

# news



## Calendar

- 8/13: Dockton Park Playdate & Picnic at 4pm  
*All Families Welcome!*
- 8/30: Carpe Diem Parent Meeting at 6:30pm  
*at Carpe Diem Primary*
- 8/31: Middle School Parent Meeting at 6:30pm  
*at Harbor School*
- 9/01: Upper Elementary Parent Meeting at 6:30pm  
*at Harbor School*
- 9/05: LABOR DAY  
*No School*
- 9/06: Carpe Diem Drop-In & Welcome at 3:00pm  
*at Carpe Diem Primary*
- Back-to-School Potluck Picnic at 5:00pm  
*at Harbor School*
- 9/07: First Day School  
*at THS & CD*
- 9/12: Camp Niwana Trip  
*Grades 4 - 8*
- 9/14: Ian Moore Concert at Nashi Orchards  
*(For parents who bought in at 2016 Voyagers Auction)*
- 9/16: Back from Camp Niwana  
*Grades 4 - 8*
- 9/23: Early Dismissal at Noon  
*THS & CD*
- 9/24: Carpe Diem Open House, Saturday 12-2pm  
*at Carpe Diem Primary*
- 9/29: Carpe Diem Curriculum Night at 6:30pm  
*at Carpe Diem Primary*

## Message from Mark

Mark McGough, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Families,

It is with great pleasure that I write the first of many weekly emails to you. It was clear from the parent surveys and from early informal meetings with some of you that bringing back the *Wednesday Letter* was a high priority. If only everything was as easy as deciding to write to you all once a week! However, please note the change in name from the *Wednesday Letter* to **Cornerstone News**. This is to draw your attention to our cornerstone values obviously but also a clever way of saying that while communication will happen once a week, it will not always be on a Wednesday.

I have now been on island as Head of School for just over 4 weeks. It has been an eventful month! I have had the opportunity to meet a number of parents, faculty, students and key members of our community. I also managed to squeeze in some fun at Strawberry Festival with my 5 year-old, Lil, and partake in the rigors of an adult learn-to-row class at VIRIC. I move into my new home today and I look forward to now really settling in to life and work here on the island.

### So what exactly does that work look like?

My work is primarily focused around two goals. The first is to ensure that we begin to think about our school as one. We are a kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade school and our curriculum, schedules, teaching and community events should reflect that. That is a move that is full of exciting possibilities and one which I am eager to lead.

The second goal is to help our school better deliver its mission. And that mission, for those of you who are still in summer mode, is ***"Inspiring young scholars to contribute their wisdom, compassion, and personal best in the classroom, the community and the world."*** This is, like many missions, a lofty statement, but it is one that gives my work, and the work of all our faculty and staff, a purpose.

In simple terms, everything we do at our school should help us deliver our mission. From Camp Niwana, to Jumping Mouse, to Travel Study, to class meetings. From how and what we teach, to how and what we communicate, to how and what we assess. Our mission is what drives our school and my work is to help align our practices, procedures and policies with our mission.

It is the sort of work that I love to do but is also the sort of work that I cannot do in isolation. So here are three questions for you to ponder for me – let's call it your summer thinking project:

1. What does wisdom look like?
2. Why do we value compassion?
3. How do we know what an individual's personal best looks like?

*MESSAGE, continued on page 2 >*



PHOTO BY LINDA CRAYTON



PHOTO BY LINDA CRAYTON

MESSAGE, continued from page 1 >

So, put your sun cream and your pondering hats on. You can share your thoughts with me via email at [mark@harborschool.org](mailto:mark@harborschool.org) or just wait till our start of school parent meetings at the end of August where we will pick up the conversation again.

There will be some changes as we move into the start of the school year and beyond but our mission will remain the same and will continue to guide our work. I hope you will join me in embracing (or re-embracing) that mission this year.

I look forward to getting to know all of you much better as the school year begins and as always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or anything you would like to share.

Regards,

Mark

## From the Board of Trustees

Dear Community,

As the approaching school year nears, I want to welcome Mark McGough, our new Head of School. Mark arrived in early July and is already working hard to prepare our school, our faculty, and our staff for the new year. His engagement and enthusiasm was evident the moment he arrived – greeting families at our Strawberry Festival booth, sitting down with our Board’s Executive Committee, initiating reviews of our math curriculum, meeting with faculty and parents, and sifting through all the feedback from our parent and student surveys. I know I speak for all of us on the Board of Trustees when I say, “Welcome aboard, Mark!” We are looking forward to the start of the school year and working with you to further the mission and vision of our school.

Mark has many challenges before him and I encourage all of you in our school community to join me in supporting his efforts. Together, we can continue to strengthen and build upon our academic programs, travel study, service learning and cornerstone values, and make Harbor School a nurturing and vital part of each child’s journey.

I’d also like to welcome our newest board member, **Liz Naumann**. Liz, and her husband Andrew, are parents to Mila, Max and Sophie. Liz is a senior fundraiser on Princeton University’s Development team. She is a graduate of The Lawrenceville School and George Washington University.

I’d also like to welcome again **Lisa Pearson** who joined the board this past Spring. Lisa and her husband Christian are parents to Max. Lisa serves as Deputy Regional Commissioner for the United States General Services Administration. She has a Master in Public Policy from the JFK School of Government at Harvard University and completed her undergraduate degree at Northwestern University.

We are excited to have Liz and Lisa’s involvement on the board level. Their wisdom and insights will be great assets to our community and school.

And, it is with great thanks that we say goodbye to two departing board trustees: **Leif Ormseth** and **Erik Assink**. Leif and Erik have served Harbor School’s school community as trustees for the past three years. Their commitment and dedication to advancing our school’s mission and representing our school have been deeply appreciated. Thank you for your service. *You will be missed, although I expect we’ll see you regularly as current and alumni parents!*

I look forward to seeing all of you at our **Back-to-School Potluck Picnic on Tuesday, September 6!**

Enjoy the rest of your summer,

*Scott Shawver, Board Chair*



PHOTO BY LINDA CRAYTON

Adela Thompson Page, Class of 2017, was the recipient of the 2016 Cornerstone Value Commendation for Personal Best.

## Featured Art

Page 1: art by Abigail Furr, Class of 2021

Page 4: art by Josephine Baker, Class of 2023

# Harbor School Play Set Update



PHOTO BY LINDA CRAYTON

We are excited to announce that we have now reached the 'almost, close to, nearly final' stage of the play structure project on our main campus. Thanks to much involvement by many, we have staked out the site, arranged for it to be prepped and scheduled the construction of the structure. If all goes according to plan, we are hoping to formally open our new play area when school starts the first week of September.

This new play structure will create a wonderful focal point for all Harbor School students and add an additional physical component to student life on this campus which has been needed (*and asked for*) since our previous play set was deemed too old and had to be removed.

There are still some needs for the Carpe Diem play area as well and Mark is meeting with the teachers there to see what we can accomplish before school resumes.

Big thanks to those of you who have made donations in support of the playset cost. Special thanks to parent Erika Ellison for securing in-kind donations for the excavation and prep work by Vashon Park District, the pea gravel for padding from CalPortland, and the transport of gravel by Roggenbuck Construction. Thanks also go out to alumni parents Jil Stenn and Bob Horsley, both landscape architects and designers, for meeting with us to map out the perimeter and determine the best placement for the play set. We thank all of you for your generous support in helping us provide for our students.

## Farewell Kristen

As you may have learned by now, our middle school English teacher, **Kristen Spangler**, has decided to move back to Pennsylvania where she can be closer and more available to her family. Kristen taught at Harbor School for five years and is a much loved and respected member of our community.

Many parents have asked whether we could arrange a time for parents and students to say farewell to her when she is back on island in late August. Kristen would also love the chance to close out her time with us as well so we are planning a thank you and farewell event sometime during the week of August 22-26. This will be a nice opportunity to come together to celebrate Kristen's work and wish her all the best. As soon as I have more details about the specific date and time, I will share this with you. If anyone would like to help coordinate this event, please contact me at [mark@harborschool.org](mailto:mark@harborschool.org).

I have already received applications for Kristen's position and I am interviewing the first qualified candidate on Monday. I will of course keep you informed of the process but I am certain that we will be able to appoint and bring on board a new teacher before the start of school in September. - Mark

PHOTO BY LINDA CRAYTON



PHOTO BY THS STAFF

## What about Spanish?

Spanish has been offered at Harbor School since the very beginning and is seen by many parents as an important part of the curriculum we offer. In the words of one of our families, the Spanish program is "*essential for a school that values travel and cultural learning.*" Learning an additional language provides us with new words to communicate but it also provides us with new ways of seeing the world - new windows through which to view what is happening around us. As such, when delivered with intent and purpose, language learning can truly alter our perspective.

With that in mind I am working to develop our Spanish program so that it can truly reflect what we value about language learning. This is not without complication however and my goal of having a developmentally appropriate and thoughtful approach to Spanish at our school may have to be phased in over time. I will keep you informed about our developing Spanish program as the summer progresses and will update our parent community at the parent meetings on 8/30, 8/31 and 9/1. I hope to see you all there! - Mark



## Dockton Park Playdate Saturday, August 13 at 4pm

We are hosting a playdate and picnic at the Dockton Park on Saturday, August 13, at 4pm. We'd like to encourage all our new and returning families to join us, even if it's just to drop by and say 'Hi!' Our new head of school, Mark McGough, will be there to welcome everyone and spend time getting to know our families.

If you are a new family, this is a great opportunity for your child to meet returning students and forge new friendships. It's always nice to arrive on your first day of school and connect with a familiar face. Plus, there's plenty of play equipment to keep the kids busy and having fun while parents socialize.

The covered picnic area has been reserved too so there'll be lots of room to sit and share some shade. If you're inclined to bring a late lunch or early picnic dinner, please do. Our staff will be providing fresh lemonade and cookies!

We hope you can join us! Questions? Please contact Niamh or Jackie at **(206) 567-5955** or [office@harborschool.org](mailto:office@harborschool.org).



## Math Curriculum

"If I were again beginning my studies, I would follow the advice of Plato and start with mathematics." - *Galileo Galilei*

As a core component of curriculum across the ages and the foundation of much of our thinking about how the world works, it seems like a good idea to take Galileo's advice and "start with mathematics." Before I arrived at school in July, a small group of teachers had already met to talk math. Since arriving, I have had the opportunity to continue those discussions with faculty and to hear from parents, via the surveys and face to face.

Regular curriculum review is important for any school that strives to be the best it can be. As our understanding of the brain changes and knowledge becomes available in so many different formats, it is important that we too take the opportunity to look at what we do with a critical eye. That process has begun with the goal of articulating a developmentally appropriate and challenging set of math benchmarks from kindergarten through grade 8. We have made some progress toward this goal and I hope that before the school year starts we are able to share these with you.

At the same time, we are reviewing a core math textbook that we will adopt to support the teaching of math and the delivery of our curriculum - a skeleton of sorts that provides a backbone for math across the grades but still allows for teachers to support and challenge their students using materials drawn from diverse sources. We are currently looking at the Singapore Math program as one that may well help us achieve these goals. We have ordered sample texts and teachers will be looking at these over the next week. Many Carpe Diem families will be familiar with Singapore Math as the key text currently used to deliver the math program for our students in kindergarten through grade 3.

Again, I will provide more updates as we get closer to the start of the school year and as always, if you have any questions or mathematical expertise you would like to share, please let me know. - *Mark*

PHOTO BY ELLA LAMBLIN