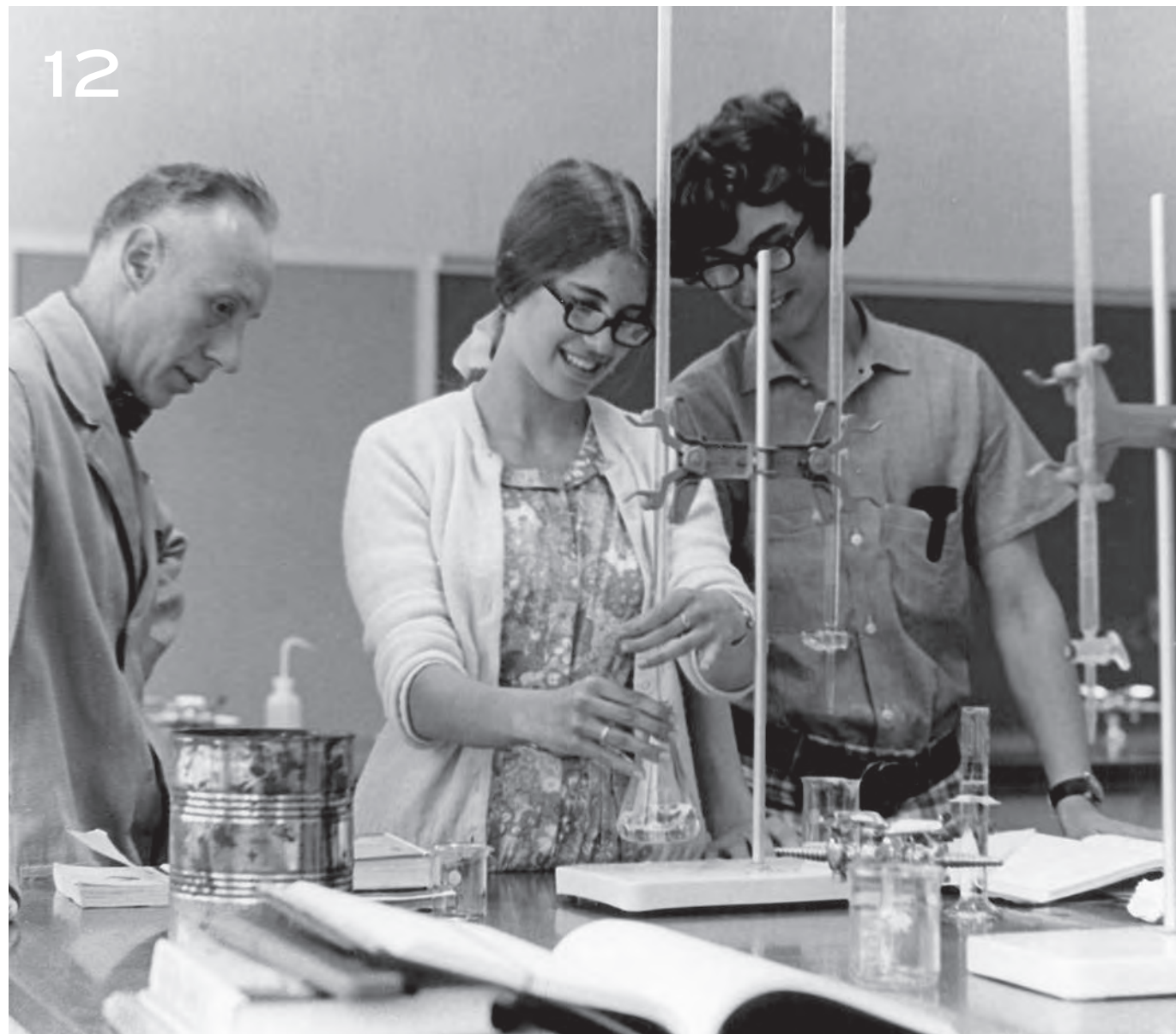


NORTHFIELD MOUNT HERMON MAGAZINE



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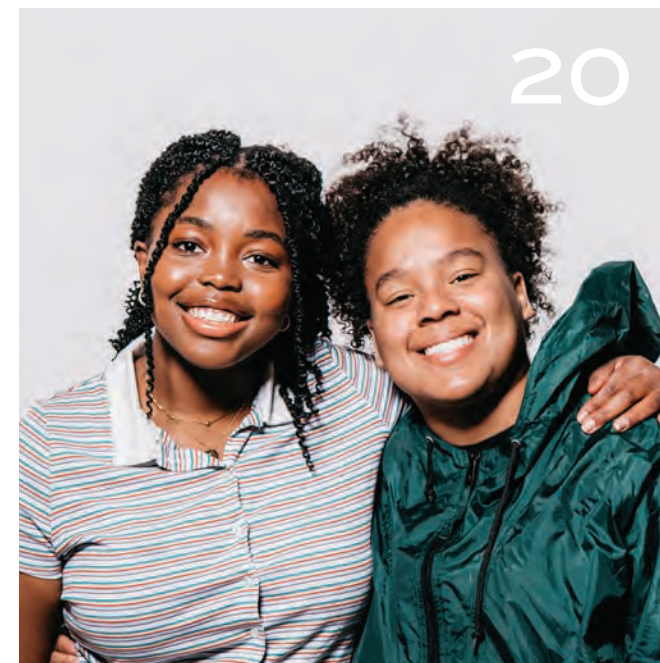
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**NORTHFIELD
MOUNT HERMON
MAGAZINE**

SPRING 2022

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MISSION
Northfield Mount Hermon educates the head, heart, and hands of our students. We engage their intellect, compassion, and talents, empowering them to act with humanity and purpose.

Cover Illustration
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LETTER FROM
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
AND COMMUNICATIONS
NATALIE GEORGES P'23

Telling Our Story

Welcome back to NMH Magazine.

REFINING OUR
LOOK BY GOING
BACK TO OUR ROOTS



Looking back through our archive, we uncovered the inspiration for our new logo. From around 1970 to 1979, the original logo was used on our student handbook and on bumper stickers. We refined its form and refreshed its colors to stand as the definitive logo for the entire Northfield Mount Hermon brand. This logo's beautifully simple design was undoubtedly inspired by the greats of midcentury modern design like Saul Bass and Ray and Charles Eames. We merely dusted off this timeless gem and made it more applicable to today.



NORTHFIELD
MOUNT HERMON

This magazine has been a long time coming. It's been two-and-a-half years since Northfield Mount Hermon last published a print version of *NMH Magazine*, after making the critical decision, during the pandemic, to focus the school's resources on campus and prioritize the academic and residential-life needs of our students.

I'm Natalie Georges, director of marketing and communications. I was welcomed to NMH in September 2021 and have had the pleasure of serving as part of the team that made this special issue of the magazine possible. It's been enlightening to connect with the NMH community through so many amazing stories of students, faculty, staff, and alumni, some of which are captured in these pages. The content we have created and curated to share with you underscores the ways that NMH has lived its mission for nearly 150 years, deeply rooted in history but with our eyes fixed on the future.

You'll read about the advent of coeducation at the school 50 years ago, a transformation in which NMH responded to societal shifts while remaining true to its longtime principles. You'll meet students, alumni, faculty, and staff who reflect on what NMH has meant to their lives. You'll experience the new Gilder Center, which exemplifies NMH's multidisciplinary, experiential, and future-focused approach to education. You'll hear from Bea Garcia, assistant head of school for academic programs and dean

of faculty, about the ways our mission plays out every day in our classrooms, and from Martha Neubert, dean of equity and social justice, on how NMH continues the ongoing work of living D.L. Moody's ideals. Finally, I invite you to explore NMH's new Strategic Framework, which was developed over the past year to set out the priorities, plans, and aspirations that will shape our next chapter.

Because I joined NMH as the Strategic Framework was being finalized, I have come to understand three truths about NMH: First, the core values that have guided NMH from the beginning will continue to do so as we evolve, always in service to our students and our larger community. Second, we will continue to strive for excellence while acknowledging that the real value of our work is the journey, which is driven and enriched by the diversity of our community and measured by its impact on humanity and the physical world we share. Finally, as the beneficiaries and stewards of D.L. Moody's vision, we must aspire to do work that has the potential to transform lives and open doors for generations to come.

Along with the Strategic Framework, NMH undertook a refresh of the school's brand, which I am excited to launch fully in the fall of 2022. The intention — of moving toward a future that is firmly grounded in our founding principles — is represented visually in our reimagined logo, which revisits our wordmark from 50 years ago, when

“The content in these pages underscores how NMH has lived its mission — deeply rooted in history but with our eyes fixed on the future.”

Northfield and Mount Hermon merged to become a single coeducational institution. The colorful mosaic of the logo represents both the diversity of our community today and the future that we envision, one comprising a kaleidoscope of individuals who exemplify NMH's ideals by living, learning, and serving with purpose.

This is an exciting time, and ours is a dedicated, strong, and passionate community. I am honored to serve and live our mission alongside each of you. [NMH]



LETTER FROM
HEAD OF SCHOOL
 BRIAN HARGROVE

Resolve, Resiliency, and Hope

The past two years have been hard — but also magical.

Our students often ask if we can stop talking about the pandemic. Their desire to move on is understandable: COVID-19 has impacted nearly every aspect of their lives, including their time here at Northfield Mount Hermon. For many of our alumni, it would be difficult to imagine learning and living on campus as we have asked our students to over the last two-and-a-half years. It has been hard. And, at times, it has been magical.

In this issue of the newly revamped *NMH Magazine*, we follow our students' lead and shift our focus from the COVID realities we all must navigate to the magic of NMH that defines us even in the most challenging of times. I invite you to consider the profound opportunity that our students and employees embrace daily amid the hills of our campus. I ask you to reflect on the lifelong impact of your NMH education and the totality of your experience here. And I call on you to consider how you can join us to advance our school's mission — to empower students to act with humanity and purpose — in the days to come.

In the spring of 2020, we made a series of institutional decisions to ensure that NMH would not simply survive the yet-unknown challenges of the pandemic but would, in fact, thrive. These decisions reflected our commitment to our mission and to meeting students where they are in their journeys to become their best selves.

The decisions we made would, I imagine, rival, in pace and in consequence, those made in our earliest days, when D.L. Moody put his dream into action and opened the doors of Northfield Seminary for Young Ladies in 1879, just a few short months after committing to move ahead. While there are many stories we could share about what we've accomplished over the last two-and-a-half years, I want to offer insight into a few that reflect our

commitment to our mission and to thriving today and in the years to come.

We shifted resources rapidly to help teachers, coaches, and advisors connect with their students. Within a few weeks, we found ways to bring NMH remotely to students around the world, while launching plans to ensure that we could welcome students back to campus as soon as possible. These parallel commitments allowed us to deliver a robust, in-person experience all of last year and, for those who could not be on campus, the virtual NMH Lab Program. While COVID still requires occasional operational shifts, I am incredibly proud of the ways we adapted to enable our students to continue to experience so many of the best qualities of NMH.

We prioritized investments to increase access. In the last three budgets, financial aid has increased 25%. In addition, the school has limited tuition increases to among the most modest in school history (ranging from 1% to 2.5%). These investments would not be possible if not for strategic operational decisions, stewardship of existing resources, and growth in the NMH Fund, from \$3.4 million in FY '19 to nearly \$5 million in FY '21.

We moved forward with critical campus projects. In January 2020, our board authorized construction of the Gilder Center. Then the pandemic hit, and projects around the world stopped. But we remained committed to the Gilder Center, and, with an updated design that reflected our program's needs, offered long-term flexibility, and honored architectural legacies from both the Northfield and Mount Hermon campuses, we broke ground in the summer of 2020. Gilder opened, on schedule and under budget, in October 2021. We also opened the Draper Riverhouse, renovated Grandin and James Gym, opened

“The decisions we’ve made might rival, in pace and consequence, those made in our earliest days, when D.L. Moody put his dream into action.”

the Calagione Fitness Center, made improvements to McCollum Hockey Rink and several dorms, and broke ground on a new multi-sport and wrestling center. These investments have been funded principally through designated gifts and budgeted capital expenditures.

We approved and launched a Strategic Framework to guide our decisions for the next three to five years. Friends and colleagues asked a reasonable question: Who launches a strategic plan in the midst of a pandemic? Our answer: NMH does. Our decision to move forward underscores our belief that now is precisely the time to demonstrate NMH's leadership. The Framework, explored in detail in these pages, provides a road map as we transform our program, invest in our people, and steward our resources in remarkable ways. Most important, the Framework reflects our mission and our values of inclusivity, learning for life, and service.

We have been busy at Northfield Mount Hermon. I am proud of the work we have done. I am humbled by the resolve, resiliency, and hopefulness demonstrated every day by our students and employees. And I am inspired by the aspirations captured in our Strategic Framework. Even as we thrive, we understand that we face profound challenges in this country and around the world, and we embrace our responsibility to equip our students with the skills and knowledge to serve and lead with humanity and purpose. NMH graduates are problem solvers. We are community leaders and servants. Together, we are changing the world.

[NMH]





HISTORY IS TRICKY, MEMORY EVEN MORE SO. Retrofitting origin stories to serve the present is the messiest of all. Yet there is a kind of collective remembering that holds those of us connected to the Northfield, Mount Hermon, and Northfield Mount Hermon schools. Even if we exclude the pandemic or the economic, sociopolitical, and climate upheaval of the past three years, not one of us lives in the times

THROUGHLINE*

ESSAY BY
MARTHA
NEUBERT

ILLUSTRATION
BY
ELEANOR
SHAKESPEARE

in which we were born. Across schools, generations, and eras, every student — from the first alumnae in the Northfield Seminary Class of 1884 to the first coed Class of 1972 to this year’s Class of 2022 — has in common, at the very least, a set of formative experiences during adolescent years spent *here*.

**common or consistent element or theme shared by items in a series or by parts of a whole*

HERE:

On the ancestral homelands of Nipmuc, Pocumtuc, and Abenaki tribes, whose members remain connected with the region today.

Here: Where John Winthrop — who was elected the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony six months before crossing the Atlantic with some 700 fellow English immigrants — proclaimed that the region and its capital city would be, in its anticipated exceptionalism, looked on by all “as a city upon a hill.”

Here: Along the fertile banks of the Connecticut River in the heart of Puritan New England, where religious, economic, and territorial aims drove 150 years of regional warfare.

Here: Where, in nearby Northampton, Jonathan Edwards delivered “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” one of the fire-and-brimstone sermons that launched the Great Awakening religious revival in the mid-1700s.

Here: Where, after the passage of the first Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, local safe houses offered inconspicuous, protective shelter to African Americans fleeing the racial terror of the South well into the 1850s.

Here: Where Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, the oldest of the Seven Sisters, was established — along with Smith College — to offer equal educational opportunities for women excluded from the then male-only Ivy League colleges.

Here: In western Massachusetts, where Daniel Shays led a farmers’ rebellion to oppose state taxation; where Susan B. Anthony and W.E.B. Du Bois were born and came of age; where John Brown intensified abolitionist efforts; where Emily Dickinson wrote poem after brilliant poem in isolation; and where the Industrial Revolution dictated the long-term economic calculus of the nearby farmsteads, mill towns, and hill towns.

Here: Where Christian evangelist, theologian, educator, husband, and father Dwight Lyman Moody founded a school for girls in Northfield and, two years later, a school for boys in Gill.



↑ Lydia Emma Keys, a member of the Cherokee Nation, graduated with Northfield’s first class in 1884.



Moody often shared — for example, during his remarks at the 1880 dedication of East Hall — that having stopped his formal schooling at fifth grade, “my lack of education was of great disadvantage to me; I shall suffer from it as long as I live.” This piece of his identity, combined with his reverent call to evangelistic ministry and outreach, led to the founding of Northfield Seminary for Young Ladies. The student admission application stated that the purpose of the school was to give “educational opportunities to girls of ability and character who [could not] afford more expensive schools.”

Here: Where, after Moody talked with friends — “a number of [whom] gave money for the school” — Mount Hermon School for Boys opened in 1881, welcoming William Tonkin from Cornwall, England, as its first student. The school letterhead read: “To help young men of very limited means to get an education such as would have done me good when I was their age.” For a long time, Moody had envisioned building schools where poor children could be educated; in choosing Isaiah 27:3 as the school’s motto, Moody sought to ensure a participatory, living, breathing institution: “*I the Lord do keep it. I will water it every moment lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day.*”

We cannot begin to imagine the constellation of pressures Moody must have been facing, particularly as one of the world’s most celebrated preachers at the time. His friend, Henry Drummond, insisted that Moody would have become one of the wealthiest men in the United States had he remained in the business world. While Moody’s unyielding faith instead guided his work forward *here*, building Northfield and Mount Hermon was not an assured endeavor. In an era of business tycoons, industrialization, urban expansion, and the concretization of American capitalism, it is clear: Even in this distinct corner of New England, Moody’s vision was a risk. Though not articulated as such at the time, by providing a Christian education to young people otherwise denied the privilege, Moody’s initial — and, frankly, radical — commitment to access produced an unintentionally diverse student body in the first several decades, which, albeit with varying consistency and care, evolved into a lasting component of the school’s identity.

This is not to suggest that this institution hasn’t changed in significant ways over the past 143 years. Nor have all our community members experienced Northfield, Mount Hermon, and Northfield Mount Hermon schools in the same ways across time. But

↑ The Mount Hermon campus, circa 1913.



↑ Thomas Nelson Baker, Class of 1887, was the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in philosophy in the U.S.



↑ Chan Loon Teung, Class of 1892, was the first Chinese graduate of Harvard.

the story of *this place* is all of ours. Diversity, equity, and inclusion work has always been the very bones of living well together in this community. Being as intentional as possible in our accounting of the multiplicity of people and stories within the context of this place is a powerful reminder: *Here*, we have long been an influential kind of different.

In the summer of 1880, Moody instructed Northfield Seminary Principal Harriet Tuttle to find a dozen “Indian girls who might succeed at the school, and to enroll them at [his] own expense.” Tuttle found 16 girls, including Lydia Emma Keys, who graduated with Northfield’s first class in 1884. Keys was a member of the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah, Oklahoma Territory. In an era when graduation rates at the school were well under 10%, Keys’ successful graduation is even more noteworthy. By 1905, Northfield had 417 students, 21 from foreign countries; Mount Hermon had 732 students, 117 from abroad. By 1900, over 40 Chinese, Japanese, and Korean students had enrolled at Mount Hermon, including Chan Loon Teung, Class of 1892, who spoke at Mount Hermon’s first Commencement and who became the first Chinese graduate of Harvard University.

The earliest classes also welcomed Thomas Nelson Baker Sr., who was born enslaved in Virginia. Having learned to read early,



↑ Students across the generations, from those at Northfield in the 1940s (above) to the Class of 2020 (opposite), share a set of common experiences.



↑ Winfred Williams '71 makes a presentation about the legacy of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

breaking laws punishable by death, Baker was able to start attending school at age 12, just seven years after the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution formally abolished chattel slavery. In his mid-20s, Baker was one of only two Black students at Mount Hermon at the time. It is a meaningful exercise to imagine how he — a man whose existence, early life, and family structure had been legally defined in property and production terms — might have absorbed the fact that mandatory, unpaid manual labor (workjob) was required for the self and for the greater good at his new school.

Reporting on the 1887 graduation speeches of Mount Hermon's first class, the *Springfield Republican* stated: "One of the most eloquent was Thomas N. Baker, a full-blooded Negro, who spoke of what he had learned at Mt. Hermon." Baker went on to Yale University and became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in philosophy in the United States. In 1899 — at the height of Jim Crow racial violence that precipitated the Great Migration of 6 million Black Americans fleeing to cities outside the Deep South, three years after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld segregation in the "separate but equal" ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and 10 years before the establishment of the NAACP — Baker wrote a letter to Mount Hermon Principal Henry Sawyer. Baker said, "As a school, Mt. Hermon is far ahead of all places that I know anything of in regards to the race question and I pray God that she may ever hold her position and send out men who will teach and practice her training."

Who am I? What is my place? What does it mean to be human? How, then, shall I live? While asked in some form over many decades, these essential questions of the 9th-grade Humanities I curriculum (English and religious studies) have extended beyond the classroom to inform our community framework. Whether they are presenting a Senior Capstone project, competing in a championship game, leading an affinity group, collecting gallons of sap, gearing up for Rope Pull, participating in a six-word story contest, interviewing a visiting speaker, creating a project in the new fabrication lab, performing in a recital, learning a third language, offering a social justice workshop, taking photos for the yearbook, making playlists for a radio show, earning accolades at the World Debate Championships, or simply pausing to greet a friend or marvel at snowfall for the first time ever — current NMH students are engaged here. *Here*: where the house that D.L. built has shaped and been shaped by literally tens of thousands of stories and lives. *Here*: where students today, as so many alumni did, are coming of age in this participatory, living, breathing institution.

It is one thing to have a founder with vision. It is entirely another to have a founder whose vision challenged the status quo. Moody set in motion a paradigmatic shift in both *who* should have a seat at the boarding-school table and *how* their learning could be in service to a better world. At the 2022 Founder's Day ceremony, Visual Arts Chair and keynote speaker Mona Seno reminded the NMH community that through his faith, works, and teachings, Moody talked about a kind of love that "is available to each of us; as he said, it is the privilege of every one of us to know, beyond a doubt, that our salvation is sure. Then we can work for others." Students on campus today take up Moody's charge — to work for others — in myriad ways, even amid the angst and joys of teenagehood during national and global crises. And their voices, convictions, and aspirations are strong.

On Founder's Day, Augustine Boadi '22 echoed some of the intersections of Moody's 143-year-old legacy: "I'm so honored to be a part of this community, and to be a part of this mission, and I am more than grateful to have the opportunity to represent what Moody was all about: the *good news*....God bless Moody!"

When I graduate, I hope that people will say I gave more than I received. That'd make me really happy." Drawing inspiration from the 1970 *BLACK LIGHT* yearbook, members of the Black Student Union recently urged the campus community to work to better understand how everyone has a responsibility in fighting racial and other societal injustices. Ukrainian students hosted an information session to share their perspectives on the February 24 invasion of their country; the next day, Russian students posted a statement of solidarity that, in part, read: "*Our hearts are torn apart because millions of civilians in Ukraine and Russia are being pulled into the horrors of war. [We] are unified in our condemnation of war, and we support the immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukraine. We stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, and with Russian civilians around the world campaigning for an end to the war.*" And at a March all-school meeting in Memorial Chapel, Henry Perkins '22 articulated our throughline while talking about living in collaborative community during challenging times:

We sit on top of this Chapel Hill / Not merely by the strength of our individual skill / But because of those who sat in these very pews and their collective will.

To be unique in their visions of the world we share / Where the extent of our humanity, kindness, compassion doesn't stop at merely me / But extends to a radical, collective, and inclusive "we."

The question posed to us at NMH is "How, then, shall we live?" / The great blessing, for each of us, the yield we reap here, the lessons we learn here / Aren't for our time in this place.

The hope is that they will shape us forever / Until the moment we ponder a new question, we will consider, "How, then, have we lived?"

Moody's vision then and now is beyond noble: It is exceptional. As was true in 1879, delivering on the school's mission today requires deep faith, extraordinary optimism, and a radical kind of love. Aspiring to uphold the central tenets of Moody's legacy in a decidedly different world but unequivocally

STUDENTS TODAY TAKE UP MOODY'S CHARGE — TO WORK FOR OTHERS — IN MYRIAD WAYS, EVEN AMID THE ANGST AND JOYS OF TEENAGEHOOD DURING NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CRISES.

in service to a better one remains the why. In being *of here*, we find our throughline. Much of our school's founding ethos remains in our current practices, with inclusivity principles shaping the core of our work. Given that the past several years have been widely described as divisive, disquieting, and disruptive, it should be easy to imagine how day-to-day life is affected by social turmoil *here* and beyond our campus. We aspire to connect with compassion across difference and live lives of balance as we take up big, essential questions that anchor our shared humanity. Ultimately, we seek to create the conditions of fellowship, inquiry, and possibility so that we can be a collective force for good as we educate the next generation of students. We — all of us in the NMH community — are inextricably tied to the profound intellectual, spiritual, and literal landscape born of Moody's head, heart, and hands. Even with our wide and varied range of individual experiences, *we* are the throughline.

D.L. Moody was an imperfect man both precisely of and assuredly ahead of his time. The word of God and the pillars of Christianity were his compass and blueprint; evangelism, labor, and instruction his toolbox. He believed that living, praying, learning, working, and loving one another in *this place* could and would prepare young people to go forth as grounded, meaningful contributors. His students were vessels of communion, leadership, and service here and abroad — lamplighters, indeed. What happens *here* is transformative. And there is much to be done. As we continue to work toward more equitable, just, and sustainable societies, we consider Moody's words in 1880: We, too, "hope, after all of us who are here today are dead and gone, this school may live, and be a blessing to the world." May it be so. [NMH]

Martha Neubert joined the NMH faculty as a history teacher in 2005 and has served as dean of equity and social justice since 2016.





1972

COLLECTIVE POWER!



*Fifty years ago,
Northfield Mount Hermon
celebrated its first year as
a coed institution.
The world was changing.
So the school did, too.*

STORY BY
JENNIFER SUTTON

IMAGES COURTESY OF
NMH ARCHIVES



The news broke on a Monday in October 1970. “Coeducation!” proclaimed a headline in *The Bridge*, the student newspaper, a few days later. The accompanying photo showed a

crowd of students clapping and grinning at one another with “palpable glee,” says Northfield Mount Hermon Archivist Peter Weis ’78.

That Monday, school leaders had announced that Northfield and Mount Hermon schools would merge, taking a decisive step toward “electrifying change,” as a letter to *The Bridge* later described it. The two schools, founded by D.L. Moody in the late 1800s, had existed separately for close to a century: Northfield for girls and Mount Hermon for boys. While they had been coupled under one board of trustees for more than half of that time, they possessed their own histories and cultures, their own curricula and faculty. But as the 1960s drew to a close, fewer students and their parents were interested in single-sex education. If the two schools wanted to safeguard their future, and continue educating students to serve and lead in the years ahead, they had to reimagine themselves.

So in the fall of 1971, school trustees and administrators officially launched Northfield Mount Hermon, a united and coed institution. The merger was “an inevitable reaction to the circumstances of the times,” says Betsy Compton ’72, who was part of the first class to graduate from NMH and would later become an NMH trustee.

When Compton and her classmates started high school in the fall of 1968, the country was

↔ ↑
In 1970, Northfield students reacted to the announcement that the two schools would soon merge. While most applauded, not everyone welcomed the shift.

reeling from the assassinations of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, the confrontations between police and protesters at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and the ongoing trauma of the Vietnam War. Beyond Northfield and Mount Hermon, high school and college students were joining anti-war protests and taking over school buildings with demands for racial justice and gender justice. There was a “groundswell of change in the air,” says Reid Whitlock ’72, who graduated with Compton. “There was a general feeling among students that they possessed collective power that could not have been imagined a few years earlier.”

On campus, Northfield and Mount Hermon leaders saw the merger as a way to usher in a more progressive social environment. At the first joint meeting with faculty from both schools, Art Kiendl, the head of Mount Hermon, described the existential choice they were facing in provocative terms: “It is a matter of good people who care and dare vs. those who want to stop the world and get off.”

Compton, Whitlock, and the rest of the Class of 1972 were thrust into a strange, shape-shifting scenario: They had enrolled at one kind of school and would be the first to graduate from a remarkably different one. That was 50 years ago. What do they think now?

“AS STUDENTS, we had no clue how much analysis and questioning went into making a decision of that magnitude,” says Compton, looking back at Northfield and Mount Hermon’s transition into a single coed school. “As teenagers, we thought, ‘Of course, let’s do it, what’s the big deal?’”

It was an extraordinarily big deal. And by the fall of 1970, when Compton and her classmates were juniors, it felt almost preordained. For decades, Northfield and Mount Hermon students had been riding buses back and forth between the two campuses to attend dances and sports events together and perform in joint plays and concerts. By 1970, “coordinate” academics — girls and boys in the same classroom — had grown to include nearly a fifth of the student body.

And single-gender boarding schools were falling out of favor. Howard Jones, president of the corporation that oversaw Northfield and Mount Hermon, described their “plight” in a message to alumni: “Enrollments are down. Costs are up. Money is scarce.” Within three years in the late 1960s, the National Association of Boarding Schools counted 20 single-gender private schools that merged to become 10 coed institutions, according to *The New York Times*. An additional 20 private boys’ schools started



Betsy Compton ’72



Reid Whitlock ’72

↓
Between classes outside Beveridge Hall. By the late 1960s, single-gender private schools were falling out of favor across the country.

enrolling girls in the same time period, and six boarding schools in the Northeast shut down altogether. Northfield and Mount Hermon’s peer schools were leaning toward coeducation, too: Choate (boys) and Rosemary Hall (girls), and Loomis (boys) and Chaffee (girls) both merged in 1971, the same year that NMH did. All-male Exeter began admitting girls that same year.

Northfield and Mount Hermon leaders had begun planning in 1968, bringing in an educational consultant to help them consider the options. Weis speculates that they might have considered keeping Northfield independent. “It was arguably the best girls’ school around, so it probably could have made it on its own,” he says. “But Mount Hermon was hemorrhaging potential students. Parents were looking for coeducational schools for their sons.”

In the spring of 1970, before the merger decision, Northfield and Mount Hermon administrators hosted a “Day of Concern,” inviting students and faculty to weigh in about the future of the schools. “We went through all these discussions, but the decision had probably already been made,” recalls Bisa Williams ’72. After the merger was announced, the schools followed up with a “Day of Planning” to allow students and faculty to offer ideas about the monumental task ahead. How best to combine two different





↑ Northfield's tradition of white dresses on Sunday disappeared when the schools merged.

← A piece of student artwork reveals the cultural shift happening in the U.S.



Bisa Williams '72



Brad Graves '72

← Students were invited to share ideas about how coeducation would work.

academic programs, work programs, and class schedules? How to blend two different sets of traditions, clubs, affinity groups, and social activities? Committees, task forces, and a “Council for One School” were formed. Debates took place. Who would move into which dorms? How would adults govern boys and girls living side-by-side 24/7 instead of in highly regimented and limited time periods? How much would the busing system have to expand to accommodate students traveling between the two campuses all day every day instead of just on weekends? (One creative soul suggested building a mini-subway system under the Connecticut River.)

Amid the planning hubbub, many students were excited about leaving gender segregation behind. “I had grown up in coed elementary and middle schools — a lot of us had — so the fact that our high school was just boys started to seem really strange,” says Brad Graves '72. Living on two different campuses made interactions feel “stilted and contrived,” adds Deidra Dain '72. To communicate — to make plans to get together on the weekend, for example — girls and boys were still writing letters back and forth just as their predecessors had done years earlier.

Students considered themselves more progressive than that old-fashioned protocol would suggest; they were part of the Woodstock generation, even if they'd been too young to attend the iconic 1969 event. Many teachers and administrators felt that way, too. The schools hosted a teach-in following the Kent State assassinations in the spring of 1970 and invited students from other local schools to attend. Two years earlier, Black students on both campuses had gathered and marched, with support from school leaders, to protest the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Graves remembers a Mount Hermon presentation about drug use in which Kiendl, the headmaster, spoke frankly about the problem among students. “It was stunning,” Graves says. “In our parents' generation, the tendency was to sweep things under the rug. It was refreshing to hear an adult confront those issues.”

The merger, however, was not completely welcomed by all. It felt like a “gut punch” to many Northfielders, says Williams. And while Lauren Boulware '72 describes the overall student-life dynamic of the separate schools as “not getting the experience of a normal childhood or being a normal teenager,” she also felt deep appreciation for her single-gender academic



life. “Northfield was like an incubator,” Williams says. “It felt safe. We could challenge each other and talk loud and be smart and relax. When you introduced guys into the room, at least back then, suddenly there would be a self-consciousness that didn't feel great.”

Graves remembers a handful of Mount Hermon students who also were unenthusiastic; their parents were alumni and wanted the school they had known back in the day to stay the same. But most of the feelings of loss came from Northfield. Celia Popper '72 was torn. On one hand, she says, “I was worried that our community would blow apart. And that did happen to some extent. The intimacy of our little world was fractured.” At the same time, she knew the merger “was going to be a good thing” in the long run. “It was going to open us up to the real world,” she says.

“Coeducation is a matter of people who care and dare vs. those who want to stop the world and get off.”

↑ The new merged Student Senate met for the first time in the fall of 1971. Looking back, one alumnus says, “It was like the coeducation manual was being written and revised as it was being implemented.”

WHEN STUDENTS RETURNED to school in the fall of 1971, “it was like we all leaped and assumed the net would appear,” says Ellyn Spragins ’72. Dain recalls that “some people felt it was chaotic, and it was, but it was also really exciting.” A couple hundred Northfield students, including Dain and Spragins, opted to move to the Mount Hermon campus. Dain landed the job of social chair and started advocating for girls and boys to be allowed to gather in the same dorm room on a Saturday night. The new policy was approved, which, at the time, was “huge,” Dain says. “We felt very empowered, like we were creating a new reality. But at the same time, it seemed like we were just trying to have a normal life.”

It didn’t feel so normal for Whitlock, who relocated from Mount Hermon to Northfield; he calls that first year “disorienting.” Even though the presence of boys at Northfield and girls at Mount Hermon was accepted, he says, “the ‘other



Lauren Boulware '72



Deidra Dain '72

↓ A coed science class with teacher Richard “Dick” Kellom.

sex’ dorms, those reserved for the newcomers, seemed a bit like island fortresses rather than fully integrated parts of campus.”

Also disorienting were the campus traditions — both official and casual ones — that either evolved or faded away. Northfield’s “May Queen” ritual vanished, but its Mountain Day endured and expanded to include all of Mount Hermon. Whitlock recalls that boys accustomed to pick-up ice hockey games on the “real rink” at Mount Hermon were not interested in skating on Northfield’s Perry Pond, and “no self-respecting boys would walk arm-in-arm after a Sage Chapel event as Northfield girls always did,” he says.

On the plus side, Compton points out, Northfield’s dress code disappeared. “In my freshman year, we couldn’t wear pants to class, but by senior year, we could wear whatever we wanted,” she says. No more white dresses every Sunday; instead, there were bell-bottom jeans that dragged on the ground and denim



skirts that got shorter and shorter. “The faculty thought we looked like slobs, but suddenly, we were with the times, and it felt completely different,” Compton says.

Academically, there was little change. Everyone was used to small classes, high expectations, and teachers who innovated and pushed. Boulware recalls that the boys tried to dominate in a few of her upper-level courses, but “we had some super-smart girls,” she says. “Usually the smartest kid in the class was a girl.” Compton remembers a notoriously gruff English teacher on the Mount Hermon campus who seemed to soften after girls showed up in his classroom. “Some of us found out when his birthday was, and we got him a cake, and he was kind of taken aback,” she says. “In all his years of teaching, nothing like that had ever happened.”

A few years after NMH went coed, all-male Andover, Hotchkiss, and St. Paul’s schools followed suit and began admitting girls. Lawrenceville and Deerfield remained all-male

↑ For many students, coeducation felt both empowering and “just like we were trying to have a normal life.”



Celia Popper '72



Ellyn Spragins '72

until the late 1980s, with considerable resistance at Deerfield when the school went coed in 1989. For a short time, Deerfield students and alumni adopted the same “Better dead than coed” rallying cry that had circulated at Dartmouth when women began enrolling there in 1972.

In contrast, Reid Whitlock says, Northfield and Mount Hermon leaders were open to progress. During that momentous first school year, in 1971 and 1972, “it felt as if the manual on how to coeducate was being written and revised as it was being implemented,” he says. Looking back, Whitlock says he’s “in awe” of what school leaders accomplished — “their excellent sense of timing, their judicious use of funds to implement their decisions, and their institutional commitment to the success of what was, at the time, a huge strategic shift in direction.”

Celia Popper calls that year “a piece of history.” She says, “NMH did what it did because the world was changing. And we were there when it happened.” [NMH]

STORIES OF SELF-DISCOVERY AT NMH

My

TAKEAWAY*

The words of a brilliant teacher. The tenacity learned on a stage or playing field. The kindness of an advisor, the complexities of talking about racism, the seeds of understanding and ambition that take root again and again. Generations of NMH students and employees have worked hard to create and sustain a vibrant environment for living and learning — one in which all of us, in the words of Karin Kimbrough '86, can “wake up and discover parts of ourselves that we might not have otherwise discovered.”

But what are those parts? We asked alumni, students, faculty, staff, and parents to reflect on their NMH experiences and what ideas stay with them. Their stories are both unique and full of common denominators that resonate, in one way or another, with us all.

INTERVIEWS BY
JENNIFER SUTTON,
KWABENA APPIAH '22,
JASPER NEFF '25, AND
ASHLEY RAKOTOARIVO '24

PHOTOS BY
JOANNA CHATTMAN
(Alumni and parent photos courtesy of subjects)

*
These first-person
reflections have
been edited and
condensed.



CAROLYN KUAN '95
Hartford, Connecticut
Music Director, Hartford Symphony

Between seventh and eighth grade, I came to NMH for Summer Session. The very first day in the classroom, the teacher said, “Feel free to ask questions.” Which seems like such a normal thing to say if you live in America, but coming from Taipei, where the education system was very memorization-based, you never ask questions. So NMH blew my mind immediately. I was quite rebellious at home, and for high school, I wanted to study in a place where I could ask questions and be creative.

Sheila Heffernon was one of the dorm faculty in Wallace. She was always kind, always supportive; she provided a lot of guidance; and at some point, she suggested I join the choir. So I did. I'm the kind of person who, whatever I do, I want to do it really well. Wanting to be better at choir meant I took voice lessons. It meant I got interested in conducting. I was supposed to go home to Taipei and be a banker, and I studied economics in college, but I also learned as much about music as I could because I thought I would never have the opportunity again. So NMH planted a seed. I wouldn't be a musician if it weren't for NMH. More precisely, I wouldn't be a musician if it weren't for Sheila.



CHARMEL MAYNARD '03
Miami, Florida
Associate Vice President, Chief Investment
Officer, and University Treasurer,
University of Miami

One of the main reasons I wanted to go to Northfield Mount Hermon was because I thought that's where I could jumpstart a college basketball career and then a professional basketball career. I didn't see any boundaries in what I could do. And Coach [John] Carroll and Coach [Bill] Batty were motivational people in my life. They taught me about dealing with adversity, how to work hard, and how to deal with not being as good as I thought I was.

[Music teacher] Ron Smith pushed me to activate the creative side of my brain. I grew up playing music but I had stopped for a long time. Ron found out I played steel drums and pretty soon after that, I joined the World Music Combo.

But the person who blew my mind was [English teacher] Bob Cooley. I grew up in between Trinidad and Atlanta, but I'd never dug into the Harlem Renaissance or James Baldwin or Langston Hughes or Zora Neale Hurston, and Bob's knowledge was amazing. I have vivid memories of his classes. We'd walk in and he'd be playing Nas or John Coltrane or Miles Davis; it felt like someone's living room and we were talking around the dinner table about what we'd just read. A lot of times, your best mentors and advocates don't look like what you think they should look like. You've got to go into all your interactions with an open mind and an open heart because you never know.

When I got to Amherst, it was easy because I'd been through NMH. I'd already interacted with people who didn't look like me or talk like me or think like me; I'd already worked at being independent and managing my time. I hate to say it, but I remember judging people in college — like how do you not get your homework done? Even later, when I was working in banking, I remember being baffled when people would miss deadlines. At the time, I did not appreciate that they may not have had an NMH in their life.

AT NMH'S CORE IS
A GENUINE DESIRE
TO MAKE GOOD
PEOPLE, TO MAKE
DECENT PEOPLE,
WHICH OUR WORLD
NEEDS AT THIS
MOMENT IN TIME.

HENRY PERKINS '22
Wooster, Ohio

Something that people talk about at higher education institutions is, How can you be a leader? How do you rise to the top? That often comes out as, How can you get the highest score? How can you run the fastest, score the most goals, make the most baskets, lift the most weight? From there, you will be a leader and people will look up to you. At NMH, leadership is expected from everyone. To me, that is freeing because it allows all of us to feel like we have a place at the table. We're all smart, we're all capable, we're all talented and creative.

NMH is surely not perfect. But at its core is a genuine desire to make good people, to make decent people, which our world needs at this moment in time. We're charged to think about the ways that we can influence a better future. Even little things, like all-school meetings or community conversations about really difficult issues, allow us the space to feel connected to a world beyond this campus.

The work I'm doing at NMH now — the work that we're all doing now — isn't for our time here. It's for a time after this, beyond here. It's for the way we will live out the rest of our lives. That's really powerful to me. It gives me hope, excitement, and confidence.





CAMILLE CHILLER '22
Atlanta, Georgia

If you asked me five years ago if I would be at boarding school, I couldn't have imagined it. I didn't even know what boarding school was. But NMH showed me the possibilities that are out there if you take things seriously. I never would have thought that I'd be the person studying late at night, but one time my roommate and I did calculus from 6 pm to 4 am. We took 10-minute breaks every hour. I actually enjoyed doing that.

I love how passionate NMH teachers are, how they're not willing to teach or have relationships with students in just one certain way. They make learning not just about learning; they make it about knowing and understanding.

NMH has pushed me to try new things, like JV ice hockey and pole vaulting, and it's opened my eyes to particular issues. I already had my stance about Black Lives Matter, but the Diversity and Social Justice course, and my teacher, Cameron Crocker, enlightened me more. I have a brother who's adopted, and he's mixed-race, and sometimes it was hard for me to realize how bad things can be for him. NMH helped me understand the issue more clearly, and pushed me to view the world from a perspective that I did not see before.

I AM A DORKY FANBOY ABOUT THIS SCHOOL. BECAUSE OF THAT, THERE ARE A MILLION THINGS I WANT TO CHANGE. BUT I AM IN LOVE WITH THIS INSTITUTION.



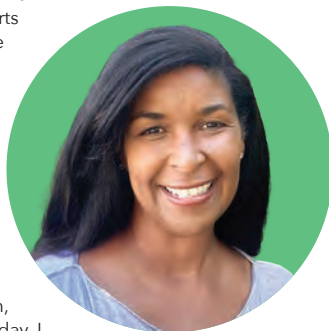
KARIN KIMBROUGH '86

Palo Alto, California
Chief Economist, LinkedIn

Growing up as a Black girl in Boston in the mid-1980s felt like an invisible experience, and I was looking for a school where I could feel seen. NMH is where my whole world opened up. It felt multicultural in a way I'd never experienced before. I saw other Black kids, kids from Turkey and South Korea; there was a girl in my dorm who was from a Native American reservation; there were Black students from South Africa. We were all different, and yet we were all together in what felt like a really safe space. I don't know any other institution that was like that back then.

The teachers were invested in the learning process, invested in us. I remember feeling like I was waking up and discovering parts of myself that I might not otherwise have discovered. It was OK to try. It was also OK to fail. That taught me to be resilient. I had a lot of agency, a lot of freedom to chart my path, and that made me bold. Today, I'm willing to try things even when I'm not certain I'm going to succeed.

I do have one regret about my NMH experience: I never worked on the farm. I worked in the kitchen, cutting tomatoes for hours. To this day, I am one of the most efficient tomato cutters you'll ever meet. But I always thought it was neat that the school had a working farm, and I have no idea why I didn't walk down the hill and say, I'm done cutting tomatoes. I'm ready to make maple syrup and help with the cows.



WILLIAM CHUCH

NMH Religious Studies and Philosophy Teacher, Lacrosse and Ice Hockey Coach

When I was applying for teaching positions, the big things I was looking for, in order, were: community, being able to teach my subject matter in a meaningful way, and a lacrosse program that I could help grow. I'm Native American – Potawatomi – and lacrosse is huge for me and my family.

This school has been such a good incubator for me. I'm an atheist who teaches religious studies, and the first few times I was observed in the classroom, I was nervous, but I've gotten nothing but support. I'm around talented teachers – I can bounce around ideas and content and get genuine solid input. As a coach, I was taught early on to observe good coaches, and there are plenty of those at NMH. I'm the dorm head of Lower North Crossley, and I thought that was going to be a brutal part of my job that I might struggle to enjoy. But I absolutely love it! My boys are the best. I love knowing them, helping them form into better humans.

We play video games; we sit and talk about the bad breakup. Our theme my first year was servant leadership. I said to them, "You all are impressive, but what can you give up to take care of other people?"

My daughter is almost 2, and she basically has 45 older brothers. She's also got 100-and-something aunts and uncles, and 600-plus kids who, if they saw her in need, would step up. You can see that I am a dorky fanboy about this school. Because of that, there are a million things I want to change. But I am in love with this institution.

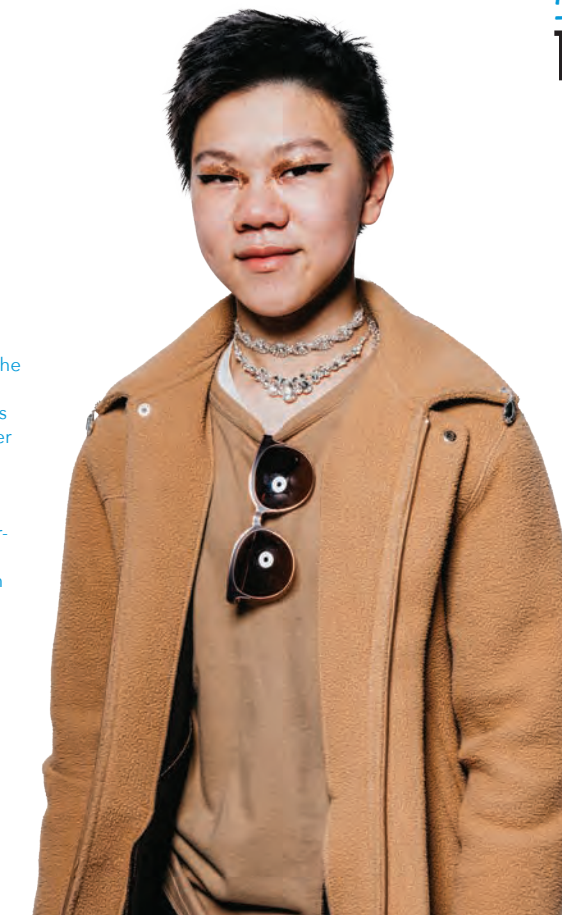
EVERETT LIU '24

Apple Valley, California

I'm a theater person, but at my previous school, theater was kind of a niche thing. People thought it was cringy. At NMH, theater is pretty hardcore, which is awesome. The musicals are accompanied by violin and trumpets and keyboards, and it's so cool! When we rehearsed the opening number of *Newsies* last fall with the pit orchestra, I got a feeling of togetherness that I never really had before. It was amazing to be part of something much larger than myself, to be able to collaborate and interact with so many people. And in the next production, I got to play a villain! It's super-fun to go against the grain in terms of who people are rooting for – to argue from a different perspective and see the person's motivation, even though it might be incredibly flawed.

I've always wanted to be in a space where I could be myself and not be confined to any social standards. I owe a lot to my current friend group because they are so encouraging; they all really inspired me to break out of my shell. I like how I have the ability to experiment without social consequences – that's really freeing and empowering. I feel much more confident because I'm not hiding any aspect of myself anymore.

I HAVE THE ABILITY TO EXPERIMENT WITHOUT SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES. THAT'S REALLY FREEING AND EMPOWERING.



MEG DONNELLY P'96, '18

NMH English Teacher, Tennis Coach

When I came to NMH in 1982, I was so young and naive and unworldly and wide-eyed. This place was very different from what I'd come from – the conservative South. So my whole worldview expanded and changed. The school was cutting-edge in its progressiveness then, in its focus on diversity and social justice. There was real activism: We were a nuclear-free zone; faculty were trained in passive resistance. And there were real debates, healthy debates. I was rolling my eyes in meetings when those debates were going on back then, but now I think, Could we please debate the issues we're facing? It's part of our tradition.

I entered this school year knowing it was going to be my last. When I taught seniors in the fall, we read Cheryl Strayed's *Tiny, Beautiful Things*, which I've taught a lot, and I had that moment of realizing that I'm never going to talk about this book with kids again. In the spring I taught Hum 1, and for many years, we've opened with the poem "The Buddha's Last Instruction" by Mary Oliver. I thought, This is the last time I'm going to spend three days talking about a poem – with anybody!

It sounds like a cliché, but I'm so appreciative of the rich life I've had at NMH. I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to talk about books every day, to be able to love and empower so many kids, to appreciate my colleagues, to have lifelong friends. You don't have to create a life at NMH; it just comes to you. A student says, "Are you coming to my game tonight?" and I say, "Yes. I hadn't thought about it. But yes."



Meg Donnelly is retiring after 40 years of teaching and coaching at NMH.

I'M GRATEFUL THAT I GOT TO TALK ABOUT BOOKS EVERY DAY, AND LOVE AND EMPOWER SO MANY KIDS.

**SARA ROURKE '94,
P'23, '25**
NMH Director of Medicine

Coming back to work at NMH seemed a little romantic because the school held such a special place in my heart. It was pivotal for me.

For example, Walt Congdon – Mr. C – taught ninth-grade science, and I went to him for extra help a lot. It started as a genuine need for help with the content, and transitioned into a need for reassurance. After a while, he said I couldn't come anymore. I was devastated, but what he did was teach me that I could look internally for my confidence. For a girl who ended up going to med school and becoming a doctor, it was really important for someone to let me know I had that inside of me.

Now when I work with students, there's a bond that connects us. They laugh when I tell them stories, like how I got a DP [disciplinary probation] my senior year. Because of that DP, I ended up having a great relationship with the dean, and at the end of the year, she nominated me for an award. That's how I see NMH: You can mess up and it's OK; you can learn from a mistake and still be a positive member of the community. It's nice for kids who are struggling when I can tell a personal story. I can say, "I get that you don't like your work job, but I worked the dish room, I scrubbed toilets, I was right where you are now. You're going to get through this."



FATIMA SAIDI '13

Portland, Maine
Grants and Contracts Manager,
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition

All my life, there was no guarantee of surviving. When I left Afghanistan and got to NMH, it was the first time that I could literally, physically, slow down. I didn't hear bullets. I didn't hear bomb blasts. It was just trees, and it was beautiful. For the first time, I felt like I deserved things. I deserve to go to school. I deserve to have food. I deserve to dislike a certain food. My parents worked really hard and did everything they possibly could, but the small things were not there. At NMH, when I showered, there was hot water every single day. Do you know how rare that is?

Nothing physically happened to my loved ones when I was at NMH, but the survivor's guilt was real. I got up every day with the same questions: How is my family? Why am I here? Am I worthy enough? My dorm was near the chapel, and there was a tree with a bench next to it, and I used to sit there for hours, just thinking. Or not even thinking – just being.

People emphasized that NMH was good for my English and my learning, but it was much more than that; I was adjusting to a new society. I'm sure I offended 100 people at NMH because of something inappropriate that I said. I didn't know what race was, what gender was. But I was eager to learn. I wanted to learn every single thing.

I'm the first person from my family to go to university, to get a degree, to have a job. I'm the first woman in my family to go to school. And now my two youngest siblings will go to NMH. I see their eyes light up when I talk about ideas and the future, so it means a lot to me that they will be a part of the NMH community. When you go to NMH, you're kind of set for life. There's a clear path if you work hard. And if you ask for help, there's always help.



MICHAEL WHITING

NMH Lead Electrician

I've worked at NMH for 29 years. First with grounds – I mowed lawns, set up athletic fields, ran the Zamboni in the hockey rink – and then a position opened up in the electrical department. This is a great place for an electrician because we do so many different kinds of work: residential, commercial, fire alarms, medium voltage, high voltage. Most electricians don't get that wide range of experience.

I've been in pretty much every building on campus; the old Northfield campus, too. The top of the tower of Memorial Chapel is by far the best spot. It's tradition for seniors to go up there on the morning of graduation, and we install temporary lights inside the tower to get them up there safely. It's an amazing view.

When I first came here, I was a little uneducated in the ways of other cultures. I'm from a small place, and NMH has people coming in from all over the world. You hear all the different opinions and philosophies and experiences, and you can't not grow. Like 9-11 – going through that at NMH was a big deal. Everybody met in the chapel. Seeing the kids whose parents were in the World Trade Center, seeing their pain and uncertainty – that's what I'm talking about when I talk about growing.



**YOU HEAR ALL
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AND YOU CAN'T
NOT GROW.**

GAIL DOOLITTLE '89

NMH Facilities Logistics Coordinator

NMH has been part of my family's life for a long time. My dad worked on campus as a teenager, doing deliveries and groundskeeping, and later as a carpenter and locksmith until he retired. My mom worked in the admission office. My grandfather worked on the Northfield campus, delivering milk on his wagon. Going to NMH was an opportunity for me to be among different cultures and different ways of thinking, learning things I wouldn't have learned otherwise.



Working here is different from your average job. NMH is like its own little town, and for the people who live on campus, it's their home. I've tried to be a positive influence and create a good working environment as well as a living environment. A lot of my job is behind the scenes, which I love, especially the big events that really matter in the end, like Commencement and Reunion. I've worked here for almost 26 years. I started out in the kitchen. Eventually I was managing up to 25 people. I like the opportunity to keep learning – there's not a lot of places I could have done as much as I've done here. NMH feels like home. It's my place.

**I'VE JUST COMPLETED
23 YEARS AT NMH, AND
IT'S A BLESSING. I GET TO
DO MUSIC EVERY DAY –
THAT'S MY HEALING.**

RON SMITH P'21

NMH Director of Band and Jazz Programs

Coming from an all-Black community and education system in Memphis, Tennessee, in the '70s and '80s to a much wider culture was a way for me to further my education and develop my talent. NMH sees what I do, what I can provide, and has nurtured my innovation and creativity. I've just completed 23 years at NMH, and it's a blessing. I get to do music every day – that's my healing. And I feel safe. I feel secure living on this campus, and that has an impact on my family. I'm a human being, and we have stresses in life, ups and downs; we have our pain. Music is what I do when everything is going wrong and when everything is going right. It can't be taken away.

Outside of teaching, I'm a professional musician, which is a completely different audience and network. Being in that landscape can have you traveling and playing with legendary musicians, but it's not sustainable. It's more of an opportunity that I can bring back and share with students. I try to show students what having a passion is. If you come in one day and play something that you didn't think you were going to get? All right, that's where you learn about yourself and begin the development process. That's what makes you feel good. Anytime you do music, something's going to go right.





BADER EL-JEAAN '90
Kuwait City, Kuwait
Senior Partner, Meysan Partners

I joined NMH as a junior because my father was a diplomat and got posted to a location that didn't have any English-speaking schools. It was the first time that I was truly away from my family, being independent. It was a scary thing.

I remember sitting in the Crossley hallway, reading *A Confederacy of Dunces* for my AP English class while two dorm mates passed a lacrosse ball back and forth above my head with their sticks, and three others jammed on their guitars in a nearby dorm room. We were an eclectic mix, but there was no friction. There were no stereotypes. There was no such thing as a jock. The athletes helped me with my problem sets and I helped them with their English essays. It was an incredibly formative experience, building up those relationships.

The diversity of NMH was not just racial and ethnic. There was an incredible richness of creative and academic thought. Teachers welcomed students to challenge the accepted norm, and the school really nurtured every student based on who they had the potential to be. The big message I took away was to show compassion and empathy. My English teacher Jerry Renaud would always chide me: Do not rush to judgment with the text you're reading. Think about it. Today, as a lawyer, I can't rush to judgment. I think that's why I always veered toward the social sciences after NMH, where there's no binary, no single answer. Every time you reach a conclusion, there's always another question.

LEE MOULTON '03
New York, New York
E-Commerce Partnership Strategy, Google

The first thing NMH taught me was an appreciation for nature. I can't explain what a mental-health respite it was to be in those hills, to walk through one of the most beautiful campuses in America every day. I also found the structure and consistency of life at NMH healing in a way, knowing that the buses were going to run on time and there were all these people – teachers, dorm parents, student leaders – who were willing to help you and talk through things with you.

When it came to skills, an important one I honed at Northfield was building relationships and finding a connecting thread among a diverse group of faculty and fellow students. On my floor in Crossley, we had kids from Nigeria, Hong Kong, and Japan. My roommate was a hockey player from Hingham, Massachusetts. We didn't have much in common but we forged a strong bond throughout our time together.

Professionally, I've done my best to leverage the lessons I learned at NMH. The small classes and the deep attention that the teachers showed made me feel comfortable speaking up and having an opinion. Knowing that opinion would be challenged and speaking up anyway taught me to be OK with being wrong. That has served me so well in my career. With my teams and in my work, I make sure to say: Let's try this. Let's push forward. Let's take risks.

DO I LOVE FLIPPING BURGERS AND MAKING MILKSHAKES? NOT REALLY. WHAT I LIKE IS THE PEOPLE.

DORY MCCLURE P'22
Snack Bar Lead, NMH Dining Services

Do I love flipping burgers and making milkshakes? Not really. What I like is the people. In the five years I've worked at NMH, I've been able to build my confidence mainly because I've been supported by my coworkers. And in the snack bar, I get to have a different relationship with students than most other adults on campus do. I'm not so concerned about how great they're doing with their academics and sports and extracurriculars. It's about them as a person.

Part of being a server is being able to read people and see what they need. Most of the time, kids just need connection. There's one student – I can gauge what kind of day she's having by seeing what kind of pants she's wearing. Is it a sweatpants day or a jeans day? I make the food or the drink, I watch kids as they go about their day, I notice their routines and patterns, and if there's a lapse, I can pay attention to it.

One time this year, I had a good conversation with a few student leaders about how the student body in general needs to be more respectful to the dining staff and custodial staff. It's a socio-economic thing, a class-system thing, and a lot of students don't understand it. So this was a time that a few kids got to ask questions and learn about real life, which felt meaningful.

In this place where students are always worried about where they're going to go to college, I've actually started my own college application process. I'm probably going to end up in the social sciences field, maybe as a social worker. The last five years have proven to me that I work really well with people. One day, I had a student come through, a regular who's pretty high-anxiety. She ordered her coffee drink and then she ordered a hug. I said, "You got it, no charge." The next girl came up like she was going to order something, and I asked her, "What do you need?" She said, "I could use one of those hugs." I said, "Absolutely. I will pass them out."



EVERY TIME I GET OFF STAGE AFTER A PERFORMANCE, I THINK, WHEN CAN I DO THAT AGAIN?

AMY LANE '71
New York, New York

I spent my first year of high school in Rumson, New Jersey, and it was not cool to be smart there. At Northfield, there was much more freedom to live up to one's own expectations. I wasn't conscious of it at the time, but being at Northfield when it was an all-girls' school, you could realize your own capability without all the social overlays that can happen in a coed public high school. I could own my intelligence without worrying how others would perceive it.

I went on to University of Pennsylvania and Wharton Business School, and I worked as an investment banker for a lot of years. It's a very male-dominated field. I had to be able to understand the language and the rules about how to progress and succeed, and at the same time, be true to myself. At the end of my career, at Merrill, I ran a global group of about 50 people. We killed it; we went from \$70 million in revenue to \$400 million. But what I feel unbelievably proud about is how we took all the so-called "rules" – the way people take credit for somebody else's work and don't trust each other – and we shifted the culture. We created a new model that was based on transparency and communication and trust, with everybody supporting one another and knowing people were not going to try to one-up you.

I partly tie my success back to Northfield, even though it was forever ago. When you're a teenager, at that vulnerable point in your life, being able to feel confident about your intelligence and capability is important in forming a person who can go out and succeed in the world. I had the desire and drive to achieve and leave a mark, but also to act with integrity. You have to feel pretty empowered to do that.



AVA CLARKE '22
Spofford, New Hampshire

When I was a freshman, I said to myself, "What can I do to get on Broadway?" I wanted to leave high school and move to New York or L.A. My performing arts teachers said, "Don't waste your high school experience. Embrace all the opportunities that NMH has to offer." It was all right here at my fingertips, I just needed to take advantage of it. And I think I did. All three teachers – Gretel (Schatz), Jared (Eberlein), and Sheila (Heffernon) – have been such great mentors in my life. For me, the great thing about NMH was that I could incorporate as much arts as possible into my schedule. Every time I get off stage after a performance, I think, "When can I do that again?"

I didn't know about NYU and Tisch School of the Arts until one of my older friends applied during my freshman year. After that, I couldn't stop dreaming about Tisch and researching it. I finally got to apply, and I got in! That was one of the best moments of my life – working toward something for so long and then having it actually happen.

BESIDES THE LAND, IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND WORK HERE THAT MADE IT AN AMAZING PLACE.

David Dowdy is retiring after 40 years of teaching at NMH.



DAVID DOWDY P'15, '18
NMH English Teacher

When I think about the teaching I've done – that went by in a flash. But no, actually, it was a long time. I was 28 when I got here. My whole life, basically.

I remember saying to myself the first week I worked at NMH, "If I ever take these hills for granted, it's time to move on." I don't think I ever have. I've walked to work almost every day for at least 25 years. Every season, and within seasons – snow, no snow, the different greens, the golden greens, the fall colors, which happen to be my least favorite – all of it. I would say to myself, "Somehow I get to have this." Even more recently when I'd walk across campus, especially in the spring when everything comes back to life, a mood or a memory would sweep over me – an awareness of my first year, of constantly being surprised by the outdoors, by the smells and the light. Before NMH, I lived in Chicago and didn't have a car, so I walked a great deal, but it was always to get someplace. To move to NMH was just to wander.

Besides the land, it's the people who live and work here that made it an amazing place. I think of the faculty who have come and gone and those who stayed – what an amazing collection of people. The opportunity to be friends with them, to be part of their lives, to learn from them. Sometimes I felt pushed in the wrong ways, but mostly I felt pushed in the right ways. There was always an opportunity to grow.



NMH HAS ALLOWED ME TO UNDERSTAND HOW I TAKE UP SPACE, AND HOW I CAN TAKE UP MORE SPACE IF I NEED TO.

LAURE MANDIAMY '22 (left)
Bronx, New York

At NMH, I feel like I figured out who I am as a person. I realized that I like directing plays. I like to play Ultimate Frisbee. I'm really passionate about social justice. I also saw how academics can lead to productive conversations about the real world. In my Advanced Calculus class, we figured out how climate change can impact islands because of rising sea levels. That showed me how math has real-world applications, and made me think about academics as something greater than a test or an essay – it's a way that I can think about the world and how I want to contribute to it.

Before NMH, I went to a school with people who looked like me. So coming into a predominantly white institution for high school, I was a minority, but connecting with other people of color whose voices are underrepresented helped me understand my own experiences. And being part of the Student Diversity Committee (SDC) has helped me make an impact on the community – not just sharing my voice but also doing other things like organizing and hosting events like Diversity Summits and Story Nights. It's one thing to say that you want change, but with the SDC, I could make change happen.

DESTINY MONTERO '22 (right)
Mattapan, Massachusetts

During intramurals freshman year, we played Capture the Pumpkin with all the dorms and classes. When I had the pumpkin in my hand, everyone on my team was making sure that no one could get to me. When I fell, people helped me get back up. It gave me a good taste of NMH. It showed me how even though everyone was different ages and from different walks of life, they could work together to get something done, even if it's something as silly as making sure someone can't capture your pumpkin. After that, I tried out for soccer, I went to Science Club, I did robotics – I did so many things because I was more comfortable approaching new people.

I already knew I was interested in STEM, and being able to take a wide variety of math and science classes and move up in levels has helped me explore what I like and don't like. My favorite part of biology was learning about nucleotides and DNA, how they code what you look like and how little changes can cause a disease or be deadly. My family is impacted by genetic diseases, so being able to learn about biotechnology, why stuff happens, looking at how other species evolved to deal with these issues – I fell in love with it because it's a growing field and it can be used to help people.

I'm not a very social person, but I've become more outspoken since I've been at NMH. Sometimes my family does things that I don't agree with, and I'll talk about it and explain why it's wrong. But NMH has also allowed me to understand how I take up space, and how I can take up more space if I need to.



JAMES D'ERCOLE '89
Brooklyn, New York
United Nations Department of Peace Operations

I was heavily into sports as a teenager, and the Mount Hermon campus was where people were more into athletics. But I was assigned to Gould Hall on the Northfield campus, which had a much more artistic and crunchy feel. People were into the Grateful Dead. I remember wondering if I was placed there as an experiment, or maybe as some attempt to change the social structure. But I loved it.

When I left NMH, I thought I would go into environmental law because I took a few environmental studies courses at Northfield and really connected with them. I did a master's degree in environment and development at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, which I would not have done if it wasn't for Northfield. I see NMH as a solid foundation for what I do now, which is strategic force generation. When a U.N. member state pledges a unit to peacekeeping operations, I bring all the U.N. experts together and lead a trip to the member state and make sure they're in line with what the U.N. needs in the field. This spring, I traveled to Rwanda, Sweden, then Mongolia and Kazakhstan. At NMH, you were constantly interacting with people from other countries, other states, and you couldn't help but connect. The diversity wasn't just for diversity's sake; it felt like something more. There was a sense of camaraderie. Like workjib: You're washing dishes next to someone and everyone is in the same boat, helping each other get the job done. That connection always brings a smile when I bump into NMH alumni around the world.

SYDNEY MAY '22
Erving, Massachusetts

Before NMH, I was climate-conscious. I grew up composting, trying to reduce, reuse, recycle. But this year, when our school theme was environmental stewardship, some teachers integrated climate change into their courses, and I started to take sustainability a lot more seriously.

I took the Rhodes Social Entrepreneurship course, and a couple of kids from my class and I started an enterprise called Your Corner Closet. There's a lot of online shopping on campus because of the stress that people sometimes feel in a highly academic environment. That generates clothing waste because some of it gets left behind when people leave. We collect that clothing and redistribute it to shelters in the area. We also resell some of the clothes and give the profits directly to the shelters.

NMH is a very independent environment, and learning how to be independent makes you feel super-confident. That helps you contribute back to the community. As a tour guide, I was always trying to give other kids a good idea of why they should come to NMH. The main story I told is about how I worked at the farm for two weeks straight the summer before my freshman year, like 7 or 8 am to 4 pm. I thought I would really dislike it, but it was a great introduction. Every day, we'd weed or make ice cream, and we'd be rewarded with bits of maple candy that we made, or we'd get to pet the horses. It gave me a sense of the NMH community: working hard, getting your hands dirty, but enjoying it and learning from it.



SHEILA HEFFERNON P'01, '02, '08
NMH Director of Choral Programs

I was a child of the '60s – protests and communes – and NMH felt like a commune when I first arrived. I loved it when the whole school would assemble together, and I could look out at this community where people were focused on how to be better, how to live well, and how to help adolescents figure out what a moral and good life looked like to them.

This year, I made a conscious decision to imagine that it was my first year at NMH again. It was fascinating to become reacquainted with my 26-year-old self. I could see myself in different time periods, too: I'd be walking up to Alumni Hall for lunch, thinking about the remarkable, crazy students in my hip-hop class, and suddenly I'd see myself pushing a stroller with my son in it and my daughter on my back.

When we went to New York to do Vespers last December, it was a very different experience because of the pandemic. And because it was my last Vespers, I wondered how I would handle it. As we went through the service, there was one song – a setting of a Blake poem – when I realized, this is all about to come to an end. I started to lose it a little bit. I looked around and made eye contact with all the students. They knew I was struggling. It was their looks of encouragement, their nods, that helped me get through that moment. In the early years when I was teaching, there were times I would walk away from a class or a performance feeling exhilarated because everything clicked. As I got older, it was still joyful, just not as thrilling. But that moment during Vespers, I felt that sense of exhilaration again because of the amazing community of students who, in spite of everything we've been through in the last two years, were there to make exquisite music together. I will never forget that.

I FELT THAT SENSE OF EXHILARATION BECAUSE OF THE AMAZING COMMUNITY OF STUDENTS WHO, IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, WERE THERE TO MAKE EXQUISITE MUSIC TOGETHER.

Sheila Heffernon is retiring after 42 years of teaching at NMH.



**NMH HAS STRETCHED ME,
AND ALLOWED ME TO
SEE THE STRENGTHS AND
CAPABILITIES IN MYSELF.**

NHU GONZALEZ HOANG
NMH Science Department Chair, Chemistry Teacher,
Swimming Coach

Having studied chemistry since seventh grade in Vietnam, I find the subject – and the kind of thinking it asks of me – to be familiar, like an old friend. However, for students who are just starting to think about the world in terms of atoms and molecules, chemistry can be challenging. I try to view their challenge as a provocation; before I teach, I tackle the material with a fresh eye, see where the stumbling blocks might arise, and use my expertise to break things apart and put them back together in ways that are accessible for students. My craft has grown significantly since I've been at NMH. I'm a parent figure and a mentor to students, but I'm also a companion. I'm part of their adventure as they learn about chemistry, the world around them, and themselves.

When I came to the U.S. as an international student at 15, my goal was to get into a good college, pursue science, and cure cancer. (I wanted to make a difference and in my teenage-self's mind, curing cancer was it.) I've suffered from social anxiety my whole life, which is partly why, in college, the chemistry lab was my haven. The idea of teaching, coaching, and advising teenagers, not to mention living with them, should have scared me, but it didn't. NMH has stretched me, and allowed me to see the strengths and capabilities in myself. Be it spending hours in the emergency room with an advisee waiting for an appendicitis diagnosis, or helping another dorm resident process anti-Asian sentiment during the pandemic – it started out as a need, like "I need to do this for my students." Then it grew and turned into "I can and I want to."



THEMBA FLOWERS '90, P'19, '23
NMH Director of Information Technology

I think the job of parents is to provide our children with as much opportunity and as many chances to bloom as possible. My mother chose NMH for me for this reason. As a student, my relationship with the school wasn't necessarily great and was largely defined by being Black on campus. Still, NMH changed my outlook on the world, and it absolutely affected who I would become in a positive way. It wasn't a pressure cooker the way other schools felt like they might be. I appreciated the holistic head, heart, and hand philosophy. I wrestled, acted in a couple of plays, and was assistant director at the radio station. And I'm quite sure that my study abroad in Spain with NMH led to my majoring in Spanish and Portuguese in college. I don't think I would have gotten into the colleges that I did had I stayed in the Philadelphia public school system.

When I was a student, NMH was quite intentionally anti-tech. Ironically, not long after I graduated, it became one of the most technologically innovative boarding schools in the country. As the director of IT, I've learned a lot about being responsible for technology at a 24/7 campus. The job never stops. It's given me a unique perspective on Enterprise IT in education. And I'm happy to represent as a person of color in a leadership role, both for the example it sets and for my ability to provide a different perspective in many conversations. I've learned that my voice is really necessary.

JIM VOLLINGER P'01, '08
NMH Math Teacher, Soccer Coach

I was originally hired as a soccer coach who could also teach math. I taught Algebra 1, but didn't have a lot of knowledge beyond that, so I became an adult learner, which had real benefits. I learned from some very experienced colleagues, and NMH did a great job of pushing me up the ladder – Algebra 2, Precalc, Calculus. I always tried to slow my thought process down and ask myself, What is it that allows me to have the a-ha moments?

Math is usually taught sequentially, and retention tends to be short term, so I decided to experiment with a mastery model. The first two or three weeks of my classes were usually the most challenging because I put everything in front of the students. I overloaded them. But then we'd be working on concepts they'd already seen, looking at the overlap of different techniques from one calculation to the next. We practiced the skills over and over. It's just like anything else: The more times you repeat a task, the easier it is to do and understand.

I've been rewarded at NMH with friendships and hard work and a lot of new skills. Soccer played a huge role; nothing pleases me more than hearing from a former player, especially if he or she is still knocking the ball around. And going to India with students and connecting with an orphanage and a community there – those trips had many life-affirming and life-changing moments. That's NMH to me – getting excited about different things, and doing something with that energy and enthusiasm to, hopefully, make a difference.



TOM BAXTER '59
Millville, New Jersey

I was a faculty brat. Every vacation and all summer, I worked at the farm and on the grounds crew. One day, I helped Carroll Rikert, the head of buildings and grounds, do the surveying for a new steam line going from the power plant to the dining hall. Later, when he worked on drawings, specifications, and contract documents for that project, he showed me what he was doing. When it came time to dig the ditch, I helped dig the ditch. I helped put in the bases that held the steam pipes, and I wrapped the steam pipes in asbestos. All of that was the prime experience that led me to study engineering.

One of the big things I did in my career was to design, construct, and operate a water supply system in Monmouth County, New Jersey. It was all focused on teamwork: How do you get people to play nice together? Doing sports at Mount Hermon was critical to that. One year, we were having a great season in soccer, undefeated, and we went to Suffield Academy and tied. The game was a disaster. The coaches sat us down afterward, gave us each a piece of paper and asked us a simple question: What's wrong? We all wrote something down and gave it to them. The point is that if you're leading a group, you involve the group in the decisions. You don't dictate. I carry that with me today. I'm advising the East Northfield Water Company near NMH, trying to determine the future of that facility. I volunteer with Habitat for Humanity a few times a week, building houses. There is always a discussion: What are we going to do today, how are we going to do it, and who's going to do what? When people have input, they're vested.



MADDY GRANT '22
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

When I first visited NMH, it was November, really cold. The weather was disgusting. But I remember thinking, this campus is beautiful. I could already see it as home.

The first experience I had with live music at NMH was the pops concert in the fall. It was in the dining hall, and I remember being really tired and just needing food. There was this blaring music and I saw Steve Bathory-Peeler (director of orchestral programs) wearing a Pikachu onesie, conducting the theme song from Pokemon. I was like, I love this place! There were other pieces besides the Pokemon song, and I felt so happy to have wonderful music to listen to.

My primary instrument has always been bass – behind the scenes, at the back of the band. I'd never really sung before. But doing musicals at NMH helped me become more open to trying new things, and I joined NMH Singers. I can translate my experience as an instrumentalist and songwriter and composer into my singing performances. In my senior year, I got the opportunity to do a Capstone course on musical theater, and it was a radically wonderful experience because I was learning things I wanted to learn about. I learned not only about the subject I was studying but also about myself – what it takes to make a large piece of work and what I need to do in order to be successful and creative.

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Jim Vollinger is retiring after 36 years of teaching and coaching at NMH.

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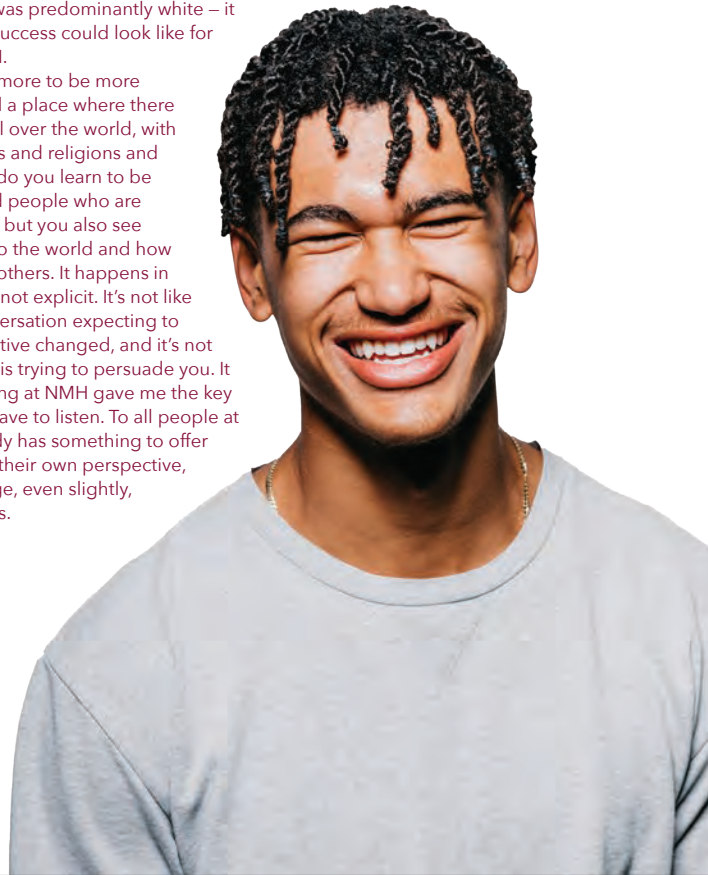


EVERYBODY HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER AND EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE, AND THAT WILL CHANGE, EVEN SLIGHTLY, HOW YOU SEE THINGS.

TIDIANE THIAM '23
Andover, Massachusetts

The dorm life at NMH makes you want to be a part of the community. My RLs (resident student leaders) and dorm heads really showed me what success could look like. Especially having Black RLs when I was coming from an area that was predominantly white – it showed me what success could look like for a Black kid at NMH.

NMH could do more to be more diverse, but it's still a place where there are people from all over the world, with different ethnicities and religions and cultures. Not only do you learn to be empathetic toward people who are different from you, but you also see how you can fit into the world and how you can influence others. It happens in little moments. It's not explicit. It's not like you go into a conversation expecting to have your perspective changed, and it's not like someone else is trying to persuade you. It just comes up. Being at NMH gave me the key component: You have to listen. To all people at all times. Everybody has something to offer and everyone has their own perspective, and that will change, even slightly, how you see things.



Mace Foehl is retiring after 34 years of teaching and coaching at NMH.

MACE FOEHL P'11, '14
NMH Math Teacher, Golf and Field Hockey Coach

I was 20-something when NMH hired me; it was only my second teaching job. Then I got engaged, and NMH hired my husband three years later. I had a time at NMH when I was single, then a time when I was married. Why did I stay so long? We had kids, and having kids in this place is wonderful. You take them to the dining hall, and they go to the campus nursery school, and they have friends on campus. So you don't leave. Then your kids go to school at NMH, and you see them being taught by your colleagues, and that is magical. When I coached field hockey, I always used to think that the athletic director didn't like me very much. But then his daughter was on my team, and he observed me from a parent's perspective. He gained more respect for me because he finally understood how good a coach I was.

Last winter I got an email from the mom of a kid in my Advanced Calculus class, and she said, "Mace, I'm so happy that you are teaching her again. She trusts you so much that she thinks you can teach anything." That's probably the nicest note I've ever gotten. She also said, "I read your course description. I think it is not easy."

She was right. I actually bought everyone in that class sweatbands in different colors, and I said, "Pick one, because you are sweating in this class. I don't care how smart you are; advanced calculus is not easy." I told them, "I've been sweating my whole life. I work hard, I work out, I sweat. So maybe you want to wear this during a test, or at night when you're doing your homework. Everyone looks good in a sweatband."

E.E. WINTERS AND CHRIS WHITE P'13, '14
Great Barrington, Massachusetts

We had to up our game because of NMH. It was a growth experience for us as well as for our kids. They held our feet to the fire about the way we talked, the way we viewed the world. The zings would come at us, which was a good thing. When your children challenge your previous ways of thinking, it wakes you up.

Charlie and Suki arrived at NMH together; Suki was there for four years, and Charlie was there for three. Charlie had been really unhappy in the place where he started high school, and after he'd been at NMH for just a couple weeks, he called home and said, "Even though I have to wake up at six in the morning to go clean something, I feel so comfortable here. Everybody is accepted. Everybody is OK with everybody."

We think about high school as kind of a hard-drive for learning. It can really set the tone for the rest of your life. It sets the balance in your thinking. When both Charlie and Suki got to college, they had no trouble being away from home, number one. And number two, they knew how to live with people in the right way. Because NMH was a school for everybody. You felt that on campus, the focus on equity. That's the way they've been living their lives ever since, in the same kind of ecosystem that was created at NMH.



ELLIOT DETJENS '22
Barnstable, Massachusetts

Because of my commitment to play lacrosse in college, I was hesitant about doing cross country running last fall. The coach was super-willing to let me do both – participate in cross country and also train for lacrosse on the side – and I appreciated how he was flexible about what I wanted to do. The camaraderie and community on the cross country team is super strong, and I bought into every practice and every race. I started out as a lacrosse player who tried running to cross-train, and I ended up getting 14th at the New England Cross Country Championships. I was really proud of that.

I was a shy kid growing up, and I was insecure about trying new things and meeting new people. Cross country was an example of trying something and having it pay off. I'm not so shy any more. I will totally talk to anybody new. And in class, I'm not afraid to be the first one to talk or the only one to talk. I like pushing myself to try to answer tough questions. NMH has helped with the leadership side of things, too – it's challenged me to make my own path and lead by example. There are definitely times that I've referred to NMH as "home." Like, I'm going back to the dorm – I'm going home. I wouldn't have it any other way.

JOHN CARROLL '89, P'23
NMH Boys' Basketball Coach



I grew up in New York City, and I was always taught not to look people in the eye, because they might be dangerous. When I came to NMH, everyone was like, Hi! Hi! Hi! This is a very friendly community. People want to know who you are, and that can be a lot for some kids. It was a lot for me. I remember thinking, I'm here for a year, I'm going to handle my business, then I'm getting out. Rope Pull played a big part in changing my experience. I saw that and I thought, I bet I can help, and I grabbed the rope.

As a PG on the basketball team, I was committed to being an athlete, but people would say, "Great, you're an athlete. What else do you do?" That was the first time in my life that I was asked that. Later, as a coach, my biggest goal became getting a group of kids to become the fullest version of themselves, and for them to understand what we were doing with basketball was just a cover for life. You can't just show up on game day, just like you can't be a parent only on Wednesdays and Saturdays. You aren't an employee only when you feel like your best; you have to give your best even when you're at not your best.

Kids come to NMH because they're typically the best player in their playground, and they need a new playground. They want to be surrounded by peers who are chasing excellence the way they're chasing it. I was only so good by myself. It wasn't until I came here as a student, and came back as a coach, that I became a part of something bigger.

John Carroll is leaving NMH after coaching basketball for 21 years.



I'M NOT SO SHY ANYMORE. I WILL TOTALLY TALK TO ANYBODY NEW.



PASSION

AND

PURPOSE

NMH teachers and students are constantly asking questions, seeking solutions, and contributing to a better world.

ESSAY BY BEA GARCIA, *Assistant Head of School for Academic Programs and Dean of Faculty*

ILLUSTRATION BY SAM FALCONER

Alanna* is an NMH student who arrived on campus as a 9th grader full of excitement and anticipation. Her ultimate goal was to travel the world. Alexander* came to NMH as a 10th grader, hoping his future path would reveal itself to him. He was not ready to make his own decisions yet and he defaulted to going with the flow. Both students were typical teenagers who thought NMH was the place for them. Both expected to be transformed.

And they were — but not without challenges along the way. Alexander and Alanna each discovered that at NMH, we are constantly asking questions and moving forward. We never settle. We always want to learn how to do better. NMH teachers prioritize exploring new ways to meet students where they are and help them live good lives. Starting in our humanities courses, we ask 9th graders to reflect on their identities, their place in the world, and the choices they make as global citizens. Next, we challenge our 10th graders to look at the world through the lens of equity and inclusivity, through the story of power and powerlessness; we advise them against the danger of the single story. The goal is to create the conditions that allow all our students to find their own answers. The goal is to educate with passion and purpose.

In those early years, Alanna thrived. She got good grades, did her work, seemed to always be smiling and happy, and made friends. But something was still missing. That magic revelation about what she would do with her life had not yet come. Alexander, a more average student, also found support and connection, but was also far from finding his calling. Their teachers continued to engage them and push them to try new things with an eye on the long view: helping them find a path toward a life of fulfillment.

NMH's mission is to empower students, and our academic program is one of our most powerful tools. It stands, by design, at the intersection of innovation and equity, and in that intentionality, we live out our mission. Through a holistic, interdisciplinary approach, we help our students take charge of their own learning, and our focus on experiential

opportunities connects the dots and truly engages students in their education.

The new fabrication lab in the Gilder Center, for example, is open to every student who wants to tinker and learn through design thinking and trial and error. Our Capstone Program encourages seniors to take deep scholarly dives into areas that spark their intellectual curiosity, working independently with full agency but also with faculty mentors. Our Social Entrepreneurship program guides students in applying their knowledge and creating enterprises that solve problems in local and global communities. NMH's arts program encourages students to help drive the creative process and discover new dimensions of their talent as they compose, sing, direct, choreograph, and make visual art. Next year, we will start a new Farm Program that will connect students more deeply to NMH's natural resources, combining a science course, an English course, a workjob commitment, and multiple visits to nearby farms. By emphasizing local heritage, cultures, landscapes, and hands-on experiences, the program will allow students to apply knowledge, develop skills, and learn through a different lens.

These examples of experiential learning, which are grounded in our mission to educate the head, heart, and hands of our students, consistently result in transformative stories like those of Alanna and Alexander. During her junior year, Alanna had an epiphany. She had hosted exchange students at NMH multiple times, which required significant personal effort and an attempt to leave her comfort zone. However, she knew she had to take the next step — to go abroad herself and experience what it meant to insert herself in another culture and to respect and honor the thinking, practices, and people that define it. And she did. Alexander took the same step, traveling with NMH to learn within cultures very different from his own, but his desire came from a different place; he saw this as one of his last chances to find something that would move him to the core. Both students had valid reasons for wanting to travel. Both were encouraged, supported, and pushed by teachers who believed in them.

Students are at the center of everything we do. We meet them where they are and provide the conditions for their growth. Recently, a student shared with me that

during a college admission interview, they highlighted their experience studying a language through our Service Learning Program. This program allows NMH students to teach the very language they are learning to elementary school students in the nearby towns of Bernardston and Northfield. They navigate the learning and teaching process, reflect on the values of educational access and opportunity, and manage the challenges of helping others learn. They experience an incredible feeling of accomplishment and pride when their young students are able to communicate in Spanish or French at the end of the semester.

with you. You brought back my son.”

We live in a world that requires us to be flexible and adaptable, one that calls for innovation and drive. We need global citizens who can engage and respond with empathy and compassion, citizens who use a systems-thinking approach to solve problems with curiosity, an open mind, and an understanding of the interconnectedness that makes us human. We must educate students so they know how to collaborate around common goals, and how to commit themselves to equity and inclusivity as they invite others into the conversation. Our global society needs people who are divergent thinkers,

“We must create the conditions that allow all our students to find their own answers.”

AT NMH, WE ARE COMMITTED to helping students develop the literacies they need “to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their community and wider society,” as UNESCO describes it. Service and leadership, global fluency, social justice, sustainability, and cultural awareness are some of the literacies we expect our students to develop, practice, and apply at NMH and beyond.

Alanna and Alexander are prime examples. Traveling internationally, Alanna felt empowered. She developed a new network of people who became her extended family, and later, she even brought her biological family to meet her new community. She felt transformed and committed herself to transforming others. Upon her return to NMH, she became a leader and encouraged others to engage and act. Alexander's experience abroad was different but similarly remarkable. Something clicked for him in his new community. He connected with people and places with a new sense of purpose and started to understand his role in the world. A few weeks after Alexander returned home, his father wrote to the NMH teachers who had led his trip: “I am humbly grateful for what you did. I sent a student

who are prepared to approach traditional and new problems with a multidisciplinary perspective, who are excellent communicators in different environments, and who have developed the competencies to navigate the world. At NMH, we are committed to educating the head, heart, and the hands of our students. It's how we can empower them to become creative agents of change and to act with humanity and purpose. [NMH]



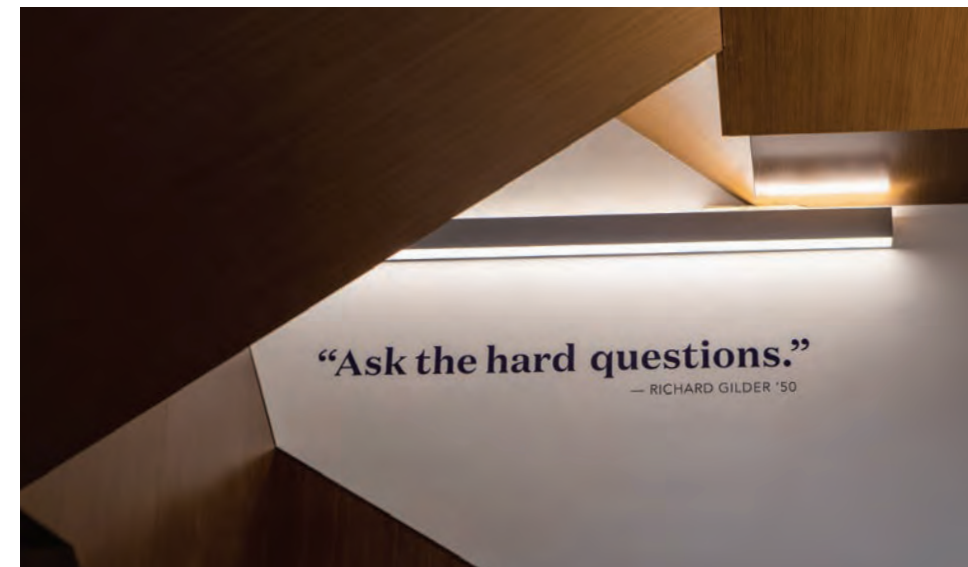
* Names have been changed to protect students' privacy.



OPEN

TEXT BY
JENNIFER
SUTTON

PHOTOS BY
JOANNA
CHATTMAN



SPACE(S)

THE
GILDER CENTER
IS WHERE
STUDENTS
AND FACULTY
GO TO THINK
BIG

From the soaring expanse of the atrium lobby to the private study corners that overlook the hills, the Gilder Center is the place to be on campus these days. The new building, home to NMH’s math and science departments, was under construction from May 2020 to October 2021, and when the doors opened about seven months ago, students and faculty were awestruck. The feeling held. “It’s just exciting when you walk into this building,” Liam Lichocki ’23 said during his honors chemistry class in February.

Named after the late Richard “Dick” Gilder ’50, the new building provides a backdrop of environmental awareness throughout the classroom and common spaces, and supports student-teacher interactions with more hands-on, interdisciplinary tools and techniques. Sustainability Director and science teacher Becca Malloy calls it “a dynamic and immersive place to learn.” To students like Lulu Calame ’23, the Gilder Center’s minimalist beauty and light-filled spaces offer something else, too. “It’s hard to describe,” she says. “It just feels like we can breathe here.”

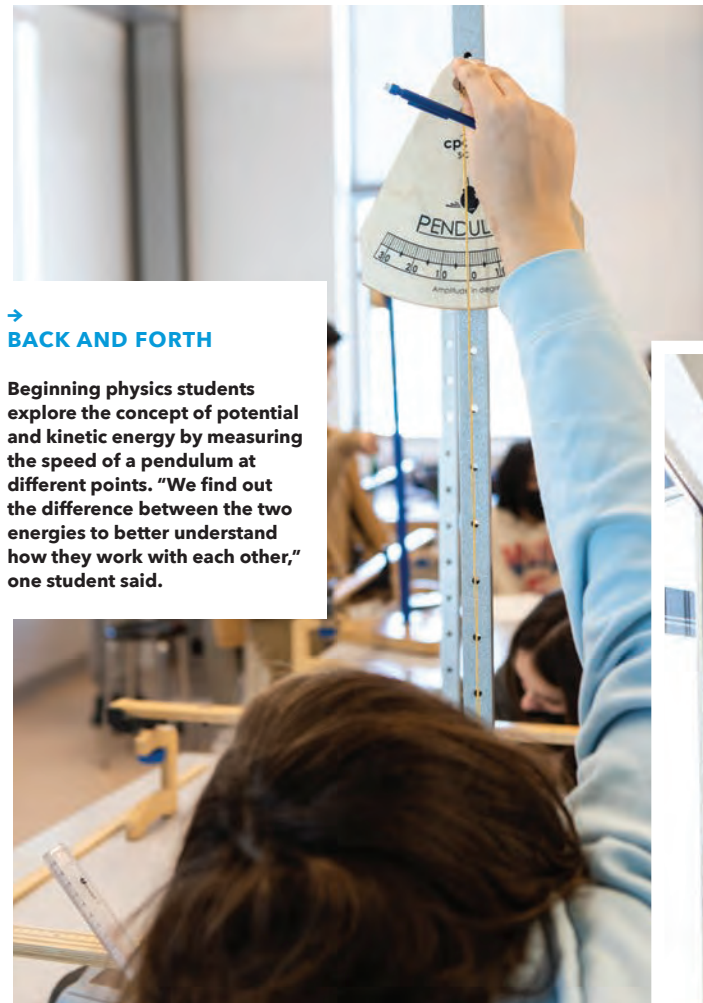


HONG KONG HALL

➤ **A COMMUNAL SPACE**

Walk in the front door and sense the possibilities. The atmosphere is open, inviting discussion and collaboration. "It's nice to see kids want to hang out in this space," says science teacher Jolene Schuster. "In Cutler Science Center, there was no place to sit and be together as a group outside of class, and it was kind of cold and dingy. But students are in this building every chance they can get."

Previous pages:
Honors chemistry students at work in the lab; in the stairwell, all students get a daily reminder from Richard Gilder '50, who donated the lead gift for the building.



➤ **BACK AND FORTH**

Beginning physics students explore the concept of potential and kinetic energy by measuring the speed of a pendulum at different points. "We find out the difference between the two energies to better understand how they work with each other," one student said.



➤ **SMALL-GROUP STUDY**

Eliot Vaughey '22 (left) and Laure Mandiamy '22 work on calculus problems in one of Gilder's more intimate conference rooms. Because so much of NMH's curriculum emphasizes collaboration and interpersonal skills, breaking out into smaller groups is crucial.



➤ **LAB WORK**

During an evening Science Club session, students dive into biotechnology, working with bacteria extracted from jellyfish plasma to see if they survive under certain conditions, and getting familiar with equipment and practices they'll encounter in college science courses. "We get to try our hands on things most high school students don't get to do," says Bryan Ho '22 (right).





HANDS ON

Ella Gazo '22 (left) and Brynn Charron '22 dig into an augmented-reality sandbox – essentially a color-gradient topographic map that can be manipulated with the movement or touch of their hands. By forming mountains, valleys, river deltas, and flood plains, students can learn about geography, hydrology, erosion, and conservation.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Ninth graders take a test together that they took individually the previous week. "It's a little chaotic, but helpful," says Phoebe Garrett '25 (center). "When we have different ideas about what the answer is, we work together to find something that makes sense to everyone."

LAWS OF PHYSICS

In an Advanced Physics class, Otto Luessenhop '22 measures how much energy is needed for a spring to launch a small ball in the air. The Gilder Center provides more spaces for students to focus on lab techniques, problem-solving practices, and projects.



WRITE ON THE DESK!

Gilder's desk surfaces, along with many of the walls, are made of whiteboard material, so students like Ruyan Li '23 (with Michael Liu '22) have the freedom and flexibility to try out ideas before committing them to paper or a computer screen. More space to write leads to clearer thinking, and it saves paper, too.

400+
THE NUMBER OF WRITABLE WHITEBOARD SURFACES

SEEING TRENDS

Honors Chemistry students Lulu Calame '23 and Alex Clayton '23 look at "periodic trends" – patterns in the size and electronic properties of different elements in the periodic table – by observing how the elements react when combined with hydrochloric acid.



SHARING RESULTS

Science teacher Skylar McAlpin pulls a display poster off a new large-format printer. Her Honors Biology students conducted research in the NMH forest and designed posters to help present their findings, much like they would at an academic conference. The new printer provides a sophisticated way for students to share what they're discovering and hone their visual communication skills.



AT THE BOARD

Math teacher Mark Yates confers with Advanced Calculus students as they learn to integrate and differentiate the slope of a curve and the area under a curve. Collaborating at the whiteboard – talking through problems and assignments – helps students process and retain what they learn.



UP FOR DEBATE

Members of NMH's award-winning Debate Society gather weekly in the Gilder Center, preparing for tournaments and practicing their quick-thinking and rebuttal skills.





←↔→
SPARKING CREATIVITY

Students design, tinker, code, and build in the Guild Fabrication Lab (named after Peter '64 and Ann Guild). Whether they're working with robots or 3D-printed racecars, students discuss ideas, research ways to bring those ideas to life, assemble equipment to test prototypes, and gain knowledge by making and doing. Clockwise, from top: Satvik Mathur '24 (in checked shirt) and Grady Miller-Foulk '24, Alex Solano '22, and Lydia Hong '23 (left) and Tiana Johnson '22.

203

THE NUMBER OF PARTS NEEDED TO ASSEMBLE A "CLAWBOT"



→ Students in a Robotics class built the Clawbots and programmed them to perform specific actions and tasks.



An aerial photograph of a university campus during sunset. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting sun breaking through. The campus below features several large, multi-story brick buildings, a central clock tower, a red running track, and a large white tent structure. The campus is surrounded by lush green trees and rolling hills in the distance. The overall mood is serene and hopeful.

WHAT IS POSSIBLE ...

*NMH digs deep into its mission
and values to envision the future.*

WHAT IS POSSIBLE ...

In September 2020, Northfield Mount Hermon launched an in-person school year in the midst of COVID-19. The pandemic shaped nearly every aspect of NMH's day-to-day operations, yet diminished none of the school's aspirations for the future. This critical moment was either a lousy time to start a strategic planning process — or just the right time. The NMH Board of Trustees decided on the latter.

They dove into conversations about how to preserve and strengthen NMH's historical commitment to academic excellence and diversity in its many forms; how to affirm and nurture each student's potential in their journey to young adulthood; how to continue to educate students' heads, hearts, and hands, and get better at it every year. The board joined with hundreds of faculty and staff members, students, alumni, and parents to broaden and deepen the discussion. Through surveys, focus groups, and working committees, the NMH community framed ambitious goals while staying rooted in the school's mission and values.

In the following pages, we share a clear vision for how NMH will measure success in the months and years ahead. The Strategic Framework calls for nothing less than *transformation*, which sounds huge, and it is, but it's also what NMH has been doing since the day D.L. Moody opened the school's doors 143 years ago. From the transformative qualities each student brings to NMH, to the transformative effect a dedicated mentor can have on a student's life, to the transformation sparked by alumni and parent support — it all feeds into the transformative contributions that NMH, as an institution, is making in the world.

PHOTOS BY
MATTHEW CAVANAUGH,
GLENN MINSHALL,
DAVID WARREN

To learn more about how NMH is envisioning the future, find the entire Strategic Framework online at: tinyurl.com/NMHframework





MISSION

Northfield Mount Hermon educates the head, heart, and hands of our students. We engage their intellect, compassion, and talents, empowering them to act with humanity and purpose.



VALUES

Inclusivity

We seek to create a culture where all members feel they belong and where everyone is welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported. We embrace the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and ideas our community members bring and ask that students aspire to develop their unique selves and talents. Because we value such a learning environment, our students are better equipped to empathize, listen, serve, and lead.

Learning for Life

Education for the head, heart, and hands inspires learning for life. We challenge each other to be curious, to think critically, to recognize and challenge biases, and to pursue the best version of ourselves. We expect each member of the community to respect others, engage with differing worldviews, gain cultural literacies, and think and act as a force for good.

Service

We model and celebrate the ideal that learning and growth require genuine service to others. Service demands respect, compassion, and empathy. As students develop these capacities, they gain a deeper understanding of how individual and collective efforts — service and leadership — can transform communities and change the world.

VISION

We will ...

- Be a collective force for good as we educate the next generation of students who will serve and lead in communities around the world.
- Make historic investments in financial aid and assert our commitment to providing access and opportunity to underrepresented communities.
- Deliver a rigorous, immersive, and interdisciplinary program that relies on authentic connections, reflects our commitment to environmental stewardship and social justice, nurtures a global perspective, and leverages our unique resources on campus and around the world.
- Live our mission and values across the life of our school.



PRIORITIES

Expect transformation.

Our expectations are high for our school and for our students.

In educating students' head, heart, and hands in preparation for college and life, we call forth their intellectual, physical, cultural, and spiritual growth. We seek to identify and nurture individual strengths so that students may discover their best selves and, together, be a collective and transformative force for good in communities around the world.

Associated Goals

- **Deliver an exceptional academic experience.** This requires strength across disciplines as well as distinctive programs that align with NMH's mission, integrate diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and sustainability principles, and promote outstanding communication skills.
- **Embrace learning across campus, in our local community, and around the world.** From athletics to performing arts to student leadership roles to workjob to the farm to residential life to service-learning to immersive international travel, experiential learning opportunities profoundly shape the NMH experience. Success requires explicit learning and growth objectives in every facet of the student experience, as well as a shared commitment to the ideal that, when we engage, we seek to do our best work.
- **Meet students where they are.** From the moment we accept students, we must understand their unique strengths and needs, their aspirations, and how we will support them. This requires authentic relationships, as well as a commitment to each student's social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual growth. It also calls for ongoing assessment, flexible learning plans and paths, and consistent communication with students and among the adults working on their team.

Invest in people.

We believe in the potential of each student; the impact of great teachers, coaches, and mentors; and the strength of our alumni network.

Associated Goals

- **Expand access and opportunity.** We must make historic investments in financial aid and reduce the financial barriers to enrolling students.
- **Reflect and support diversity in its many forms.** NMH must attract and retain students and employees whose talents and perspectives better reflect the diversity in our country and around the world. Our success requires an equitable and inclusive experience across the life of our school.
- **Strengthen and support our faculty and staff.** We must value the contributions of all employees, compensate them fairly, offer a healthy work environment, and invest in ongoing professional development so that employees may advance as leaders in their fields.
- **Activate our alumni network.** We must develop professional networking and student-focused career development programs that leverage the expertise within the alumni body.

Steward our resources.

Our place on the Connecticut River differentiates us. It connects us to the land and our community in unique ways, and it provides a springboard to serve more broadly and boldly. We understand the importance of our leadership and modeling environmental stewardship in our daily lives, as well as in our institutional decision making.

Associated Goals

- **Act locally and globally.** Understand the cultural and social contexts of the Connecticut River Valley, including the legacy and enduring presence of the Nipmuc, Pocumtuc, and Abenaki tribes and our founder D.L. Moody's vision for the school. Strengthen interdisciplinary programs that connect students to the land and the community, emphasize environmental stewardship, and promote service to others.
- **Maximize campus resources.** The Gilder Center, the Rhodes Arts Center, the Draper Riverhouse, the farm, and other outstanding facilities provide unique opportunities for our students. They also require purposeful attention to expand their impact as we create signature programs.
- **Strengthen our financial foundation.** We must steward and grow our existing resources and align investment with our strategic priorities to the benefit of current generations, without compromising the long-term health of the school for future generations.
- **Communicate our impact.** Express and celebrate Northfield Mount Hermon's distinct identity, history, and educational mission with greater clarity and pride internally and in the broader marketplace.



Lucy Brown '63, a retired professor of neuroscience at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, decided to become a Tai Chi instructor four years ago. "It's more restful than teaching medical students about the brain, although I loved that, too. I also started mindfulness meditation two years ago — a little like 'Quiet Time' at Northfield."



Robert (Bob) Bruce '66 (NMH faculty 1973–80) was honored by the U.S. Masters Swimming organization with the 2021 Ransom J. Arthur Award, recognizing "the person who has done the most to further the objectives of USMS and the sport of swimming." Bob continues to swim, race, and coach a large adult team in Bend, Oregon, wryly identifying his charges as "8-and-unders with credit cards."

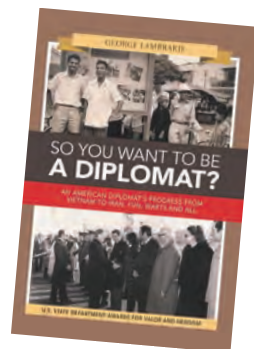
Felice Merrit Gelman '63:

"When COVID hit, my daughter persuaded me to start a neighborhood mutual aid group. We put a letter in every mailbox on our street inviting people to check in [on Zoom]. Now we get together for backyard barbecues, marshmallow roasts — or whatever — about once a month."



Maurice Coleman '87, a senior VP at Bank of America, delivered NMH's Commencement address in May. He's worked in commercial real estate banking on Wall Street for more than two decades — but 35 years ago? "The year that I spent at NMH transformed my life," he says.

George Lambrakis '48 recently published a memoir titled *So You Want to Be a Diplomat?*, which covers his decades-long career as a U.S. Foreign Service officer around the world, including in Vietnam, Laos, Guinea, Israel, Munich, Washington, D.C., London, Lebanon, and Iran.



CLASS NOTES ARE BACK!

Check out our new online portal where you can post photos and updates about marriages, births, career news, and alumni gatherings — and see them appear immediately! Read stories from classmates and gain access to a full, searchable alumni directory. The online portal replaces the traditional Class Notes section in *NMH Magazine*; visit www.nmhschool.org/alumni to learn more.

“Be curious.
Choose to
love it.
Know your
why.”

— LAUREN CARPENTER '22
2022 WINTER ATHLETIC
BANQUET STUDENT SPEAKER

Lauren's wise advice shows that NMH works. An open mind, a desire to understand, a readiness to act.

That's humanity and purpose.

You remember. NMH lifted you up, too — with intellectual challenges, a supportive community, and deep, lasting human connections. You left NMH ready for more. You learned, achieved, and shared your gifts to create and sustain a better world.

Now you can help sustain the NMH experience. Consider making a gift to NMH in your will or through your estate plan.

You can lift up our students for generations to come.



For more information about planned giving options:
nmhschool.org/plannedgiving
413-498-3259

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MARCH 2022. SUGARING. Over spring break, Nazima Rasuly '24 was one of 14 students who stayed at school to help with the farm's annual sugaring operation. Guided by farm staff, the students worked eight hours a day, collecting sap from maple trees in the campus woods, caring for the animals that haul the sap, and keeping the wood-fired evaporator going to boil the sap down into syrup.

**Want a taste of NMH?
Order maple products
online at [nmhschool.org/
student-life/farm-program/
order-farm-products](https://nmhschool.org/student-life/farm-program/order-farm-products)**