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Hartsbrook

journal

& ANNUAL REPORT



**Clarity of thought.
Warmth of heart.
Strength of purpose.**

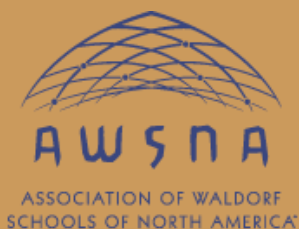
The Hartsbrook School is dedicated to nurturing the unique spirit of each child. Our program from early childhood through high school integrates academic, artistic, and practical work to awaken clarity of thought, warmth of heart, and strength of purpose. Through joy in learning, kinship with nature,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

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Hartsbrook
journal

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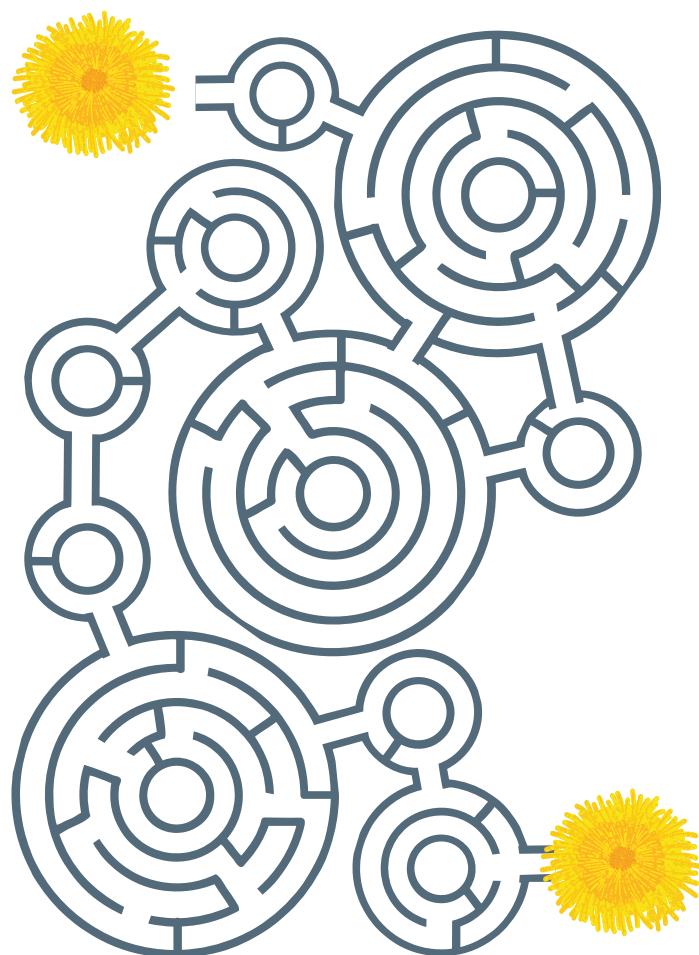
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RUN WITH US AGAIN THIS YEAR!
The Dandelion Dash & Mushroom Mile

SEE PAGE 20

A LETTER

from our new Head of School, **Diego Sharon**



Dear Friends, Families, and Stewards of The Hartsbrook School,

It is a privilege to join this vibrant learning community as Head of School. This academic year marks The Hartsbrook School's 45th anniversary, a milestone that invites both celebration and reflection. Over these few months, I've had the opportunity to reflect deeply on this history and recognize the gifts we are inheriting from our founders and many supporters. I also see this as a moment of tremendous synergy. We stand at the intersection of the deep roots of our legacy and the focused work of our future. For forty-five years, this school has offered a strong foundation - a place where children grow from the wonder and warmth of Early Childhood to the moral and intellectual independence of the twelfth grade. This enduring history is our greatest gift.

As a thriving institution, I know we must also be dynamic, and I am thrilled to share that we are embracing essential, forward-looking qualitative enhancements across our campus. These intentional changes will continue to ensure that the Hartsbrook School remains connected to the needs of young people and our mission of providing skillful preparation for the real world.

We are working across the grades to deepen our curricular study and collaboration, expanding pedagogical innovation while preserving the core integrity of Waldorf education. We are implementing impactful student supports to ensure more children have access to our school throughout the span of our programs. And we are working to develop initiatives that leverage our land and human resources to benefit our region and community in meaningful ways.

These efforts are designed to sustain Hartsbrook for the next forty-five years of inspired learning. As we celebrate this milestone year, we honor the past while stepping into the future - ensuring every child is met with the richest opportunities for learning and growth. I thank you for your partnership.

In Learning,

Diego Sharon
Head of School

GENEROSITY IN ACTION

A Year of Impactful Donations

Anne Griffin, Director of Advancement

As we look ahead to our 45th year, we find ourselves both deeply rooted in the traditions that have carried us this far, and courageously looking toward the future. Our school has always been a place where childhood is honored, where learning is purposeful, and where community holds a central place. But sustaining this vision - one that nurtures both the head and the heart - requires more than tuition alone.

Like most independent schools, tuition only covers a portion of what it takes to bring our programs fully to life. To truly meet the needs of our students, teachers, and campus, charitable giving is essential. As we imagine a future where our school can continue to meet the ever-changing needs of our students, the role of fundraising becomes not just helpful - but vital.

This past year, your generosity helped make that vision more tangible. Together, we surpassed our Annual Fund goal of \$285,000, raising \$293,000 in gifts that directly supported the programs, faculty, and daily life of our school.

Our Farm-to-Table Harvest Dinner and Auction was a beautiful celebration of community and generosity. With the help of sponsors and donors, we raised \$95,000, and were able to put \$80,000 of that directly towards sustaining the work we all hold dear.

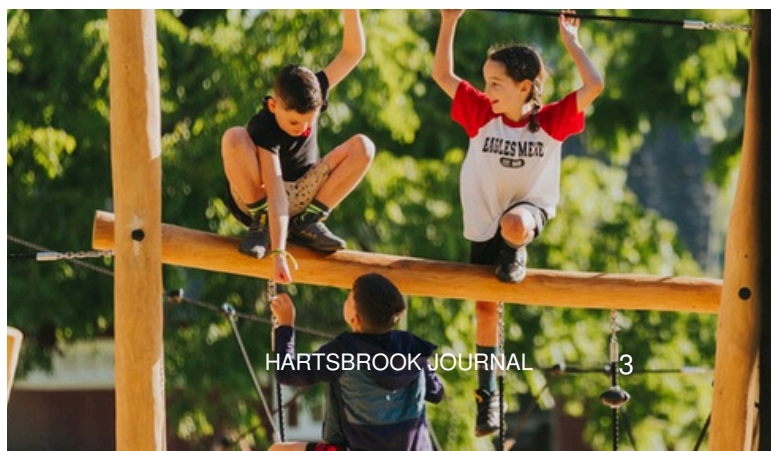
If you've been on campus recently, you've likely noticed the joyful energy around our new Lower and Upper School playgrounds. Thanks to the generosity of two anonymous families, we were able to create eight new play structures and fresh

landscaping - spaces that reflect our values and support the healthy movement and imagination of our students.

We are also continually uplifted by the many gifts of time and service. Our Community Work Days brought families together to care for our campus - helping with projects large and small that keep our spaces vibrant, welcoming, and well-loved.

As we grow into our next chapter, we are also being called to tend to the very spaces and structures that hold our work. Years of deferred maintenance - along with the expansion of our farm and land stewardship efforts - remind us that caring for the physical life of the school is just as essential as nurturing its spirit. These needs, while practical, are deeply tied to our pedagogy and our students' experience. There is no better time than now to join us in reinvesting in the campus that supports this living education.

Thank you, dear community, for standing with us, for giving generously, and for believing in this shared work. In this 45th year, your continued support helps us move toward a future where a Waldorf education at Hartsbrook is not only sustainable, but increasingly accessible and grounded in the care of both people and place.





FAMILY ASSOCIATION RECAP

Family Association coordinates parent and caregiver initiatives including community potlucks, work days, and clothing swaps, meditation, and support and appreciation for faculty and staff. Family Association strives to strengthen the social fabric of our school not only with the monthly Community Crafting program, but also through weaving our structure as a social organization. Our form is to invite Ambassadors from every class in the school to our monthly meetings to facilitate connection across the school. This year we expanded representation to include Ambassadors from the Campus, Festivals, and Development committees. We continue to tend threads of connection between the “buddy classes,” established when each 1st grader has an 8th grade buddy, and we invite parents and caregivers from each class to connect across that arc as well.

Every Family Association event, project, and initiative is organized by volunteers who engage for a one-time activity or an ongoing commitment. In the fourth year of running the Holiday Fair, the Artisan Market was the primary focus, with three beloved activities offered for a Children’s Bazaar, hosted by parent and caregiver volunteers from all classes.

Family Association hosted all-family picnics to conclude the Fall and Spring festival weeks, with a fun tie-dye activity after the Dandelion Dash this year. We continue our collaborative expressions of gratitude to faculty and staff, with coordinated gift bags in December and gift cards in June, endeavoring to inclusively and equally reach every employee! This past spring we brought back a well-loved community folk dance and potluck called the Hootenanny,

Family Association warmly invites you to campus on **Saturday, November 22, 2025** for our Holiday Fair! Volunteers interested in supporting our Artisan Market or fair activities, please contact fta@hartsbrook.org now. We look forward to seeing you soon!



LOOKING AHEAD

Winter Solstice Gathering
December 18

Cabaret
January 17

Hootenanny
March 7

Community Day
Potluck & Clothing Swap
April 26

Community Crafting
December 11
January 8
February 12
March 12
April 9
May 7

Indian Hollow Camp-Out
August 27-30



CELEBRATING 45 YEARS

A LIVING SCHOOL, SHAPED BY PURPOSE AND PEOPLE

In a gathering held last year between present faculty and three long-serving colleagues, The Hartsbrook School paused to reflect on its past and future. These colleagues—Valerie Poplawski, Jan Baudendistel, and Nicki Robb—each helped shape the school in profound ways over the decades. Their words carried the wisdom of lived experience and the depth of spiritual striving, reminding us that Hartsbrook is not simply a school—it is a community bound by intention, care, and a shared unfolding path.

Beginnings: A School Founded in Purpose

Each of these teachers came to Hartsbrook through what they described as an act of destiny—some guided by a handshake, others by a gathering of like-minded parents, or even the pull of the land itself. Valerie shared, “What inspired me was I felt so welcomed and wanted. I was met with such kindness, joy, warmth, and interest. There was a palpable sense of enthusiasm, and a commitment to bring Waldorf education here.”

For Jan, it was a moment with founding teacher Ekkehard Piening that sealed her path. “Ekkehard’s handshake—the vibrancy and depth in his eyes, and this immediate surrounding of a huge, caring heart. I knew right then this was where I wanted to work.” That moment pointed toward a bigger vision, one that was both deeply spiritual and joyfully practical.

Nicki described her family’s integration into the school as “destiny-driven.” She recalled the basement of David and Claire Fortier - founding members of the Brookfield Community Farm - where her family lived and where the seeds of Hartsbrook and a biodynamic farm were quietly taking root. “It was the most remarkable group of people. Our journey into the life of the school felt like a stream we were meant to step into.”



What Sustains a School: The Inner and Outer Work

When asked what sustained them, all three women pointed to relationships, artistic striving, the natural world, and the courage to grow—individually and together.

Nicki reflected on the evolving vision of the school, saying, “There’s this commitment to something that is destiny in a moment in time. That’s what sustains—it’s alive.” Jan described the deep joy of “singing with children every day, singing with colleagues, growing with them, making mistakes, and being forgiven.” She emphasized that the space to be both learner and guide is rare—and sacred.

Valerie was sustained by the children, the land, and the spiritual striving embedded in the work. “The more I taught, the more humility I felt,” she shared. Her teaching, she said, was always guided by an inner striving to meet the child—“I took seriously the development of myself as a teacher, and that sustained me.”

Looking Forward: Hopes Rooted in Wisdom

Each offered a vision for Hartsbrook's future. Valerie expressed a hope that the school continues to center children in all decisions: "My wish is that we continue to put the children at the center—to understand who they are, and build vibrant support systems around them." She also hoped for the continued freedom of teachers to shape their classrooms with responsibility, artistry, and trust.

Jan emphasized cultivating the inner life of the educator: "That ego falls away when you realize the community you're a part of." She described the importance of small gestures—"acknowledging each person you pass, a smile or a hello, because you are in the presence of another being." She spoke to the courage needed in today's world to center not just academics, but the deeper question of what it means to be human. "We're not always going to get it right," she said, "but we're committed to working on it."

Nicki urged us to stay in deep relationship with the natural world as a foundational part of education. "As long as you have a touchstone in the natural world, that will be the strongest grounding our children can have." She reminded us that true learning comes through experience, through the creatures we care for, the weather we live with, and the hands-on work that connects head, heart, and hands.

Looking Ahead to Our 45th Year

As we celebrate 45 years, we do so with deep gratitude for the shoulders we stand on. Our founding and long-standing colleagues have gifted us a path of integrity, humility, and joy.

We welcomed our new Head of School, Diego Sharon, and begin this year with a new governance model that reflects our values and our hope for the future. Together, we will engage in schoolwide work with Kim John Payne, deepening our commitment to Integrated Student Support across all grades and classrooms.

This year also marks the launch of a collaborative policy in Grades 1–8, built on restorative practices and shared language to help us support healthy social dynamics from day one. All teachers will be committing to these protocols, ensuring that every child is met with clarity, compassion, and consistency.

In all of this, we recommit ourselves to the guiding principle that every student must feel a deep sense of belonging—and be free from the harms of bullying and discrimination. These efforts



**FIRST GRADUATING CLASS OF 1993:
THEN AND NOW**



EKKEHARD PIENING



reflect not only policy but purpose: a school culture that is responsive, awake, and evolving.

As Diego shared:

"I sometimes marvel at the set of skills it must have taken to survive and thrive in this area a century or two ago. Today, there are new skills that the conveniences of our modern life and the pace of change also necessitate. A deepening awareness of how to be responsive to our students, our community and the world, and what they will encounter in their lives is part of what we have the responsibility to think into. That's why I feel so blessed to be here, working to empower our students to face whatever challenges the future brings them."

I had the opportunity to watch and participate in the harvesting and processing of acorns, black walnuts and chokeberries, which 6th graders, excitedly unshelled the walnuts and acorns with hammers, making ink from the chokeberries through cheese cloth. I was then handed a paint brush made from carefully pounding the end of a stick into fiber-like strands to paint a sunset with chokeberry ink. Now I feel ready for whatever may come."

As we celebrate 45 years of Hartsbrook, we honor our past and step forward into the future - with gratitude, with courage, and with joy.



SPRING '25 INTENSIVES

9th Grade Geology Tour

Reflections from Alex Lester

Intensive week brought the 9th grade into the field to study geology firsthand. We started by making our own custom field notebooks, then we headed off on our adventures to fill them with notes and observations.

Visiting several sites each day, we saw the swirling lines of metamorphic rock, found dinosaur footprints from the shores of an ancient lake, and discovered giant columns of basalt, remnants of former lava flows. Students honed their skills of observation as they explored the details of rocks and landforms at each site, and they began the work of “piecing together the puzzle” of the geologic history of this region. Although the forecast looked gloomy most of the week, we somehow dodged the heaviest downpours, and they provided some unexpected benefits that ended up being highlights of our time: a sometimes small, dripping waterfall was a roaring sensation whose noise and power (and unexpectedness) delighted the 9th graders.

When we heard it and it then emerged into view, the students went bounding off joyfully, soaking in the spray and running alongside the brook amid the thunderous roar. The multiple days of rain also provided a washed-out area alongside a different trail that upended many quartz and amethyst pieces. Several “rockhounds” were born as the students excitedly went searching in the dirt for the crystals.

It is always a joy to me to see students experience and share in the delight of discovery in this marvelous region to learn about geology.

The sense of wonder at many of the sites was palpable, and students left with a newfound appreciation for the earth and the place where we live.





10th Grade Trip to Washington, DC

Reflections from Art Middleton

After a week in DC that pushed us to observe, inquire, and support each other as we made a home in an adopted space, the 10th grade returned to Hartsbrook full, tired, and with more questions about our nation's capital and who we are as citizens than before we left. Each day began together in our shared home at the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Temple before we set off to walk and attempt to take in all that DC offers. As we return to our routines, we are still processing all we took in. From the National Gallery to the architecture of the Mall, and to the Vietnam, WWII, and Martin Luther King Jr. memorials, there is a lot to continue to unpack.



Each visit brought something new. Whether thinking through the Holocaust, or the narratives of deprivation and survival in the National Museum of African American History and Culture or the National Museum of the American Indian, fresh questions arose. The National Museum of Natural History, with its gems and minerals, reminded us of the ground beneath our feet. We reflected in the evenings as we shared food, traveled to an open mic, and looked back on the day with curiosity and appreciation.

As we toured the Capitol Building, I kept thinking about how saturated DC is with symbolism. The tiles on the floor show you what side of the building you are in; the statues presented by the states tell a story about how we narrate history; the design of memorials, and the choices of figuration or abstraction, communicate how we want to remember the past and inhabit the present. Making meaning out of those symbols, and reckoning with how they've been explained to us in the past, is part of our work today.



In a quote from Thurgood Marshall on display in the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the former justice writes, "the rights guaranteed by our Constitution are not self-enforcing; they can be made meaningful only by legislative or judicial action." That effort, to compose a nation, each day, out of the practices that make its values tangible in the lives of each, is an often unwieldy gift.

As we watched lawmakers deliver briefs from the House observation gallery about issues that concerned them to a nearly empty room, and later spontaneously explored a temporary exhibit of female statues placed on the Mall by an advocacy group for survivors of assault, the observation kept getting made—all of this is made by people, like us, everyday. And then the question: what role, however modest, might we play in creating, challenging, uplifting, that national story together?

I felt lucky to be with our students as we explored these spaces, and grateful as they approached each opportunity with the seriousness, curiosity, and maturity that each demanded. With the new administration proposing changes through executive order about what may be available to future visitors at the Smithsonian and beyond, we don't know what the trip may look like next year, but I'm grateful for a week where we were able to indulge in so much of what this beautiful city has to offer, together.

11th Grade Trip to Camp Hill

Reflections from Jen Curtis

This year, the 11th graders headed to Camphill Village for their Spring Intensive. Camphill Village is a special place where adults with special needs and long- and short-term volunteers live and work together as equals in extended family homes. The mission of Camphill is to provide equality, dignity, and purpose to all people, regardless of ability level. In order to achieve this, residents work on the land's 750-acres of wooded hills, gardens, and pastures, as well as in workshops making candles, cards, and delicious baked goods. The 11th graders had the opportunity to spend a week at this beautiful place volunteering alongside residents. We prepared garden beds, planted tomatoes, harvested herbs, made tea blends, and milked cows.

We also shared meals in the group homes, learning firsthand about the structure of co-living in the community. Most of all, we enjoyed each other's company, swapping stories and sharing jokes with each other and Villagers. We witnessed firsthand the shared humanity that bonds us all, allowing us to deepen our inquiry of what a meaningful life looks like. It was an uplifting, transformative experience that I suspect will stay with us all.





12th Grade Trip to San Miguel

San Miguel de Allende, a picturesque city in central Mexico, is renowned for its charming colonial-era center, which stands in stark contrast to surrounding areas. The city's center – a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2008 – is filled with cobblestone streets, vibrant markets, and historic architecture. This area is a hub of culture and tourism, where cafes, art galleries, and shops attract visitors from around the world.

However, a mile or so beyond the center, the reality shifts. The outer neighborhoods reveal the city's complexity, marked by economic inequality. Poverty is more visible here, with families in modest homes or makeshift dwellings on the outskirts, struggling with limited access to resources like water and electricity. The contrast between the opulent, tourist-filled center and the more impoverished, quiet neighborhoods underscores a stark social divide, where tourism's wealth has not always improved life for the broader population. These outer areas, though often overlooked, remind us of the city's disparities, where many face daily challenges far from the glossy image of San Miguel's center.



Seniors spent the week volunteering with mainly Spanish-speaking residents in neighborhoods outside the bustling center. They were hosted by Centro Infantil de los Ángeles (CILA), a nonprofit that provides daycare and preschool education to children with the greatest need. The center gives low-income, single parents the confidence of knowing their children are fed, cared for, and supported toward a brighter future. Many participants live on the outskirts in basic housing, without water mains or electricity. They share small spaces with extended family and depend on the Center for free meals, daycare, and education, including exposure to English, essential for local job opportunities.

Seniors worked at the Daycare and Preschool assisting teachers, playing with children, doing arts/crafts, preparing meals, and cleaning up.

After work, students explored the city through a variety of cultural and educational experiences, learning about its history, the forces behind its inequality (similar to our own cities'), and its cultural vibrancy.



FROM SEED TO SWEEP

FIFTH GRADERS AT HARTSBROOK SCHOOL MAKE BROOMS FROM SCRATCH

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Republished with permission. Written by Emilee Klein | Photos by Daniel Jacobi II



Fifth grader Hattie Griffin rubs the soft, thin tree trunk with one piece of sandpaper before switching to a different piece with a softer grit, hoping to make her already-velvety broom handle even smoother.

“I had a good idea that the rest of the broom would take a long, long time, but the sanding I didn’t think would take this long,” Hattie said.

A couple weeks prior, she had journeyed with the rest of her class from The Hartsbrook School in Hadley to Practical Arts teacher Katharine Payne’s backyard in Hatfield to pick the young tree she’d work with over the next two months. Hattie gravitated towards a tree with several knobs and twists in its trunk; it seemed fun to work with and “just felt right,” she said.

Her classmate Marika Bellis choose a tall beech tree, which now sticks out under her armpit as she shaves off the bark using a variety of knives and files. Every mark Marika makes would need to be sanded out, a procedure that took Hattie five or six classes to finish.

“When I sand, it’s for feel and look,” Marika said. “If it feels nice, great. But if it doesn’t look the best, I still need to take all those marks off.”

Each fifth grade student at Hartsbrook creates a kitchen broom with locally-grown broomcorn — a type of sorghum that’s particularly good for sweeping dirt and dust.

It’s a tedious process: it takes patience to debark, sand and oil the wood; strength to bind the broomcorn to their brooms; and precision to stitch and trim the fibers into a flat triangle shape.

“EACH FIFTH GRADE STUDENT AT HARTSBROOK CREATES A KITCHEN BROOM WITH LOCALLY-GROWN BROOMCORN.”

Yet Payne knows her students can handle the challenge, and they couldn't be more proud of their creations.

"There is a process that is set up for the purpose of the material and what you're making out of it," Payne said. "If you try to rush it or skimp out, it's going to show. It becomes your teacher, as opposed to the human next to you, and to be able to learn from those experiences, those are good lessons."

The Hartbrook School teaches broom making as both a practical craft and homage to Hadley's colonial broom makers and factories. Hadley farmer Levi Dickenson created the first broom out of broomcorn in 1797. When his wife told her neighbors about the broom's ability to trap dust better than most other fibers, broomcorn quickly became the main material for brooms, and Hadley soil was provide the perfect growing conditions for the grass. Hadley remained a broom-making capital into the end of the 19th century.

"The preparing of the broomcorn we do as a class," Payne said. "We'll have a whole factory here, there are different stations and it's really fun and exciting."

Using their agricultural resources, the Hartbrook students plant the broomcorn for their brooms the previous spring. The grass spouts over summer just in time for a fall harvest and drying period. Each broom contains about 30 stalks of broomcorn, which includes both the red broomcorn grown on campus and yellow broomcorn from local farms. The students sort through the red broomcorn for the straightest pieces, popping off the hard, ripe seeds for next year's crop. While deseeding, the broomcorn itch may crawl up the back of their necks as the seeds release an irriating dust into the air.

"I love that they have to experience the hardship of the manufacturing side of things," Payne said. "And just recognize what it would be like in a broom factory where they did this all day."

Properly binding the broomcorn to the broom ensures the bristles won't fall out as students sweep, but it's by far the most strenuous part of broom making. Students feed a spool of twine through a hole in a wooden paddle, and tie the twine to the broom handle. While standing on the paddle to keep the twine tight, students simultaneously wrap a bundle of broomcorn to the handle with the thread, and pull up.



“AT SOME POINT THEY’LL
RECOGNIZE THAT
PROCESS BECAUSE IT
LIVES IN THEM.”

Payne said they continue to maintain the tension of the twine while wrapping and pulling over and over, or the binding will be too loose.

“It was hard at first because you have to put the corn at the end of the handle and tie it tight and pull up,” student Ellie Taylor said. “It hurts you back because you’re bending over. It’s hard, but fun.”

Even with the physical strength required to bind, Ella Kermensky-Dizdarevic said stitching was the most difficult step because she needed to undo and redo several of her stitches. The bound brooms are placed in a wooden clamp to fan out the bristles, allowing students to run a needle and thread through the fibers. The key is to keep the stitches tight and evenly spaced, something Hattie cannot wait to try.

“I think it’s going to be kind of tricky, but you’re almost at the end,” Hattie said. “It completes the broom.”

Not only do the Hartsbrook students make their brooms, but they also make the paddles, clamps and needles used during the process. Payne structures her lessons around the purpose of tools: everything in the room has a use, and it’s constructed to serve that intention.

“That kind of underlies all of the projects that we make, that it’s not just something random, or for the sake of ‘I like it.’ You’re taking the material and transforming it into something that’s going to be serving,” she said.

Each final product is unique. The knots and twists of the wood are on full display. Students add personal touches by choosing the stitching color, wood oil type and even wood burned designs. Marika wants Hattie to sketch an olive branch to wood burn into her broom. Hattie has already decided to put a sunflower on her handle.

It’s a delight, Payne said, seeing her student’s faces light up the first time they sweep with their broom. “They follow the process from the seed to the finished broom,” Payne said. “They don’t necessarily think about that so much right then and there, probably as much as we do, but brooms last, and for them to have gone through that experience, at some point they’ll recognize that process because it lives in them.”

Emilee Klein can be reached at eklein@gazettenet.com.





WE SHAPE OUR CITIES AND THEY SHAPE US

BY NAOMI HENDERSON

When we consider buildings, cities and infrastructure, it is useful to reflect on the words of Winston Churchill who said, “We shape our buildings, and thereafter they shape us”. In conjunction with the History through Architecture Main Lesson Seminar, the seniors learned about urban design and planning by studying the city of Holyoke, and going on a walking tour.

In the 1840's much of the land that is now Holyoke was bought by a group of investors called the Boston Associates, who saw the tremendous potential for water power where the Connecticut River drops 57 feet. The first successful dam was completed in 1849, and a three level canal system was planned. The city of Holyoke was designed expressly to expand industry through factories powered by turbines that ran on hydro power. It is therefore one of the first planned industrial cities. From the dam, water is channeled into the first canal, where it runs under the mill buildings where the turbines are. It then flows out into the second and third canals before rejoining the river below the Flats neighborhood.

Before long many paper and textile mills opened along the canals, and immigrants from Ireland, Poland, Canada, and Germany were among the first to work in the mills. In 1885 the population was 4600, and by 1920 it had bloomed to 60,000. By the early 20th century, there were more millionaires in Holyoke per capita than in any city in the U.S. During this time Holyoke gained its nickname “Paper City of the World,” as it supplied the U.S. with 80% of its paper. The last influx of immigrants came in the 1970's from Puerto Rico through a Farm workers program. People of Puerto Rican heritage currently make up about half the population of Holyoke.

By the mid 20th century economic factors began to shift, and world competition in manufacturing became ever more fierce. Due to many economic and global factors, mills began to close with most shuttering their businesses in the 1980's. Today Holyoke has a population of about 36,000, and the downtown is a shadow of its former self with many shuttered businesses. The opening of the Ingleside Mall in 1979 drew even more business away from downtown.

On our tour, the seniors walked around the canals, and took a guided tour of City Hall. We visited the Art Deco post office with a WPA mural of the first European settlers. We learned about the construction and subsequent addition to the Library, and the current work being done to restore the Victory Theater. We saw where the mill workers lived, and as we moved up the hill noted the mangers and skilled worker housing, with the owners in their mansions at the top of the hill. Students reflected that social stratification is built into the location of housing in the city.

The water power in Holyoke is still very beneficial to the city, and supplies a cheap power source to residents and businesses. Many mills are being repurposed, but the city has a lot of work to do to reinvent itself and thrive in our current time and into the future.



EVOLVING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL STUDENTS

At Hartsbrook, we remain deeply committed to meeting each child at their unique stage of development. After thoughtful reflection and study, we are gradually evolving our long-standing class teacher looping model. Instead of one teacher guiding a class from Grades 1 through 8, our new approach will have one teacher accompany students through Grades 1–5, with a second teacher taking the lead for Grades 6–8.

This thoughtful shift recognizes the distinct developmental needs of both younger and middle school students. It allows for greater teacher specialization, deeper subject expertise, and a more gradual, supportive transition toward high school. The change will be introduced gradually to honor the strong relationships already formed and to ensure continuity of care and guidance.



In addition to this structural change, we are strengthening the bridge between middle school and high school. Dina Levi, our Upper School Director, now oversees Grades 6–12, ensuring a cohesive experience for students as they move through these formative years. Dina’s leadership supports a curriculum, teaching practices, and student experience that align fully with the values of Waldorf education, our commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ), and the school’s mission.

This expanded focus fosters a culture of community engagement, academic excellence, and personal growth. By nurturing this natural progression from middle to high school, we help our students step confidently into the wider horizons of Upper School and beyond

“In my time here at Hartsbrook, I’ve worked closely with the faculty, staff and students to consider what it means to be intentional about our sense of community. Bridging that work with the middle school is an exciting opportunity, as I believe our devoting attention towards the interconnectedness of students and experiences from grades 6 through 12 will truly allow students to thrive in both their personal and academic growth. I’m excited to help strengthen this transitional journey, supporting a more unified learning experience and helping our community flourish through continuity, connection, and shared purpose.” - Dina Levi, Upper School Director

As we grow and evolve, we do so with deep respect for our students, teachers, and families—nurturing strong roots while preparing students to reach new heights.



Farm-to-Table Harvest Dinner & Auction

Chef Nate Sustick Featured Hartsbrook's Own Root Vegetables This Year at Farm-to-Table!

Each year, our Farm-to-Table Harvest Dinner & Auction takes place on The Hartsbrook School campus, set against the glowing gold and orange of the Holyoke Mountain Range. This cherished gathering raises vital funds for our Land Stewardship Program and Sliding Scale Tuition Model.

This year, we introduced a meaningful shift: the Harvest Dinner did not include the auction. By pausing the auction for the fall event, we were able to create more space to celebrate our programming, honor the season's harvest, uplift our local farm partners, and simply be together in deep and joyful community. **We are delighted to offer the beloved auction this Spring, on March 21, 2026 from 6–9 pm** - free and open to the public, so our wider community can join in the celebration.

The evening began with cocktails and conversation, followed by a delicious multi-course dinner crafted by alum Chef Nate Sustick, owner of Paul & Elizabeth's, using root vegetables from the Hartsbrook garden. We are profoundly grateful for

Nate's generosity in donating his time and talent each year.

This year's dinner was truly a celebration of community. Thank you to the nearly 200 guests who helped raise an inspiring \$50,000 in support of Hartsbrook's mission.

Our success was made possible through the generosity of local farms, businesses, and friends who share our commitment to hands-on, heart-centered education. From the exquisite meal and signature cocktails to live music by Andrea Cooper and Mark Roberts, the handmade photo booth, raffle prizes, Jessica Stark's gracious hosting, student stories, and Art Middleton's moving reflections on learning, every detail reflected the creativity, care, and warmth that make Hartsbrook so special.

It was a joy to see so many current, former, and future families gathered under the stars. Your presence and support help ensure that our students continue to learn from the land, care for the earth, and thrive in a nurturing, accessible community.



GRANOLA BARS

Recipe by Ms. Courage, former Early
Childhood Teacher



PREP TIME

10 MINUTES



COOK TIME

22 MINUTES



SERVINGS

12

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups rolled oats
- ¾ cup oat flour
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup seed or nut combo*
- 1/3 cup seed or nut butter*
- 1/3 cup safflower seed oil
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

NOTE:

This recipe is meant for a 9 × 13 inch pan and is easily made by young children and their grown-ups. Seed combination used at school: 1/3 cup each of unsalted / unsweetened pumpkin, sunflower, and sesame seeds.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1** Preheat oven to 325 °F. Line pan with parchment paper.
- 2** Mix dry ingredients together in a big bowl. Whisk wet ingredients together in a large measuring cup, then pour over dry ingredients. Mix to combine thoroughly and pour out onto the parchment in the pan. Flatten with a spatula and push out to each corner so the mixture spreads evenly in the pan.
- 3** Bake for 12 minutes, then turn and bake for 10 minutes more.
- 4** Remove from oven and cool in pan for 15 minutes before cutting into bars. Use a sharp knife when the bars are still just a bit soft to the touch (this helps to prevent cracking).
- 5** Once cooled, cover with foil and chill in the fridge for at least an hour (this helps to firm them up so that the bars are less likely to crumble when you separate them).

Recipe submitted by John White

CIDER STEW

Substitute tofu for meat and reduce cooking time if you like.

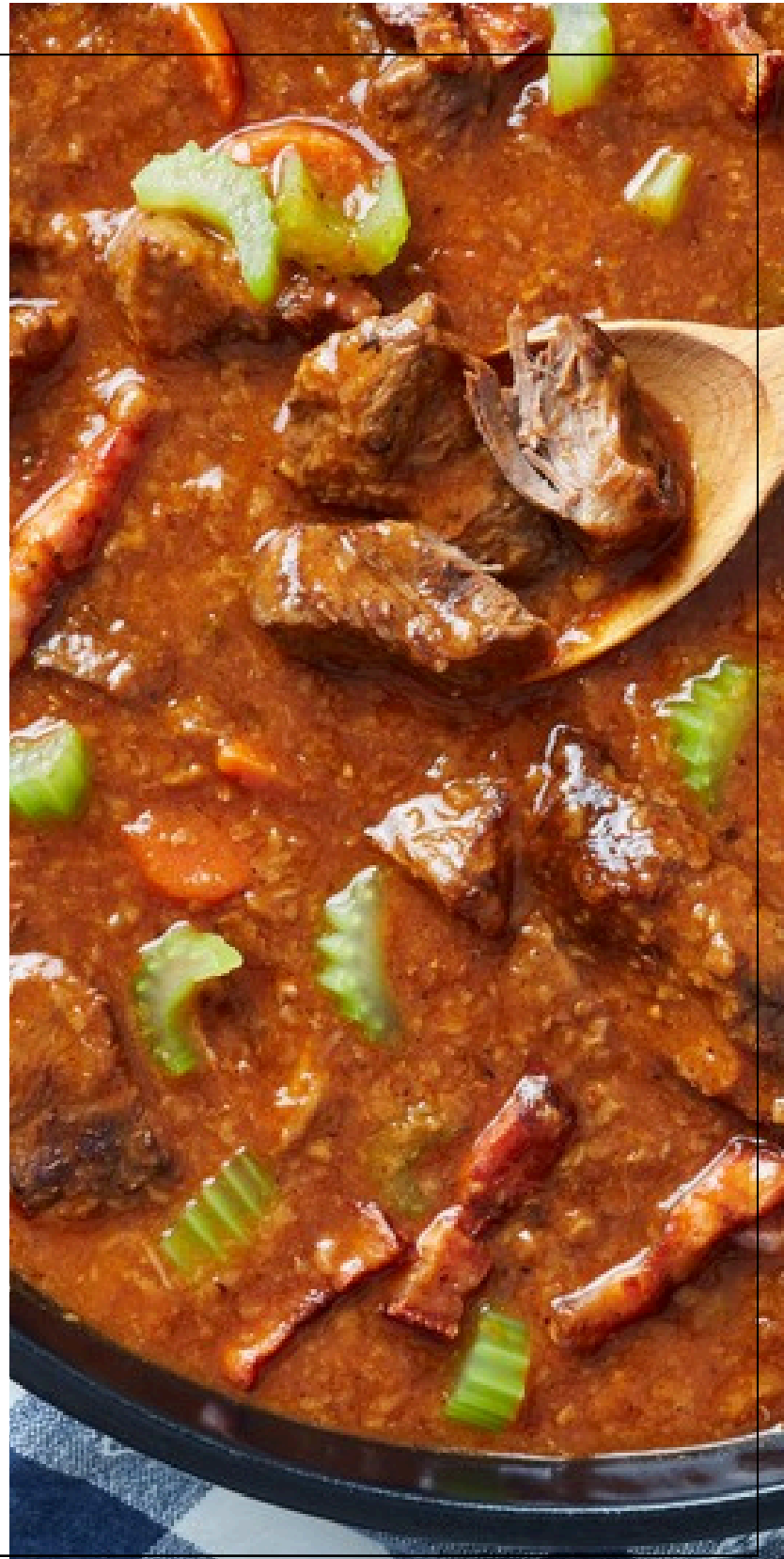
Makes: 6-8 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 pounds stew meat, cubed
- 2 cups cider
- 2 carrots, diced
- ½ cup water
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon thyme
- 3 tablespoons flour

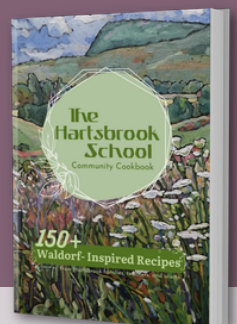
INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Use a Dutch oven to brown meat in a mix of oil, flour, salt, pepper, and thyme.
- 2 Drain meat fat. Stir in cider, water, and vinegar and bring to boil. Lower heat, cover, and simmer for 75 minutes.
- 3 Stir in veggies. Cover, simmer 30 minutes until done.



The Hartsbrook Community Cookbook is a compilation of 150+ Waldorf-inspired recipes contributed by parents, teachers, and alums. From simple breakfasts to hearty main dishes, soups and breads, this full-color cookbook—complete with recipe photos and crafts—has something for everyone. You'll also find traditional Waldorf meal blessings, shareable recipes for fairs, and kindergarten lunchbox ideas.

Proceeds from this cookbook benefit the programs that support the students, faculty, and lands of The Hartsbrook School.



SCAN & ORDER THE COOKBOOK!

Hartsbrook Gives

MAY DAY OF GIVING - MAY 1

Giving Days are all about community. On May 1 our community comes together to support the Hartsbrook Annual Fund, which directly sustains:

- Specialized programming in health, wellness, and dramatic arts
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Social Justice work
- Music, Spanish, and agricultural and practical arts
- Our Sliding Scale tuition model, which makes Hartsbrook accessible and sustainable for more families
- Competitive compensation and benefits for faculty and staff to recruit and retain exceptional educators
- Maintenance of Hartsbrook's 54 acres of land and care for the animals

SPRING AUCTION & SOCIAL

March 21, 2026

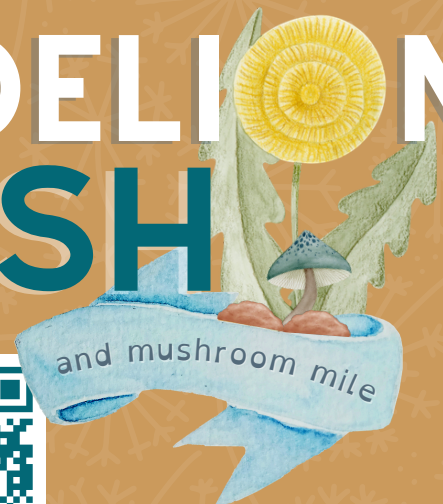
6 pm - 9 pm

Free to attend! Join Us for an evening in Piening Hall in support of the Hartsbrook School



REGISTER NOW!

DANDELION DASH



May 3, 2026

A 5K TRAIL RUN (OR 1 MILE WALK)
THROUGH HARTSBROOK'S BACKLANDS

Ways to Support Hartsbrook

CASH, CHECK OR ONLINE

Many gifts to the School are cash contributions that are made by check or credit card. These gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law and provide immediate funding for the School and its operations.



SCAN TO DONATE

SECURITIES AND PROPERTY

Gifts of stock, other securities or property benefit the ischool and provide the donor with a tax deduction for the fair maket value of the gift when it is made. Additionally, the donor does not have to pay capital gains tax on the appreciated value of the stock or property.

MATCHING GIFTS

Many companies provide their employees with the benefit of increasing their gifts to certain organizations by matching these gifts. Please check with your employer about their matching gifts program.

PLANNED GIVING

Gifts made through estate planning provide for the future growth of the School. Leave a lasting legacy.

GIFTS IN KIND

Hartsbrook welcomes gifts in kind, including donations of goods and services that meet the educational and programmatic needs of the School.

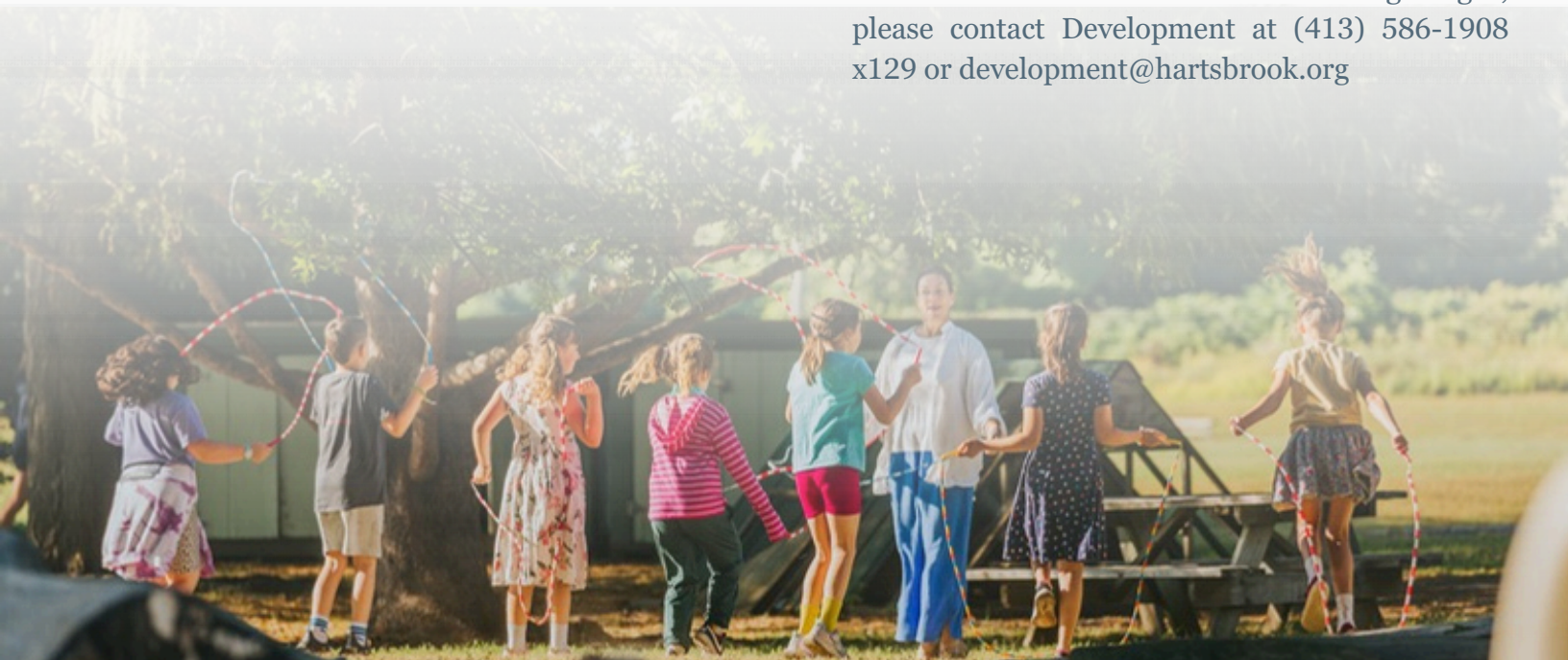
EVERYDAY EFFORTLESS FUNDRAISING

Download the RaiseRight app and use it as you go about your regular, everyday purchases. The Hartsbrook School automatically receives a percentage of the money you spend. Use school code 6L1F813F8734.



SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD

For further information about making a gift, please contact Development at (413) 586-1908 x129 or development@hartsbrook.org





Seven Sisters
School Store



hartsbrook.square.site

