One Crystal: Bridging Two Campuses

Human Development: Belonging and Purpose

Canines of Crystal II

Alumni Changemakers

Head of School Transition: Thank you Dan, Welcome Kelly
“One Crystal”

IN ONE OF THE FEATURES OF THIS ISSUE OF THE CRYSTAL MAGAZINE, we write about this year’s theme of “One Crystal” and how we are fostering a program and culture that unites two campuses and two divisions of students and faculty members. The heart of Crystal beat through this conscious act of building one school whether it is in maintaining traditions or creating new ones. In every iteration, we are first and foremost a cohesive and caring community.

Interim Head of School, Dan Miller, opened the year with the concept of One Crystal. We are grateful for his leadership which provided a smooth transition for the incoming head, Kelly Sortino, and accomplished a significant amount—in only one year—to move the school and community forward on many fronts. We thank Dan as we welcome Kelly to her new role.

Human Development (HD) is a relatively new 6–12th grade program that combines social-emotional and service learning through active community engagement that is developmentally appropriate for each level. For example, the Middle School HD program “supports students’ personal growth through experiences that cultivate a just and inclusive community, focusing on skills of cultural competence, self-awareness, empathy, and social action. Our goal is to help students learn and practice life skills needed to be productive and fulfilled citizens” (www.csus.org). In this issue, we highlight the HD program as it becomes an integral part of the Crystal experience.

Our alumni community provides a through line for the issue whether in the form of Crystal history, portraits of alumni who now teach at Crystal, or profiles of alumni changemakers. Our three featured alumni provide what journalist Erin Peterson describes as an “insider’s guide to changing the world.” In October 2018, Chris Bischof ’88, Kat Taylor ’76, and Charles Wilson ’93 spoke at the Alumni Networking Forum about how they have worked to make the world a better place by pursuing social justice and equity in education, finance, and the law. Erin writes, “We went beyond the highlight reels of these three alumni to dig into the real challenges and opportunities of making change. How do you really create a school that improves a community, or a bank that might just change the country? What does it mean when a kid known primarily for residing in the “murder capital” of East Palo Alto transforms his identity and is sworn in as a Superior Court judge?”

Both campuses also boast beautiful grounds. We don’t have a lot of acreage, but we are fortunate with lovely views and natural features that draw students and adults outdoors throughout the school day. After a robust rainy season, both campuses were ablaze with flowering trees and bursting gardens—a long drought is still a recent memory so the spring greening seems greener than before. It is one of the best things about attending school in California!
CRYSTAL BALL is a terrific name for our yearbook given its longevity from the first yearbook of 1957 to the most recent edition published June 2019. Alumni storyteller Deb Hunt, who wore many hats at Crystal, was also a yearbook advisor. She has curated some of her favorite Crystal Ball covers and tells us why.

1952 A literal crystal ball, complete with wizard.
1956 Castles were featured on a few covers over the years.
1966 I like the puzzle pieces as a metaphor for the school year.
1968 A very 1960s design.
1980 I like the graphics by John Ravich ’80.
1989 The highway signs are fun and the green grass color really stands out.
1989 The “Dick & Jane” theme is possibly my favorite.
1991 The best student art cover.
1992 A literal crystal ball, complete with wizard.
1996 Castles were featured on a few covers over the years.
2006 I like the puzzle pieces as a metaphor for the school year.
2019 The “Dick & Jane” theme is possibly my favorite.
WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO SERVE AS AN INTERIM HEAD?
Exciting and a bit daunting—I wanted to sustain momentum and, hopefully, add insight gained from previous practice without being presumptuous or setting things in motion that would not square with Kelly’s and the Board’s priorities. I hope I’ve found that balance.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME AT CRYSTAL?
I feel good about working productively with an excellent and established Administrative Team and Board of Trustees. I’m proud of our successful initiative to build an endowment for financial aid—we have raised $5.8M and counting, which is a great accomplishment for the school. We’ve also developed a new protocol for hiring to diversify and deepen our applicant pool. We’re thrilled with the quality of the new faculty, staff, and administrators who will be joining Crystal next year. We have also done some good work around unifying the two divisions—our efforts to maintain a culture of One Crystal are fully in motion.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT CRYSTAL?
I learned that some of the clichéd adjectives about this part of the world—innovative, energetic, ambitious—really bear out. People may affect a nonchalant exterior, but underneath, the students and families are driven. I was also struck by the students’ rare combination of undeniable interest in measurable success with an equally noteworthy intellectualism. Grades are important, but so too is learning for learning’s sake. I also want to stress that both my wife Joanna and I found the community to be incredibly warm and welcoming. We both were made to feel at home here almost right away, before people had even made any evaluation of our capabilities.
WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT CRYSTAL?
I love both the homey, quirky, slightly scuffed grandeur of the Mansion, as juxtaposed to the hi-tech, digital workflow. I love the modernist clarity of the new Middle School campus with all its age-appropriate energy contained inside—like molecules in a glass box. I truly admire the teaching faculty—they are so talented and committed, as are the administrators. And the students are so impressive. The coffee machine in the faculty room is also killer as are the salad bars on both campuses.

IF YOU WERE TO VISIT CRYSTAL FIVE YEARS FROM NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?
A robust endowment to support financial aid as well as improvements in faculty/staff compensation; some polishing and enhancing of the Upper School campus through renovation and new construction; and a universally understood 6-12 culture and program that highlights two distinct divisions within one cohesive entity.

IF YOU COULD OFFER OUR NEXT HEAD, KELLY SORTINO, ONE PIECE OF ADVICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
First of all, she doesn’t need advice—she’s a star. But if pressed: keep your sense of humor and work everything backwards from the experience of the students.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO AT THE URBAN SCHOOL AND LIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO?
Truthfully, I’m the sort of person who eats a plate of food one element at a time. I’m “linear sequential,” so I won’t think about it until I’m there. I know, looking back, I will have been fortunate to live in two extraordinary and very different places, and to work at two amazing, albeit very different schools.

“DAN’S IMPACT ON OUR INSTITUTION, and on me personally, will long outlast his relatively short stint as our Interim Head of School. He has professionalized several aspects of our school, most notably our hiring process, and has brought a heightened awareness and urgency to issues of diversity, access, inclusion, and equity, by planting the seeds of a financial aid endowment, which is an initiative I intend to keep growing throughout my tenure as Head of School. On a personal level, Dan has reminded me that the best leaders are the ones who are warm, humorous, approachable, and ambitious. I am thrilled that Dan will be close-by next year (as he takes on the headship at Urban School in San Francisco) and hope that he doesn’t mind that I intend to keep his number on speed-dial. Thank you, Dan, for your tutelage and friendship.”

-Kelly Sortino, Head of Upper School and incoming Head of School

“WHEN THE BOARD of Trustees launched the Head of School search in the fall of 2017, we were intent on finding an interim head who could bring a fresh perspective and external best practices to Crystal. This is consistent with the National Association of Independent School’s best practices after the retirement of a successful, long-tenured head. Early on, we met Dan Miller. After our first lunch, I remember thinking how fortunate Crystal would be to have Dan as our head for a year. With his intellect, experience, enthusiasm, and easy wit, Dan has had a meaningful impact in a short period of time. I will miss Dan—his smile, his ready handshake, his stories—and will always consider him part of the Crystal family.”

-Gerry Horkan, 2018-19 Vice President and Co-Chair of the Search Committee, Board of Trustees

“DAN IS THE RARE LEADER who effectively presents foundational values and strong moral fiber, but without arrogance or presumption of demanding his own way. He’s also shown up at multiple sports games, musical events, and other activities as a genial spectator and friend of the school. He’s been an ideal interim head, and we’re so lucky to have had him with us this year.”

-Bob Peck, Board of Trustees

“When searching for an interim head, we knew we needed a special talent who shared Crystal’s values. Having spent the past year working closely with Dan Miller, I couldn’t be happier. Crystal has been incredibly fortunate to have Dan’s experienced leadership, strategic insights, and sense of humor to guide us. Under his leadership, Crystal has enhanced the student experience, advanced our goal of One Crystal on two campuses, increased endowment for financial aid, made key hires, and prepared for a smooth leadership transition to our new Head of School.”

-Julia Davidson, 2018-19 President, Board of Trustees

PHOTOGRAPH BY DELBARR MORDADI
Welcome
Kelly
Sortino
CRYSTAL'S
NEXT
HEAD
OF
SCHOOL
Kelly Sortino will begin her eleventh year of service at Crystal as the Head of School in 2019-20. The Crystal community is excited to welcome Kelly to her new role. She is a proven visionary leader who has worked tirelessly to deliver a top-quality educational program while continuing to improve the student experience. Kelly is an enthusiastic participant in the life of Crystal at every level, whether dancing in the annual Faculty Lip Sync or answering questions in the Knowledge Bowl. In this respect, Kelly is not unlike your average Crystal student—she brings a keen intellect combined with a high-level of engagement to everything she does! To celebrate her new role, we asked her to name some of her favorite things about Crystal, in no particular order.

**INSPIRING FACULTY**
Whether analyzing a passage with Ms. Chang’s English students, conducting an experiment alongside 7th grade scientists and Mr. Gummerson, or making interesting connections to primary documents in Mr. Holubar’s history classes, my favorite part of the week is when I get to drop by classrooms to see our amazing faculty in action.

**AUTHENTICITY OF STUDENTS**
I appreciate the fact that Crystal students pursue a vast array of interests, not to pad resumes, but because of a genuine interest and intellectual excitement. It’s not unusual for me to talk to students about a wide range of topics from ornithology to intersectional feminism.

**LIP SYNC**
As a former dancer, nothing beats watching every grade level come together to showcase their creativity, collaboration, and school spirit in this annual tradition. (I can also say that the faculty deserves to win first place every year!)

**CORE VALUES**
I use our Core Values (scholarship, growth challenges, kindness and inclusion, balance, enthusiasm, and humility) to tell potential applicants (both students and faculty) what makes Crystal so magical.

**THE GENEROSITY OF PARENTS AND ALUMNI**
I am constantly blown away by the way our parents and alumni give back as through the Crystal Fund, Gryphon Gala, and the Alumni Red & Blue Challenges; the latter even inspired the Alumni Red & Blue Challenges; the latter even inspired the Alumni Red & Blue Challenges; the latter even inspired the Alumni Red & Blue Challenges. Whether analyzing a passage with Ms. Chang’s English students, conducting an experiment alongside 7th grade scientists and Mr. Gummerson, or making interesting connections to primary documents in Mr. Holubar’s history classes, my favorite part of the week is when I get to drop by classrooms to see our amazing faculty in action.

**Genuine Student/Teacher Interactions**
Our faculty really know and care deeply for their students. I know it means a lot to our students that they have faculty members in their corner rooting for them during every step of their Crystal journeys.

**Dogs on Campus**
I enjoy bringing my dog, Brownie, to school most days and also enjoy seeing students smiling when they encounter a faculty pup.

**Knowledge Bowl**
Tom Woosnam hosted his best Alex Trebek impression during this annual trivia competition in which the final round is always the faculty versus the winning student team.

**Fabulous Facilities**
Whether taking in the beautiful canyon views while sitting in Expansion Hall in the Middle School or simply standing in the Upper School Mansion Ballroom and breathing in the glory of every precious detail of decor, I am constantly pinching myself that I get to work in such inspiring facilities.

**8th Grade Hall Talks and Senior Projects**
I really enjoy seeing these culminating “capstone” opportunities for our graduating 8th and 12th graders to display their passions for a project, topic, personal value, or essential question.

**Commitment to Continual Improvement**
Whether on issues of equity and inclusion, innovation and tradition, or rigor and balance, we never rest on our laurels and always push ourselves to be better.

**Doc Ingersoll Golf Tournament**
The avid golfer in me can’t help but get competitive (especially when some talented middle schoolers out-drive me!) during this annual “fun”draiser that supports Crystal athletics and co-curricular teams.

**Laughter at Lunch Tables and in Classrooms**
Walk through the Middle and Upper School cafeterias at lunchtime and you’ll notice the outbursts of laughter rippling from table to table. The same is true when walking by classrooms. I love that Crystal is a place where we take academics seriously without taking ourselves too seriously.

**Did you know that at least 80% of Jobs are landed through**
Networking
That is an enlightening statistic, particularly when paired with the finding that a job seeker who is referred is up to 14 times more likely to be hired than someone who applies without a referral. Finally, it has become common practice for a person to changes jobs 10 to 15 times (with an average of 12 job changes) during their career.

Crystal Connects, our online networking platform, has over 400 members and growing. This is the best place to seek career advice, find internships and jobs, or connect with some of the best and brightest—Crystal alumni, current and alumni parents, and faculty and staff.

The more Crystal community members who join and engage on the platform, the more powerful and valuable this resource will become.

Janice Law Wong ’99 wrote about recent interactions with alumni on Crystal Connects: “Corresponding with young alums reconnected me to my alma mater on the most human and personal level. I was eager to provide guidance on decisions and feelings I could have similarly used decades ago. Crystal Connects provides a platform for alumni to assist each other with opportunities, career exploration, and so much more, by seamlessly linking generations who are anchored by a shared educational experience.”

To register: go to https://csus.peoplegrove.com
If you visit the Middle School in the late morning on Wednesdays, there’s a good chance that things are going to be very quiet and still...
that’s because the entire Middle School will be reading for a set period, from 11:15 to 11:45 am, known as DEAR, short for Drop Everything and Read (a student also pointed out that DEAR is an anagram for READ). Middle School Dean of Students Lizzie Rogal explains, “Life at our Middle School is adventurous, fast-paced, and exciting. As we ‘strive for balance’ in all that we do, we are grateful for the 30 minutes each week when we DEAR. It’s truly magical to walk through our buildings during DEAR: everyone—students and adults—is reading. It’s quiet, contemplative, and cozy. DEAR is an opportunity for us to take a break, be intentional about our time, and sink into a good book.”
Charles Wilson ’93 has taken a rocket ship ride from East Palo Alto to Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge.

CHARLES WILSON

Alumni Changemaker
by Erin Peterson

IN 2014, WHEN CHARLES WILSON ’93 was sworn in as a Superior Court Judge in Santa Clara County, he became the second-youngest judge in California. A remarkable accomplishment for anyone, the achievement was particularly sweet for Charles.

He grew up in East Palo Alto, an economically disadvantaged neighborhood that was known as the nation’s “murder capital” in 1992. He knew with razor-sharp clarity what the burden of low expectations looked like.

Again and again, Charles defied those expectations. He found ways to open himself up to growth, and to maintain his sense of empathy and fairness. He made sure that his background and ways to open himself up to growth, and to maintain his sense of empathy and fairness. He made sure that his background and experiences would always be assets, not liabilities.

Charles might have followed a different path if it hadn’t been for his mother. She understood early on that her son had enormous potential, but she also knew that he needed a better curriculum and guidance that were beyond what he was getting from his neighborhood public school. She saw an opportunity for her son to walk a tightrope, because he felt the color of his skin made it more likely that any poor decision that he made would be judged harshly. “I was well aware of the academic rigor that came with going to a [place like Crystal],” he says. “I had mentally prepared myself for that challenge, but I also had to prepare myself socially. I had gone to a school where African-American and Latino students made up the majority of the population, and suddenly, I was part of the minority. I didn’t really know what that meant before I went into it.”

While Charles struggled at Crystal initially, he eventually found his footing. Required activities that he at first resisted, such as the arts and music, ultimately gave him confidence that he could successfully pursue almost anything that felt new and unfamiliar.

He became known for his steady, thoughtful presence on campus. Longtime friend Assad Waathiq ’95 says he often counted on Charles to be the voice of reason during what felt like a tumultuous adolescence. “There are literally countless numbers of times when Charles was the voice next to me—or in the back of my head—reminding me of the consequences associated with bad choices,” he says. “For some of us, he has been our True North.”

After graduating from Crystal, Charles didn’t let up. He had an inkling that he might go into law, and he methodically pushed ahead so he could land a job in civil practice. He earned a bachelor’s degree from UCLA, then went on to earn a joint JD/MBA degree from the University of San Francisco.

His first job out of law school, working for a firm that represented pharmaceutical and medical device companies on product liability issues, put him on clear path to success. He just needed to follow it. But his job also made him realize he was suited for a different type of legal role. “So much of the work was office-oriented. I was doing medical records reviews and settlement conferences,” he says. “I wanted to be in the courtroom.”

So he made a pivot, joining the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office as a deputy district attorney. The work could hardly have been more different from his previous role. Suddenly, he was taking on cases ranging from property crimes to homicide.

Although the work could be draining and demoralizing at times, it was also a way for him to make a real difference to the people who needed it most. He realized that he wasn’t like a lot of other attorneys, and that gave him an advantage. “Many people who enter these fields never lived in an environment where people were struggling economically. They don’t always understand how the things that happen in these communities can put you at a disadvantage,” he says.

He knew, for example, that someone who lived in a neighborhood where crime was common might hesitate, for fear of retaliation, to testify about something illegal that they’d witnessed. Having lived in similar neighborhoods, Charles has the ability to share both the larger value of their testimony and pair it with the empathy he’s gained from living in circumstances like theirs. “I think it makes a difference when you’re from a similar community and you’re sitting down with victims and witnesses,” he says. “They saw that I respected their concerns.”

After just seven years as a deputy district attorney, a blink of an eye for many lawyers, Charles was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown as Superior Court Judge in Santa Clara County. Crystal’s Alumni Liaison, John Draper, who first met Wilson as a prospective student in sixth grade, and has followed his life and career since then, says the role couldn’t have gone to a better person. “He’s honest, he’s polite, he’s no BS,” says John. “With Charles, what you see is what you get. He’s tremendous.”

In his years as a judge, Charles has overseen challenging cases, including murders and assaults, for which he fastidiously seeks a fair process. But the cases that give him the greatest hope are those in which he creates an inflection point that leads to improvements.

‘For some of us, he has been our True North’

“When a defendant comes in who has underlying drug or mental health issues, sometimes I can fashion a resolution that allows them to get treatment,” he says. “And if I see them a year later as a completely different person, that’s powerful. You know your efforts and investments in them have helped put them in a better place.”

It is Charles’ desire to find ways to give people a helping hand, even those in the most difficult circumstances, that continues to connect him to the kid he was in East Palo Alto. “There are so many kids who grew up next to me who were charming and bright and could have done so many things in this world. The difference was that they didn’t have the support at home and at school like I did,” he says. “This path and this life have been a gift, and I want to make changes so that my story won’t be the exception to the rule.”

Charles was recognized as the CSUS 2018 Alumnus of the Year for his service and generosity to the greater community and to the school. He will be joining the Crystal Board of Trustees and his son, Charlie, will be joining the CSUS Class of 2026 as a sixth grader this fall.
It’s been three years since we gathered campus dogs for a community favorite: The Canines of Crystal photo spread. You can always find several furry friends on both campuses, some of whom are classroom fixtures, office mates, study buddies, or just a fun distraction from the stresses of the day.

This spread is dedicated to Ahmay, the first dog to become a daily campus visitor in Peter Kovas’ Comparative Cultures classes. Ahmay was a trailblazer who showed that dogs could be an asset in the environment while establishing ground rules for those who followed. Peter writes, “Ahmay, or Aamé, was a Gray Labrador who lived for 14 years. She first started coming to Crystal in January of 2005. Her last day at CSUS was in April of 2016 so she had an 11-year run. She went on over 15 Outdoor Club excursions. She served as an unofficial therapy dog for CSUS 9th graders, many of whom would stop by in later years to pet her before a test or a quiz. She loved running around and swimming with our students.”

The spread is also dedicated to Buster, Rob Cannone’s dear friend, who participated in the current photo shoot and later passed away near the end of April, after a long and happy life.

“You can say any foolish thing to a dog, and the dog will give you a look that says, ‘Wow, you’re right! I never would’ve thought of that!’”

Dave Barry

Ahmay Kovas
“If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went.”

WILL ROGERS

“Outside of a dog, a book is man’s best friend. Inside of a dog it’s too dark to read.”

GROUCHO MARX

“Every dog has his day, unless he loses his tail, then he has a weak-end.”

JUNE CARTER CASH

CLEO
CSUS PARENT: FRANCE ENRIQUEZ
DEPARTMENT: UPPER SCHOOL ASSISTANT
BREED: YELLOW LAB
AGE: 10 YEARS

ROXY
CSUS PARENT: ANDREA EDWARDS
DEPARTMENT: ALUMNI RELATIONS
BREED: CHIHUAHUA/PUG
AGE: 6 YEARS

SAM
CSUS PARENT: MEAVE WARD
DEPARTMENT: UPPER SCHOOL ATHLETICS
BREED: SHEPHERD/TERRIER MIX
AGE: 2 YEARS

DUKE
CSUS PARENT: CHRIS SCHÖBERL
DEPARTMENT: HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL
BREED: CANEM ANTIQUIS
AGE: 14 YEARS

LULU
CSUS PARENT: KRISTY COWAN
DEPARTMENT: ADVANCEMENT
BREED: HAVANESE
AGE: 6 YEARS

SCOUT
CSUS PARENT: LIZZIE ROGAL
DEPARTMENT: MIDDLE SCHOOL DEAN OF STUDENTS
BREED: WELSH TERRIER
AGE: 1.5 YEARS

CLEMENTINE
CSUS PARENT: TODD LANAM
DEPARTMENT: FINE ARTS
BREED: BASSET HOUND
AGE: 4 YEARS

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DEPARTMENT: ADVANCEMENT
BREED: HAVANESE MIX
AGE: 4 YEARS

ROXY
CSUS PARENT: ANDREA EDWARDS
DEPARTMENT: ALUMNI RELATIONS
BREED: CHIHUAHUA/PUG
AGE: 6 YEARS

RUBY
CSUS PARENTS: DAN AND JOANNA MILLER
DEPARTMENT: INTERIM HEAD OF SCHOOL AND UPPER SCHOOL ENGLISH
BREED: BEAUTIFUL MUTT
AGE: 9 YEARS

SAM
CSUS PARENT: MEAVE WARD
DEPARTMENT: UPPER SCHOOL ATHLETICS
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Tait Wade, Director of Equity and Social Justice, has witnessed a sea change in how Crystal creates a culture of inclusion. “Our approach extends beyond checking boxes and celebrating ‘heroes and holidays.’ While community events and celebrations are certainly important, our goal is to make inclusion, equity, and social justice the water in which we swim. Our ultimate goal is that every student and adult on campus feels at home at Crystal in every sense of the word.”

A good example is the recent work of the Gender Inclusion Task Force. According to Tait, “We found ourselves reacting to requests for support from families with students who are transitioning*. By forming the task force, we became proactive in developing policies, practices, and protocols to create spaces—both literal and virtual—that are accessible, safe, and comfortable for all of our students. As an institution, we did not want the burden of advocacy...
and proposing solutions to always be the responsibility of transgen-
der and non-binary students and their families.” (“To understand
more about transitioning and other gender-related terms, see the
sidebar about “The Language of Gender.”)

The school now has all-gender bathrooms in each building and
plans to complete an all-gender locker room in the Gryphon
Center this summer. Any student can opt for gender-inclusive
housing during retreats and trips, which means that both students
who identify as non-binary and their allies can room together if
they choose. This shift in housing has had, perhaps, the largest
impact by making the day-to-day experience of overnight trips
less stressful for many students.

“We have also made our infrastructure and support system much
more comprehensive and fluid,” Tait notes. For example, we make
it a priority to communicate a student’s preferences throughout the
community. A student’s name or gender can be updated immedi-
ately everywhere it appears: on rosters, databases, and the like. It
may sound like a minor change, but it underscores how the school
is making the recognition of gender preferences an institutional
priority. We raise awareness and signal our values when everyday
processes receive heightened focus.

Additionally, faculty and staff receive ongoing professional
development regarding equity and inclusion. Tait believes that
professional development is a key factor in propelling institutional
change whether it is taking administrators to a White Privilege
Conference, training faculty and staff in “Gender 101” workshops,
or bringing in experts to develop “equity as excellence” and
diversity-responsive teaching practices.

What Tait views as one of the most important priorities for schools
in terms of social justice and equity is “having difficult conversa-
tions across difference.” She explains, “We need to become more
comfortable talking about race and racial identity, which will only
happen if we have a set of skills and the mindset to have the diffi-
cult discussions. As adults, we must be willing to model vulnerabil-
ity and experience discomfort.” Getting to difficult conversations
involves helping students understand their own identities, appreci-
ate the difference in others, and engage in civil discourse.

DIVERSITY DAY: STUDENTS LEAD
DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS

Now, more than ever, students are the voice of advocacy and change
on campus. Diversity Day is an annual event in which
ninth graders participate in various workshops organized and led
by older students, many of whom are members of the Diversity
Committee, a student-run club. Tait explains, “One of the main
purposes of Diversity Day is to create space for students in our
community who may not feel like this space or this school is for
them. Whether it’s the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, so-
cioeconomics, family structure, religion, ability, or culture—if you
are not in the majority, it can be hard to feel like you belong. Our
goal is to name and talk about some of these issues so those who
are not in the majority can be seen and heard, and so those in
the majority can figure out ways to be allies and make space for every-
one in our community.”

The range of the 2019 Diversity Day workshops illus-
trates the complexity of issues our students face. Here
is a partial list of the student-led workshops:

**INTERSECTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH**
We will explore how diverse backgrounds affect mental
health. Through a combination of mental health statistics,
examination of expectations within communities, and
student contributions, we will take a deep dive into how
various aspects of your identity can contribute to your men-
tal wellness. We will discuss topics such as family history,
ethnicity, medical discrimination, societal expectations,
and stereotypes.

**LGBTQ+ IN THE MEDIA**
Our goal is to raise awareness of the LGBTQ+ community,
educate about how stereotyping can be harmful, and talk
about LGBTQ+ representation in the media. We will go over
terminology, basic definitions, and some history. We will
end with an engaging activity about representation in the
media and stereotypes. With more discussion about the
topic of gender and sexuality, we can work towards making
Crystal a more inclusive place.

**DOUBLE STANDARDS IN RACE**
Throughout this class, we will engage in hands-on activi-
ties, look at U.S. statistics, and even a play board game.
Race is a topic that can immediately turn people off, but
we hope to change that dynamic. In this workshop, we
will break down what race and racism mean (and do not
mean), explore how power and privilege impact multiple
races, and other aspects of identity.

**SOCIOECONOMICS AT CRYSTAL**
With tuition increasing and just under 25% of our student
body receiving financial aid, the socioeconomics of Crystal
is an extremely relevant topic. Our workshop will focus on
money distribution and inequality in America as a whole as
well as the wealth within the Crystal community. We will be
doing activities such as a wealth simulation to allow you to
experience a lifestyle that may be different from your own,
and a discussion of the climate surrounding socioeconomi-
cs at Crystal.
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT TAKES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

“The Upper School Human Development curriculum centers on our students’ social and emotional wellbeing and an imperative to engage students meaningfully with others, including direct interaction with issues which may cause discomfort or challenge their assumptions. By devoting time and attention to these skills and experiences, we will graduate more self-aware, socially and intellectually engaged, and open-minded citizens who know what matters to them, so that they may navigate their lives with intention and joy and become agents of change.” (www.csus.org)

“The Middle School’s Human Development program supports students’ social-emotional growth through experiences that cultivate a just and inclusive community, focusing on skills of cultural competence, self-awareness, empathy, and social action. Our goal is to help students learn and practice life skills needed to be productive and fulfilled citizens. Human Development students will be able to connect their individual identity to a growing awareness of the world around them. Students will have opportunities to connect meaningfully with others through an integrated community engagement program.” (www.csus.org)

Crystal’s Human Development (HD) Program has been in existence for two years. Through the program, students address essential questions such as the following:

Who am I as an individual?
What does it mean to be a citizen in a community?
What are the various factors that shape the identity and experiences of others?
Who am I as a leader?

Several dedicated HD Days take place throughout the school year with on-campus programs and off-campus service work with nearly 30 community partner organizations. The off-campus community engagement days provide an understanding of critical issues affecting our community and various approaches to addressing those issues. Whether it is 6th graders growing food in our community garden for Second Harvest Food Bank, 11th graders working with students with disabilities at partner schools and during Special Olympics events, or 12th graders designing and teaching “Great Start!” activities for the Middle School, students are stepping out of their comfort zones, learning from community partners and organizations, and reflecting on the world outside of Crystal. As Tait explains, “The goal of the HD program is not necessarily to steer students toward a particular issue or approach to community engagement. Some students connect more deeply with academic and intellectual implications of the issues we explore, some find fulfillment in the new relationships they develop, and some look beyond the partnerships we have established as a school to pursue a personal passion. In the end, we want all students to gain a critical understanding of the many ways in which they can contribute purposefully to the Crystal community and the world at large.”

2018-19 Human Development Community Partners

Arbor Bay
ASPCA
Avalon Academy
California Native Garden Foundation/The Middlebrook Center
Code Tenderloin/Walking Tour
De Colores
Fitzgerald Marine Reserve
Holy Family Day Home
Huckleberry Youth Program
Muttville
Pacifica Beach Coalition
Peninsula Family Service
Project Open Hand
San Mateo Center for Independent Living
Second Harvest Food Bank
SF-Marin Food Bank
Shanti Project
Special Olympics
St. Anthony’s
St. Francis Living Room
St. Vincent de Paul
Sunrise Senior Living - Belmont
Sunrise Senior Living - San Mateo
Tandem
There With Care
Wings Learning Center

PHOTOGRAPHS 2+3 BY DELBARR MORADI
UPPER SCHOOL STUDENT CLUBS: LEADING WITH HUMILITY

The Student Government, along with Head of Upper School, Kelly Sortino, created a shared definition of leadership, "The dynamic by which a person (leader) catalyzes the group to achieve more than the individuals alone can achieve," as well as the following credo:

We believe leadership is a learned skill and that leaders must continually grow in their practice. It is the result of an individual's actions and attitudes, not their titles; leaders must set the example. Specifically, we believe that leaders are constantly using and developing the five competencies needed for leadership: communication, group process, management, self-awareness, and human relations.

Kelly notes, "In 2018-19, we had 61 Upper School clubs. What is unique about clubs at Crystal is that they are 100% student-created, student-led, and student-run. Faculty sponsors take attendance and provide guidance when asked, but mainly watch from the sidelines as students take the leadership reins."

The purpose of Upper School clubs run the gamut, including the arts, athletics, STEM, business, gaming, culture, politics, and more. Also, many clubs have a service, philanthropic, or advocacy mission.

For this feature, we are highlighting some of the service and advocacy clubs in which student leaders develop a sense of belonging and purpose outside of the classroom. For example, groups such as the Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA), Keep it Real Affinity Group, Diversity Committee, Women Driving Change Club, and the Asian Culture Club provide opportunities for students to explore themselves, learn about others, and make connections across difference. Other clubs, such as the Green Team, We the Children, Helping Hands, and Days for Girls raise funds for and awareness about issues and people in need.

The Green Team focuses on making the Upper School campus more environmentally friendly or “greener.” Their three primary projects are to restore and maintain the CSUS garden, enhance waste sorting, and reduce food waste and electricity/water/paper usage on campus.

The Diversity Committee explores issues surrounding diversity and inclusion within the Crystal community. Their goal is to create awareness and increase advocacy by organizing events, such as Diversity Day and the MLK Assembly, which provide opportunities for students to speak freely and have a voice for social justice and equity.

The Women Driving Change Club focuses on intersectional feminism and community advocacy, including issues about gender equality, women in the workforce, sexual harassment, and education for women globally, as well as other social justice issues including sexuality, gender identity, and race. The group held a one-day conference on intersectional feminism featuring women leaders from a variety of backgrounds.

The Helping Hands Club supports a variety of organizations in the greater community by raising funds or collecting resources, such as a patient kit project for families at the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital.

We the Children Club raises money and awareness for youth-related causes including education, water security, health, and opportunity. Their main event was a dance and games night for local children with special needs.

Crafts for Causes members give back through creative activities. This year, through the Memory Project, they created portraits for youth around the world who have faced substantial challenges such as neglect, abuse, loss of parents, and extreme poverty. These portraits help the children feel valued and important, knowing that many people care about their wellbeing, and act as meaningful pieces of personal history in the future.
The power of language to shape our perceptions of other people is immense. Precise use of terms in regards to gender can have a significant impact on demystifying many of the misperceptions associated with gender. However, the vocabulary of gender continues to evolve and there is not universal agreement about the definitions of many terms. Nonetheless, here is some working language and examples of frequently used (and misused) terms. We offer them as a starting place for dialogue and understanding, which begins by clarifying how we are using various terms, rather than asserting that they represent the final or only definition of the various terms.

**Affirmed Gender** An individuals’ gender self-identification, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Gender Binary** A system that constructs gender according to two discrete and opposite categories: boy/man and girl/woman. It is important to recognize that both cisgender and transgender people can have a gender identity that is binary.

**Gender Expression** This is our “public” gender. How we present our gender in the world and how society, culture, community, and family perceive, interact with, and try to shape our gender. Gender expression is also related to gender roles and how society uses those roles to try to enforce conformity to current gender norms.

**Gender Fluid** People who have a gender or genders that change. Gender fluid people move between genders, experiencing their gender as something dynamic and changing, rather than static.

**Gender Identity** A person’s innermost core concept of self which can include boy/man, girl/woman, a blend of both, neither, and many more. Gender identity is how each person perceives themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be consistent with, or different than, their sex assigned at birth. The language a person uses to communicate their gender identity can evolve and shift over time, especially as someone gets older and has access to a broader gender vocabulary.

**Gender Role** The set of functions, activities, and behaviors commonly expected of boys/men and girls/women by society.

**Gender-Expansive** An umbrella term used for individuals that broaden their own culture’s commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender-expansive individuals include those with transgender and non-binary identities, as well as those whose gender in some way is seen to be stretching society’s notions of gender.

**Genderqueer** An umbrella term to describe someone who doesn’t identify with conventional gender identities, roles, expression and/or expectations. For some, genderqueer is a non-binary identification, and for others it is not.

**Intersection** Also referred to as Differences of Sexual Development. About 1% of children are born with chromosomes, hormones, genitalia and/or other sex characteristics that are not exclusively male or female as defined by the medical establishment in our society. In most cases, these children are at no medical risk, but most are assigned a binary sex identity that is “opposite” or “across from” the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Trans Girl** A child who was assigned a male sex at birth and has a girl gender identity.

**Transgender** Sometimes this term is used broadly as an umbrella term to describe anyone whose gender identity differs from their assigned birth sex. It is also used more narrowly as a gender identity that reflects a binary gender identity that is “opposite” or “across from” the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transgender** An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed, or seek to change, their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries. Unlike transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word transgender.

**Transgender** A term commonly used to include one or a transgender, agender, or non-binary person takes in order to align aspects of their life to be consistent with their gender identity. This term can be misleading, however, as it implies the person’s gender is changing from one gender to another in actuality the person’s gender remains relatively stable. It is others’ understanding of that gender that shifts. What people see as a “transition” is actually an alignment in one or more dimensions of the individual’s gender, as they seek congruence across those dimensions. A transition is taking place, but it is often those associated with the person (parents and other family members, support professionals, employers, etc.) who are transitioning in how they see the individual’s gender, and not the person themselves. Thus we prefer the term seeking congruence or congruence measures. A person can seek congruence in any or all of the following ways: social congruence—through changes of social identifiers such as clothing, hairstyle, gender identity, name and/or pronouns; hormonal congruence—through the use of medicines such as hormone “blockers” or cross hormones to promote gender-based body changes; surgical congruence in which an individual’s body is modified through the addition or removal of gender-related physical traits; and legal congruence through changing identification documents such as one’s birth certificate, driver’s license, and passport.

**Transphobia** Fear, dislike of, and/or prejudice against transgender people.

**Transsexuality** An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed, or seek to change, their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries. Unlike transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word transgender.

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Chris Bischof ’88 has built a school where every single student excels, despite difficult circumstances.

CHRIS BISCHOFF

88
Alumni Changemaker
by Erin Peterson

Chris Bischof ’88 long assumed he’d become a teacher. While he was at Stanford, he participated in a handful of tutoring and teaching programs in East Palo Alto schools that he loved. He was moved by his students’ curiosity and thoughtfulness, and dispirited by the educational opportunities that were offered to them. If he were a teacher, he knew he could make a difference in many of their lives.

But at some point, he and fellow Stanford grad, Helen Kim, began to think bigger than the classroom. What if they didn’t become teachers leading classrooms to transform students, but instead became founders of a school to transform a community? What if they could build a culture where every student was expected to go to college, even if none of their family members had ever gone?

Somewhere in the tumult of teaching, that vision, which would ultimately become the fuel that powered Eastside College Preparatory School, was born. It would take years before the school officially started in 1996, and its first “campus” was a picnic table in a park. Eventually, they acquired a small house, then trailers and mobile classrooms. Finally, a decade in, they secured a campus of their own.

In its own way, Crystal served as a template for the education he hoped for his students: rigorous, supportive, and laser-focused on preparing students for college. Day by day, a small group of Eastside teachers and administrators built more than a curriculum: they built a culture. “Students here work together to support each other. Students feel it and teachers feel it: It takes a long time to develop that, but now the college-going culture is so strong that it’s almost tangible,” says Chris.

Chris is the first to admit that those first years weren’t easy. The school started with just eight students, no campus, and a shoestring budget—found its footing. But it was a mission that would sustain them during even the toughest times. “It was definitely a leap of faith,” Chris says. “But we were extremely motivated. We were going to do everything in our human capacity to make this work.” It has. But more on that in a moment.

Long before Chris was dreaming up the idea for an ambitious new school in an economically depressed area, he was surprising his peers and teachers at Crystal. History teacher Kent Holubar says he might not have predicted Chris’s exact trajectory, but his approach to tough problems has been consistent since high school.

When Chris wanted to improve his basketball skills, Kent recalls, he didn’t join an expensive coaching camp. Instead, he found the best players in East Palo Alto who would practice with him. When he learned those young men didn’t have a clue about college admission, he started a tutoring program for them. “What stands out to me is his willingness to take the logical next step, no matter how daunting it appears,” Kent says. “He’s got a kind of crazy courage.”

She recalls that the year before the school started, when the details of Eastside still felt fuzzy, Chris sat in the living rooms of every single prospective family. He carefully laid out the vision and purpose of the school. “He [showed] families how hard he would work for the success of each student,” she says. “Building those relationships, establishing trust, and following through each day is how we started the school.”

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Today, the school boasts nearly 300 students across four grades, almost all of whom are the first in their families bound for college. Students’ college acceptance rate is an eye-popping 100 percent. The college completion rate, 76 percent, is 11 times higher than the national average for first-generation students. Every single penny of the annual budget is raised from private donations, and every student receives a full scholarship. Graduates have gone on to pursue varied careers, from teachers and nonprofit leaders, to researchers for biotechnology companies.

While those numbers would be enough for anyone to rest on their laurels, Chris is fixated on solving the next big problem in the same methodical way he has in the past. He understands now, 22 years in to an idea that has truly changed a community, that college isn’t the finish line.

Instead, he sees his work as helping the school’s students get the education they need to make a smooth transition into a meaningful career they love. “I think I was naive when we started. I thought when we got our students into college, that would be their ticket to a better life,” he says. “But we realize now that it’s important to continue to support them, and to help them get through college and on to a career they can feel good about.”

Chris says that what gives him the most joy is seeing some of his earliest students, who are now in their mid-30s, thriving. “It’s true for teachers and it’s true for me. When you see alumni who may have gone through some ups and downs, who are doing really wonderful things with their lives, that’s what makes it all worth it,” he says. “Knowing you played a little part in that student’s success is really gratifying.”

Chris was recognized as the CSUS 2003 Alumnus of the Year for his contributions to education, families in East Palo Alto, and to Crystal.
Many believe that what one literally carries through life reveals a lot about a person. We asked members of the Crystal Community to open their school bags and share some of their favorite things to tote to and from school.

“I always have treats and toys for my Welsh Terrier, Scout.”

—LIZZIE ROGAL, MIDDLE SCHOOL DEAN OF STUDENTS

“As a year-round gardener, I often carry seeds with me.”

“This is the same lipstick that the ‘Marvelous Mrs. Maisel’ wears.”

Crystal-style!

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DELBARR MORADI
ANNA BERMAN ’23

“I love the rain and carried my yellow umbrella with me every day this year.”

“I have read the entire Harry Potter series nine times and the Half-Blood Prince is my favorite.”

“The Waitress Pie Book combines my love for musicals and baking pies—the perfect combo!”

“I just started learning the harmonica.”

“I bought this bracelet when we visited Kilimanjaro.”

“I am addicted to coconut water!”

ARNAV VYAS ’23

“I love the rain and carried my yellow umbrella with me every day this year.”

“The Waitress Pie Book combines my love for musicals and baking pies—the perfect combo!”

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“The Waitress Pie Book combines my love for musicals and baking pies—the perfect combo!”

“I just started learning the harmonica.”

“I bought this bracelet when we visited Kilimanjaro.”

“I am addicted to coconut water!”
“I’ve worn my Crystal Ambassador name tag on numerous tours, talks, etc. for the last two years.”

KEVIN CARPIO ’19

“Hands down, this is my favorite lip gloss.”

“I wear my sunglasses everywhere.”

“Music is an important part of my life, whether it’s singing, dancing, or listening.”

“Hands down, this is my favorite lip gloss.”

“My new favorite book, Pillow Thoughts, has a great poem for every emotion.”

“I’m known for my earrings.”

“Pillow Thoughts”

KEVIN CARPIO
Crystal Ambassador

MELODY COHEN ’22

“Music is an important part of my life, whether it’s singing, dancing, or listening.”
Tom is originally from Wenham, MA, about a half hour northeast of Boston, and grew up in the house where his parents still reside. He is close to his family and is the oldest of four brothers. Tom attended Phillips Academy, Andover starting in 10th grade and loved the experience, making lifelong friends and thriving in an environment of academic curiosity and depth. He earned a BA in English from the University of Pennsylvania and an MA from Teachers’ College at Columbia University. Prior to Crystal, Tom worked in a residential facility for developmentally disabled adults, and taught English in Japan, at a boarding school in Connecticut, and in charter schools in Harlem.

Tom Huntoon joined Crystal’s Upper School English Department in 2013. He quickly established a great rapport with students and was asked by the Class of 2017 to give their Commencement address. Now that we know what he carries in his bag (see the “What’s in Your Bag?” feature on page 48), the Crystal Magazine asked Tom “11 Questions” to get to know him even better.

Dreams, the collection of vignettes by Akira Kurosawa inspired by the director’s actual dreams. I also appreciate the more low-brow humor of Dumb and Dumber. Few of my pop culture references resonate with students anymore, so I was pleased when a group of sophomores a few years back watched Zoolander in order to get my jokes.

I would choose something long I probably wouldn’t read otherwise, like all of Proust or the Tales of Genji. I would wave my magic wand to preserve existing wild places for people to explore forever.

I enjoy expensive meals out and exploring places through cuisine. A few years ago, I led a Crystal trip to Peru and was blown away by the food in Lima and Cusco, especially trying alpaca for the first time.

I’m also on a quest to find the perfect soup dumpling (Xiaolongbao).

I took a course in Old English a few years ago and became fascinated by words that have evolved over time, such as the word sable for black (from heraldry) and the word rood for a cross or crucifix.

I am fairly relaxed about most rules, but I do get annoyed by unnecessary commas.
Tom Woosnam: Celebrating a Crystal Legend

AT THE END OF THE 2018–19 ACADEMIC YEAR, TOM WOOSNAM will have spent 40 years teaching at Crystal. He started in 1977, the same year boys were admitted, and has made a huge impact on the intellectual and personal growth of thousands of Crystal students. Mr. Woosnam left for a few years to pursue other adventures, but luckily has been back home at Crystal since the early '80s. Mr. Woosnam has taught both physics and mathematics, served as the 12th grade lead advisor, acted in a Crystal drama production (The Drowsy Chaperone), hosted the annual Knowledge Bowl, and shared his love of cinema, theater, and all things Monty Python with his students. Chances are, if you went to Disneyland for an overnight senior trip, Mr. Woosnam was there with you. For many years, Mr. Woosnam filmed the antics of each class from sixth through twelfth grade, compiling a video that featured every student which was shown during grad night. Also a professional actor, Mr. Woosnam was as comfortable on the stage as he was in front of the blackboard, and was always a source of inspiration, no matter the audience. Over 350 alumni, current and former faculty, parents, and friends honored Tom at his retirement party on June 8, 2019.
Experiential Learning in the Middle School

Crystal middle schoolers spend a lot of time doing stuff outside of the classroom whether in a weekly Great Start/Club period, on world language trips, or during the Pursuit of Passion (PoP) Week. Through hands-on exploration, student learning takes off in exciting directions!
Great Start and Clubs

Middle School students enjoy a Great Start or Club every other Wednesday morning. If you walk around campus at the start of the day, you’ll see a hub of activity. Students head off to fish in Water Dog Lake at the base of the adjacent canyon. Rube Goldberg engineers create beautifully complex structures to accomplish simple tasks. The aquaponics and garden crews build sustainable food resources to share with local food banks. Sixth grade mad scientists learn the secrets of the world from twelfth-grade mentors. One can also knit, take photos for the yearbook, throw a pot, and study geopolitics through Model UN.

Unlike traditional classroom learning which can be more didactic, experiential learning is active, often hands-on, and based upon student discovery. There aren’t any right answers. The Great Start/Clubs period gives students a level of ownership in how they spend their time as well as leadership opportunities to devise and run clubs. It’s also a lot of FUN—the number—one word Middle School students use to describe their experience.
World Language Trips

Each year, eighth-grade language learners head out of the country on a week-long cultural and language immersion adventure. This year, French students headed to the “Great White North” in Quebec and Spanish students explored the lush flora and fauna of Costa Rica. (Next year, eighth grade Mandarin students will visit Shanghai.) An important aspect of experiential learning, the student travelers reflect on their experiences in daily blogs which cover the action-packed days. Interestingly, the two trips both featured zip-line tours across terrains (Quebec in snow-covered canyons and Costa Rica in the Cloud Forest), visits to schools and pen pals, and a great deal of enjoyment of local cuisines. In Costa Rica, students also enjoyed cliff diving, white water rafting, sustainable farming, coffee roasting, and a wildlife preserve, among other activities. In Quebec, students enjoyed the circus, learning to be an astronaut, cooking, and dog sledding while also soaking in the cosmopolitan, historical, and aboriginal contexts of the province.
While the 8th graders are away on world language trips, the 6th and 7th graders PoP! The Pursuit of Passion (PoP) Week is a favorite tradition that allows our youngest students to delve deeply into a topic, develop new skills, and have a blast taking a full week away from their classrooms to explore hands-on learning opportunities, venture off campus, and make stuff.

During PoP Week 2019, students created civilizations for an archaeological dig, became stop animation filmmakers, sewed cozy quilts and pajamas, explored the California coast, were immersed in Chinese culture, designed and built beautiful forms, detoxed from all things digital, and much more. Each group enjoyed a mix of on-campus project work and off-campus excursions ranging from trips to the Walt Disney Museum to hikes along the coast to sketching live animals at the zoo. PoP Week activities often seed budding passions, help students develop confidence in their creativity, and serve as bonding time for students and faculty across grade levels.
KAT TAYLOR
Alumni Changemaker

‘Her commitment to the causes she champions has always been 150 percent.’

As CEO of Beneficial State Bank, Kat Taylor ’76 won’t rest until she’s changed banking for the better.

I tried to cancel the meeting, but instead she asked me to move the meeting to her house, where we not only held the meeting, but she invited us to stay for dinner. Her commitment to strengthen the causes she champions has always been 150 percent.”

Kat says there’s much more work to be done, but she remains undaunted. “We need to change the banking system for good,” she says.

Kat’s dedication to the greater good extends to service to Crystal. She has generously given of her time, expertise, and wisdom as a speaker at several school events, including as a panelist for the student-led “Women Driving Change: Passing the Microphone” Conference on intersectional feminism in February 2019.

Kat’s senior portrait in 1976

DURING HER FOUR YEARS AT CRYSTAL, KAT TAYLOR ’76 was unstoppable. She played field hockey and basketball and competed on the debate team. She performed in plays and was voted student body president. She and her classmates felt ready to take on the world.

Despite her achievements, Taylor felt like there was something missing. More than anything, she wanted to support the work of the Civil Rights Movement. She just wasn’t sure how. “I kept trying to figure out how I could play a role,” she says. “But it wasn’t obvious to me—as a middle-class white woman from California—how I could do that.”

Eventually, she came across a Martin Luther King quotation that resonated with her. “He had said that the black community needed to take back its economic power by not using their spending power with anybody who was antithetical to the Civil Rights agenda,” she says. “That was really powerful to me.”

In a way, that sentiment felt personal. Kat’s grandfather had been a CEO of Crocker National Bank, and she spent two of her summer breaks from Harvard working there. King’s quote and her connections helped her see that she could make a positive impact on Civil Rights by helping create a more just financial system.

While earning a joint JD/MBA degree at Stanford, she received advice from Michael Kieschnick [also a parent of a Crystal alum], who later become Jerry Brown’s czar of development. “He said: ‘Get yourself positioned to start a bank one day,’” Kat recalls.

As wild as that seemed at the time—she had no wealth to speak of at that point—she soaked up all the knowledge she could. She landed a job at Wells Fargo, where she learned the ins and outs of cost accounting and middle-market financing. Even when she stepped away from the job to raise her four children, she did an enormous amount of volunteer work in nonprofit governance, sitting on more than a dozen boards and learning finance from a new angle.

In 2004, she was ready to re-examine the advice she had received from Kieschnick decades earlier. By then, she and her husband, Farallon Capital hedge fund founder Tom Steyer, had built significant wealth that they could deploy to make a real impact. But even more than that, they were energized to change the world around them. It might be time, she realized, to make that bank a reality.

While the couple could have funded any number of banking-related initiatives through philanthropy, Kat wanted more than that. “We wanted to be fully on the game board ourselves,” she says. “We didn’t want to be on the sidelines.”

In 2007, they founded what is now Beneficial State Bank. Kat is its CEO.

It may look like any other bank, offering the typical checking and savings accounts, credit cards, and loans, but it could hardly be more different from most of America’s banking behemoths.

Unlike most banks, Beneficial isn’t just under specific obligations to equity shareholders. The organization also has explicit responsibilities to its customers, employees, and communities. For example, three-quarters of their loan dollars go to support initiatives that are inclusive, racially and gender just, and environmentally restorative—think affordable housing or renewable energy. The bank aligns its corporate practices with its larger mission, which includes paying all of its employees at least 150 percent of a living wage. Every year, the bank measures and seeks to improve its greenhouse gas and landfill footprints.

These practices are implemented with a larger strategy in mind, says Kat. “We’re trying to create a playbook so that larger regional banks can adopt it. We want these regional banks to take market share, deposit equity, and human capital from the biggest money-center banks that are locked in place,” she says.

Early signs suggest that Beneficial’s model is having an impact. At least one major regional bank has diverted from fossil fuels and has bumped up its pay to at least $15 an hour for all employees. Moreover, Beneficial is successful in its own right. It recently crossed the billion-dollar mark in assets.

Kat’s passion for the ideas that drive her work are matched by the effort she puts into every initiative she launches. Salvador Menjivar, a former executive director of what is now Beneficial State Foundation, says he is often astonished by Kat’s unrelenting commitment to her work. “A few years ago, Kat fell from a horse and broke her ribs,” he recalls. “I had scheduled a meeting with her to meet a new potential board member for our foundation during the week of the accident. I tried to cancel the meeting, but instead she asked me to move the meeting to her house, where we not only held the meeting, but she invited us to stay for dinner. Her commitment to strengthen the causes she champions has always been 150 percent.”

Kat’s senior portrait in 1976

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THE SENIOR PROJECT

by Alumni Storyteller, Deb Hunt
As an annual rite of passage, Senior Projects began in the 1970s. In 1977, my first year at Crystal, we held a breakfast for seniors in a conference room in the Uplands Building (now the site of the Digital Arts Lab) right before graduation. All seniors and many faculty members sat around a long u-shaped table; we could fit everyone in a relatively small space in those days because an entire senior class was about 30 young women. As part of this tradition, each senior reported on what she had done during the two weeks of "time away from campus," while the rest of the student body took final exams. Each student was expected to have done something worthwhile that would have been difficult to accomplish during regular school hours. Most of these projects...
One Crystal in action

SNOW DAY: our favorite tradition brings both campuses together.

CONVOCATION: a welcoming event for the start of the school year.

LUNAR NEW YEAR BANQUET: a Pan-Asian party for the whole school.

FINE ARTS FESTIVAL: a showcase of talent on the US campus and in the Crystal community.

LIP SYNC: a fun, grade competition.

FUN IN THE SUN: fun, games, and outdoor activities for all students at the end of the school year.

BOW WOW!: dogs visit daily on both campuses.

CRYPHON MASCOTS: Gus and Griff lead our wild activities.

ILLUSTRATION BY CRISTINA SHIN
THE THEME FOR OUR SECOND YEAR on two campuses is One Crystal. One Crystal is our promise to create a united culture, across campuses, in which our close-knit and nurturing community will continue to flourish with two locations and an expanded student body. One Crystal provides opportunities to bring the divisions together through new traditions and old, as well as through 6-12 curriculum mapping and faculty committees, and revamped student leadership opportunities. Sometimes One Crystal is as simple as faculty members visiting and eating lunch with colleagues on the other campus or as complex as the extraordinary Lego models of each campus created by the Upper School Crystal Bricks Club (see sidebar).

Convoication
This new tradition on the first day of school brings the entire Middle School to the Upper School back lawn for an all-school activity, photo, and treat.

A Tale of Two Gryphons
Augustus “Gus” the Gryphon represents the Upper School while Griffin “Griff” the Gryphon is the Middle School mascot.

Snow Day
It’s all fun and fun for all in the annual Snow Day when students and faculty play together. This year, faculty from both divisions teamed up to conquer Palace Games Escape Rooms while the students took over the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts with a flurry of activities (pun intended).

Lip Sync
We tried it separately once, but Lip Sync really is more fun when all the grades, 6-12, compete together. This year, the sixth graders and seniors won their respective divisions as we all shared the same stage once again.

Lunar New Year Banquet
The annual Pan-Asian celebration brings families together on the Upper School campus for one of the biggest events of the year.

Gryphon Gala
The popular community-raising and fundraising extravaganza brings together parents, faculty and staff, and alumni to party on the Middle School Campus.

Music in the Mansion
Formerly known as Great Performances, this concert features accomplished student musicians, singers, and dancers from across divisions.

Gr8Visit
Eighth graders “invade” the Upper School in the fall to hear about high school, get acquainted with the faculty and campus, and have some fun at their future home.

Seniors at the Middle School
As part of their Human Development experience, seniors can opt for various school leadership roles including service as Middle School Club Leaders.

Dogs!
Dogs are welcome on the campuses and several visit both regularly as faculty and staff members commute between the sites.

Faculty Swaps and Student Shadows
There is a constant exchange of faculty between the campuses to meet with colleagues across disciplines, participate in professional development, and visit classrooms. Teachers also shadow students for the day to understand first-hand what a day in the life at Crystal is like from the other side.

Fun in the Sun
Just as we start the school year with the entire student body convening for Convocation on the back lawn of the Mansion, so too we end the year with all 536 gryphons enjoying Fun in the Sun together right before final exams. The Upper School student government hosts all students for an afternoon of bouncy mats, games, music, and treats.

TKaM
Do you remember reading To Kill a Mockingbird for the first time? Eighth grade English teacher Heidi Gruber asked adults on both campuses to help teach this complex novel and then share their experiences with the novel and reading a portion of the book out loud to her students.

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Crystal Bricks Club Creates One Crystal in Miniature
The Upper School Crystal Bricks Club was founded by Pat Nieman ’19 with a goal to use engineering, creativity, and collaboration to undertake a yearlong Lego building project. Their first project was a stunning scale model of the Upper School Mansion, requiring thousands of specially-sourced pieces and hundreds of work hours to accomplish. This model is proudly displayed in the lobby of the Middle School Academic Building and reminds us daily in Belmont of our unique other home in Hillsborough. The club’s follow-up project was a model of the entire Middle School Campus which lives in the Gryphon Center. Finally, the club finished a model of the entire Upper School Campus this academic year. The first two projects won awards at the Bricks by the Bay competitions for most realistic models and the club will go for a third win in summer 2019.

“Crystal Bricks Club creates One Crystal in miniature.”

Where can you see One Crystal in action?

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“Crystal Bricks Club creates One Crystal in miniature.”
Alumni
Faculty Members

CRYSTAL HAS A GREAT TRADITION of graduates coming back to their alma mater to teach, coach, or work on the administrative staff. Sometimes these are short stints, such as to replace teachers on sabbaticals or maternity leaves, and at other times the tenures can span decades, such as with Blyth Coghlan Carpenter ’60, Cindy Wheeler Shanahoe ’74, and Louise Ichinose Bonomo ’79. Alumni bring a unique perspective to their roles on the faculty and staff, having had firsthand experience as a student and an in-depth knowledge of the Crystal community. For this issue, Crystal Magazine conducted a photo shoot with the four alumni who are currently members of the faculty and staff.

Lucy teaches Upper School dance, having taken over the program from her former teacher, Maggie Fongheiser.

Ben currently teaches drama in the Upper School, and has also taught English and playwriting at Crystal.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DELBARR MORADI

SUMMER 2019 CRYSTAL SPRINGS UPLANDS SCHOOL 77
Kirsten Riding Smith ‘90

Kirsten is the Middle School Director of Student Counseling.

Robert Martinez ‘13

Robert is a shop steward for Physics, Engineering, and Technology (PET) and is the Upper School Robotics Team mentor.
Oh what a night! We combined two events into one great party on June 8th. First, over 350 alumni, alumni parents, current and former faculty, and friends honored retiring physics teacher, Tom Woosnam, for 40 years of service at Crystal. Tom’s remarkable legacy was celebrated in the Theater with a mini Knowledge Bowl with faculty versus alumni, the faculty won, by song and video, and with special remarks by Ken Shen ’00 and Head of Upper School (incoming Head of School) Kelly Sortino. After Tom’s party, about 200 revelers from the Classes of 1969-2014 and their guests enjoyed a Reunion dinner in the Mansion.

Becky Davidow Logan ’89
Celebrate her 30th CSUS Reunion this year. Becky is passionate about education and was an elementary school teacher at Phillips Brooks School, where she also taught parent education on topics from diversity to sibling conflict. Becky also served on the Phillips Brooks Board of Trustees.

Cindy Wheeler Shanholt ’74
Celebrated her 45th Crystal Reunion this year. Cindy is a Crystal triple-threat: an alumnus, a former parent, and a former faculty member. She recently retired from Crystal in June 2018 after 26 years as a Mind Body teacher, coach, and advisor. She has also been a choreographer for our theater productions for 28 years. Cindy received the Doc Ingersoll Excellence in Teaching Award in 2012. Cindy served as Crystal’s Alumni Board President in the 1990s and is returning to serve on the board once again this fall. Her three children Vandy, Callie, and Ellie are also Crystal graduates. We are deeply grateful for Cindy’s decades of dedication to and advocacy of Crystal students. For so many, Cindy was the adult on campus from whom they sought guidance, support, and assistance.

Each year the Alumni Board helps select an “Alumna/na of the Year” among all of the classes celebrating significant reunions. The criteria for the award include professional leadership and achievement, civic engagement, and connection to Crystal. This year, we are recognizing two outstanding alumnae for this award.

Becky Davidow Logan ’89 and Cindy Wheeler Shanholt ’74 celebrated their 30th and 45th CSUS Reunion this year. Becky is passionate about education and was an elementary school teacher at Phillips Brooks School, where she also taught parent education on topics from diversity to sibling conflict. Becky also served on the Phillips Brooks Board of Trustees.

At Crystal, Becky has been a thoughtful and dedicated leader, first as a member of and then President of the Alumni Board. As Alumni Board President, Becky helped to professionalize the board, improve alumni engagement programs, and increase communications. Becky now serves on the Crystal Board of Trustees as the Chair of the Committee on Trustees. Her oldest son, Hayden, graduated from Crystal’s Upper School this year while her younger son, Wyatt, just finished eighth grade in the Middle School. We are grateful to Becky for her significant leadership at Crystal.

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REUNION 2019
Elizabeth Dole Hughes passed away in December 2018. She wrote to us earlier in the year that she was thrilled to see two of her 22 grandchildren get married in the summer.

Celia Coghan Lovell writes, “I’m still active with Executive Coaching-Network Inc., focusing on assisting senior executives of private and public organizations to be outstanding leaders. I also do volunteer work in historic preservation and conversation. I would love to connect with any CSUS folks in the DC area.”

Galen Paine writes, “I have a career as a psychologist in private practice and travel for some city culture.” But now I live in a very cosmopolitan town (8,000 people) on an island in the Tongass National Forest. I love to boat the Alaskan waters, walk long distances periodically, and travel for some city culture.

Marion Howard Hochenga writes, “I have been enjoying retirement for five years! I spent a lot of these early years of ‘freedom’ helping out my oldest daughter, a working mom, and her husband with their new family in Arlington, VA. Nora is 5 years old and Hannah is 18 months. I am still painting and I’ve remained active in the Boulder City Art Guild (BCAG) over the last 20 years and currently serve as the VP of the BCAG board.

Ana-Maria Zaugg writes, “I am president of the Friends of the Ichel Museum here in the US. We have our own collection of Guatemalan textiles and from time to time, we do exhibits—educating the public on these stunning weavings. We are doing a major exhibit at the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles which opens July 21st and runs through mid-October (to span Hispanic Heritage Month). There is an opening reception on July 21st 4-6pm. There will be a free Hispanic-oriented Community Day on September 21st with the Smithsonian Museum Day.”

Judy Jerstadt Cater writes, “Retirement continues to agree with Jack and me. I enjoy keeping up with classmates on Facebook and hope to see many of you at our 50th reunion. My youngest grandson, James Henry Holding, joined the family in October 2017. My daughter Jennifer married Nicola Brame in June 2017, and we were delighted to have classmates Dorothy Fletcher, Winnie Homer-Smith, and Stephanie Shooter Trauben join the festivities.

Suki Dennis shares, “I’m still working as an MFT three days a week, while gardening is my sanctuary endeavor. I still enjoy skiing and biking, but less often. I got another golden retriever.”

Melissa Williamson Lockwood is a working psychic in Houston, TX.

Candy Chase Luddy writes, “After a 45-year career in nursing, specializing in cardiac disease and rehabilitation, and lastly in medicare reimbursement, I retired for the third and final time! David and I have been married for 45 years this July. We have three sons and two grandsons, so I remain ‘the Queen.’ We enjoy the family as they all live within five miles as well as traveling.”

Valery Ferguson Lytle writes, “I am a retired Navy Commander, teacher, and online business woman. I now take care of my two granddaughters, ages 7 and 2, and do volunteer work for my local SPCA. My husband John and I will celebrate our 39th anniversary in June 2019!”

Claudia Carnes McCotter writes, “I live in Carmel and work with Sotheby’s International Realty. I would love to reconnect with old friends!”

Lisa Refrem Davis writes, “Another cross-country move landed us in the Tri-Cities in Washington State. I am enjoying teaching fifth grade for four years. Our daughter Rachel begins her freshman year at University of Maine at Orono in August. Jim is a CEO of a healthcare organization.”

Katie Etzlaff Larsen welcomes their third child, Auryn, after helping out my oldest daughter, a working mom, and her husband with their new family in Arlington, VA. Nora is 5 years old and Hannah is 18 months. I am still painting and I’ve remained active in the Boulder City Art Guild (BCAG) over the last 20 years and currently serve as the VP of the BCAG board.

1967

Fennelle Deforest Miller writes, “I am now semi-retired, spending 3–4 months a year on tiny Long Island in the Bahamas. I swim daily, snorkel, fish, scuba dive, and explore the jungle for 18th century ruins. I am very lucky and love my life!”

Amy Peters Aiken writes, “Just a ‘hello’ to all my old friends, wishing you well. My husband, Mike, and I just released his 7th album. If Americana Root music interests you please check it out—Wayward Troubadour—mikeaikenmusic.com. Please reach out if you get to Southern Virginia.”

1981

Faye Gourvitz Gilberd!”

Jennifer Vogt is a Production Executive for Disney and worked on the new “Star Wars Galaxies Edge” at the two WDE parks in Anaheim and Orlando which opened on May 31, 2019. She writes, “Bob Iger [CEO of Disney] gave us a challenge to build the most ambitious land Disney has ever envisioned, and even he said he was ‘blown away.’ Unfortunately, I’ll be missing my Crystal reunion, but I am looking forward to a much deserved break from the insanity of building two theme parks at once; I’m moving the family to Paris, France for a year! Mais oui!”

1989

1990

Jon Fisher, Co-Founder and CEO of CrowdOptic, gave the commencement address for his alma mater, the University of San Francisco School of Management, in December. Jon is also adjunct business professor whose book, Strategic Entrepreneurism, is taught in a number of USF classes. Jon gave a thoughtful and moving speech—check it out on YouTube.

Staci Eisler Cole sent in this photo and writes, “Having lunch with my Crystal friends Johanna Davis Beyer, Missy Gruber Zech, Kerri de Grous Stenson, Elizabeth Herrick Sachs, Kendra Gourvitz Gilberd”

1992

Dara Stecker writes, “My wife Vicky [CSUS Choral Teacher] and I have been enjoying the Valley of the Boom TV series on the National Geographic channel featuring the story of CSUS alum Todd Kristelman ’92 and his early dot.com company theGlobe.com.”

1994

Patrick Nagle lives in Whitefish, MT and has a new real estate business there, PureWest Real Estate.

Deva Schiekowitz Pywyes lives in Long Island, NY with her husband, Michael, and two boys ages 10 and 11. She met Michael in college at Northwestern University. Deva is the Chief Product Officer at Applicaster, an app management platform for media companies.
Reid Tileston encourages everyone to check the Sandbox VR entertainment experience he invested in at the Hilldale Mall in San Mateo. He explains, “It’s like the holodeck—simply the best VR movie quality motion capture with free roaming VR to transform guests into the experience on the planet. We combine real international travel and spending time with my family.”

Chrystle Cu moved her dental practice to a new Cocofloss-inspired space in downtown San Mateo.

Anny Chen wrote to John Draper in August 2018, “Thank you for the little gryphon onesie! Landon is seven months old now and it fits him perfectly!”

Sean Darling- Hammond writes, “I am excited to be entering the second year of my Ph.D. program in public policy at UC Berkeley, and to have competed for my fourth year on American Ninja Warrior. Crystal truly prepares you for a life of athletic and academic excitement!”

Crystal classmates traveled to San Diego in summer 2018 for Eric Loesches’ wedding to Alisha Edmundson. Pictured (l to r): Samantha Birkner ’03, Rachel Shearn ’03, Andrew Loesche ‘01, Tyler Dorman ’03, Jordan Smith ’03, Charley Lanyon ’03, Eric Loesche ’03, Hadley Fellows ’03, Hilary Pollock ’04, Paul Fike ’03, Ryan Shane ’03, Adam Smith ’03, Derek Metzger ’03. Abby Loesch ’11 was in also in attendance and served as a groomsman.

Nick Neely was the 2019 Cum Laude speaker for Crystal’s new inductees. Nick was a student and award¬winner. Retired English teacher and award¬winning poet, Dr. Idris Anderson, sent in this photo with his former student Alex Boyd in Portland. They are pictured at book reading for the anthology, All We Know of Pleasure, which features work by Idris and other noted poets.

Alumni Storyteller, Deb Hunt, shared the news that Emily Goss’ latest film, Snapshots, took home the top prize. Best in Show, at The Female Eye Film Festival in Toronto. Emily also received the Honorary Best Actress Award—past winners include Karen Black, MacKenzie Phillips, and Elizabeth Moss. Snapshots will have its LA theatrical debut July 27th and will be available on demand on August 14.

Michelle Bard wrote, “After attending Duke University to study public policy, I moved to New York city for four years to pursue various business development roles. I moved back to the Bay Area in late 2017 and currently work for Garment and live in the Marina with my boyfriend Rusty and our dog Harper.”

History Dept. Chair, Kent Holubar, was proud to share news of his former student, Brad Ross: “I’m attaching a picture from the J. E. Wallace Sterling Awards for Academic Achievement Ceremony at the Stanford Faculty Club. The event brought together the top 25 students in Stanford’s School of Humanities and Sciences. The students got to choose a mentor from Stanford and a teacher from earlier in their education who’d made a difference in their academic and intellectual life.”

Pictured (l to r): Brad’s Stanford mentor, Prof. Guido Imbens from the Graduate School of Business, Brad, Kent, and Debra Staz, Dean of the Graduate School of Business. Brad is graduating this June with a BS (with honors) in mathematical and computational science and an MS in computer science. He will pursue a Ph.D. at Stanford in economics.
CRYSTAL SPRINGS UPLANDS SCHOOL

Dan Miller, Interim Head of School
400 Uplands Drive
Hillsborough, California 94010-6999

10 Davis Drive
Belmont, California 94002
(650) 342-4175; fax (650) 342-7623
www.csus.org

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Parents of Alumni:
If this periodical is addressed to your child who no longer maintains a permanent address at your home, please email us (alumni@csus.org) with his or her new address. Thank you!