

HIGH *where nature
& minds meet*
**MOUNTAIN
INSTITUTE**

FALL 2017





This summer and fall have been full at the High Mountain Institute: full of **new programs, new partnerships, and new buildings** here on campus. We learned a new framework for gender and sexuality diversity, and welcomed talented new faculty members to be part of our team.

While we are proud of these recent advancements, we are also proud of what has remained the same. True to form, motivated students have joined us to connect more deeply with themselves and nature. They are learning authentically through intentional risks and leaving HMI empowered to take advantage of the next chapters ahead—turn to page 7 of this newsletter to see how some of our alumni are currently using their time at HMI to make the most of college.

We are also proud that **next summer we will celebrate two decades of HMI**. Mark your calendars for June 8-10 to connect—and reconnect—with the incredible community that has given life to our mission for the last twenty years. We hope to see you in Leadville then.

THROUGH OUR LENS THIS SUMMER & FALL:



TO FOLLOW MORE OF HMI'S ADVENTURES, FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

COMING HOME

By Danny O'Brien, Head of School



One year ago, I moved into the new Head of School home on the HMI campus with my family. It was a wild time. Within ten days, we unpacked a home's worth of boxes, treated Vivie for a severe case of bronchitis, hosted Semester 37 families over Family Weekend, and welcomed our son, Henry, into the world.

Looking back on that week now, my gut reaction is almost always the same: "What were we thinking?"

We survived the week, of course, and have almost recovered from it. And the effort was clearly worth the temporary toll. Living on campus feels like a natural extension of everything

for which HMI stands. The Head of School house is a peaceful and comfortable place for us to live. It has also become another gathering place for our community, where relationships develop and people come together to connect with one another.

The completion of the Head of School home marked the end of the first phase of our current \$4.5 million capital campaign to build on-campus housing for a majority of our faculty and staff. One reason to undertake this effort, which will fulfill the original vision for HMI, is that it will create new ways we can connect with students and each other, building important relationships along the way.

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Sometimes these ways are silly: Last spring, we hosted 48 students in my living room at 7:30 in the morning when they “disappeared” during AMX to prank the faculty member on duty. Rather than this being a burden, I found I had 48 friends for my kids. And sometimes these ways are more serious. I have gotten to know students over the meals we have shared together when it was, frankly, easier to bring our family to dinner in Who’s Hall than cook ourselves. I notice little things I’d never see otherwise. I recently received an email from a student who attended HMI last spring. He asked me to write him a recommendation for college, saying he believed I knew him deeply and well. He gave two examples, one of a time when I pulled him aside to congratulate him for thriving academically in a tough class, and the other when I pointed out how he could set higher standards for himself during cook crew. Each conversation had a lasting impact on this student, and each happened because I was present on campus. Being here gave me the chance to turn little moments into big learning opportunities.

Living here has been great in other ways too. Recently, I had to meet with a student during study hall. When I lived off-campus, it was impractical to return home before coming back to HMI. This time, however, my family joined me for dinner and I helped Ellie read nighttime stories before my meeting. I am able to be a better father and husband because we live on campus, something for which I am grateful.

As I look back upon our first year in the on-campus Head of School home, it was my two-year old who provided me with the most clarity. Last weekend, Vivie and I were walking back from dinner in Who’s Hall. I was explaining to her that we were going to a party the next night; the hosts, coincidentally, were the folks who moved into our old home when we moved to campus. “They live in my old house,” said Vivie, filling in blanks for me. “We live in my home now.”

Thank you, Vivie, for reminding me—in a way better than I ever could—that the crazy week last October was worth it many times over, both for our family and our school, in order to have a place we can call home. ■

With the Phase I of our Campaign for Community complete, we are now turning our attention toward Phase II: the construction of homes for faculty and staff. We intend to break ground in the summer of 2018 and will continue to fundraise for a second round of homes in Phase III. This project will honor faculty members by providing quality housing and allowing them more time at home with their families. It will strengthen our program by providing more varied and meaningful ways for students and faculty to build relationships. Finally, it will ensure our fiscal sustainability by capitalizing a portion of benefits, allowing HMI to improve compensation without adding to our operating budget.

OUR CAMPUS IS EVOLVING!



We are now running 100% of our electricity off **solar power!**



We recently added **two new cabins** to accommodate our growing summer programs. This also allows us to rotate which cabins we use during the Semester, cutting down on wear and tear and providing more opportunities for upkeep.



Because a functioning campus is paramount to the service of our mission, we are **building a garage and workshop** so that we can have a dedicated space for maintenance projects and a place to house our vehicles.



Thanks to the generous donors who are contributing to our Campaign for Community, planning has begun in earnest for the **first round of on-campus faculty and staff housing**. We intend to break ground in the summer of 2018—stay tuned for updates.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON OUR CAMPAIGN,
PLEASE VISIT

[WWW.HMINET.ORG/GIVING/
CAMPAIGN-FOR-COMMUNITY](http://WWW.HMINET.ORG/GIVING/CAMPAIGN-FOR-COMMUNITY).



EDUCATORS EXPEDITION

By Jacob Sheetz-Willard, History Faculty

Our inaugural professional development course offered educators the chance to explore HMI's leadership curriculum and consider how they can implement leadership initiatives at their own schools.

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

I hear this question a lot at HMI. In history class, it comes while students probe a primary source or evaluate the writing of a peer. We notice word choice, style, subtext, tone, syntax. The flesh and bones of a text; all that makes meaning.

In the backcountry it means attention to natural landmarks, recognizing breaks in the landscape, pointing out a "stopping feature." Careful noticing often separates an early afternoon in camp from setting up in the dark by headlamp.

HOW MUCH DO I STILL NOTICE?

Teaching the same subject year after year means that I can often anticipate what students will discover and what they might miss. It means I can prepare the right questions. Habit takes the place of the live encounter. Routine supplants surprise. And sometimes I forget to do my own noticing.

Verlyn Klinkenborg writes that noticing "requires a suspension of yearning and a pause in the desire to be pouring something out of yourself into the world." The impulse to give of ourselves is often what leads us as educators into the classroom in the first place. I've found,

though, that it's only in the weeks outside of the classroom that I can suspend my desire to give enough to take in the world around me and inside of me.

This past June I found others who share these sentiments. I joined in as HMI sent its inaugural Educators Expedition into the Sawatch for six days of backpacking and professional development. As is typical with HMI expeditions, we battled mosquitos and fried up cheesy mac; we designated Leaders-of-the-Day and practiced giving feedback; we climbed a mountain and bombproofed our belongings.

We also talked about pedagogy. We asked big questions of ourselves, and of each other: how much missions matter, what we can do to best support student leadership, how we might foster positive culture in our schools. We became students again. We noticed.

Isn't the value of any HMI experience the opportunity to break the routine? To ask the right questions? To notice something new about ourselves and the world around us? ■

NEXT SUMMER, WHAT WILL YOU NOTICE?

FOR MORE INFORMATION about HMI's Educators Expedition, please visit www.hminet.org/programs/educators-expedition



HOW HAS HMI SHAPED **YOUR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE?**

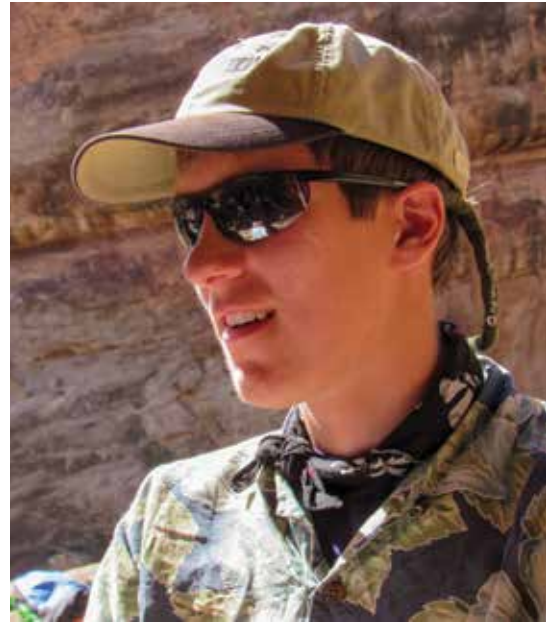


Erin Paglione | Minerva Schools at KGI '21

“Since I’ve only been here for a few weeks, I’m not sure how HMI is shaping my college experience, but it definitely pushed me in the application process. Because of my time at HMI, I looked at many nontraditional universities including Minerva. I am now being pushed out of my comfort zone to the next level thanks to HMI. Minerva, like HMI, is an intentional community and my experience building relationships and a cohort at HMI has helped me start creating meaningful relationships here.”

Chris Brakey | United States Naval Academy '20

“In my time at the United States Naval Academy thus far, it constantly amazes me how many things I still look back to from HMI. Biggest for me was the heavy emphasis on leadership that HMI pushes its students to develop, not only as peer leaders but as active followers as well: both skills that I’ve had to work on a lot in my time becoming an officer. I learned that there is a balance between always taking initiative and knowing when to put up your support instead. HMI put me on a great path with a leadership mindset, and I’m still so grateful for the experiences I had.”



Spencer Rundquist | St. Lawrence University '19

“To put it simply, HMI taught me to smile in the face of adversity, to enjoy new situations and new environments, and to seek out adventure wherever I go. This spirit followed me to college and led me to go on the Adirondack Semester, a place-based academic program where I lived in a yurt off the grid. Since then, whether it’s applying to study abroad in Australia, doing research on endangered salamanders in British Columbia, or guiding trips for the St. Lawrence Outdoor Program, I am always in pursuit of my next opportunity to get out of my comfort zone and experience something new and exciting.”



READ OUR ALUMNI UPDATES
at www.hminet.org/alumniupdates

WORKSHOPPING FOR **INCLUSIVITY**

By Reed Holden, Director of Development



As an effort to expand our awareness and best serve our students, this past August HMI welcomed Team Finch to our annual All Staff Day. Team Finch, led by HMI alumna parent Dr. Jennifer Bryan, specializes in supporting schools to better understand the intersection of gender, sexuality, and student development.

With humor, grace, and compassion Dr. Bryan presented us with a new framework: Gender and Sexuality Diversity (GSD). A relatively new way of thinking, GSD is inclusive of every student, making it a pressing issue for all educational institutions. Dr. Bryan helped us to see that every student is a unique set and combination of sex, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation spectrums—and every student deserves to explore and acknowledge these components of what makes them human.

Throughout our time with Dr. Bryan, the HMI staff confronted difficult topics in a safe and educational space. We thought about the development of identity in sex, gender, and sexuality as a healthy process that we want to support through increased understanding and empathy. And by adopting a common conceptual framework, we are poised to continue conversations about GSD in the months that follow so that we can support the educational journey of all students who walk through our doors. ■

Team Finch Mission Statement: *Through consultancy, training, speaking, research and collaborative projects Team Finch supports those who want to better understand the role of gender and sexuality in PreK-12 Education. With increased understanding of Gender and Sexuality Diversity, schools can build safe learning communities, create inclusive curricula, and teach students 21st Century skills for living and serving in our complex world.*

GET OUTDOORS LEADVILLE!

By John MacKinnon, Semester 16 Apprentice and Leadville Community Member

In September, HMI partnered with the Lake County School District and Get Outdoors Leadville! (GOL!) to help them fulfill their missions of connecting “Lake County youth and families to the outdoors to inspire dreams, foster stewardship, build leadership, and strengthen community.” HMI facilitated a 3-day camping trip for 9th graders and a 2-day camping trip for 7th graders. The vision was to provide an outdoor experience for students entering a new school and a new era in their academic and personal growth, and to foster a sense of family in their homeroom classes. The programs were a huge success and HMI was thrilled to support the community.



I am one of those apprentices that just won't go away—seriously. I have been involved with HMI in some capacity almost every year since I was Cooper Mallozzi's Science Apprentice in Semester 16. Living here in Leadville with a flexible work schedule has provided me with numerous opportunities to work with HMI in various roles over the past 10 years. So when Libbey asked me if I was interested in working the GOL! trip with 7th graders from the Lake County School District I jumped at the chance to be a part of this partnership.

My two co-instructors and I worked with 12 students for a 30-hour whirlwind of adventure based on the HMI campus. We hiked to Turquoise Lake, cooked S'mores, camped out, and dipped into the experiential curriculum that GOL! created. But mostly we played games—lots of Camouflage and volleyball—and ate way too many snacks. Our goal, as instructors, was for our students to engage with nature, engage with their classmates, and have fun while they were doing it. “Fun”, “Exciting” and “Happy” were the three most repeated words that students wrote down in

their post-course evaluations. “Cold” and “Adventurous” were also pretty common!

Cold and adventurous also sums up the highlight of my trip: cooking breakfast with three students at 7 am. The four of us somehow managed to assemble breakfast burritos for the group, complete with bacon, eggs, potatoes, and sautéed vegetables. And we had it all done by 8 am! It was during this hectic stretch of morning hustle that I felt like I had finally grasped the GOL!'s mission: we were all having fun outdoors, getting to know new people, and working for a stronger community. ■



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REACHING THE PROMISE OF MINDSET RESEARCH

By Dylan Kane, Math Faculty

Carol Dweck's research on growth mindset has swept through the education world in the last decade. Few ideas have gone from unknown to ubiquitous in such a short time, yet few ideas have such a large gap between rhetoric and reality. The way growth mindset has played out in the popular media, one might think that praising effort rather than ability a few times will flip a student from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset and change the course of their lives. Current research points toward a more nuanced perspective, and it matches what every teacher knows —telling is not the same as teaching. Recently, Dweck reiterated that a

growth mindset is a strong predictor of the outcomes teachers care about, but also that it's incredibly hard to influence. Many researchers who have tried to replicate Dweck's work have failed, and many interventions in schools have been unsuccessful. To reach the promise of mindset research, teachers need more robust strategies to influence mindsets that are embedded in everyday classroom practice.

I met Colorado Springs math teacher Lisa Bejarano at a math teaching conference several years ago, and through several conversations we realized that we shared similar perspectives and frustrations at how mindset interventions play out in schools. We recently collaborated on a presentation at the Colorado Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference in Denver, sharing a more comprehensive approach to changing students' mindsets:

- CAREFULLY DEFINING WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE IN CLASSROOMS
- BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS SO THAT STUDENTS ARE WILLING TO TAKE RISKS
- SCAFFOLDING SUCCESS FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS

Students hold fixed mindsets for a reason. They have felt unsuccessful in the past, and their experiences have led them to believe that they can't achieve academically. Teachers can work to change that every day in class by creating new experiences that send new messages. It's slow, humble work, and happens in fits and starts. Teachers can broaden what they value in their classrooms, beyond narrow, tired conceptions of learning based on speed and surface-level understanding. Teachers can build relationships with students to invite them to contribute and see themselves as contributors. And teachers can scaffold all students to feel successful in class by meeting them where they are and building on students' strengths. As they live new experiences that send growth-oriented messages about who they are and who they can be, students have the chance to develop new mindsets for their learning. ■





Dear Noah and Sam and Dad and Mom,
In the mountains life is both crazy and calm
And my heart has exploded, someone set off a bomb
In my chest,
Which I can't put to rest and my heart has grown since I last saw you
And it hasn't stopped and I don't want it to.
But I miss you four.
As I'm doing my chores in the morning
Sweeping under tables, reminiscing of fables you read to me
As a child
Fairytale of fantastic places or impossible races
Ran to obtain wild goals
And Mom, Dad, when I was younger
I longed, in my stomach I felt a hunger,
To belong in these stories I heard through your voices
I didn't know there would be real choices I could make
To turn my life into an adventure, awake
With the sun on my face,
Dress for a run and hear my heart race,
Beating louder than I knew it could
But now I know that's the volume and pace with which it should.



WRITTEN BY SKYE BRODSKY. To read Skye's complete poem, please visit www.hminet.org/blog/student-work

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SAVE THE DATE
HMI's 20-Year Reunion
June 8-10, 2018 | Leadville



**HMI PROGRAM
CALENDAR**

AVALANCHE EDUCATION

AIARE AVALANCHE RESCUE

January 4

AIARE 1

January 5-7

AIARE 2

January 5-7

AVALANCHE REFRESHER

By appointment

WILDERNESS MEDICINE

**WILDERNESS FIRST RESPONDER
RECERTIFICATION**

January 5-7

WILDERNESS FIRST RESPONDER

May 30-June 8



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WWW.HMINET.ORG/PROGRAMS