



THE PHOENIX

The Woodhall School Newsletter - Winter 2022



Reflections from Head of School

To The Woodhall School Family:

During a recent Morning Meeting in January when it was clear that the Omicron surge had inveigled itself into The Woodhall School community, the anxiety and frustration among students and adult mentors was palpable. The only thing that seemed certain and consistent was uncertainty and disruption.

The evening before, we had one of the first appreciable snowfalls of the season. (December had been unusually warm.) I chose to read Robert Frost's "A Dust of Snow" to the Gentlemen of Woodhall that morning. We glossed the verb "to rue" to ensure understanding among the students, and then I shared my connection to the poem.

I enjoyed reading Frost's poetry with my late sister, Abby – or, Miss Abby, as the boys called her, when she taught at Woodhall from 1994 until her untimely passing from brain cancer in 2005. I read this poem to her in her final days. By then, the morphine administered to ease her suffering and hasten her death had taken hold, and she was in and out of consciousness. From her bedside, I heard her utter the last word that she ever said to me: "snow."

Given the challenges that we are living through during the pandemic – physical, emotional, psychological, and otherwise – I reminded the boys to be present in their minds, hearts, words, and deeds to the people around them: to nourish their relationships with kindness and respect. At this time, in particular, we can work our way from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset, and we can strive to treat ourselves and others with compassion.

This winter, may the light and warmth of the renewing fires of the Phoenix sustain us.

Respectfully yours,

Matthew C. Woodhall

**"Dust of Snow"
By Robert Frost**

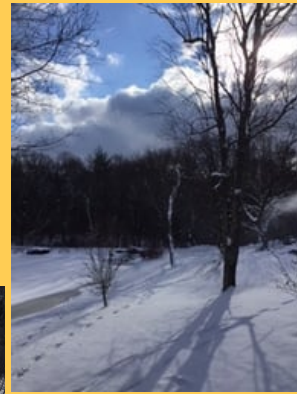
**The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree**

**Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.**

THE PHOENIX

WE ARE BACK!

On September 12th, the student leaders, seniors and adult mentors welcomed both new and returning families to The Woodhall School for the start of our 39th school year. We have embraced a more typical school year in the face of the ongoing pandemic, returning the structure, programming, and traditions that are the hallmarks of our relationship-based approach.



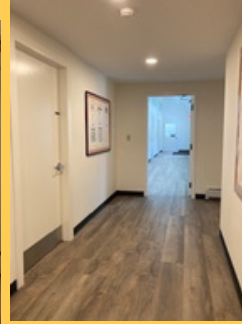
THE PHOENIX

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS AND ADDITIONS

Students and families were greeted with many tangible changes and improvements to the campus upon their return to school, as well as throughout the fall term, starting with the new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Lab, and the fully renovated classroom spaces in Founders Hall.



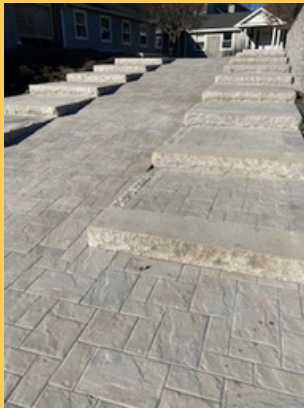
S.T.E.A.M Lab and Classrooms



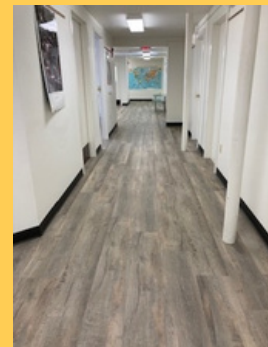
Burn Study Center (new student lounge adjacent to the library)



New walkways in the school's main courtyard



Founders Hall classroom spaces



FALL ACTIVITIES

Soccer

The 2021 soccer season was a rebuilding year for the Woodhall Phoenix. With a substantially new set of players and coaches, we took to the pitch each day trying to hone our rough skills and develop our camaraderie. The team was anchored by senior captains Chas Sterling, a defender, and Avi Skolnick, a goalkeeper. Our offense was led by newcomer Luke Boudouvas, who led Woodhall in scoring this season, and whose elegant footwork often dazzled the crowd. Though we will be losing several key seniors, such as three-year forward Henry Lippman, there is optimism to be found in the many promising underclassmen who will have a chance to lead the team next year. Notable among these is Liam Tilenius, who earned the Coaches' Award for embodying The Woodhall School's ideals of sportsmanship and perseverance. Though we did not notch any victories this season, the players can be proud of the tough battles against Grove School and Oakwood Friends, the two exhilarating matches against the Woodhall faculty, and the many small moments of brotherhood discovered on the field of play this fall.



Cross Country

Fall of 2021 was a rebuilding year for the cross country team. After suffering a lost season last year due to COVID-19, the team was excited to finally have the opportunity to compete in weekly five kilometer races against other schools in the Hudson Valley Athletic League (HVAL). With a small roster and many new runners, we often struggled to accumulate team points against other schools. But, as a whole, the team showed tremendous grit as the season progressed. We finished the season on a high note, with many of our runners earning a personal best at the HVAL Championship meet in early November.



Outdoor Challenge

Fall Outdoor Challenge provided The Gentlemen of the Woodhall School the opportunity to get outside and explore various areas within Connecticut. The team ventured the various trails in Whites Woods and frequented areas that overlooked the beauty of Bantam Lake. On warm fall days, the boys kayaked and canoed on Long Meadow Pond. The season peaked (literally) with the hike up Bear Mountain. The full-day trip gave the boys the opportunity to pace themselves and experience the gratification of reaching the peak of a mountain after hours of hiking. Whether swimming in the Steep Rock Preserve, or getting turned around on new trails, the team was able to come together each day, pack into a bus, and get away from the craziness of boarding school life, at least for a little while.



Parent's Weekend

We were so grateful to be able to celebrate Fall Family Weekend in person and on campus once again. With the backdrop of glorious New England autumn weather, we were able to connect with our shared experiences, build community, and come to understand the Woodhall process.



Alumni Panel - Diego Zablah '09, William Joyce '08, Charlie Reisman '15, Benjamin Kelly '21, Alexander Neuschotz '19, Michael Bernardi '19



Alumnus Diego Zablah '09, wife Camilla, Sally Woodhall





Follow us on

