



THE PHOENIX

The Woodhall School Newsletter - Winter 2023



Reflections from Head of School

To The Woodhall School Community:

“To learn something new, take the same path that you took yesterday.” – John Burroughs

I shared this quotation with the boys recently in Morning Meeting, just as we reached the mid-point of the school year and the winter doldrums had decidedly taken hold. In some ways, I'm grateful for the same old, same old and find assurance in the predictability of our schedule after three years of pandemic-related disruptions.

While there is much that is novel this school year – the dynamic STEM Lab and its related programming and opportunities, the striking pavilion as a new gathering place on campus, and the relationships and energy of new students and adult mentors. We also have returned to what is familiar about Woodhall: our distinct mission and core values which provides the scaffolding for the supportive community culture that celebrates both a playfulness and a willingness to embrace respectful confrontation, even when the process of doing so is uncomfortable and messy.

Some might complain about the sameness of the daily rhythms of school life – the daily schedule of classes, sports, study hall, and the Communications Program – all obligations and responsibilities and seemingly no free time. Yet, here is where we need to heed what Burroughs is saying. In the original context, John Burroughs, the acclaimed naturalist, was reflecting on his daily sojourns in his native Catskill Mountains; nonetheless, we can embrace the essence of mindfulness – that is, being present – in the well-worn paths that we take during our time at Woodhall.

Nothing will change unless we take on our perceived challenges and anticipated delights – work, play, relationships, and reflections – with a new yet informed perspective each day. To be fair, it takes time and trust in a community to cultivate such a mindset. Yet, it is the critical work of the Woodhall process. Whether you are an alumnus, family member, student, or adult mentor, I hope you read with interest the happenings of the school community and learn something new in the familiar paths that you take as you reflect upon and celebrate your Woodhall experience.

Respectfully yours,

Matthew C. Woodhall
Head of School

IN MEMORIAM: DR. JONATHAN WOODHALL - CO-FOUNDER OF THE WOODHALL SCHOOL



With sadness, we share the news of the passing of Dr. Jonathan A. Woodhall, PhD, one of the co-founders of The Woodhall School. He died in Southern Pines, NC on December 20, 2022. Born in Stamford, CT, on February 29, 1940, he was educated at Fairfield College Preparatory School and earned a BA from Mexico City College. Upon his return from Mexico, he began his career in education as a Latin and humanities teacher at Greenwich Country Day School; during these years, he traveled extensively throughout Europe, and he earned a MALS from Wesleyan University.

He married Sally Campbell Woodhall in 1968, and he went on to teach Latin and Religion at Convent of the Sacred Heart in Noroton Heights, CT, and then served as Dean of Studies at Villa Duchesne in St. Louis, MO. In 1974, the Woodhalls returned to Connecticut, where Dr. Woodhall became Assistant Headmaster at The Oxford Academy in Westbrook and then served as Headmaster from 1976-1983. During this time, he earned a PhD in Theology from Fordham University and was also ordained a deacon in the Diocese of Norwich.

In 1983, he and Sally and their three children, Abigail, Sarah, and Matthew moved to Bethlehem to establish The Woodhall School. From 1983 – 1994, Dr. Woodhall served as the first President of the Board of Directors, then Co-Head of School, and finally Director of Development. Affectionately referred to as “Doc” by students and teachers alike, he brought his acumen as a school leader to help establish the administrative foundations of the school in its early years. He was known for his steadfast presence, humor, and engaging manner.

In 1994, he moved to Southern Pines, NC, to become Head of the Upper School at The O’Neal School. Following his deep faith and commitment to serving others, he made the decision to join the full-time ministry. In 1999, he was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in the Diocese of Raleigh, NC. He served as parochial vicar at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Raleigh from 1999-2006. After his retirement, he stayed active in ministry and pastoral outreach and enjoyed many friendships and connections.

Throughout his life, he was an avid reader of literature, history, and religion. He had a love of languages and was fluent in Spanish and proficient in Italian. He relished travel abroad, museums, opera, and theatre.

Dr. Woodhall is survived by his former wife and Founding Head of School, Sally Campbell Woodhall, his two children, Sarah Woodhall Hoffert and her husband, Alex Hoffert, and Head of School, Matthew C. Woodhall and his wife, Jennie Panchoy; six beloved grandchildren and his many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his daughter Abigail J. Woodhall, who was also a beloved teacher and administrator at the school.



ALUMNI NEWS

Ty Kavanaugh '10 - Became engaged to his girlfriend Rachelle, and looking forward to a 2024 wedding. Now that he is out of the Navy, Ty and Rachelle have relocated to California and is working in nursing school while Rachelle is in residency at Keck USC.

WE ARE BACK!

On September 11th, the student leaders, seniors and adult mentors welcomed both new and returning families to The Woodhall School for the start of our 40th 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.



NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

The following new faculty and staff were welcomed to The Woodhall School community:



Alexander Cavacas joins Woodhall after teaching science at Hampshire Country School in Rindge, NH, since 2018. He has extensive experience working in camps and as a field teacher and naturalist. Mr. Cavacas earned both a B.S. in Biology with minors in Physical Science and Spanish and a M.S. in Science in Secondary Education with certification from Eastern Connecticut State University. Mr. Cavacas teaches chemistry, serves as an Outdoor Challenge coach, and is a dorm parent in French Hall, where he lives with his golden retriever, Bailey.

A native of England, Simon Culley has had a diverse career in education. From 2005-2021, he held a variety of roles at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY, including as a STEM and mathematics teacher, dorm parent, and Director of Athletics. Prior to that, he taught STEM classes and physical education at Poughkeepsie Day School and mathematics at two schools in England. Mr. Culley's formal education was in England, where he first earned his City and Guild Certificate in Motor Mechanics and then went on to earn a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering from the University of Portsmouth and a Post graduate Certificate in Education from St. Luke's School of Education at Exeter University. Mr. Culley teaches mathematics, will coach soccer in the fall, and lives in Fleming House.



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Originally from Ireland, **Paraic McGann** comes to Woodhall after teaching STEM classes and mathematics at Wooster School in Danbury, CT. Prior to that, he taught physics and mathematics at Quad Preparatory School in Manhattan from 2016-2019. He earned a B.A. in Physics and Chemistry of Advanced Material from Trinity College Dublin, a Certificate of Economics from Independent College in Dublin, and a LL.M. in Law from National University of Ireland, Galway. Mr. McGann teaches mathematics and physics and will coach soccer in the fall. He lives in Danbury with his wife and daughter.

With over twenty-five years teaching experience in the greater Boston area, **David Ng** most recently served as mathematics teacher and STEM Coordinator at Dana Hall School in Wellesley, MA. He earned a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University and a M.A.T in Mathematics Education from Boston University. He also has engaged in doctoral work in Chemical Engineering at University of California at Berkeley. Mr. Ng teaches mathematics and will develop Woodhall's first STEM program. He resides in Tower Dormitory.



Jamie Gray serves as Head School Nurse. She has extensive school nursing experience, having worked at Forman School, Marvelwood School, Wellspring Foundation, and Litchfield Public Schools. Nurse Gray earned a B.A. in Sociology from Notre Dame University and a degree in nursing from Northwestern Connecticut Community College. A Litchfield native, she lives in that town with her husband and two children.

FALL ACTIVITIES

Soccer

The Woodhall Phoenix finished the 2022 soccer season with a record of 4-5-2. The team battled through a number of hard-fought matches, including two ties against Marvelwood and close losses against Forman and Grove. Against Grove, Luke Boudouvas '24 scored a staggering 7 goals, part of his prodigious offensive output this season. Also emerging as key players were Charlie Goertel '24, our invaluable stopper, and Charlie Jones '24, our goalkeeper. Fin Cook '25 distinguished himself with his dedication to his midfield position. Overall, the Woodhall soccer team had strong contributions from new and returning players, a balance which helped us improve on our previous season and promises success for next year.



Cross Country

Fall of 2022 was a fun season for The Woodhall School cross country team. Along with afternoon practices Monday - Saturday, students had the opportunity to compete in weekly five kilometer races against other schools in the Hudson Valley Athletic League (HVAL). The coaches focused on helping the individual athletes set goals and pushed each boy to build upon their personal best as the season progressed. Compared to recent years, the team saw more success as a group,



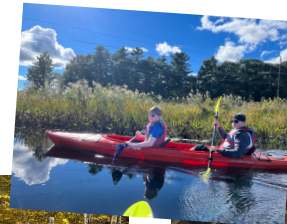
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placing 5th overall at the Darrow Invitational and 7th overall at the Storm King Invitational. As a whole, the team showed tremendous grit as the season progressed, and many of our runners earned a personal best at the HVAL Championship meet at Darrow School in early November.



Outdoor Challenge

Fall Outdoor Challenge explored the greater Litchfield County area and its abundance of trails this season. Students were able to enjoy the change of season with the vibrant fall colors throughout various trails in Litchfield, Roxbury, Bethlehem, and Washington. The team also took on Bear Mountain earlier than any other season so that everyone could enjoy the fall views before the trees dropped their leaves. This season, the team successfully revived the water portion of Outdoor Challenge. Every member of the team participated in either kayaking or canoeing throughout the term. The boys learned skills such as various paddle strokes, portaging, and navigating the scenario of a potential canoe flip, which fortunately did not happen this season.



The Woodhall Woodsmen

The Woodhall Woodsmen aims to give students a sense of agency by engaging them in service to their school. Throughout the year, students work on projects ranging from wood splitting, gardening, painting, and trail management as a means to give back to the community at Woodhall. In addition to their work outdoors, students are given the opportunity to suggest areas of the school where they can lend their many talents such as website creation, monitoring the wildlife trail cameras, and using the STEM. Through hard work, the students can hopefully see the positive change that they themselves have created at Woodhall.



Web Development Club

In the Web Development Club, the boys are learning how to create drawings and animations by programming in JavaScript. They just learned about variables, and we will be going over functions soon. Since the club meets in the STEM Lab, the boys have also been learning how to design 3D models using TinkerCAD so they can use the 3D printer.

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Family 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.



HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS

PAVILION

After delays in the permitting process, the construction of the new pavilion was finally able to commence at the end of the summer. While it is not fully completed, we look forward to connecting as a community within this dynamic space, whether it be for classes, Communications Groups, cookouts, Family Weekends, Commencements, or for an intimate conversation with a student and his mentor. This 1800-square-foot pavilion has a rustic design with bluestone base and will include an outdoor fireplace.



STEM LAB OPEN HOUSE

On Monday, January 30th, an open house was held for The Woodhall School's STEM Lab. Touring in small groups, the boys visited four different locations to learn about the many tools available to them. They learned about the 3D printers, laser cutter, and woodworking hand tools at location 1; the sewing machines and vinyl cutter at location 2; the track saw, miter saw, drill press, cordless drill, cordless impact driver, random orbital sander, and Dremel rotary tool at location 3, and the CNC router, soldering stations, multimeter, and digital oscilloscope at station 4. The members of the STEM Focus Group (Mr. Ng, Mr. Cavacas, Ms. Dibb, Mr. Spaulding, Luke Fischer, Charlie Goertel, Aidan McKee, Rohan Rajan, and Judah Rosner) staffed each location, demonstrating how to use the tools and giving the boys an opportunity to try the tools for themselves. STEM Focus Group will follow up by offering training sessions and workshops so the boys can learn how to use all of the tools safely and responsibly before the STEM Lab's grand opening in April.



Drill press



Table saw



Sewing



Disc drills



Dremel



C&C Router



Vinyl cutter



Logo on slate created with the Glow Forge Lazer Cutter

Woodhall On the Road!

The Woodhall School is traveling to gather with our alumni. We look forward to seeing you at one of the upcoming events!

WASHINGTON D.C.

On Thursday, November 10th, Matthew Woodhall, Head of School and Priscilla Loomis, Director of Advancement, traveled to the Washington D.C. area to gather with TWS alumni and alumni families at the home of Julie and Eric Skolnick, parents of Avi '22. The evening was co-hosted by current parents Riva Mirvis and Daniel Ball, parents of Jonah '24. It was a wonderful evening visiting with so many familiar faces! Thank you to our gracious hosts and all who attended!



NEW YORK CITY

On Thursday, December 1st, Matthew Woodhall, Head of School, and Priscilla Loomis, Director of Advancement, traveled to New York City for a gathering of alumni, alumni parents, current parents, and friends at Melody's Piano Bar, hosted by alumni parent Sondra Neushotz, mother of Alex '19. We had an outstanding attendance, and it was wonderful to see so many old and new faces.



Community Service



The gentlemen of Woodhall dedicated some time to the Bethlehem Food Bank by helping organize and transport donations from the holiday season. A big thank you to Rick for leading us in our work today!



If you are in the San Francisco area the end of February...

**PLEASE JOIN
MATTHEW C. WOODHALL
HEAD OF SCHOOL
FOR A GATHERING OF ALUMNI, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023
6:00PM-8:00PM
MILL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA**

R.S.V.P TO PLOOMIS@WOODHALLSCHOOL.ORG

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