reaching high

Annual Report 2015-2016

The Hartsbrook School
growing tall
Mission Statement

The Hartsbrook School, a Waldorf School in the Pioneer Valley, is dedicated to nurturing the unique spirit of each child. Our program from early childhood through high school integrates academic, artistic, and practical work to awaken clarity of thought, warmth of heart and strength of purpose. Through joy in learning, kinship with nature and working in community, we prepare students to meet the challenges of the future and to find purpose and direction in their lives.
Faculty Chair Reflections

This past year has been one of planting seeds for the future in the faculty, in the educational programs and on the campus. We are nurturing the next generation of teachers, and we have reviewed and begun to renew our programming. On the grounds, we have completed a major upgrade to our parking lot, and we have begun the work of developing a natural play yard as well as welcoming outdoor community spaces.

Supporting Faculty
Several years ago, our Teacher Development Committee recognized the need to focus resources on supporting new teachers so that teachers in their first three years would have increased mentoring and funding for professional development. This was a timely decision, as we have welcomed new lead teachers into early childhood and the grade school this year and will do so again next year. We are especially fortunate that these new teachers are supported by such experienced and wise colleagues as Jan Baudendistel, who is a class teacher with her fourth class of Hartsbrook students, and Catherine Hopkins, who has moved into the position of mentoring coordinator for new and continuing faculty, after teaching three classes of Hartsbrook students.

Program Review
We have reviewed our music program and our world language program. Following the review of our music program two years ago, we began to implement some of the recommended changes this past year. For example, we increased the number of instrumental classes in the elementary school, a move that has already had a positive impact on the overall program.

The World Language Committee reviewed our world language program as part of our regular program review. We also recognized that it was important to craft future program direction before many of our long-term language teachers retire. Following research into what other schools offer and input from our faculty, student, parent and alumni communities, the committee reaffirmed our commitment to offer two languages from contrasting language families, but recommended that we switch from French to Spanish as the Romance language offered. The committee noted that we are surrounded by Spanish speakers in the United States, with over 45 million who speak Spanish as their first or second language. Additionally, Spanish is the second most spoken native language in the world.

We have hired a new Spanish teacher, Lea Chiara, for the elementary grades one through six, starting in the fall. We also are very fortunate that our long-time elementary school French teacher, Marie Dominique Corbiere, will be available to support the transition and mentor the new teacher in the coming year while she continues to teach French to the seventh and eighth grades.

The Faculty Conference has also started a much broader review of our overall program with the question of how to renew our programs to meet the needs of the children and families of the 21st century.

Master Landscape Plan
We completed a Master Landscape Plan which addresses the relationships among programs, buildings and outdoor space. With the re-institution of Hartsbrook Community Work Day last fall by our Buildings and Grounds committee, we were able to accomplish many of the routine fall tasks. Volunteers for the Spring Community Work Day began to enhance the landscape with a welcoming path of trees and shrubs at the early childhood entrance to the campus. Volunteers also began to develop an inviting series of trails through our wonderful natural acreage. Much exciting work remains to be done within the scope of the Master Landscape Plan on how we develop play spaces and outdoor classrooms. These plans are now being further developed and implemented by parent volunteers and landscape architects, Paule Sustick and Todd Lynch, who are guiding the process forward with the help of Hartsbrook community volunteers. We are very grateful to these volunteers and to the donors who made this work possible.

Louise Spear – Faculty Chair
Report from the Board of Directors

Happily, I am this year substantially preempted by the thorough and very well written reports from our Faculty Chair, our Treasurer and our Strategic Renewal Committee (SRC). If you will promise to read those carefully, I will promise to keep this short.

As you have seen in the other reports, this past year, as well as the coming year, are times of change, of moving toward the futures of our school and its students, teachers, staff and parents. I don't know where this wave of forward energy came from, but it is clearly upon us and filled with the power of imagination, innovation and excitement. One of the purposes of our Board is general oversight, and in that capacity we have been attempting to monitor, promote and to some degree coordinate the initiatives and efforts arising all around us. Central to the efforts toward new growth is the work of the Strategic Renewal Committee, and one example of Board coordination is the conversion of several Board meetings to joint meetings with the faculty and staff for SRC presentations in which all present have examined our current conditions and paths forward.

As reported last year, the Board's Tuition Task Force was formed to determine whether a different tuition model could expand our student population and at the same time reduce the financial and related stresses that often surround attendance at an independent school. The Task Force began with a detailed study of tuition practices in Waldorf and other schools, and recently it presented the Board and Faculty/Staff with specific recommendations for the sliding scale tuition structure described in the Treasurer's report. The recommendations were enthusiastically received by both bodies, the Finance Committee this summer is determining how the proposal can create a financially strong tuition system, and we expect it will be presented this fall to the parents for their review and comment. This is clearly the most important potential change to arise from our planning efforts thus far, but it won't be the last!

By way of keeping my end of the bargain, I will stop here. But not before asking that each of you, and especially our parents, to see whether you can come more deeply into the school community, catch the fire of excitement toward our future, and participate actively in the many faceted growth we envision. From personal experience I can assure you that the school's underlying commitments to the development of humanity and to an understanding of human development bring joy and huge rewards to engagement in this Waldorf enterprise. Please, join in, for your children and for our entire community!

Tupper Brown – Board Chair
Once again, I am honored to have the opportunity to write a few paragraphs briefing the school community on the financial status of the institution.

Glancing at the charts below, you will note that the majority of our income is derived from tuition, augmented by our Annual Giving Campaign and other sources. For thirty years, since I was first enrolled in the Early Childhood program in the late 1980’s, we have said that the strength of our school is the community, but until I joined the Finance Committee and the Board of Directors, I did not realize how true that really is.

Glancing again at the charts, your second note is likely to be that the school spends roughly 58% of its resources on personnel. Trust me when I say that there is no fat to be trimmed: every possible dollar is spent on supporting the teachers and enhancing the program, and still, every year, we find ourselves making difficult decisions as we strive to balance the budget.

Given that paying tuition is challenging for many families, I ask you to consider how we can raise revenue without further burdening our existing community. Let’s look at three simple approaches.

**Filling Empty Seats**

Enrollment is key to the overall health and viability of the school. There is room for more students at Hartsbrook, and all of us have friends whose children do not attend Hartsbrook. We know that our school is not as well known in the wider community as it could and should be, and yet our program addresses many educational questions that live in our Valley. Please be genuine and enthusiastic, and invite your friends and their children to attend school events and get to know Hartsbrook better. You can make a big difference by actively reaching out as Hartsbrook Ambassadors. If you know of a family who would be a good fit, please talk to your class teacher or our Enrollment Director.

**Changing Our Perspective on Tuition and Financial Assistance**

Over the next few months, we will be starting to change the conversation regarding tuition and financial aid. We plan to move towards a sliding scale tuition model, in which each family will be recognized as a full-paying member at their level. A number of other independent and Waldorf schools in New England have experienced a marked increase in enrollment after making this transition and have also reported a more positive parent/school relationship as a result.

**Reaching Our Annual Giving Goals for the Coming Year**

Annual Giving funds are our final non-tuition revenue source, one that includes both unrestricted annual fund gifts and gifts designated for current budgeted programs and needs, such as tuition assistance. The Development Committee has increased its Annual Giving goal from $125,000 in FY16 to $175,000 in FY17, a direction that brings us more into line with other independent schools. Our goal is to increase annual giving to support the sustainability of our current school model with its ongoing investment in faculty and commitment to support affordability and socio-economic diversity at Hartsbrook. Please join us in supporting Hartsbrook.

Noah Smith—Treasurer
One year ago, the Board and the Conference put together a committee with a broad mandate – to shepherd a process to move the Hartsbrook School forward. The school has been in a stable place financially, and while enrollment fluctuates from year to year, it, too, is stable overall. Change has come over time, but a more rapid transition is clearly imminent. Teachers who have been with the school for many years, some since its earliest days, are beginning to think about retirement. Not only are new teachers, but of necessity, a new culture is coming as well. The spirit that has carried the school for so many years needs to be consciously grasped and carried forward.

The school has grown significantly over its thirty-five years to become a full pre-K through 12 school, with added teachers and administrative staff, and has fostered a strong Board and an able and experienced Faculty Conference. However, many of the habits and structures of the school have not been reexamined for over a decade. This committee has therefore been asked to address overarching questions of how to manage change, how to work strategically and set priorities, and how to shift school culture while staying true to the essential founding impulse of Hartsbrook.

The Strategic Renewal Committee, as it has come to be called, secured participation from two experienced consultants, Annabel Membrillo and Christoph Hinske, who work with the Institute for Strategic Clarity. With their generous donation of time and an anonymous donation to cover their travel expenses, they were able to bring expertise and an outside perspective to our internal process. In the middle of the last school year, they hosted conversations with individuals and groups from the various sectors of the school: parents, teachers, founders, staff, board members, donors and older students.

These conversations revealed a deep sense of purpose at the Hartsbrook School. The articulation of this shared purpose is an on-going process and consists of several parts, but at the highest level it is summarized as a commitment to the development of humanity. The shared purpose is present in and inspires enormous dedication and commitment on the part of faculty, staff, board, parents and students. This striving has its roots in the depth and breadth of vision expressed by the founders of the school, some of whom, still living in the area, were able to participate in this current process.

Process and Building a Path for Growth:

Also from these conversations a systemic map of Hartsbrook's process was created, showing how different activities, states, or "variables" within the school impact other variables. It is an extraordinary experience to see how much is captured in this large map that includes over a hundred variables – such things as time for teacher development, parent engagement, clear organizational policies and procedures, student retention and a full Waldorf education program. The systemic map, the accompanying analysis and the many conversations to come out of it indicate four strategic, high-leverage action pathways within our system essential to bringing increased health and life to the school.

Step One: The Governance Pathway

Attention must first and foremost be given to what we call The Governance Pathway -- one in which clearer governance structures will lead to better strategic prioritizing, planning, heightened engagement, and institutionalized, collaborative decision making where appropriate. For instance, the systemic map also shows areas of leadership that are missing, such as clarity of who is responsible for uniting the perspectives and initiatives of the Board and Conference and for the inclusion of input from faculty, staff, parents and others when needed.

To do this work, the Strategic Renewal Committee has created a Governance Task Force. The Task Force is researching models of governance at other schools and organizations, as well as articulating how Hartsbrook currently functions, exploring what is unique to Hartsbrook's identity, so that
it can recommend informed and appropriate changes to the Conference and Board. The work has begun this summer, and while initial recommendations are expected by early fall, the Task Force work will continue through next year.

**Step Two: Supporting and Sustaining the Faculty Pathway**

The second prioritized pathway involves the teachers, because supporting and nourishing the teachers, so they can continue to give their best to their individual and collaborative work, is vital to the experience of every one of us. One thinks first and foremost of the teachers’ direct work with the students, but the analysis reveals how much additional responsibility the teachers carry for such important matters as working with parents, oversight and review of the teaching in the school, mentorship, communication and program development, to list just a few. This next school year, the Strategic Renewal Committee will be focusing on and working further along this pathway as well, with the goal of developing recommendations for healthy structures and processes that will support and strengthen the faculty in all of its many responsibilities.

**Next Steps: The Changing Needs of the Children of Today and Support for Hartsbrook Families**

Two other additional pathways will be taken up in time. One pathway will address the changing needs of children of today and another will address support for Hartsbrook families and their experience of engagement and belonging. These pathways have the potential to inspire parents and children to attend Hartsbrook so that they will benefit from the full experience Waldorf education provides: early childhood through high school. Some of this work has begun already in the faculty and staff and can be better understood in the framework of these four strategic pathways. There is, however, a logic to the order in which these pathways should be addressed. Improvement in governance and teacher nourishment will be primary foci for this year, as they are foundational for fully taking up the second two pathways.

In the course of the coming year, we intend to reach farther into the community – to share with, listen to and involve parents and friends of the school. **Our first community meeting is scheduled for October 17 at 7:00pm.** We look forward to gathering and working together as an entire community as part of Hartsbrook’s growth into the future.

**The Strategic Renewal Committee**

Natalie Adams, Leslie Ritchie-Dunham, Viriginia McWilliam, Rachel Kennedy, Lane Hall-Witt
Jan Baudendistel has been a guiding force at The Hartsbrook School since she arrived in 1987. Following her graduation from Dartmouth College, she taught for nine years in public school and later at an international school in Germany. She also completed her Waldorf teacher training in Germany. Since then, she has carried three Hartsbrook classes through all eight elementary grades and is approaching the midpoint with her fourth class. She is also involved in supporting other Waldorf educational initiatives, as is her husband, James Pewtherer, a former Waldorf class teacher and high school teacher, who is now a consultant in the international Waldorf movement.

Reflecting on her early years at Hartsbrook, Jan explains that she was drawn to the school by the prospect of working with Ekkehard Piening, Mr. Piening was an experienced Waldorf teacher, who came to Hartsbrook from the Rudolf Steiner School in Manhattan to further the development of the school through twelfth grade. He led a group of beginning Waldorf teachers, parents and visionary board members in building a thriving Waldorf school in the Pioneer Valley. With anthroposophy as a guide, this group set out to establish a vibrant example of what Waldorf education could be. These inspired colleagues imbued their teaching with thoughtful study and devotion to children while shaping the school and community life with song, art, festivals and hard, physical work.

Jan’s first class started in 1987 as the third class in the school, completing eighth grade in 1994-95. Looking back, Jan calls these students true pioneers, hardy souls with boundless energy. They joyfully participated in the early festivals, Holiday Fair and May Fair, and also experienced the passing of the school’s leader, Ekkehard Piening, during their third grade year. This was a major event for the entire Hartsbrook community. Students, teachers and parents alike bravely forged ahead to shape the school and continue the process of becoming.

The second class that Jan carried, 1996 – 2004, she calls her “millennial class.” Another powerful group of students, this class came in boisterous and ready to go, starting at the Ben Smith Building and continuing to the renovated Homestead Building and Piening Hall on the school’s main campus. She felt her job was more to get them pulling in the same direction because they were such a force. These students produced remarkable dramatic performances; they were also sportsmen and artists. It was during this time that the beginnings of the Land Stewardship program took form.

The third class, 2005 – 2013, was also a group of pioneers in many ways. The class started in the Ben Smith Building and then moved to the newly-built Hartsbrook Hall for the remainder of their elementary years. Because so many of these students were part of the early childhood program at Hartsbrook, they, like the classes before them, had a solid foundation in Waldorf principles. Vibrant and colorful, this class particularly loved trips and plays. Over the years, they truly learned what it means to build a class community, accepting each other for who they were.

Jan’s current class is now in third grade. They will complete 8th grade in 2022 and 12th grade in 2026! Remarkably, many of these children have been together since their time in Hartsbrook’s Cricket-on-the- Hearth program. Although it’s early days, the third graders are already showing their love of hard work and love of being together.

A constant through all four classes, has been the parents’ dedication to the healthy guidance of their children and the nurturing of the class community and the school as a whole.

What Makes Hartsbrook Unique?
Hartsbrook’s distinguishing characteristic is the deep intentionality of the school community inspired and nurtured by a living anthroposophy.
Graduating Class of 2016

By Terra Szuhay, Graduation Presentation

We are travelers at heart, restless for new adventures…
Restless to confront new challenges…
Restless to achieve new goals…
We are migrators of the mind and migrators of the body.
We branch out, traversing new territory… exploring, gathering, internalizing…
Like a hive of honeybees we absorb onto our person the most valuable drops of nectar and grains of pollen. With these offerings, ensuring the vitality of the hive.

Our hearts speak of Hadley, of cornfields, of mountains, and cows…
Of New England woods, Cape Cod beaches, Nantucket whales.
Our hearts encompass the globe-tying continents – Asia, North America, Europe-
Whether in Deutschland, en France, in Österreich, en España…
En Cuba, China, St. John, Taiwan…

We want to know the workings of the universe…how the seasons change… about the geese’s instincts to migrate… about the bees geometric creations.
We want to know the workings of the mind…how thoughts wind and connect, analyzing and inventing.
We want to know what it feels like to live in every soul…hear every thought… make every decision…live every life.

Now is our time to sail…climb…pedal…skate…gallop… and fly forward.
Now is our time to leap in great bounds…span oceans…wend through mountain paths…ferry through canaled streets…navigate vast mazes of academic possibilities.
It is our time to broaden our horizons, expand our views, stretch our personalities.

Yet in our travels, full of opportunity, mystery, and adventure, let us not forget our cornfields, our mountains, our cows.
Let us not forget our Hartsbrook hive.
Let our community spirit bring us back together, again and again, richer for our experiences, with offerings for our hive.

Dante Bowman:
Carnegie Mellon University
Lucy Brady Grossman: University of Massachusetts Commonwealth Honors College
Miles Chilson: Bentley University
Daniel Garcia: Will return to Spain to pursue a career as a massage therapist
Gaeleen Hall: College of the Atlantic
Hannah Horak: University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Isabella Lederman: Oberlin College
Shirley Lin Li: San Jose State University
Ian MacPherson: Hampshire College
Gavan Rice: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Conor Ritchie Dunham: Columbia College, Chicago
Terra Szuhay: Oberlin
Nora Weber: Skidmore
Lauralyn Zacek: Simmons College

CONGRATULATIONS!
Alumna Profile: Elena Nietupski, HIGH SCHOOL 2013

What Makes Hartsbrook Unique?
Elena Nietupski found her Hartsbrook experience unique and life changing. She graduated from Hartsbrook in 2013 (HS) and most recently from UMASS, Amherst in 2016 with a major in theater. Looking back on her experiences at Hartsbrook, Elena points to the importance of Hartsbrook's smaller class environment that enables deep class community bonding combined with a supportive, academic community. She believes these factors help shape students who will become adults capable of embracing life and its challenges. Elena also talks about the impact of shared experiences at Hartsbrook, such as class trips, positive experiences that develop students who are willing to be adventurous and to embrace new ideas and experiences that lead to creative and meaningful career paths.

The Impact of a Hartsbrook Education
Elena came to Hartsbrook in 7th Grade following earlier education in Montessori learning environments. Unlike the self-directed learning style of Montessori schools, Hartsbrook and its Waldorf educational approach encourage students to explore many disciplines. Elena notes that Hartsbrook's approach is to acknowledge individual strengths while also encouraging each student to use these strengths in other areas. Elena is convinced that if she had gone on to a public high school, she would have concentrated in math, rather than exploring other subjects and career paths.

At Hartsbrook, theater, art, and music are encouraged and are also embedded in the curriculum throughout the K-12 program. Elena notes that incorporating the arts into academic disciplines encourages students to explore and makes a more wholesome student, one who is ready to embrace the world beyond academia. Elena says that Hartsbrook is the reason she has chosen theater (and its related disciplines) as a career path. She also comments that art, theater and music were continually encouraged within the curriculum as a way to keep creative energy alive in your mind.

Elena highlights the importance of participating in Hartsbrook's Exchange Program through which students live in foreign countries, usually in Europe, for three months. Traveling in Europe and living with Waldorf school families for three months provides a unique perspective on the culture and history of these countries in addition to language acquisition. Since many of these student exchanges are reciprocal, often students from a host family are able to visit their Hartsbrook families. Elena points to the lasting impact of these “home away” experiences, particularly her experience living with a host family in Germany while studying there as a 15-year-old.

Life Beyond Hartsbrook
Elena joined the theater program at UMASS Amherst, which is a multi-disciplinary program that prepares students to act but also to direct, to do set design and lighting as well as promotion, production, sound and costume design. Elena feels that participating in this program has enabled her to build upon and broaden the experiences in acting, theater direction and production that she had already gained at Hartsbrook.

Today Elena is branching out on her own set of theater paths. The skills that Elena has acquired at Hartsbrook and UMASS Amherst have prepared her to act in and to develop her own shows and production, a “make your own world” mindset that she credits to Hartsbrook. Elena is currently acting in a UMASS production of “Love and Information” by Carol Churchill. In addition, playwright and actor, Brian Marsh, has enlisted Elena in taking on the lead role in “Remember Me, Nellie,” a one-woman show about an early journalist, who was a proponent of women’s rights. Elena will be taking this show on the road to various schools in Massachusetts in the coming year, a process which includes in-class demonstrations and discussions based on this play. For her latest venture, Elena has joined Alex Kamb, recently of UMASS Amherst, to write, act in and film a script/drama concept within a 48 hour time span for submission to the 48-Hour Film Festival in New Haven.
Donors to The Hartsbrook School during FY 2015-16 Annual Giving Campaign

Including The Annual Fund and Other Designated Gifts for Current Year’s Budget

Our donors supported The Hartsbrook School by making gifts to supply revenue necessary for the school’s operations including faculty, programs and tuition assistance. These gifts have been made as annual fund unrestricted gifts or as other designated gifts for current year budgeted purposes such as tuition assistance. Our Annual Giving for FY’15-16 achieved a record of $132,338 including both annual fund gifts as well as gifts designated for tuition assistance and for the Land Stewardship program (for use in current year).

For information on “Ways to Give” please visit www.hartsbrook.org/giving/

Thank you to all of our donors!

“Hartsbrook is a special place with an amazing agricultural arts program. I’m always inspired to see the amazing things happening there.”
– Emily Sustick, ’96 (8th grade)
**Other Designated Gifts:**

**Piening Hall Lighting**
A special gift of $5,000 was made to procure a new LED stage lighting system for stage productions in Hartsbrook’s Piening Hall. This gift was made by Joseph Rice, grandfather of Gavan Rice (class of 2016). Mr Rice spoke of the impact of Hartsbrook on Gavan, noting “Gavan’s ever-positive attitude, his apparent grasp of many different subjects, the relative ease in which he engages those around him and his overall well-roundedness… traits that can be attributed in great part to Gavan’s experiences at Hartsbrook, where his growth into a ‘world citizen” is being realized.”

**Natural Play Yard Design and Build Project**
Following the completion of a Master Landscape Plan for creating a play yard that reflects the school’s pedagogy while embodying the importance of the natural world in the development of children, we instituted Community Work Days and were able to enhance the entrance to the Early Childhood area with a welcoming path of trees and shrubs as well as creating a series of trails through our wonderful natural landscape. TOTAL GIFTS of $2,015 in FY ’16 from two anonymous donors and the Hartsbrook class of 2020 (9th grade), who are currently rising fifth graders.

**Music Program**
For increased orchestra sessions. TOTAL GIFTS for FY ’16: $715 from two anonymous donors

**Other Revenue**
Holiday Fair net revenue: $9,803
Scrip Program: est. $30,000
New School Store: $1,634

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**Endowment Funds:**

**Bergen Diaz Scholarship Endowment Fund**
This fund was established in 1996 in memory of Bergen Diaz, Class of ’94 (8th grade), to support families seeking scholarship assistance. Scholarships are available in all grades and are awarded by application on the basis of need.

**GIFTS TO THE BERGEN DIAZ SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND:** total gifts of $2,120 in FY ’16
Anonymous (2)
Jan-Kees and Polly Salset
Randall and Amy Spalding-Fecher
Steve Pfrarr and Joyce Tousey
Tristan Zajonc ’94

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**List of Donors**

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**LIST OF DONORS**

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**Anonymous Amount**

**Donated to the Annual Fund**

Anonymous (2)

Ned DeLaCours &
Nancy Lustgarten
August Zajonc ‘93

**Community Gifts/Grants**

**to Annual Fund**

Florence Savings Bank
RSF Social Finance
SAXSLAB US, Inc.

**Meadowbrook Waldorf**

**Association**

Rockwell Automation

Charitable Matching Gifts

Program

Valley Gives Day

**Scrip Partners**

AHOLD Financial Services (Stop & Shop)

Amazon Smile

Atkins Farms Country Market

Esselon Cafe

Goodshop

O’Connell Oil Associates

Paul & Elizabeth’s Restaurant

River Valley Coop

Target Corporation - Take Charge of Education

Tea Living, Inc.

Whole Foods

**Tribute Giving**

**Gifts in Honor of:**

Tupper Brown
by John Stephen
Rudolf Steiner
by Fred and Janice Kreitner
Henry and Calvin Jacobs
by Ms. Megan Butow &
Mr. Tim Jacobs
Kristin Hall
by Janice Doyama
Holden Dalhaus and
June Dalhaus
by James and Pamela Kelly
Alice Mahoney ‘08 and
Sam Stein ‘13
by Marianne Mahoney

**Gifts In Memory of:**

David “Papa” Cole
by Letitia Ann Cole
Lucy and Benjamin Wolfson and
Mira and Gersh Kshitik
by Yanisssav and Inna
Wolfson, grandparents of
Benjamin Wolfson

**Jan Baudendistel continued**

Jan also points to the extraordinary gift of Hartsbrook’s natural beauty and the richness of the resource that is the land that surrounds us. Hartsbrook has been able to build on this gift, developing its Land Stewardship program in gardening, farming and animal husbandry. Living and working in field and forest, the children develop a grounded sense of place from which to discover themselves and know the world.

**Editor’s Note:** Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this donor listing, which was produced late August, 2016. If you see an error, please contact Pilar Schmidt, Director of Development, at 413-586-1908 x129 or pschmidt@hartsbrook.org so that we can make the appropriate corrections.

**Total Annual Giving**

Campaign: $132,338

Notes: (B) = Board Member
Parent Council News

The Hartsbrook Parent Council aims to be a fun, inclusive and permanent organization that furthers the School’s mission by helping to build community, support the faculty and staff, and facilitate frank and constructive communication among parents, faculty, staff and the board.

2015-2016 was a challenging year for the Parent Council. We struggled with low parent attendance at meetings and experienced a leadership shift midway through the year. We experimented with holding meetings at different times to increase engagement, which was somewhat successful, but that raised the question of how best to communicate with the larger parent population in order to maintain momentum and achieve the broadest possible reach on important school issues and events.

In spite of these challenges, the Parent Council was able to bring a number of exciting and enriching events to the community:

• An “Un-Conference” for current parents as school began in September
• A World Language Evening in October to discuss language program planning
• Music Sharing evenings for Hartsbrook students in December and March
• The Hartsbrook Hootenanny Contra Dance for Hartsbrook families in March
• A lecture by Douglas Gerwin in March: “Turning Education on its Head: What Modern Brain Research says About How Children and Young Adults Learn”
• Two screenings of the documentary movie “SCREENAGERS: Growing Up in the Digital Age” in May.

Additionally, the Parent Council facilitated important conversations throughout the year on several important issues, including the school language program, school safety protocols and the ongoing work of the Strategic Renewal Committee.

The Parent Council will continue to evolve and transform to better facilitate communication among parents, faculty and the Board of Directors for the coming years.

Mark Kopulos – Parent Council Chair

Alumni Engagement

At the Alumni Reception following Graduation in June 2016, Jacqui Ritchie-Dunham ’13 (HS) with Alex Moskovitz ’12 (HS) launched a Hartsbrook Alumni Community (HAC) initiative to establish an active, vibrant Hartsbrook alumni network. Jacqui created a Facebook group with over 108 initial members. The purpose of the group is to:

• Form an online community to support and aid each other as we grow forward in our separate lives
• Establish networking connections, from job opportunities, career advice and invitations to events to housing requests
• Reconnect periodically, with the purpose of catching up and reminding us that there are others like us, with a similar upbringing, who care about each other, and
• Construct a solid base for this community to create something really special for future generations to come.

FIRST STEPS: Jacqui is planning a series of alumni/ae profiles on this Facebook group page. TO JOIN THIS GROUP: contact Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/287604601584160/ to be approved for joining this “closed” group. This group is part of a larger initiative coming from Hartsbrook to create an Alumni Relations office, working to establish multiple connections with alumni of all ages to reconnect and also to engage alumni in supporting Hartsbrook. TO SEND CLASS NOTES or update your contact information please visit www.hartsbrook.org/community/alumni/
Why I Support Hartsbrook

When our daughter, Jacqui, was four years old, we started looking for a school. Coming from a background of systems thinking and the experience of teaching young adults at the university level where holistic thinking had seemed to be educated out of them, we knew we were looking for three criteria: 1) a place she could truly be a child as long as she needed (not being forced to be analytical too soon, which we saw in so many schools and institutions), 2) a place where her natural inborn holistic understanding of the world around her would be supported and developed as opposed to reduced and 3) we wanted her to be fearless.

After a full year of searching every school we could find in the Austin area, we stumbled upon the Austin Waldorf school through a ‘chance’ encounter. The moment I stepped on campus, I knew Waldorf was the answer for our family. In Jacqui’s first year of Kindergarten, we brought Jim’s parents to our first Grandparent’s Day where we all fell in love with one of the senior girls, who stood up there on the stage answering some pretty tough questions thoughtfully and intelligently, with graceful poise and self-confidence, and I thought, “Gosh, I hope my daughter has those qualities when she grows up.” Jacqui graduated from Hartsbrook High School three years ago.

That year a grandmother came up to her and told her that she had seen Jacqui at Grandparent’s Day the year before and had the same thought, and so she had enrolled her granddaughter who was very happy here. And Jacqui, who knew the story, and I started to cry as she related it to me. We had come full circle.

When students enter the High School, they bring a wild flower and say to the attentive audience of students, teachers and parents what they are bringing to the school. We had talked the night before, and she had come up with a couple of ideas I can’t even remember now, but when she placed her sunflower in the vase, Jacqui said, “I am bringing fearlessness.” My husband and I burst into tears – a common occurrence for us at Waldorf school events.

Gosh, I hope my daughter has those qualities when she grows up.

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In thinking about giving and why I support Hartsbrook, I was thinking about the definition of support. How we come together to support each other in this endeavor of raising our children the best we can. Over the past 17 years, because of various circumstances we have been at the Austin Waldorf School, at Pine Hill in southern New Hampshire and for the last six years here at Hartsbrook. I have given to and supported Waldorf education and Hartsbrook in many ways. Through tuition, of course, and the very important Annual Giving, but also through a whole, wonderfully-wide variety of volunteer activities throughout the years. I could look back and see that time, money and volunteer work through the lens of a value exchange. And if I do that, I would see that all this giving is my way of showing our love and gratitude.

I have given all this demonstration of our love and gratitude because the value my family and I have received in return is incalculable: in the love and education for my children and ourselves; in the beautiful community that we have been a part of for all these years; in the different path that our lives took because we found this alternative; in the history of our life lived in this beautiful place and space. Hartsbrook is a special place that supports healthy human development and connection, and we have loved being a part of it.

This past June, our youngest, Conor, graduated from Hartsbrook High School, and so reflecting on this journey through Waldorf education comes naturally. I stand in awe at both of my children for their thoughtfulness, their intelligence, their graceful poise, self-confidence and fearlessness, and I kind of can’t help but compare them to myself at that age and laugh. And I am deeply, deeply grateful that we found exactly what we had been looking for all those years ago.

I support and will continue to support Hartsbrook, because I want every family who wishes to have the opportunity to grow up in such a loving, human environment, embraced by teachers bringing a pedagogy created as an Education Toward Freedom to help our children develop into the most engaged human beings they can be in the world around them: Fearless, engaged and interested. That is what I support in every way I can.

Leslie Ritchie-Dunham – Board Member and Alumni Parent

For information on “Ways to Give” please visit www.hartsbrook.org/giving/
SAVE THE DATE

FESTIVALS AND SPECIAL EVENTS
Michaelmas Festival: Thursday & Friday, September 29, 30
Holiday Fair: Saturday, November 19, 10am – 3pm
Solstice Celebration: Thursday, December 15, time TBD
High School Art & Music Showcase: Thursday, February 16, 7pm
High School Musical: Thursday-Saturday, March 23, 24 & 25
Senior Presentations: Wednesday-Thursday, April 12 and 13, 7pm
May Day Festival: Monday, May 1, 8:30 – 10:00am
Grandparents & Special Friends Day: Friday, May 12, 8:15 – lunch
Senior Drama Production: Thursday-Friday, June 1 & 2
Graduation/Alumni Reception: Saturday, June 10, 10am

VISITING OPPPORTUNITIES
Harvest Festival Open House: Saturday, October 1
All School Open House: Saturday, January 21
Early Childhood Open House: Saturday, March 11

pathways for growth