase II were not limited to building projects. Critical operating funds and scholarship aid were raised through the Annual Fund. The creation of new endowments and support of existing ones provide perpetual funding for our programs and ongoing needs.

Harry Tsao and his wife Carol Chen, parents of Kate ’21, William ’21, and Kelly ’24, funded the Tsao Family Endowment for Chinese Studies because they believe the future is global. As Tsao shares, Prep’s curious students will benefit from both language and cultural studies that encourage engagement with the world. “It’s no longer unique for people to interact globally on both personal and professional levels,” Tsao says. “The earlier we get our kids fully familiar with other countries, the sooner they learn there is a huge universe outside of the U.S.”

Wherever the universe may take us, we remain indebted to the Prep community that sustains us.



PHASE I Campaign Gifts July 2011 - June 2016		PHASE II Campaign Gifts July 2016 - June 2020	
\$18.14 million		\$20.33 million	
Unrestricted*	\$7,973,143	Unrestricted*	\$4,783,227
Restricted Current Use	\$2,051,336	Restricted Current Use	\$1,129,615
Property, Building, and Equipment	\$4,253,402	Property, Building, and Equipment	\$12,909,198
Endowment Unrestricted	\$445,088	Endowment Unrestricted	\$105,000
Endowment Restricted	\$3,417,028	Endowment Restricted	\$1,407,269

\* This number reflects the designation of gifts and pledges at the time they were received.



# Completion of Bachmann Collaboration Building Highlights Community Strength



The \$1.5 million Trustee Challenge was a success!

We raised **\$3.28 million\*** from alumni, parents, and parents of alumni in additional gifts.

\* Excludes \$1.5 million Trustee Challenge dollars!



1st floor

The Dongyun Zhang Family Makerspace *(above)*

The Hioe-Handojo Family Art Studio *(right)*





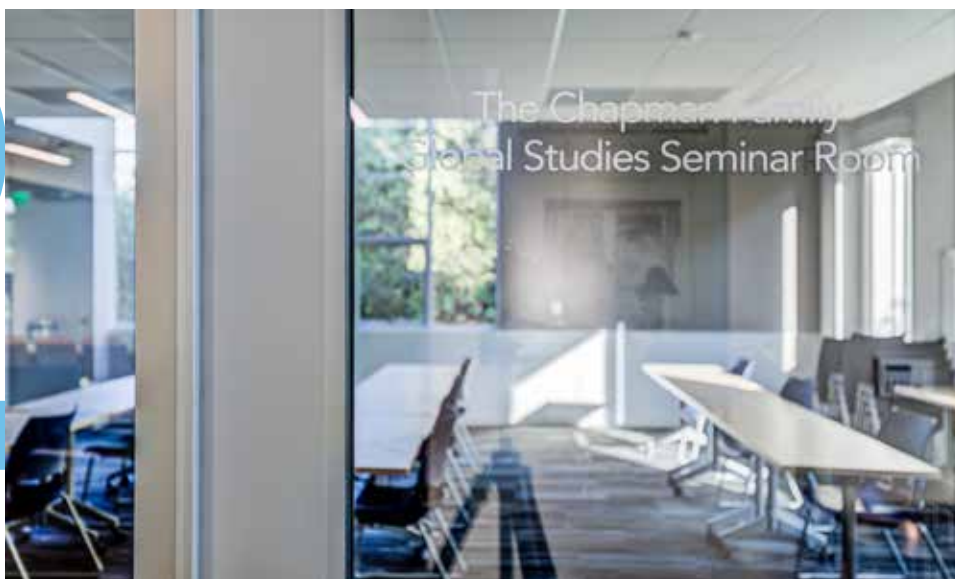


## 2nd floor Crawford and Gitlin Families Global Studies Center (left)

The Chapman Family Global Studies Seminar Room (below middle)  
Ralph & Linda Liu Global Studies Classroom (below bottom)

*Not pictured:*  
The Hioe-Handojo Family Global Research Lab  
The Wong Family Meeting Room  
The Zhu-Zhang Family Meeting Room

# 2



# 3

## 3rd floor The Boswell Family Leadership Center

The Liao Family Commons (below)

*Not pictured:*  
The Hioe-Handojo Family Terrace (see page 37)  
The McCormick Family Student Leadership Room  
The O'Leary Family Faculty Collaboration Room  
The Pranyoto Leadership Classroom  
The Tolleson Family Faculty Seminar Room  
The Waldheim Family Meeting Room



## The Boswell Family: Friendship, Leadership, and Prep

Relationships, leadership, and magic: those are words that define Prep for James and Suzanne Boswell and their children Liz '95, Kate '02, and Dan '03. The family generously donated a significant and inspiring gift through the James G. Boswell Foundation for the Bachmann Collaboration Building, in honor of Head Emeritus Peter Bachmann and Prep's Leadership programs.

"I started Prep as a freshman in 1999," says Dan. "It felt like joining a larger family, and that's a credit to the culture Peter Bachmann established."

Dan's father, Jim, had been a classmate of Bachmann's at Thacher School. They remained friends, and Jim sent all three of his kids to Prep. Suzanne was close to Molly Bachmann, and Dan was in the same class as the Bachmanns' son, Rob '03. The Boswells' experience was special, but they were not alone in feeling that their relationship to Prep contained some magic.

"I do think the Class of '03 has a unique relationship with Peter," says Dan. "It was fun being in the class with his son, Rob, who's as genuine a person you want to be around, just like his dad. I think we all felt a special connection with Peter and knew he cared about us. But—if you ask any class, any student, if they had a special relationship with Peter, they would say 'Yes, most definitely.' That's the kind of person he is."

Dan says he often draws on his Prep experiences—in the classroom, on the field or with friends or faculty members — to guide him in his personal life and career. "Peter surrounded himself with amazing people to help put a dream to work. It's a great lesson about teamwork," Dan says. "His energy and passion kept everyone around him driven. That's what leaders do: make a positive impact on you forever."

"The Bachmann Collaboration Building is a shining example of this...something that we are proud to support," says Dan. "We're honored to support the community and the continuing success of Flintridge Prep."





# Peter Bachmann LEADING WITH A VISION

by Mel Malmberg

Where to begin to sum up the legacy of Peter Bachmann at Prep? Perhaps with his vision, as expounded in the fall of 1991, when he was installed as head of school.

Having already been a Flintridge Prep teacher, college counselor, dean of students, and assistant head in his first ten years at the school, Bachmann looked ahead, building, like a castle in the air, a vision for Prep that was founded on civility, growth, communication, enthusiasm, and empathy. It was all based on his own recipe for the good life: a life filled with love, and a community engaged in a shared commitment to intellectual growth and support for one another.

After dedicating 40 years as a teacher and 30 years as head of school, Peter Bachmann retired in June 2020 and serves in a new role as Head Emeritus. Avid for knowledge, he exemplifies a lifelong love of learning and embracing challenge and growth. Bachmann is a leader who listens and is always genuine—genuinely kind, genuinely dedicated, and genuinely generous.

Sharon Kwan, parent of Harrison Chen '17, Winston Chen '19, and Preston Chen '24, wrote in a tribute letter penned ahead of Bachmann's retirement that it was his generosity "with time and patience" that resonated with her as a Prep parent. In her letter, Kwan praised Bachmann's strong leadership and understanding of the Prep community.

Prep's culture of involvement, Kwan wrote, created "a sense of belonging, particularly for parents like me who aren't born in this country, but have children who are." That involvement was a hallmark of Bachmann's own dawn-to-dusk engagement with Prep students that extended far beyond graduation. From Morning Meeting to CIF playoffs, from faculty meetings to parent coffees, from alumni reunions to wedding receptions, Bachmann spent much of his time taking part in the lives of the Prep community. His "passion and exuberance for the students," according to Kwan, directly affected her sons' blossoming "confidence, ambition, independence, and consideration."

Kwan wholeheartedly supports Prep and generously donated during the *Enrich, Inspire, Ignite* campaign to help complete Prep's Master Plan. It was Bachmann's passion that inspired her. "He taught me to be more giving, to make an impact, and to be

optimistic about the contributions that the younger generation can make," Kwan said.

Karen (Dongyun) Zhang, another Prep parent and dedicated donor, agrees. She feels that Prep gave her daughter, Melody Liu '20, an opportunity to grow and prosper, develop values, and embrace integrity, diligence, dedication, and kindness—the same values, she says, Bachmann exhibited daily. "My daughter was so fortunate to be under Peter's leadership," Zhang wrote. "He consistently envisioned a better future and made it his mission to ensure the wellbeing for all Prep families for the past 40 years."

Zhang was a key supporter of the Bachmann Collaboration Building. "It's a physical representation of Peter's legacy," she said. "The values and principles he instilled into us all will continue to run through generations."

The generations agree; Bachmann's legacy reaches backward in time as well, and families have called Prep "home" for generations.

Wendy and Rick Drewry '57 sent their three boys, Bill '82, John '85, and Dave '88, to Prep. Rick Drewry is not only an alum and a parent, but also a longtime supporter of Prep in many guises: he was president of the Flintridge Prep Alumni Association from 1978-



*Peter Bachmann built and sustained relationships with faculty, students, alumni, and community members across generations.*



1980, and served as trustee from 1981-1986 and again, with Bachmann as head, from 1994-1996. “The core values and principles of the school did not change much from the all-boys school era of my father to the coed experience of me and my brothers,” Bill says.

Bill enrolled at Prep two years before Bachmann became a faculty member and has been a fan ever since. “Peter’s ability to engage faculty and students alike was unique, starting with his role as a teacher. As head, he added parents, donors, and alumni to the list of people who respected his leadership style,” explains Bill. “Peter rarely forgot a name, and always greeted with a warm smile. He was balanced, fair, intelligent, and kindhearted.”

Prep and Bachmann have been a major part of the Drewrys’ lives, and this long-lasting legacy and connection spurred their decision to wholeheartedly support the school’s future through the Bachmann Collaboration Building.

The entire Drewry family observed with pride, Bill says, as “Bachmann took the school to another level—in physical plant and reputation—and it became the educational powerhouse it is today.”



Sharon Kwan (left) and Karen Zhang (right) both shared their appreciation for Peter Bachmann's leadership.

# A TEACHER’S HEAD PUTS PEOPLE FIRST

At Prep, Bachmann created an alchemy of support, balance, and intellectual challenge. “It all came from being a teacher’s head,” Bachmann says.

Bachmann is, at his core, a teacher. He began at Prep as a history teacher, master’s degree in hand, intending to stay only a few years. Instead, he found a community he loved, and he stayed, nurturing it and growing it. One of the hallmarks of his headship was his teaching. Seniors wrestled with philosophers (and maybe sometimes Bachmann himself) in his Great Books class, debating what entailed the “Good Life.” Bachmann identified so strongly with his students’ ideas that he wrote two books, *Standing on Shoulders* and *Advancing Confidently*, expounding on what they, and he, learned from encountering the world’s greatest thinkers. He also advised on students’ independent studies, guest lectured in literature and history courses, directed plays, and was a member of the faculty who guided seniors in the Identity course.



Bachmann says his favorite times in class are when he and his students are in the flow, “where we don’t know what time it is, we are just in the give and take of ideas.”

In a retirement tribute to Bachmann, Lisa Bierman ’03 wrote that Bachmann was “proof positive that good teachers never lose their sense of curiosity, or their delight in learning with their students.”

Prep alumni look back on the education they received, and recognize Mr. Bachmann, as they mostly call him, as the architect of a creative, inspiring faculty and nurturing campus, and a superb teacher and mentor. Many of his students have become teachers and school administrators.

Danny Kim ’91 wrote in a tribute that Bachmann influenced his career path. “One of the reasons I am an educator and administrator of a school here in San Francisco is because of Peter’s influence and modeling,” Kim said. “He saw in me, and countless others, something we could not see ourselves—the person we could become with love, hard work, and community, making space and room for us to grow while providing the support and security needed to take risks

and develop in this way. I have educated thousands of students, and the legacy of these students’ lives are, in part, Peter’s legacy.”

For Bachmann, and many Prep teachers, students, and alumni, relationships are at the heart of the Prep experience. “Concentrating on the human side, the people side, brought us to where Prep has come,” Bachmann says, citing the extraordinary faculty, Prep’s embrace of the honor code, and programs that emphasize social and emotional learning and leadership. “I’ve always believed that a strong and empowered faculty would lead to strong and empowered students—who then become strong and empowered adults,” says Bachmann.

He modeled a culture of teachers who engaged their students through hands-on leadership, involvement, and deep connection. “I wanted to be approachable as a head,” says Bachmann. “I crossed what many might have considered boundaries, all between breakfast and lunch, from a Board meeting to a curriculum meeting to seeing students on the patio. I tried not to create a moat around the headship, or around myself.”

Teachers from four decades call him an inspiration, a role model, a mentor, and a friend. Current and



former faculty say that the Prep community is “beautifully rich” and an “inspiring and passionate collective of educators and students,” ascribing it to Bachmann’s leadership.

“Nowhere else would I feel so much joy and connection, growing, playing, laughing, complaining, eating, and learning to be a better scholar, parent, and human,” says French teacher Dr. Lauren Van Ardsall.

Math teacher and college counselor Eric Hallett notes that Bachmann “maintained good humor in the face of difficult situations, showed a willingness to embrace debate, and—perhaps most importantly—found the joy and fun in education and shared it with all of us. We’re all here and proud to call this place our second home because he believed in and took a chance on every single one of us, and that is a truly spectacular legacy.”

The community of caring came from the top and permeated the campus. “His generosity of spirit and human wisdom have helped me, my family, our colleagues, and our students more times than I can count over the years,” sums up Assistant Head for Academic Life Sarah Cooper.



# BUILDING A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY

Bachmann and the Board continually and successfully collaborated on supporting Prep faculty, and the next step in nurturing this community was to create physical spaces and bolster the school’s financial strength so teachers and students could thrive and grow for generations to come.

During his tenure as head, Bachmann embarked upon several fundraising campaigns. Beginning in 2000, the campus expanded and evolved through new construction including the Randall Building, with studios and classrooms for the new Performing Arts programs, and the Chandramohan Library, with its free-flowing collaborative spaces on the first floor and its quiet books stacks on the second floor. Both places sought to physically symbolize, nurture, and enhance the flow of ideas, while keeping Prep’s green spaces intact.

In 2011, the *Enrich, Inspire, Ignite* campaign began. While also buttressing the endowment, its funds provided needed overall renovations and

capital improvements in the gym and classrooms, technology upgrades, revamped science labs, lights for the athletic field, and the enclosure of the sparkling Atrium in front of Norris Auditorium. The campaign concluded in 2020 with its crown jewel, the Bachmann Collaboration Building. Brand new from the ground up, the building houses the school’s STEAM, Global Studies, and Leadership programs—which all sprang from faculty initiatives over the years.

It was all Bachmann’s vision, to build a school that honored people and relationships first, and then give them places to learn, connect, and grow.

Bachmann notes how gratified he was to see the word “collaboration” as part of the name and on the signage of the Bachmann Collaboration Building: “Prep is first and foremost a collaboration—that’s what we do best around here.”

Even the design of the building was a collaboration, with input from faculty in all divisions, alumni, and parents. Rooms on all three floors change fluidly, allowing teachers to configure their setups for group projects, seminars, lectures, and virtual conferences.

With a makerspace, art studio, and Prep’s largest science lab on the first floor, Global Studies classrooms headquartered on the second, and spaces for student leadership on the third floor, one can imagine student leaders on the top floor becoming passionate advocates for global issues, or learning to advance scientific inquiry, while an artist helps design a poster for Student Senate.

For Bachmann, and for many community members, the building is a “grand statement—across the campus, across the generations, across constituencies.”



# THE PRACTICE OF COLLABORATION

Bachmann announced his retirement in 2018, with planned celebrations in summer 2020 to celebrate his years at Prep. David Codiga (pictured above), parent of Jackson ‘15, Hope ‘19, and Sasha ‘19, was the chair of the Board of Trustees from 2018–2020 and had been with Bachmann every step of the way for two years working on a thoughtful leadership transition, a successful campaign completion, and the opening of a new building. But then came COVID-19.

“Sometimes you can only appreciate the depth and strength of a leader when it seems like there isn’t one more thing a person could possibly handle, or deal with, at the same time,” says Codiga. “Right away, Peter stood up taller than ever, and with a calm, almost monastic determination, he set off to assess the health and safety of our community, work with his administration to develop protocols, communicate with the Board, his successor Jim Pickett, and the entire community, and then guide us safely and confidently through the remainder of the school year.”

During his last semester, Bachmann zoomed into Morning Meeting and invited the community to share “Walden Moments” of reflection and connection, harkening back to his Great Books course. Meanwhile, he was meeting bi-weekly with other heads of Pasadena schools to understand and implement COVID-19 pandemic procedures. Bachmann also placed his confidence in Prep’s dedicated administrators and staff, creative and tireless faculty, and engaged students to



pull together in the unprecedented, real-time experiment of online learning.

“Our teamwork and leadership were years in the building,” Bachmann says. “But we could rely on each other. That confidence radiated. When you get buy-in on mission and values, you have the team glue, and you can build and rely on trust.”

That trust in the school and in its values has always resonated with families and inspires their involvement over years. Like many in the Prep community, Dale and Ayako Okuno, parents of Derek ‘15 and Tomi ‘12, saw their relationship with Prep, and Bachmann himself, deepen over time.

“When our kids started, I just admired him, and his consistent record, and his support for students,” Dale says of Bachmann. Derek, who played football all four years of high school, says he and his team appreciated that Bachmann was at every game. “It was great knowing the head of the school cared about everyone on campus,” Derek says. “At some schools, students feel misunderstood or misheard by the administration but because Mr. Bachmann was so proactively involved with everyone, that never was an issue.”

Ayako notes Bachmann’s listening skills and consideration of input were key: “He never gave a glib answer or said, ‘that’s the way we’ve always done things.’ He is a real collaborator—friendly, accepting, open-minded.”

“When we had a chance to take the summer Great Books class along with Tomi, we jumped at it,” says Dale. “We always thought it was great that Peter kept his foot in the door as a teacher. What teachers do is collaborate, help students experience and discover, and he’s a natural at that. He acknowledged us, challenged us to think, and heard us out.”

Now, Tomi, who teaches kindergarten on a team of three teachers, is benefitting from the seeds planted during her schooling. She teaches her students, explicitly, to tackle problems together as a foundation of their social and emotional learning and working as a team to respond to online teaching was key. “By putting together our ideas, experiences, and levels

of technological fluency, we were able to re-imagine kindergarten and restructure our program in time for fall,” she says. “It’s not perfect, but it would have been impossible without a team. I feel like the true meaning of collaboration is finally sinking in for me as an adult.”

Currently Dale and Bachmann are working in concert, both serving on the Board of Trustees of Alliance College Ready Public Schools, which is the largest charter school group in the Los Angeles Unified School District. “We are fortunate to have Peter on our board where his character, experience, and insights are invaluable in improving the educational outcomes and lives of socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in LAUSD,” Dale says. “We all admire his credentials and knowledge, but especially, how he shares it.”

Why did the Okunos, already loyal and consistent donors, step up to help with the completion of the Bachmann Collaboration Building? “It had Peter’s name on it; it honors his devotion to Prep and what he made it into. He was at every function, every week, year in and year out, dedicating his life for the good of Prep, always wanting what was best for the school. He was so generous; we felt we could be too,” says Dale.

Tomi, who may be teaching some of Prep’s future students (think Class of 2033), feels there is much more to discover about nurturing academic collaboration. “I’m excited to see Prep taking this bold step in that direction,” she says.



# LOOKING FORWARD

Prior to COVID-19, Bachmann was celebrated by alumni and parents at six regional events across the country. In June 2020, he was fêted by the Board in a virtual ceremony that was viewed by community members across the country. Now head emeritus, Bachmann plans to teach Great Books in the spring of 2021. He’s working on a collaboration project funded by an EE Ford Foundation grant that will bring eight newer independent school heads at California schools together with eight experienced ones to create a network of support, with hopes of making it a national model.

He’ll also enjoy time with his wife, Molly, and son Rob, whose new daughter, Noa, has just turned a year old. He’ll join his golfing buddies John Ruch, Vatche Hagopian, Alex Rivera, and Glen Beattie more often, and generally enjoy life.

“I’m moving from authority to influencer, from chief to medicine man,” he says of his long-planned retirement. “But I am Prep for Life. My answer to the good life question, ‘what do I need for my good life?’ has always been ‘love.’ And I have loved my time at Prep.”

*To watch our special June 2020 virtual retirement ceremony for Peter Bachmann and view the many tributes, slideshows, and videos our community made for him, visit [www.flintridgeprep.org/peterbachmann](http://www.flintridgeprep.org/peterbachmann).*





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This special issue of *PrepTalk* and the *Annual Report* was published for the entire community of Flintridge Preparatory School.

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Flintridge Preparatory School seeks to nurture in its students the knowledge, critical skills, community values and creativity essential for an engaged, balanced, and responsible life.


The fiscal calendar for Flintridge Preparatory School is July 1 through June 30. The Office of External Affairs is deeply grateful to the dedicated and generous parents, grandparents, alumni, faculty, staff and friends who contributed their resources, time and talents to Flintridge Preparatory School during the 2019-2020 school year. We have made every effort to credit each gift made through June 30, 2020, accurately. In the event that we have made an error, please accept our apologies and notify the External Affairs Office at 818.949.5524 or ldastur-johnson@flintridgeprep.org.

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