



ROCK POINT SCHOOL

Become Your Best Self

VIEWPOINTS

WINTER 2018

One Rock Point Road, Burlington, Vermont 05408

802.863.1104

www.rockpointschool.org

Greetings from Rock Point School!

As I write this letter, we are in the midst of the holiday season. We are savoring our time together as we approach the Winter Solstice, passing through the shortest days of the year. The staff continues to offer opportunities to reflect and appreciate what we have by growing and deepening curriculum. The core of their efforts is based on connecting and building meaningful relationships with each student. The staff energy and positivity drive the school towards our mission in every aspect of our program.

I love our students' efforts to make the most of their time here. One window of time I get to have with students is a weekly gathering we call Reflections. Reflections is a time when explore issues that are broader in scope, yet connected to the issues they face on a more day-to-day basis. The week before Thanksgiving break we were delving deeper into a conversation about dignity, led by Bishop Tom Ely. In particular, we talked about what it is like for students to be growing up in a time of stress regarding mass shootings and, on a societal level, a relentless sense of growing disregard of respect for each other. What struck me most about the time with Bishop Tom was the way that students dug in and shared personally and honestly about their concerns, as well as their hopes. One student summarized student voices by saying "we live in a world with self-centered perspectives with a desire to change, but not the motivation to act." Another added "we want to create movement and cause the change we need." The students shed light not only on the culture of kindness we create here each year, but also the active and thoughtful intentions they will bring forward as alumni. It was clear to me that their contributions to the world will help create kindness and safety wherever they go after they graduate from Rock Point.

I see these contributions in the lives of every Rock Point alum I visit or talk to. As part of my work, I am lucky to stay connected with many alumni in the Burlington area and also around the country. When I speak with them, I see the quintessential values we share at Rock Point playing out in their adult lives in many ways. Whether they are practicing patience as a parent, integrity as a student, kindness as an employer, or engagement as a citizen, I am thankful to see the positive impact our alumni are making on their communities.

If you are an alum, a family member, or a friend of RPS, we hope you will visit us soon and share your stories with us! I encourage you to reach out directly to me in any way that best suits you—phone call, email, letter, in person—it will be great to connect.

Be well,

C.J. Spirito, Head of School



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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2018!



The class of 2018 with Head of School, C.J. Spirito and Bishop Thomas Ely.

On June 9th, one of the largest classes in recent Rock Point School history graduated! The class of 2018 showed incredible leadership and energy throughout last school year, setting the tone for a positive community. We are proud of them for not only their academic work, but also their tremendous engagement in our school and the greater community. Although they had a wide variety of talents from stained glass to music, and graphic design to computer programming, they came together as a group and supported one another through the year and beyond.

The class of 2018 is as follows: Ethan Beinners-Desranleau, Caleb Usadi, Kathryn Bird, Kelly McDannald, Mitchell Ruckert, Cory Kuttner, Ross Goldenberg, Maria Dolan, Jeremiah McNabb, Mason Matricardi, Anna Nigolian, Toby Nadell, Jasmine McMorran, Gabe Nadel, and Monique Law.

Currently, three members of the class of 2018 are at UVM, two are at Champlain College, and one is at Saint Michael's College. Already, we have had several alumni gatherings with this group and visited the members of the class who are farther away at places like the College of the Atlantic and Connecticut College. One student is beginning his year of service with AmeriCorps, while three other students have joined the workforce. We also have students pursuing the arts who are attending Montserrat College of Art and Ringling College of Art & Design.

We are so happy this group is staying connected with Rock Point School as they begin their next steps. If you are an alumni or family of an alumni and would like to be in touch with the school, please send your current email and contact information to Mo Reilly, our Office Administrator, at mreilly@rockpoint.org. We would also love for you to share a life update with us!

ROCK POINT SCHOOL WINS VOLUNTEER AWARD FROM COTS

On October 26th, Rock Point School was honored to accept the Samara-Anderson Walk Award from COTS (Committee on Temporary Shelter) serving Vermont. This honor is given each year to COTS Walk participants who have gone above and beyond in support of people—including children—who are homeless or facing the crisis of homelessness.

Our students completed community service projects throughout the year to benefit COTS, including an Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Day activity that included creating kits for COTS guests based on their wish list. In addition to these efforts last year, we have been hosting the Ooky Spooky 5k since 2005 and donating the proceeds from the race to COTS. For the past three years, our COTS walk teams have given themselves the challenge of raising \$1,000 for COTS. The Samara-Anderson award recognizes these efforts and was a wonderful way for students to see the impact their work has had on the community.

Students and staff attended the COTS Annual Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast and heard inspiring talks from COTS Executive Director, Rita Markley, and Burlington Mayor, Miro Weinberger. Both spoke about the economy, housing crisis, and opioid epidemic affecting the lives of Vermonters as well as people around the country, and what COTS and the state of Vermont are doing to prevent more people from becoming homeless.

Our students are passionate about helping others and we are so proud to partner with COTS, as they do such outstanding work in our community.



Runners at the 13th annual *Ooky Spooky 5k* in October 2018.



Arts, Crafts, and Internships!



By Allison, Class of 2019

At the beginning of the year, the Dean of Students, Ryan Weiland, suggested that I get an art internship somewhere in the Burlington community, since I am in my senior year and I want to pursue art. Not long after starting her search, Ryan found an opportunity at Burlington City Arts (BCA), which was perfect because a former RPS staff member, Kate McKernan, is currently working there. I began an internship at BCA in September, working in the Printing and Drawing & Painting studios for four hours every Friday.

At BCA, there are open studio periods throughout the week when members and those who participate in classes can come in and work on their art piece and use the space and supplies. My job consists of tidying up the room, refilling or replacing supplies that have run out, making sure everyone uses the space and supplies properly and safely, as well as various other odd jobs. But for a good portion of my time there, I am also working on my art and building up my portfolio.

I find my internship one of my favorite times of the whole week for multiple reasons. Firstly, I have to bike all the way there and back, which always boosts my mood and makes me feel good. I also take on the responsibilities of an adult: providing my own transportation, time management skills, responsibility over two studios full of very expensive supplies, as well as the artists who come in and their safety. I have enjoyed my internship at BCA so much that I am currently applying at Ethan Allen Nursing Home to volunteer and run arts and crafts classes. I am looking forward to getting to know more people in the community and share something I love—arts and crafts—with them. I think the responsibility of having an internship (and hopefully two) has helped me build my confidence and will serve me well as I consider what to do after I graduate this spring. 🌱

THE SHOW MUST GO ON: ROCK POINT SCHOOL GOES TO THE THEATER

By Gus Buchanan, History Teacher

Rock Point School has been attending Flynn Theater shows for more than a decade. Not only is the art-deco style theater a beautiful historical place to visit, but we have developed a relationship with the theater that allows for students to view live performances and engage in learning opportunities that enhance their experience. This year, we will attend ten student matinee performances at the Flynn!

Before each Flynn performance, we prepare students with activities and discussions in order to enrich their experience of the performance. A few times a year, we are able to participate in Companion Workshops organized by the Flynn Center, where local artists come to Rock Point School to lead us in activities designed to connect to the performance we will see. We have had dance choreographers, actors, and writers visit us to highlight different aspects of live performance.

In October, we attended “Rap on Race,” a performance by Spectrum Dance Theater, that featured a discussion between Margaret Mead and James Baldwin in 1970. Topics included race and gender relations and the progress humans have been challenged to make as we work to understand each other.

Rock Point also attended the Curious Incident of Dog in the Nighttime in the Flynn Space, a smaller black-box style theater in the Flynn Center. The up close and personal performance provided a unique connection for actors and attendees. Our students really enjoyed this show and some followed up by reading the book. One ninth grader commented, “I think that the Curious Incident of the dog in the nighttime, was very educational and very relevant to today’s society as we see how a person with a mental disability may have struggled in the high energy constant motion of current society.”



The final performance of the Fall season was Ping Chong + Company Beyond Sacred: Voices of Muslim Identity. This show really helped students to connect with a group of people who have been singled out and mistreated by a society that struggles to understand their dress, beliefs, and role in the dominant culture. This powerful show provided the ability to have engaged and thoughtful conversations about challenging topics.

Each of the shows we have seen this year have allowed students to explore important cultural and moral issues in new ways. We are committed to giving our students the opportunity to see live theater and engage in meaningful ways with the artistic and cultural commentary that these unique performances can provide. 🌱

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Cultural Exchange Trips

For several years we have been traveling with Compas de Nicaragua (Friends of Nicaragua), a non-profit organization that supports “Women in Action,” a group of 40 women who organize health and education projects in the impoverished settlement of La Primavera in Managua. Compas de Nicaragua also supports a farmers co-op in La Paz, Carazo, that carries out sustainable living projects. Compas organizes several service learning trips to Nicaragua each year. Their mission is to promote cultural exchange and improve lives through service learning trips and sustainable community development.

The main goal of our service trips are to build friendships and promote cultural exchange while working together on community projects lead by our Nicaraguan friends. Our students lived with host families and worked side by side with Nicaraguans on farming projects. During our trip in 2018, Rock Point students repaired a biogas unit, and helped build a solar-powered food dehydrator.

Our travelers also had the unique opportunity to meet local ceramic artist, German Alguirre, tour his gallery, and visit the cultural museum in La Paz to learn more about the area. Other highlights of the 2018 trip included making chocolate, swimming in a volcanic lake, and visiting an island with wild bananas and monkeys! The most significant part of the trip was the relationship students and staff built with the communities and families who welcomed them.

In February 2019, we are taking on a new travel adventure and going to Oaxaca, Mexico! We will be working with a Mexican-based non-profit organization, SUCRO, to learn about the culture, history, politics, and people of Oaxaca.



Hello. Howdy. Hi.

MEET OUR NEW RPS STAFF MEMBERS

We are excited to introduce our new (Fall 2018) staff to our community and share all their energy, enthusiasm and experience with you.

Zachary Whiting (back row, left) is from Maryland and has been working with young people in experiential education for several years. He has worked on challenge courses, canoe expeditions, and taught skiing. With all his experience in the outdoors, Zachary can't wait to take our students on adventures in the dorm program!

Marsi Foster (back row, right) taught science at Rock Point School in the nineties and has returned to us as a tutor after working in special education in schools around Vermont. Several alumni told us that Marsi was their favorite science teacher ever and we are so happy to have her back in our community. She has been bringing her sweet puppy, Charlie, with her to work, which is an added bonus!

Sean Morrissey (front row, left) is from Vermont and has been working as a behavioral interventionist and TESL teacher since graduating from Saint Lawrence University in 2016. Sean has been finding ways to share his interests in creative expression with students at Rock Point.

David Boggs (front row, middle) is our new school nurse. David works in the Critical Care unit at UVM Medical Center and has brought a new perspective to nursing at Rock Point. David is happy to be a part of our small, supportive community and help us keep our students healthy.

Laura Abrams (front row, right) is our new Admissions Associate! Laura grew up in Vermont and recently earned her degree in Art Therapy. She is assisting Hillary and has enjoyed meeting new families and students this year.

Chris Howell (separate photo) started as our Director of Finance in October. Prior to Rock Point, Chris worked as a business strategy consultant and ran a culinary tour business. Chris also serves on the boards of Slow Food Vermont and Wild Gift, a wilderness-based fellowship for social entrepreneurs. His vision, technical skills, and organization have already been a huge asset to the school!



The following donors generously gave to our 2017-2018 Tomorrow Fund

Adam Tower
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Gus and Kara Buchanan



Students sailed on Lake Champlain this fall.

Harry Frank
Heidi and Rob Outtrim
Heidi Petschauer
Helen McGrath

Jean and John Lawe
Jean and Peter Smith
Jean Hancock
Jean R. Harvey

Jordan Douglas
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Smith
Joseph P. Spang
Joy Hayes
Joyce Acton
Joyce Kellogg
Judith Allard
Judith L. Mallory
June and Philip Sherwin
Justine Viets
Kaitlyn McKernan and Collin O'Leary
Karen and Nicholas San Filippo
Karen Poulin
Katherine Pond
Kathleen Moran
Kathryn Kubie and Bill Winkler
Kathy Butts and C.J. Spirito
Kayaoko and Tadaatsu Shimamura
Kimberly Mitchell
Lanette Noel Nadel and Joshua Nadel
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Summer Session students hiked Snake Mountain.

Herb and Elinor Weiland
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Jewish Federation of Cleveland
John Lincoln and Jill Stevens
Joan and Brad Harris
Joan and Rick McGuire
John A. McLendon, Jr.
John McLendon
John S. Snyder

ANNUAL APPEAL



Working on *To Kill a Mockingbird* in English class.

Marguerite and Alexander Zabriski
Maria Baron and William Spirito
Marilyn May
Mark Rubin
Marsi Foster and Matthew Bourgault
Martha Slocum
Marvene and James Eastham & Family
Mary and Stephen Hyde
Mary Beth and Thomas Barritt
Mary Ellen Palmer
Mary Lou Ashton
Mary McLaughlin
Mary-Doris Devlin and
Lawrence DiBernardo
Matthew and Heidi Western
Matthew Hagen
Maxine and Leo LaDouceur
Michael and Miranda Dunn
Michael J. Bollo
Mitzi Wayne Weiss
Molly and Ray Coffey
Muriel O'Gorman
Nancy and Russell Ellis

Nathalie Matthews and
Langston Rockhill
New Visions Foundation
Oh My Dog
Pam and Robert Stanton
Patricia and Christopher Allen
Patricia and Richard Oden
Patricia Kirkley
Dr. Patricia A. Stone
Patrick Kelley
Pennie Beach
People's United Bank
Peter Martin
Polly and James Larkin
Phil and Pris Kerr
Phoenix Books
Rebecca Usadi
Richard R. Wanson
Rita and Robert Lee
Roger Cooper
Ron Miller
Roxana and Ledlie Laughlin
Ryan Stanton

Sally and Andre R. Nadeau
Sandra and Mark Nigolian
Sandra and Robert Willey
Sara Denny
Schwab
Scott Sheavly and Marcia
Eames-Sheavly
Shoshanna Bernstein
Siobhan Donegan and Vince Brennan
Sophie Smyth and David Fagelson
Spencer Home Services
Spoonful Herbals
Stanton Eddy
Stephanie and Michael Smerling
Steven Shapiro
Stewart Wright
Stewart and Kristin L. Wood
The Story Family
Summit Fire and Security
Susan and Barton Merle-Smith
Susan and Thomas Little
Susanne and Kenneth Davis
Susyn and Denis Dees
Suzanne Chayer
Suzanne McNeill
Sylvia E. Rupe
Terry and Janet Francis
The Rev. Thad Bennett
Theodore Ackley
Thomas and Kathryn Derenthal
Thomas P. McGrath
Timothy Wile
Tom and Jan Schroeder
Tracy and Matthew Healey
The Valley Stage
Vanessa and Ivan Hantman
Vanguard Charitable
Vera and Dewitt Mallary
The Vermont Community Foundation
Vikki and Richard Philipson
Vivian Lacy
Dr. and Mrs. Wallace Good, Jr.

Walter Poleman
Wayne Turiansky
Wendy Chace and Randy Henson
William Marquess
Yvette Kanter

The following donors generously gave to our 2017-18 Senior Initiative:

Betty and Arthur Levy
Cindy Snyder and Charles Fennimore
Elizabeth and Geoffrey Bird
Emily Bruell and Christopher Ruigomez
GlaxoSmithKline
Reinier Kraakman

The following donors generously gave to our 2017-18 Maple Sugar Program:

C.P. Smith Elementary
Children's Preschool & Enrichment Center

Donations given in 'Honor of' or Thanksgiving for:

Ann Ely
Caleb Usadi '18
Charlotte Jones
Kathy Butts and C.J. Spirito
Katie Kuhn
Lonnie Edson
Margaret L. Darrin
The Staff at Rock Point School

Donations were made in Memory of:

Dr. Andrew Maloney
Barbara Ward
Beverly St. Germaine

Elaine Little
Marylen Grigas
Melissa Holden
N. Edward Chapman
Peter Micciche
Steve Denny

The following Parishes from Vermont and New York generously gave to our 2017-2018 Tomorrow Fund:

Church of St. Luke the Beloved Physician, Saranac Lake, NY
The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont
Grace Episcopal Church, Sheldon, VT

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Colchester, VT
St. James Episcopal Church, Essex Junction, VT
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, White Hall, NY
Trinity Episcopal Church Women, Rutland, VT

Thank you to the Ackley's for their generous bequest from the Susan and Ted Ackley Foundation, which has allowed us to start a new technology initiative at the school.

Thank you!



Learning how to use negative space in Foundations of Art.

THE MISSION OF ROCK POINT SCHOOL is to provide a small, supportive educational community for teenage girls and boys, where they can become successful students and learn skills for living in a community with peers and adults. The school is committed to providing the educational, cultural, spiritual, and recreational opportunities necessary to accomplish these goals.





ROCK POINT SCHOOL

ONE ROCK POINT ROAD
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VIEWPOINTS



ROCK POINT SCHOOL is a co-educational boarding and day high school located on 125 acres of wooded lakefront property in Burlington, Vermont. Rock Point is an alternative high school that focuses on educating the whole person. In our small classes and cohesive community, students form close relationships with teachers and peers and often grow in ways they never would have thought possible. Whether in the classroom, on the playing field, or out in the wider community, our mission is to help young people become their best selves.