

HIGH *when nature & minds meet* MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE

IMPACT REPORT

FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING MAY 31, 2020



OUR MISSION

The High Mountain Institute engages students with the natural world. Our school boldly unites rigorous intellectual inquiry, experiential learning, wilderness expeditions, and shared responsibility in a strong community. Our students realize their potential—as leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens.



FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT THE WILDERNESS IS GOING TO THROW AT YOU—
WHAT OBSTACLES AWAIT AROUND THE BEND OR WHAT STORM CLOUDS SIT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PASS.



No matter the challenges we face, we want HMI to model for our students thoughtfulness, patience, clarity, compassion, and curiosity in moments of stress. This year has been an exceptionally unpredictable one: it has tested us all. Watching our students, alumni, and supporters rally to HMI's side, however, has also inspired us and proven the promise of our mission extends far beyond Leadville.

The year started with incredible promise—and felt so normal. Semester 43 and our Gap programs were tremendous, embodying so many of our hopes for our students. As one member of the semester reflected, “I continue with my stance firmer, my voice louder, and my laughter wilder than before.”

The spring began with similar promise—HMI students spanned the globe, exploring Peru and Patagonia with Gap and the familiar wilderness of Utah and Colorado during the semester. COVID-19 abruptly changed things in March; students returned home, and Semester 44 continued their HMI experience from bedrooms and living rooms across the country. Despite having a drastically different experience than the semester before them, outcomes felt similar. “I want to be as collaborative, as courageous, as conscious, as adventurous, fun, honest, and full as I felt at HMI,” said one student.

Though our students faced unique challenges this spring, what the wilderness teaches them proved enduring: our students left HMI more confident and courageously themselves.

This year has also forced us to manage circumstances outside of our control. From pivoting on a dime to host a virtual family weekend and run our first ever virtual expedition, to working tirelessly to make sure our HMI Gap students safely returned home from Peru in the face of a global pandemic, I am proud of the ways that our team lived out the values we teach our students.

In the pages that follow, I hope the incredible resilience of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff will inspire you as it has me. In this age, our work of building strong leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens feels more urgent and relevant than ever. Thank you for joining us in the vital effort.

Danny O'Brien, Head of School
dobrien@hminet.org | 719-486-8200 x101

LESSONS THAT LAST A LIFETIME

In a year full of unprecedented challenges, our mission felt more relevant than ever. From the students who were on our campus to our alumni across the globe, we saw the HMI community come to life as the strong leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens the world needs.

Dan Lustick, a Semester 8 alum, works as a family nurse practitioner at an urgent care clinic outside of Boston. Throughout the pandemic, he has fallen back on the skills that he learned at HMI 18 years ago. Many of his patients wrestled with the uncertainty that COVID-19 created in their lives. He realized that the lessons he learned at HMI were more relevant than ever.



“



When you enter the backcountry, you learn how to be comfortable with a certain amount of uncertainty, you learn when to ask for help, and you learn to stay calm when things feel out of your control. I've realized one of the greatest things I can offer my patients is to help them become more comfortable with uncertainty; I can help them control what they can control—their symptoms like headaches, fevers, and body aches; I can help them know who to ask for help and where to find accurate information. But you don't need to be a primary care provider to help people around you. All HMI alums have the skills to help the people around us be more comfortable in these uncertain times.





Semester 44 students joined our alumni in remaining calm and focused in the face of adversity. Semester 44 student Maple Buescher reflected upon the trials that COVID-19 posed for her semester this spring and the perspective she has gained from the experience.



One of the biggest lessons that HMI taught me is how to adapt to change—changing backcountry routes to accommodate weather, changing cabin routines to accommodate seven girls, and, yes, changing semester plans with 48 hours notice... When we're asked about our time at HMI, we won't say, 'I was sent home halfway through.' We'll say, 'I got to spend time in canyons and mountains. I got to see shooting stars. I got to make amazing friends and learn from incredible teachers.' We'll be grateful for what we have and not dwell on what we don't. And with that attitude, we'll get through this—all of us, together.



HMI gives our students the tools that they need to face any challenge thrown at them. We are so proud of the ways that our alumni are strengthening their communities and sharing with others the resilience they learn on campus and in the wilderness.



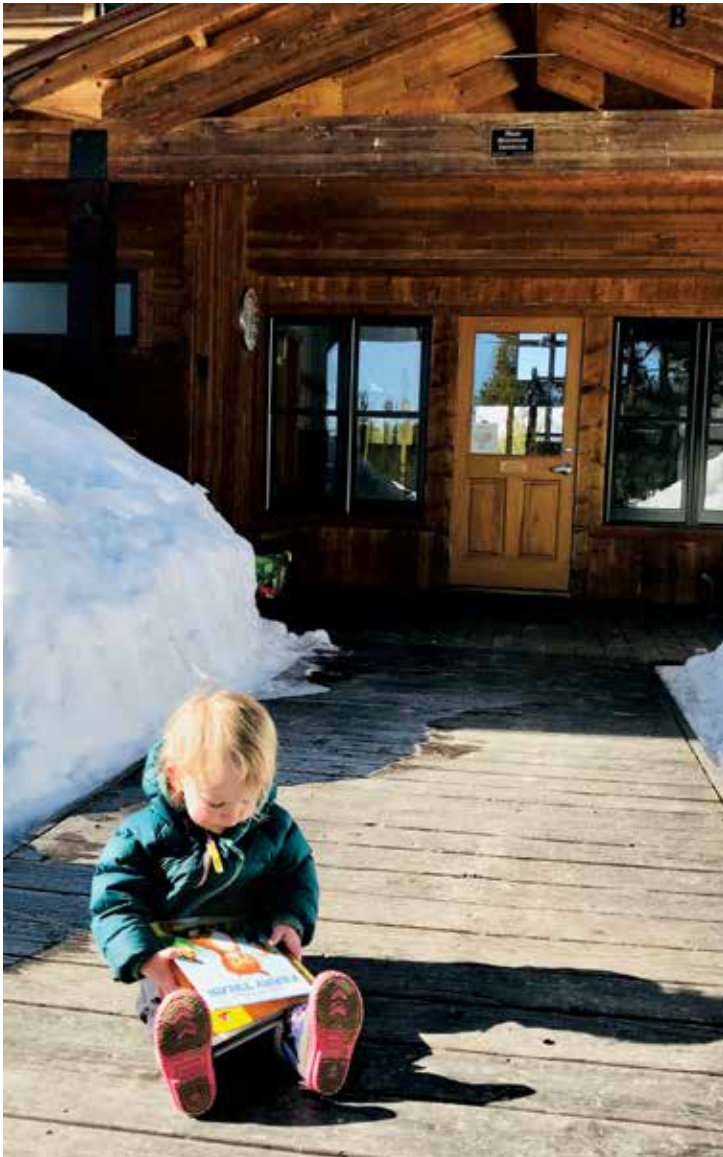
Many of the important life lessons our students learn come from living in an intentional community.

We kicked off our Campaign for Community in 2015 with the intention of creating an on-campus residential community for our employees, along with a new academic building to provide better study and social spaces for our students. We completed our first full year of having faculty and staff live on campus. Below some of our new on-campus residents share what an impact this housing had on them.



CAMPAIGN FOR COMMUNITY:

A VISION BECOMING A REALITY



“ I’ve loved being so close to trails and the national forest land that’s right next to campus. I’ve also appreciated the soundproof walls when I’m playing guitar loudly. There’s a great sense of community here with all of the on-campus dwellers and it’s been awesome to have patio space to meet up with folks in a responsible way during the pandemic.

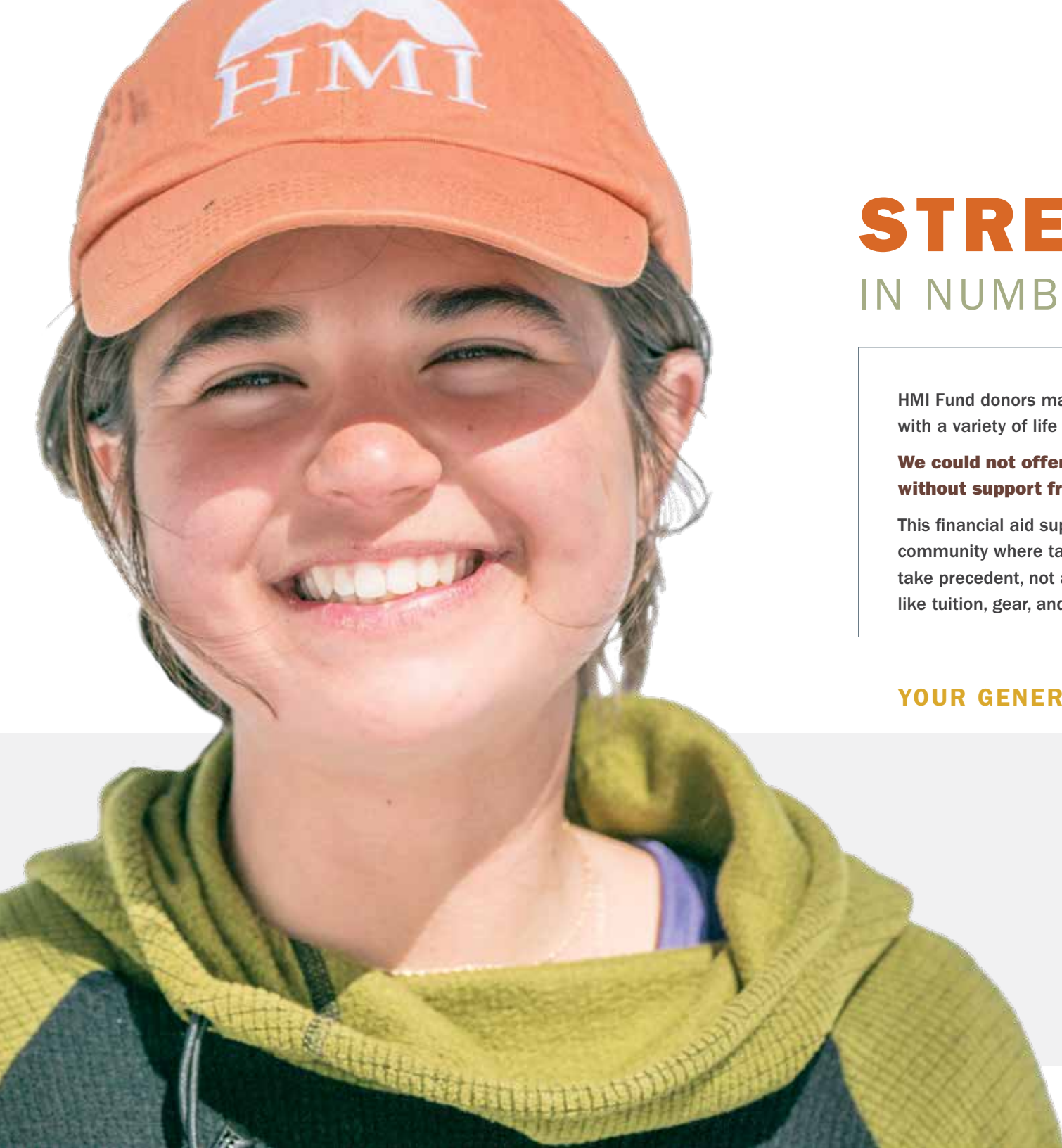
— Jacob Sheetz-Willard,
English Faculty

“ We love raising our daughter, Jane, in such a beautiful natural environment. She loves going for walks around the nature trail, visiting all of her on-campus canine pals, and fishing rubber ducks out of the stream by the Barnes Building. We are excited to move into one of the gorgeous three bedroom homes, so that Jane will have more room for her growing pinecone collection and my husband Jeff can work from home.”

— Amy Roberts, Director of HMI Semester & Academic Dean

We finished the year with only \$100,000 left to raise for our new Faculty and Student Center, a building designed to address the limitations of our current facilities. Our existing classrooms limit our ability to meet the needs of science courses; our teachers have inadequate work and meeting areas; and our students have to study, socialize, and have private conversations in the same spaces.

Once this building is completed less two years from now, our facilities will match the needs of our community and the ambitions of our program.



STRENGTH

IN NUMBERS

HMI Fund donors make it possible for students with a variety of life experiences to attend HMI.

We could not offer generous financial aid without support from YOU—our community.

This financial aid supports our efforts to craft a community where talent, ambition, and curiosity take precedent, not a family's ability to afford things like tuition, gear, and travel.

YOUR GENEROSITY IN ACTION:



\$716,954

granted in need-based financial aid, putting HMI in the

top 20% of independent schools contributing revenue to financial aid.

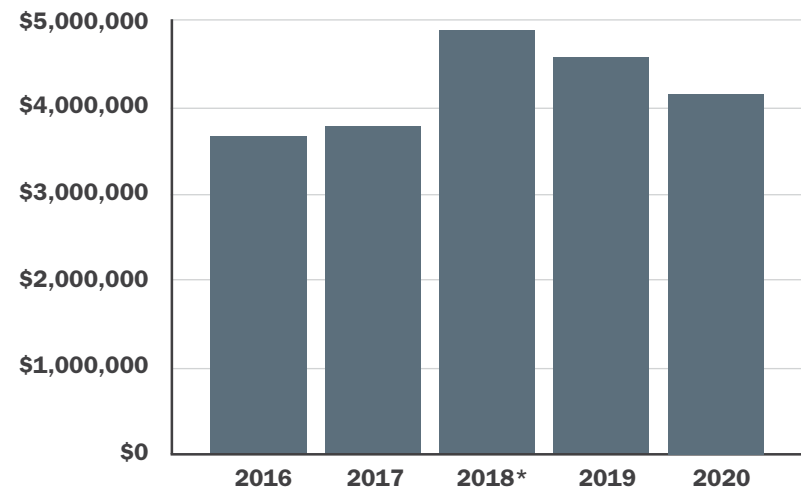
Our Financial Highlights

The following are some of our financial highlights from 2020. We are humbled by the generosity of our community, especially in the face of broader economic uncertainty. Your outpouring of support points to the importance of our mission and your faith in our ability to impact the lives of young people. To the alumni, families, friends, corporations, foundations, and all who contributed, thank you.

- **HMI's revenue remains strong, totalling \$4,185,427**
- **We are only \$100,000 away from completing both phases of our \$6.1 million Campaign for Community**
- **Donors contributed a record \$542,555 to the HMI fund, providing financial aid, investing in our faculty and staff, and allowing for critical campus improvements**

FOR DETAILED AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, please contact Barrett Donovan at bdonovan@hminet.org.

OPERATING REVENUE



**adjustment to our end of fiscal calendar caused this number to be larger*



9

round-trip flights

for students and families on financial aid



18

students received

100% free gear rental



21% of

our entire

operating budget

went directly to financial aid



100%

of our

endowment draw

went to financial aid

STRENGTH OF OUR ALUMNI

HMI'S FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL FUN RUN

One rite of passage that HMI alumni hold dear is the 10-mile Fun Run. Due to COVID-19, Semester 44 students were set to face this challenge on their own, back in their home communities. When our alumni heard about this, they rallied to support the students and organized HMI's first-ever Virtual Fun Run to support Semester 44.

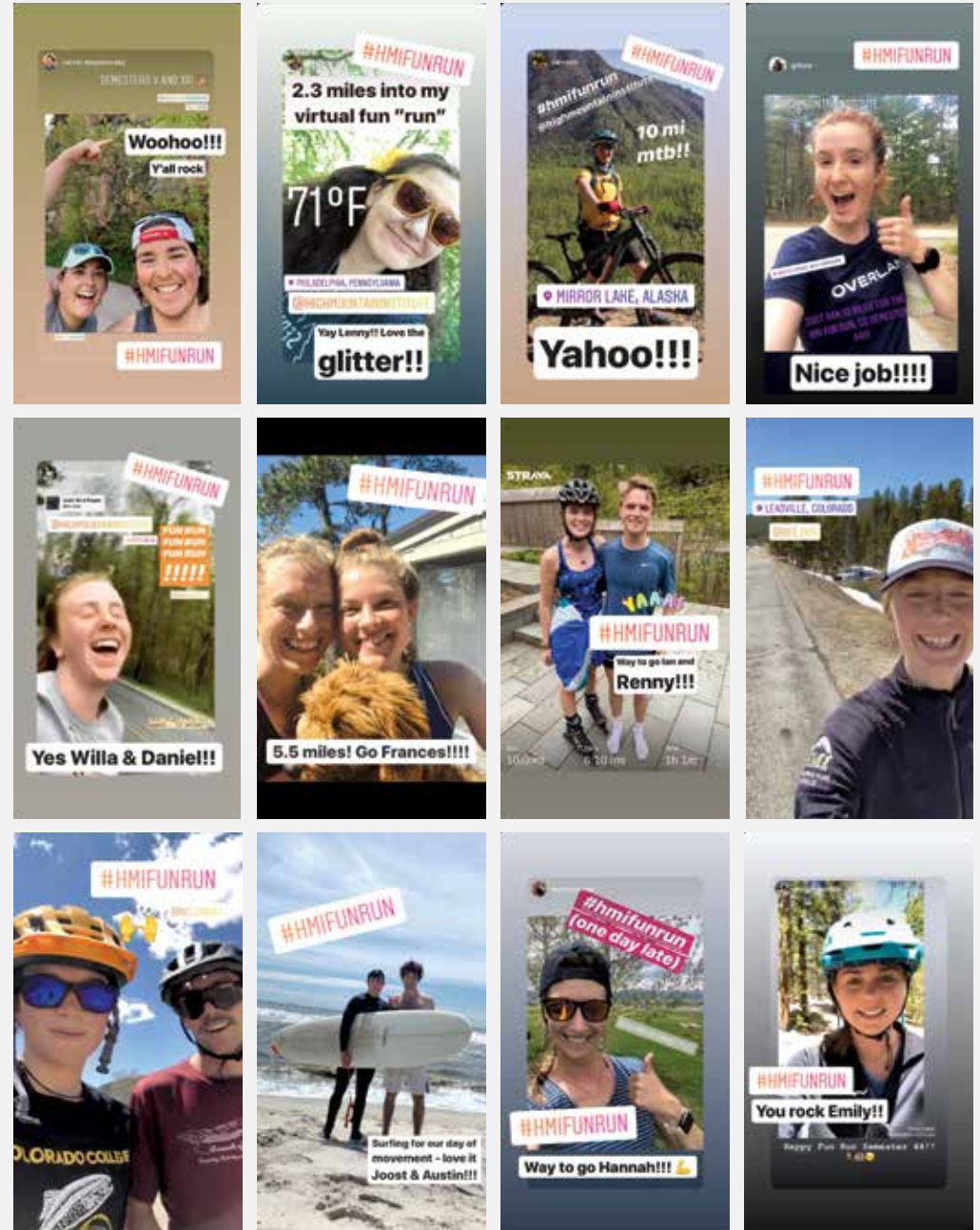
We had over 300 members of our community join in a day of running, walking, hiking, biking, and movement in solidarity with Semester 44. Given its success, we plan to continue this event into the future.



YOU CAN SEE MORE OF THIS AMAZING STORY ON OUR INSTAGRAM

@HighMountainInstitute

#HMIFUNRUN





ALUMNI SUMMIT CHALLENGE

Blazing the trail, together

During the 2019 Challenge we raised \$50,062—nearly enough to fund full scholarships for two semester students! **40% of HMI Semester alumni contributed to support future students**, which is particularly remarkable when compared to the national median of only 9.8% of independent school alumni give back to their school.

This is an outstanding show of support from our community across the country. Congratulations to Semester 40 alumni who won the Challenge with a 100% participation rate!

We see so much hope for the future through the impact that our alumni have on the world. We are grateful to everyone who has expanded the reach of our community by making this special place accessible to the next generation of students.



DURING THE 2019 CHALLENGE WE RAISED

\$50,062

nearly enough to fund full scholarships
for two semester students!

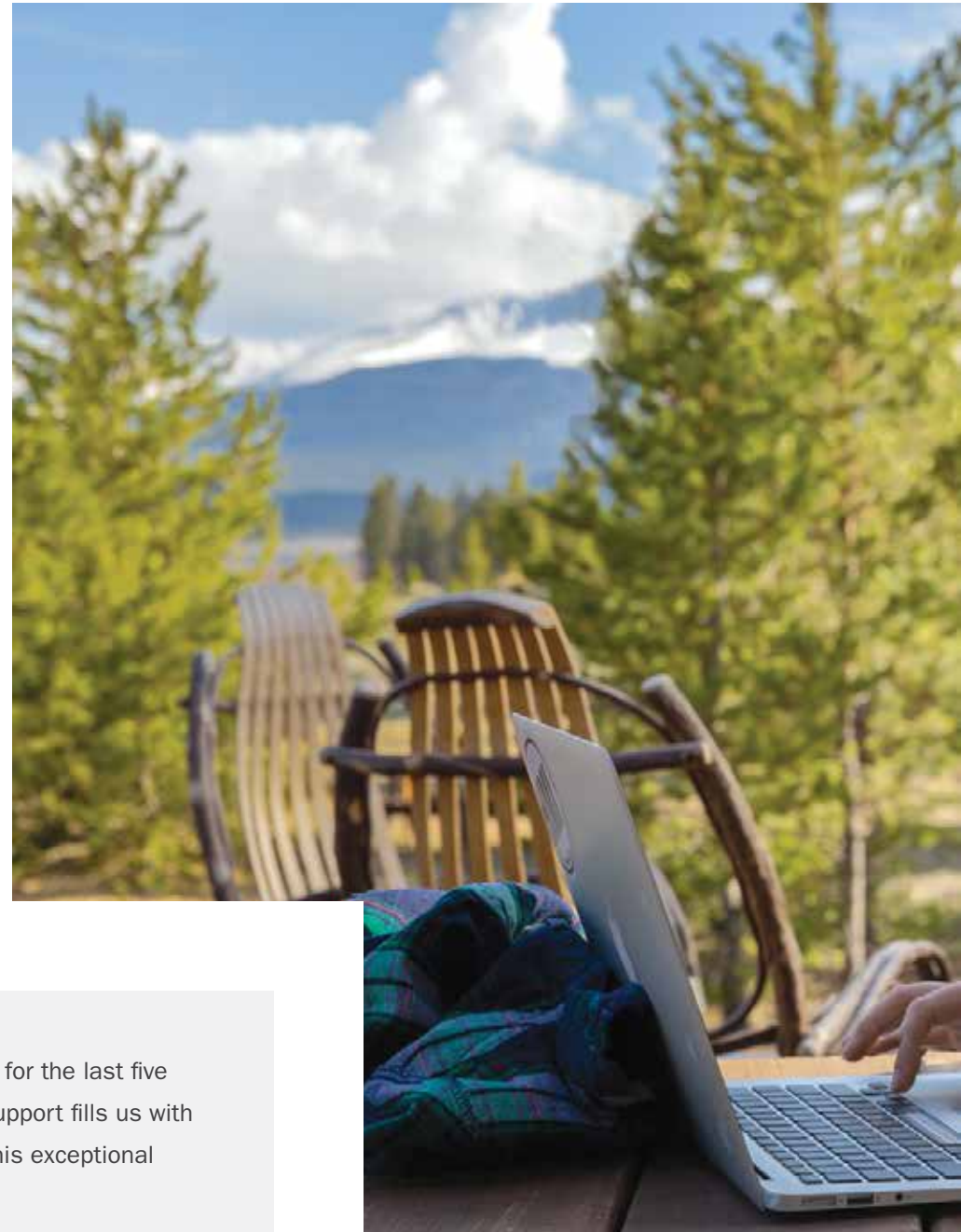
FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT
www.hminet.org/alumni-summit-challenge

THANK YOU, DONORS!

With sincere gratitude we list the following donors who have supported HMI in fiscal year 2020 by making gifts to the HMI Fund, Campaign for Community, or endowment. Through their generosity, support, and commitment to our school we continue to discover powerful things when nature and minds meet.

This list reflects donations made to the High Mountain Institute between June 1, 2019 and May 31, 2020. We have made every effort to ensure that this list is complete and accurate. We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please contact Barrett Donovan with any corrections at bdonovan@hminet.org.

THE MT. ELBERT CIRCLE recognizes donors who have given consecutively for the last five years or more. This is a remarkable demonstration of loyalty and their steadfast support fills us with gratitude. The ▲ in these pages of donor listings indicate those who have made this exceptional commitment to HMI.





EXPEDITION LEADERS

The following donors have set themselves apart by making major gifts to our school. It is an honor to acknowledge the tremendous role they play in helping us to provide such transformative outcomes for our students.

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Richard Tillyer & Sandra Morris ▲

Scott & Elizabeth Ullem

Frederick Wang ▲

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Thomas Wheeler



10,200' CIRCLE

Named after the elevation of Leadville, these donors help us reach extraordinary heights by making donations of \$1,000 or more.

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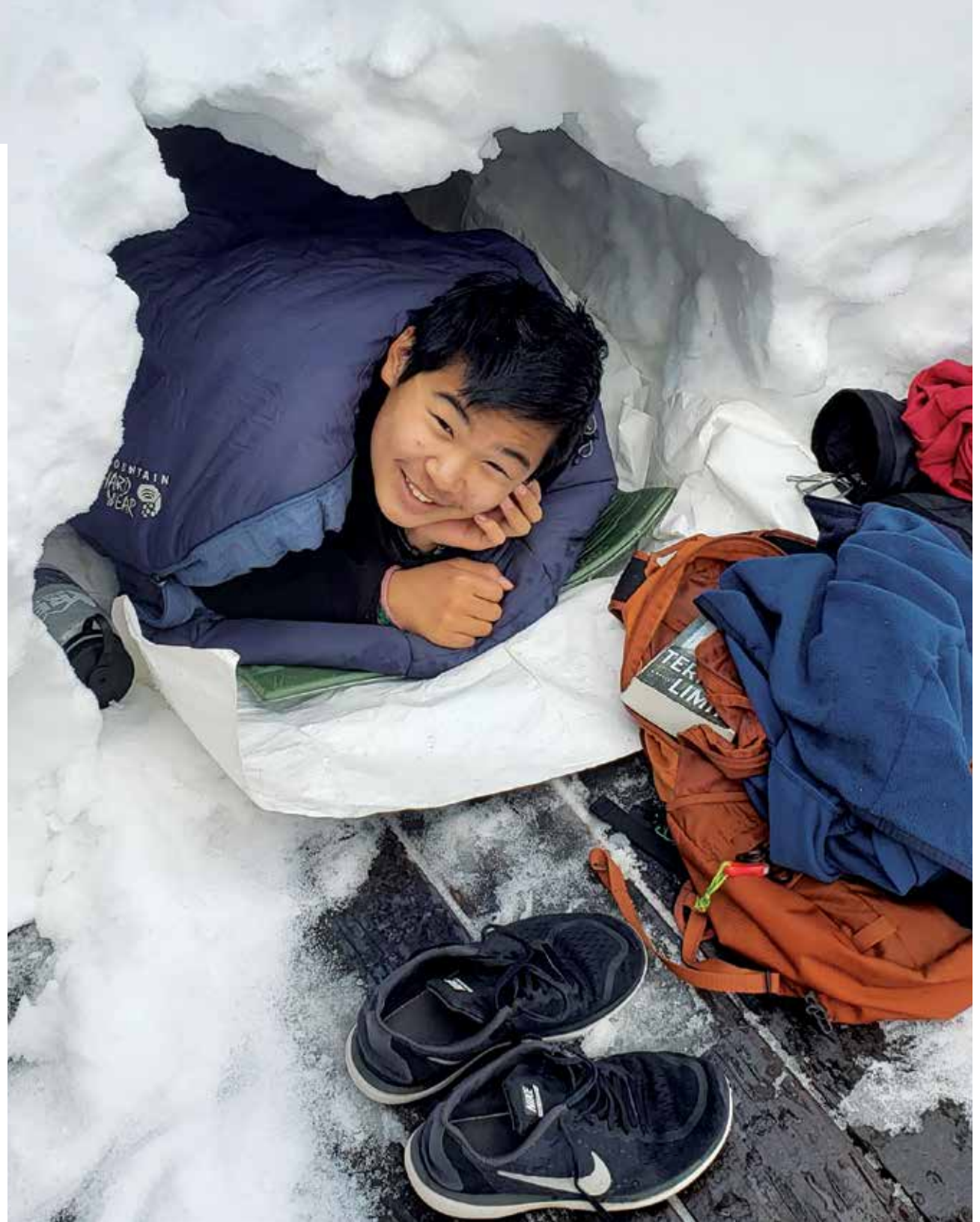
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Tim Hagist
Ellen Smith
Seton Talty ▲
Zack Lechter
Taylor Strasburger





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Our vibrant community of supporters inspires us and is a testament to the far-reaching impact of our school.

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Eli Robinson ▲

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SEMESTER 4

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Katie Watts
Beckett Warburg

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Whitney Leonard ▲
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J.P. Bleibtreu
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Megan Denault ▲
Finn Finn
Tim Hagist
Adam Klaffky
Lindsay Leahy
Dan Lustick ▲
Grace Machin ▲
Michelle May ▲
Ruth Poland
Odile Schalit
John Shubert ▲
Isaiah Thomas ▲
Em Ducharme

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Liza Cohen
Bern Kenneally
Jen McInnis

SEMESTER 10

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Michael Gregory
Eliza Parsons ▲
Sarah Tooke
Kyle Zaffin ▲
Katie Pehlivan

SEMESTER 11

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Chase Walling ▲
Harden Wisebram

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Beth Do ▲
Jess Jong ▲
Brooke Thompson

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Kassie Garfield
Eva Luderowski ▲
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Grant Sunderland
Phil Thurner
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Lia Engelsted ▲
Emily Gasperetti ▲
Pete Gossens ▲
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 Ray McGaughey ▲
 Ali Miller
 Hannah Mook ▲
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 Hildy Schott ▲
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 Cakey Worthington ▲
 Nubia Galindo

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 Emily Faxon ▲
 Matt Ford ▲
 Max Hollman ▲
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 Reed Snyderman ▲
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Sam Jacobson
Alex King
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Madeline Polese
Claire Revere
Rebecca Roman
Andrea Silvestri

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Elle Shafer
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Hannah Lufkin
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Nate Tsimikas
Duncan Wheeler ▲
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Katie Darrow
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Victoria Garner ▲
Jack Gilbert ▲

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Liza Potter!
Spencer Rundquist
Emily Shannon!
Freddy Short
Benny Wanger
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Caitlin Durcan!

SEMESTER 32

Rachel Beaver
Asher Brown
Abigail Costigan
Sophie Drew!
Anna Gibson!
Ethan Goroff!
Sophie Jensen
Livia Wallick!

SEMESTER 33

Wayan Buschman!
Jasmin Dickinson
Jessica Hebert!
Lila Hitzig!
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We are grateful to the following corporations who so generously support their employees' philanthropic efforts and provided matching gifts to HMI.

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THE LAKE COUNTY BACKPACKING TRIP



In 2019, the Lake County Backpacking Trip celebrated its tenth successful summer of taking local middle school students out to explore their backyard. Students hiked, camped, forged new friendships, and learned about the natural world surrounding them. Thank you to Richard & Suzanne Kayne Charitable Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles for their ongoing support, and thank you to Full Circle of Lake County and the Lake County School District for their partnership. We are so grateful for our community.

THANK YOU TO **OUR VOLUNTEERS**

The following lists recognize just some of the people who have contributed their time and talent to advance HMI forward. Their generosity and spirit of service is inspiring! These volunteers give to HMI in so many different ways and we are fortunate to have them as such integral parts of our community.

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