

Peddie

FALL/WINTER
2024

CHRONICLE



THE LEGENDARY "EXPLODING CHICKEN"

THE FOOD ISSUE

DINING HALL CLASSICS,
ALUMNI IN THE FOOD BIZ,
AND HOW FOOD SHAPES
THE PEDDIE EXPERIENCE

IN THIS ISSUE



Elevating Performance

Peddie's New Fitness Center Opens



Annenberg Hall at 100

A Century of Stories, Symbols and Legacy



The Scribe of '63

Mike Duffy and the Art of Class Notes

“His infectious enthusiasm for life revealed in every Class Notes column he wrote encouraged us to share our lives with him.”

— Clarence Kugler '63

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Back Cover: Peddie students enjoy a meal in 1964 at the old Wilson Hall dining room.

PEDDIE CHRONICLE

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The Food Issue

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“As a new student, I kept hearing rumors about the mysterious ‘Exploding Chicken,’ a Family Style staple that had apparently ruined a generation’s worth of students’ ties, slacks and dresses.”

— Alexander Dacey '03

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

At Peddie, food does more than fill our plates — it fills our lives with connection, culture and community. Every shared meal here is an opportunity for something special to unfold.

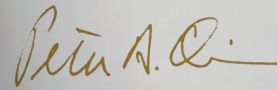
Our exceptional Peddie Food Service (PFS) team works tirelessly behind the scenes, crafting thousands of meals weekly and supporting special events. Their creativity and dedication make every meal memorable, and the PFS staff know and remember us, even long after we've left campus. I have a soft spot for their chicken cheddar wraps — they always hit the spot!

And of course, there's the magic of Family Style Dinners, where students are seated randomly, often turning strangers into friends. Many seniors and alumni have shared how these dinners sparked some of their closest friendships. Faculty love it, too, as it's a chance to connect with students they might not teach or coach.

In this special food-themed issue, you'll explore how food shapes our experiences at Peddie, from favorite local eateries to alumni making an impact in the food industry. These stories remind us that food is more than nourishment — it's a connection that unites us across generations.

So dig in — there's plenty to savor.

Bon appétit, and Ala Viva!



Peter Quinn P'15 '18 '21
Head of School



Head of School Peter Quinn speaks with students during a recent Family Style Dinner.



Peddie Food Service employee Joanie Cecere prepares a chocolate-raspberry dessert.

James A. Hamilton Named Peddie's 17th Head of School

The Peddie School begins an exciting new chapter with the unanimous appointment of James A. Hamilton as its 17th Head of School by the board of trustees in September. Currently the head of school at Berwick Academy in Maine, Hamilton will officially begin his tenure at Peddie on July 1, 2025.

Hamilton brings a wealth of experience from leadership roles at esteemed institutions such as Brooks School and St. George's School, and his involvement with several educational and community boards.

Board Chair Doug Davidson '64 shared his confidence in Hamilton's leadership, stating, "Jim could not be a better educator to

lead Peddie in its next chapter. The search committee and the board of trustees were convinced that his strong and steady leadership, his vision for Peddie's future and his genuine warmth and care for others will make him successful beginning in Peddie's 162nd year."

Hamilton will succeed Peter Quinn, who is retiring after 11 years of dedicated service. Reflecting on the transition, Quinn expressed optimism about Peddie's future under Hamilton's guidance. "Jim Hamilton has the heart to understand and cherish Peddie, the experience to celebrate and challenge Peddie, and the vision to lead the Peddie community in that wonderful habit of beginning 'anew,'" he said.

A Letter from Jim Hamilton

Dear Peddie School Community,

I am honored to be named the 17th head of school at Peddie. Peddie's rich history, vibrant community and commitment to academic excellence, diversity and personal growth resonate deeply with me. I look forward to working alongside such a passionate and talented group of students, faculty and staff, as well as building meaningful relationships with all members of this extraordinary community.

The opportunity at Peddie brings me back to the roots of my career in a boarding school setting, which offers a unique opportunity to engage with students in a deeper, more holistic way, extending beyond the classroom into their everyday lives. Living and working alongside students and faculty will allow me to be fully immersed in the vibrant energy on campus, creating an environment where learning, mentorship and connection flourish.

My wife, Lucy, and I are also excited to be closer to our two oldest children, who have made their way to the Philadelphia area. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Doug Davidson, the search committee and the board of trustees for entrusting me with the leadership of this remarkable school. Following in Peter Quinn's footsteps will be no small task — his leadership has left a lasting impact, and I am humbled to take on the challenge of continuing to build upon his legacy.

As I reflect on Peddie's motto, "We Finish Our Labors to Begin Them Anew," I am filled with excitement for the journey ahead. Together, we will continue to shape Peddie into a place where students from around the globe can thrive, challenge themselves and grow as individuals who will truly make a difference in the world.

I am eager to begin this next chapter and look forward to meeting you all soon!

Ala Viva!
With appreciation,
Jim Hamilton



Heirloom Herringbone Blanket
\$130

Peddie Monogram Belt
\$30

Peddie Seal Ivory Mug
\$12

The North Face Mountain Beanie
\$32

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FALCONS BEAT THE BUCS!

IN an unforgettable finish, the Falcons claimed victory over Blair Academy, capturing the Kelley-Potter Cup with a final score of 6–5 on November 9. Wins from JV Field Hockey, Girls JV Soccer, Coed Varsity Cross Country, and the undefeated Girls Varsity and Girls JV Tennis teams contributed to Peddie's triumph. The intense competition was especially poignant as it marked Head of School Peter Quinn's 21st — and final — Peddie-Blair Day. Reflecting on the spirited week, Quinn remarked, "In the end, the outcome reflected a totality of effort. The conduct, enthusiasm and support for each other were tremendous."

The Girls Varsity Tennis team completed their season undefeated with a resounding 7–0 win over Blair. Their impressive 21–0 record capped off an extraordinary run with a 46–1 record over the past three years. The Girls JV Tennis team also finished an undefeated season (13–0–1), securing the first point for the Kelley-Potter Cup earlier in the week.



ON CAMPUS



BLUE & GOLD CHAPEL





ELEVATING PERFORMANCE

PEDDIE'S NEW FITNESS CENTER OPENS



new to the weight room and aspiring college athletes,” said Mike Volkmar, strength and conditioning coach.

According to Volkmar, the new community fitness center offers everything a fitness enthusiast could want to achieve their fitness goals, including cardio machines, free weights and strength machines.

Since its opening, the Zhao and Li Family Fitness and Exercise Center has been buzzing with activity, attracting hundreds of students and community members who use the upgraded facilities daily. “The energy in here is infectious,” said Director of Athletics Rich D’Andrea ’01. “Students and employees are clearly inspired, and the energy is evident throughout campus.”



“THE ENERGY IN HERE IS INFECTIOUS.”

– RICH D’ANDREA ’01, DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

IN SEPTEMBER, Peddie unveiled the Zhao and Li Family Fitness and Exercise Center, a game-changing addition that champions health and well-being school-wide. The two-level facility boasts the 8,710-square-foot Michael L. Li ’17 Sports Performance Training Center on the lower level for top-tier athletic training. The upper level is home to a rowing facility, yoga studio, state-of-the-art golf training rooms with high-tech simulators, and a community fitness center with views of Shuman Field.

The Sports Performance Training Center facilities, which include six dedicated training spaces, have enabled the athletic department to implement a foundations program for JV teams and a more consistent workout regimen for in-season varsity athletes. “We now have a space where we can simultaneously train students



ANNENBERG HALL AT 100

A Century of Stories, Symbols and Legacy

For 100 years, Annenberg Hall, originally named Memorial Hall, has stood as the centerpiece of The Peddie School campus, a symbol of tradition and progress. As we celebrate its centennial, we delve into nine defining moments, legends and enduring symbols that have made Annenberg Hall the cornerstone of the Peddie experience.

1 Architectural Grandeur

The building's exterior is a striking example of classical architecture, resembling a Roman temple with its four grand Corinthian columns beneath a stately pediment. The frieze prominently displays the school's Latin motto: *Finimus Pariter Renovamusque Labores* — "We Finish Our Labors to Begin Them Anew." Or, as it's practically understood: Every day is another chance at the best day ever.



2 The Walter Annenberg Legacy

In 1992, Memorial Hall was renamed Annenberg Hall to recognize the significant contributions of Walter H. Annenberg '27, a distinguished Peddie alumnus and one of America's foremost philanthropists. His generosity helped shape Peddie into the institution it is today, and his legacy is permanently enshrined in the building that now bears his name.

3 A Monument to Sacrifice

Originally named Memorial Hall, this iconic building was dedicated in 1925 to honor the 502 Peddie students who served in World War I. It was the largest building project in Peddie's history at the time, led by Headmaster Roger Swetland. A dedicatory tablet still hangs in the lobby, while the Ayer Memorial Chapel now honors veterans of all wars.



4 The Mysterious Car Caper

Peddie's history is rich with legends, and one of the most intriguing involves Annenberg Hall. Sometime between the early 1960s and mid-1970s, a car was allegedly hoisted onto the roof of the building. The details remain elusive, but the story is a favorite among alumni, adding a mischievous chapter to the building's storied past.



5 The Bell of Tradition

Standing in the lobby is the Wilson Hall Bell, rescued by students who surprised Headmaster Ed Potter in 1978 by retrieving it shortly before the building's demolition. For more than a century, this iconic structure had been the face of Peddie. Today, the Bell serves as a popular meeting spot.

6 Masterpieces of Impressionism and Post Impressionism

In 1989, Walter Annenberg curated high-quality photographic reproductions of iconic works by Monet, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Renoir, Degas and others from his personal collection for Peddie. These reproductions, chosen for their resonance with young minds, are displayed throughout Memorial Hall and the Peddie Arts Center, ensuring that students encounter great art every day.

7 The Heart of Knowledge

Annenberg Hall houses the Walter H. Annenberg '27 Library. With its impressive 33,000-volume collection, the library is a favorite spot for both serious study sessions and relaxing breaks.



8 The Gateway to Peddie

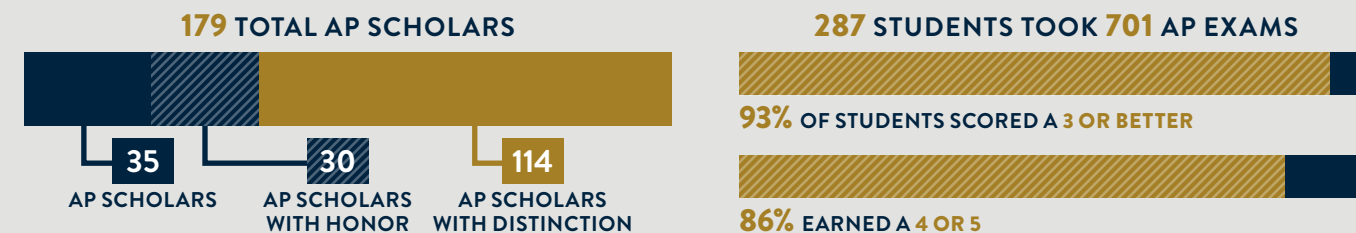
Annenberg Hall is the first building many prospective students and their families encounter. The admission department, located within its walls, is where campus tours begin and interviews occur.



9 A Living Legacy

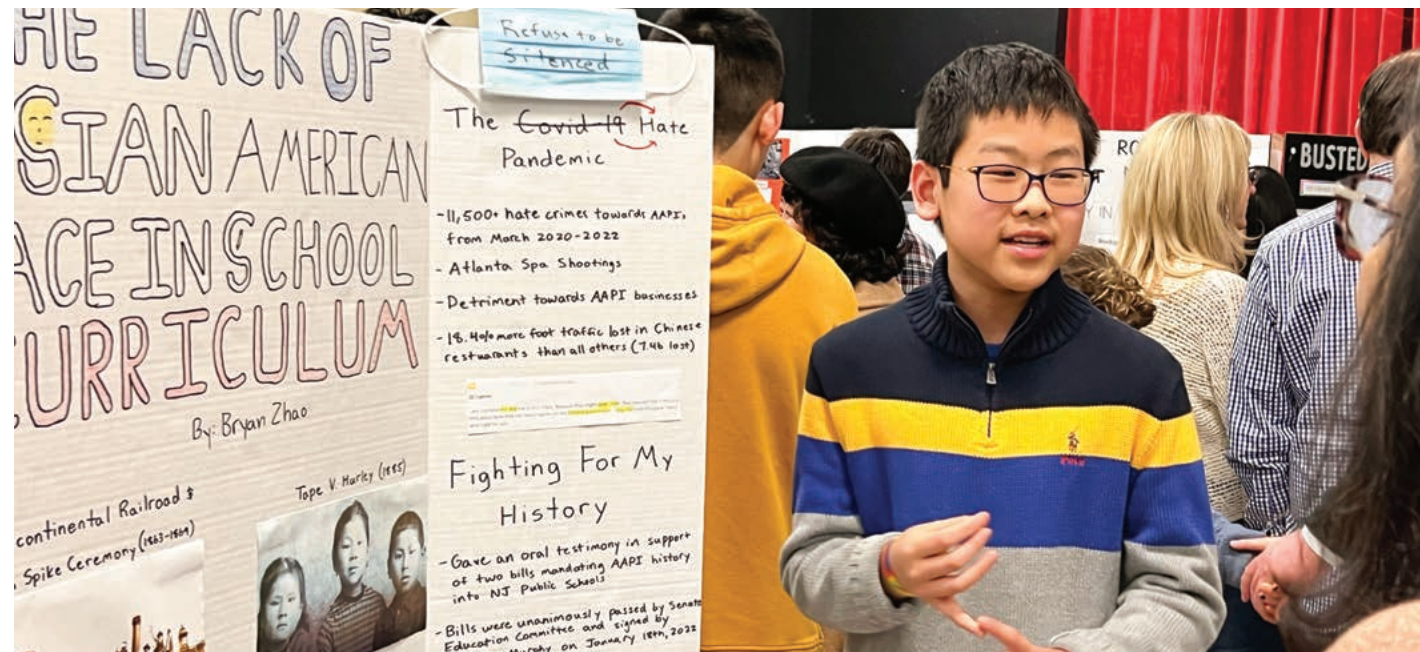
Today, Annenberg Hall continues to be a vibrant part of campus life, housing administrative offices, classrooms, the admission department and the technology department. It is a building that has adapted to the needs of each new generation while maintaining its historic charm, standing not just as a monument to the past but as a dynamic space that continues to shape the lives of those who pass through its grand columns.

PEDDIE STUDENTS SHINE IN AP EXAMS



Education FOR A New Generation

A Peddie sophomore embraces the role of advocate for Asian American studies.



Bryan Zhao '27 presents his Asian American history project at his eighth-grade curriculum fair. This photo, taken by Zhao's mother, appeared in *The New York Times* last spring.

Bryan Zhao '27 first encountered stereotypes against Asian Americans when children on his elementary school bus used thin eye expressions, saying “Chinese Eyes” and “Japanese Eyes.” “I kind of laughed at it because I didn't really know how to respond,” Zhao recalled, “but it became one of my defining memories.”

In fifth grade, Zhao watched a PBS documentary introducing him to the long history of Asians in the U.S. The program reminded him of the incidents on the school bus, and he wondered how other Asian kids coped with stereotyping and discrimination. He later wrote an essay advocating for including Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history and contributions in the school curriculum, which was showcased at an Asian American United Coalition webinar.

When the pandemic hit in 2020 and racist acts against Asians escalated, Zhao had a shocking encounter with a passerby in his town.

“I was outside on the trampoline, and a guy walked across my backyard,” he said. “We made eye contact for a second, then he looked down, spat in my direction and walked away.”

“I didn't expect that to happen in my neighborhood,” he continued. “It was one of the reasons why I wanted to advocate for Asian American equality and awareness.”

Zhao joined the advocacy movement in 2021 when Make Us Visible New Jersey, an organization combating anti-Asian violence through education, urged state legislators to mandate AAPI studies in K-12 curricula.

“My parents subscribed to the Make Us Visible newsletter, and the organization was looking for young advocates to testify in the statehouse,” said Zhao. “So I signed up.” Zhao testified before the New Jersey Senate Education Committee as the youngest advocate. The legislation was adopted.

“It was a really gratifying experience, being able to fight for the inclusion of my own identity and history and also for my little sister's,” said Zhao. “She's in third grade now, and at the time, she was starting kindergarten. To know she will be able to learn about her own history is really important to me.”

Zhao believes the decision will provide momentum toward helping

“It was a really gratifying experience, being able to fight for the inclusion of my own identity and history and also for my little sister's.”

— BRYAN ZHAO '27

underrepresented Asian kids feel included — especially at school.

“Growing up was a bit of a struggle between being Asian and being American,” he said. “My parents cooked Chinese food at home and I embraced Chinese culture. But American history in my school was Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. There was never really an Asian face for me to identify with. So I felt like I'd always be Asian American and never just American.”

“I think when the Asian American curriculum is added, Asian American students will be able to identify with the country and feel like a part of it and embrace it. That will be really big for them.”

Not long after Zhao's visit to the statehouse, Make Us Visible New Jersey contacted him.

Chinese American historian Erika Lee had heard about the students who had testified and wanted to interview them for “Made in Asian America: A History for Young People,” a book she was writing with Christina Soontornvat. The book explores racism and marginalization of Asian Americans in the U.S. and amplifies their efforts to be seen and heard here.

Zhao was excited to contribute his story to the book and got another surprise: Turns out a picture his mom snapped of him presenting his Asian American history project at his eighth-grade curriculum fair had made it further than his family's photo album.

“Dr. Lee sent me an email,” he grinned. “It said, ‘Look who is in today's New York Times! Check out the review of our book in today's paper!’”

Zhao indulged his passion for advocacy further last summer when he got to explore the history of Chinese Americans whose ancestors immigrated to the South 150 years ago. He also interviewed several active Asian Americans in Arkansas. “The community members went from sleeping in the back of grocery stores to becoming life savers and community leaders and builders — something I found very inspiring,” he said.

Zhao knows his testimony in the New Jersey statehouse and his contribution to the Lee/Soontornvat book were significant stepping stones toward Asian American inclusion. He also recognizes the challenges ahead in the classroom and why the effort to keep the conversation going is worth it.

“Even with these bills being passed, different schools have different curricula,” Zhao said. “It starts with different kids and different teachers at their own schools coming together to try to make this change.”

“America is becoming more diverse by the day,” he continued. “It's really important to be able to understand other people's perspectives, where we're all coming from, our histories and identities.”



Bryan Zhao '27 interviews Dr. James Suen, a renowned otolaryngologist and second-generation Chinese American, in Arkansas in July.



Bryan Zhao '27 visits the Mississippi Delta Chinese Heritage Museum in June, where he learned about the Chinese American migration to the South in the late 1800s and their role in running small businesses that bridged Black and White communities during the Jim Crow era.

A Consummate Connector

Brian Davidson's retirement marks the end of an era at Peddie, but his legacy continues to connect and inspire.

When Brian Davidson arrived at Peddie in 1991, he brought a distinctive blend of intellectual curiosity and easygoing charm. Few could have predicted his profound impact on the school community. Over the next three decades, until his retirement last May, Davidson became a unifying force that bridged generations of Peddie alumni, students and faculty.

From his earliest days on campus, Davidson's approach to his roles in the alumni & development department and as a student advisor was defined by genuine engagement and an innate ability to forge deep connections. Though his official title may not have included the word "mentor," that is exactly what he became to countless students. Through more than 2,200 dorm duties — each one an opportunity to connect — Brian offered students guidance and a friend and trusted confidant who genuinely cared about their lives.

"Brian developed strong relationships with students through dorm duty, Family Style Dinner, serving as their advisor, and making it a point to see them at their games, plays and concerts," said Head of School Peter Quinn during a retirement tribute last spring. "His conversations, always rich with humor and insight, became a lifeline for many students navigating the exhilarating yet daunting terrain of adolescence far from home."

Something that endeared him to students was his habit of bringing freshly-baked cookies to dorm duty — a tradition that



Above: Brian Davidson listens to tributes during a retirement ceremony in chapel last spring.

Below: Head of School Peter Quinn congratulates Brian Davidson at last spring's retirement ceremony.



began in the 1990s and has since become legendary. These cookies, which he baked himself every week, brought students out of their rooms and into the communal space, where they could relax, socialize and connect with Davidson and each other.

As director of alumni relations, Davidson's influence extended far beyond campus. He became a familiar and beloved figure at alumni events worldwide, known

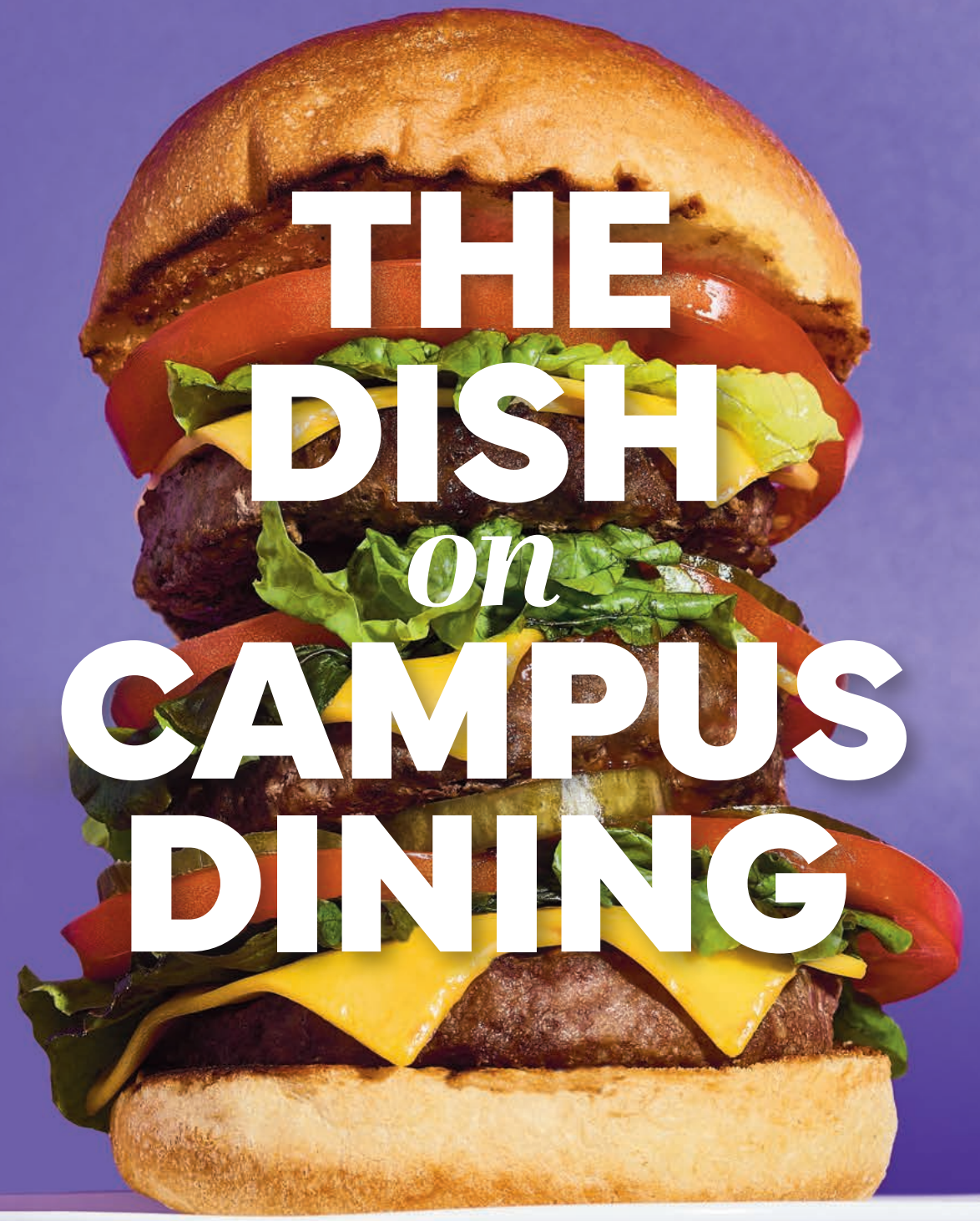
for his uncanny ability to create a sense of home wherever he went, and his efforts were always infused with a deep respect for Peddie's history and people.

"I've always been struck by the fondness and deep appreciation our alumni retain for the faculty, coaches and staff who mentored them as students," Davidson reflected. "Their vivid memories about the school's enduring impact on them, often in life-changing ways, are truly inspiring."

Davidson was a bridge between Peddie's past and present, especially during times of change. His diplomatic approach eased alumni's concerns about new initiatives, helping them see how tradition and progress could coexist. He was known for his remarkable memory, easily recalling personal details about students and alumni, whether it was their favorite book or the name of their childhood pet.

"Brian's contributions to Peddie have been remarkable, both in the depth of relationships he has nurtured and the breadth of ways he has helped people feel seen, heard and valued," said Karyn Vella, assistant head for development. "He'll be deeply missed."

Now settled in coastal New England, Davidson is adjusting to this new chapter of his life. "The beach is at the end of the street, which is great for a long walk and a swim," he said. "It's been fun rediscovering my community and catching up with old friends. And I am always happy to hear from Peddie people!"



PEDDIE FOOD SERVICE (PFS) GARNISHES MENUS WITH THE FAMILIAR AND THE FUN

“PFS has the toughest job on campus because it’s the only department that’s critiqued three times a day.”

Peddie Food Service Director and Executive Chef Jeremy Stahl grins when he recalls former CFO Mike McKitish’s assertion — but then, Stahl tends to view his work as a playful challenge. And one could argue that this is the only sane way to walk the tightrope of trying to feed his clientele — about 530 students, plus 200 full-time employees and families, all with varying tastes and needs — every day.

Stahl joined PFS on a part-time basis in 2007 and in 2012, was promoted full time to sous chef. He changed into executive chef’s whites in February 2020.

The hardest part of the job is trying to please every palate, Stahl says. He knows it’s not possible to do every day, but it’s not for lack of trying. The shortest distance between what’s on the daily menu and a happy clientele is accessibility — a concept he goes out of his way to advertise.



SALTY BITE: ROBIN WOJCIK

“Cheryl Jamison (pictured above) was the unofficial basketball coach. She was a fan. I went with her to the games a couple of times, and she was jumping up in the stands and yelling. One day, the team screwed up, and those boys came through the line to get their lunch. And they came up to Cheryl and were hanging their heads and were like, ‘We’re sorry, Miss Cheryl, we’re sorry.’ She said, ‘Do you think the good Lord would give you six-foot-four inches of height and not expect you to jump?’”

“WE ARE A WORLD KITCHEN.”

— EXECUTIVE CHEF JEREMY STAHL

“When we do the International Student Dinner (in the spring), I always say to the students, ‘If you’re missing a taste of home, email me, and we will make it,’” he said. “‘If I don’t know how to make it, you can get into the kitchen with me and show me how. Send me your mom’s recipe, or your grandmother’s, or your father’s — whoever’s.’ We have never said no to any of their requests,” he continued. “We usually get a lot in the fall. That little taste of home helps.”

A WORLD KITCHEN

A key reason for why Stahl and his staff don’t refuse any requests is because sometimes, they miss the mark on what will or won’t be popular with the Peddie community. Why take a chance?

“Once, by the end of the year, three students were sending me weekly ideas, and I’m not going to lie: With one of the dishes, I was like, ‘This is not going to work; I don’t understand it.’ And then we probably moved more of this special than we ever have of anything else.”



Peddie Food Service sous chef Matthew Walker prepares dinner for hundreds of students, employees and their families.



Peddie Food Service Director and Executive Chef Jeremy Stahl is committed to accommodating special meal requests.

SWEET BITE: EXECUTIVE CHEF JEREMY STAHL

What’s the best part of heading up PFS?

“The cast of characters, especially my co-managers, Pam Houskeeper and Jimmy Hamnett, and my sous chef, Matthew Walker. It’s a we, definitely not a me. Second best: the kids. To see them excited about food, happy and smiling; seeing a line upstairs before we open the door; coming back for seconds. They work so hard with their studies. It’s not every career that you can see all of your hard work being appreciated so quickly.”

BLUE-PLATE SPECIALS: A VANISHING TRADITION

The “blue-plate special” once symbolized an affordable, satisfying meal — typically featuring meat, sides and a drink — offered at diners across America from the 1920s to the 1950s. Its roots lie in dining at railroad stops, where budget-conscious travelers and workers were served hearty portions on sectioned blue plates. The concept is believed to date back to 1892, when the Harvey House chain popularized these discounted meals, catering to railroad passengers in the Western U.S.

Knowing their clientele is from Hightstown as well as all over the globe galvanizes Stahl and his staff to draw from a wide variety of cultural influences on a regular basis. The team regularly hosts dinners that feature a particular cuisine, along with “the most exciting”: a week that showcases international foods.

“We are a world kitchen,” Stahl emphasized. “African cuisine is huge here. Those dishes became some of our most popular ones. And they’re flavors I’d never done. There’s Asian cuisine; we do three different kinds of rice, and are now doing sticky rice every day.” Dishes like this are typically served as blue-plate specials ... and Stahl doesn’t miss the opportunity to serve them on ceramic blue plates.

Along with heartfelt appeals for certain dishes, Stahl regularly gets requests to carry specialty oils and sauces. “We have a tray full of different kinds, and it’s growing, getting out of control,” laughed Stahl. “But the students are happy.”

LOCAL-FOOD EDUCATORS

Alumni who graduated 15 or more years ago who visit Peddie’s dining hall may see something that inspires a double take: platters of unusual local fruits or vegetables, beautifully prepared, arranged and labeled. PFS works with purveyors who seek out what’s in season at local farms, in and around New Jersey.

**SWEET BITE: SNACK BAR
SUPERVISOR JAMES HAMNETT**

"It's been an amazing 30 years working for Peddie Food Service and seeing how much the department has evolved. I had the privilege of working with some hard working colleagues over the years, including my mother, Mae Hamnett, who dedicated herself to the success of the department for 25 years.

"Reunion is one of PFS's greatest days — a day for us to reconnect with former students and reminisce about all the great times they shared with us. They tell us how much they loved our food and that the food at most of their colleges and universities doesn't compare to ours."

"That really started with (Head of School) Peter Quinn, Mike McKitish and other administrators," said Stahl. "They told us, 'regardless of who you are on campus, we're all educators. There are always lessons we can teach the community — especially the students.' We really took that to heart, so we took the initiative and said, 'Let's find some food that you may not find every day. Let's talk about it, let's educate our staff about it.' We love to create, as chefs and as cooks. And I try to use as much Jersey produce as possible."

ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION

Stahl also makes smart ecological choices, regularly recycling and composting. He recently joined Peddie's Sustainability Committee and has "learned a lot," he said.

Earth-friendly choices are also included on PFS menus, with a sustainable food distributor providing much of it. And "all of the seafood we get is sustainable," said Stahl. "Some of it is farm raised, but in an ethical way. We try to play our part."

PFS has evolved further, providing kosher, halal, vegetarian and vegan options on each day's menu. And the department is keenly proactive when it comes to food allergies and intolerances.

From left: Peddie Food Service employees Lucy Armstrong and Julie Heymach



BIG BITE: ROBIN WOJCIK

"Tris and Leigh Wood's oldest, Duncan, would sneak in 10 or 15 minutes sooner than his parents because he wanted to eat cake before they got there. And we knew it, and we'd watch him eat his cake and put his plate on the return, and then he'd be ready for dinner."

FORMER DIRECTOR OF FOOD SERVICE ROBIN WOJCIK

"I was hired in May 1994 and was my predecessor's assistant for nine years. Back then, we served simple fare — a lot of processed food, not a lot of imagination.

"In 2005–07, there was a whole new crew of faculty and they had a lot of expectations and demands. I'd had it drilled into my head not to spend money. It took me and (then Head of School) John Green and (then CFO) Mike McKitish a good six months to go and spend some money. That was really hard.

"We had 700 people who all wanted different things. So who were we gonna be? Mike and I went to see some other schools, and no one was doing anything that was knocking my socks off. So I wrote a mission statement and a vision statement. And then I sat with the staff, asked who we were going to be, and we'd go from there. We made decisions together.

"From 2007–10, we started to turn things around and got our mojo going. Today, 80–85% of the food is made from scratch.

"When Jeremy got promoted, he was the final help I needed to push through what I wanted to get done before I retired. Now it's an operation that's really in touch with the community."



“IT’S ABOUT THE COMMUNITY.”

— EXECUTIVE CHEF JEREMY STAHL

"When I started here 12 years ago, it was only nut and seafood allergies," said Stahl. "Now there's a list of eight or nine items, and we hit all of them." The PFS staff identifies all menu items that contain allergens and also lists them on a public wall on a large placard.

How is Stahl and his team able to keep everyone's needs straight? By "communicating with the community – getting to know them," he said. "Students with certain diets, we will make individual meals just for them – their own fryer oil, their own plates. We want people to feel comfortable, not like they're singled out.

"It's about the community."

SWEET BITE: ROBIN WOJCIK

"Janice Brown was an amazing woman. She retired in 2022. I think she was at Peddie for 38 years. She brought her own sense of integrity to everything she did. She never called out of work — hurricane, snowstorm, whatever. I would watch that woman never miss a trick, never burn anything. It was amazing to be in her presence. And she loved those kids. 'They're my kids,' she would say. She went to the concerts. She went to the Dec Contests. She went to the recitals. She'd be annoyed by something that someone burned and would wrinkle her nose and say, 'Not for my babies.'"



Student clubs and organizations, like Bon Appétit (left) and the Jewish Heritage Alliance (right), embrace food as a central part of their activities.

BREAKING BREAD AND BUILDING BONDS

For Greg Wriede, director of student leadership and student activities, food is key in fostering community and creating memories. From informal gatherings to campus-wide events, Wriede sees food as an opportunity for students to form bonds beyond the classroom.

"Food drives contact between our students, faculty and community as a whole," Wriede noted. "Whether it's a late-night snack in the dorm, an all-school barbeque or our traditional Family Style Dinners, food encourages our community to gather in spaces that foster conversations and connections."

Wriede pointed out that student clubs and organizations embrace food as a central part of their activities. "Our Bon Appétit Club, for example, has hosted all-school BBQs and other meals for student mental health breaks. Also, our Japanese Culture Club hosted sushi-making, which was a huge hit last year."

When planning student activities, Wriede always considers how food can enhance the experience. Some recent favorites include waffle fries, grilled cheese nights and nostalgic snacks like Dunkaroos, Gushers and Fruit Roll-Ups during exam breaks. "Food encourages students to show up and stay a little longer, giving them more time to connect with their peers," Wriede said.

I love breakfast food, and the French toast always hit the spot after morning swim practice.
— Bryce Hillman '07

The infamous small BLT! Food service served us just one small BLT for lunch. Hungry young men need more! A ruckus began in the corner of the Wilson dining hall, a pounding of the tables with the chant, “We want seconds.” In just moments, the entire student body was in revolt. Dean DuBois jumped up from the head table, shouting, “The next boy to make a sound is out!” All quiet broke loose as Mr. DuBois stormed back to the kitchen. Minutes passed. Then, out came seconds. Mr. DuBois was our hero!
— John M Roberts '70

As a new student, I kept hearing rumors about the mysterious “Exploding Chicken,” a Family Style staple that had apparently ruined a generation’s worth of students’ ties, slacks and dresses. Our dorm prefects regaled us with tales of unsuspecting students doused in butter as they unknowingly cut into the harmless-looking Chicken Kiev. My mind ran wild when I heard it was on the menu one Fall evening. I approached the dish as if I was about to embark on a major surgical procedure. To my surprise, the “explosion” was nothing more than a little pop of butter. Not only did I survive the chicken bomb, but it was actually pretty good!
— Alexander Dacey '03

Chicken fingers.
— Aidan Lawrence '26

Beef stew on noodles.
— Jennifer Orlick '81

Breakfast hash browns were always a go-to.
— Matt Pustay '02

Pork roll and cheese sandwiches for lunch were my favorite.
— Mark Gartner '84

Muffins on Thursdays! Would not miss this day for the world, and Cheryl would be passing them out with a big smile, making the whole thing amazing.
— Cal Rohde '12

My Peddie dining experience was defined by learning to eat incredibly fast. If I didn’t, I could not finish a complete meal, especially as a freshman and sophomore when upperclassmen essentially dictated your portions. To this day, 55 years later, I am still a speed eater.
— Roy Grossman '70

A special memory is Muffin Day. I would always be one of the few at the dining hall early enough to get one, so I would always grab an extra for my roommate, Courtney, who liked sleeping in.
— Brooke Maria (Azcu) Eriksen '08

Char Siu pork buns.
— Megan Cheng '27

BBQ ribs.
— Siwoo Jeong '27

Breakfast for dinner.
— Liam Ruiz '26

Chicken nuggets.
— Eason Wang '27

Chicken nuggets were my favorite.
— Bridgette McKnight '10

Turkey Divan was my favorite. It was only served at Family Style Dinner. Before I tried that dish, I had never eaten broccoli, but it turned me into a broccoli lover and got me to try other foods I never thought I would enjoy. When I went home for a break and told my mom I liked broccoli, she almost fell out of her seat. It was a miracle! Peddie got me to try broccoli.
— Bill Volckening '84

Chicken breast, BBQ ribs.
— Andrii Golubchuk '26

Probably the corn fritters.
— John Lord '71

Burger bar!
— Ethan Jin '25

Corn fritters and Canadian bacon.
— Jennifer Miksis-Olds '92

I loved the waffle bar at Sunday brunch (if I woke up in time!) For lunch, Pierogi Day or Chicken Nugget Day were always favorites of mine. For Family Style, the Chicken Kiev (“Exploding Chicken”) with wild rice was definitely the best.
— Morgan Fagioli '09

Peaches and cream for dessert.
— John Wall '51

The salmon salad, berry smoothies and pork buns.
— Ivy Zhao '25

Oddly, potato chips and cottage cheese come to mind. Hey, it was the 80s.
— Stephanie Martin '91

Definitely the yucca fries blue plate.
— Anjali Sudarshan '25

Muffin Thursdays and chicken cheddar wraps.
— Christine Lee '08

I would sit next to the teacher to get first pick at the food. One I remember was chipped beef on toast.
— Sam Havens '61

Brunch (after Saturday classes) was by far the best meal. My roommate and I would try to outdo each other until we eventually ended up with the toast-egg-cheese-bacon-sausage-hash brown double-decker sandwich.
— Robert Zakon '86

Chicken cheddar wraps.
— Fred Sullivan '26

The mystery meat that had a sheen which glowed in several colors, red, green and brown, once reputed to be kangaroo! We swallowed it often, even if suspect.
— John Roberts '70

Vegetable chili.
— Ayaan Nagarkatti '27

Chicken cheddar wraps.
— Nicholas Massenburg-Abraham '17

Chicken cheddar wraps, taco night and the salmon rice dish!
— Olivia Dewar '24

Chicken cheddar wraps.
— Gabriel Spadaccini '13

Sunday morning waffles were the best.
— Chris Ransom '06

Anyone else remember what we called creamed chipped beef?
— Steve Cole '60

Roast beef and mashed potatoes (even if mixed with condensed formula) smothered in gravy. Yum!
— Richard Gerweck '78

Every once in a while, they did a make-your-own potato bar, and that was my favorite.
— Jon Siegel '91

Thursday muffins! With Cheryl serving and smiling, of course! “Exploding Chicken” at Family Style.
— Megan Hill Grewal '97

“Exploding Chicken.”
— Beth Strum '94

“Exploding Chicken” and the muffins on Thursday mornings!
— Lauren Smedley '09

I like “Exploding Chicken,” chicken nuggets and chicken cheddar wraps.
— Kohana Brown '25

“Exploding Chicken” and flank steak were a fave!
— Katherine “Kate” (Ridgeway) Lobben '11

Loved “Exploding Chicken” and Muffin Day.
— Sarah Letter '02

All-time favorite dish was Chicken Kiev, aka “Exploding Chicken.”
— Peter Cao '05

Chicken Kiev is my all-time fave.
— Celine Hau '03

Chicken Kiev. That’s it. That’s the story.
— Alex Valentino '13



“Exploding Chicken,” aka Chicken Kiev. It was always fun to see who at Family Style meals would get absolutely demolished by the hot melted butter. Plus, it was delicious!
— Jennifer (Prostoff) Braciak '11

Chicken Kiev, aka “Squirting Chicken,” might’ve been the favorite and the scariest.
— Lauren (Laurie) King '88

The most fun was “Exploding Chicken” (aka Chicken Kiev), especially the first Family Style they served it at each year!
— Julie Saker Schlegel '90

WHAT’S YOUR ALL-TIME FAVORITE DINING HALL DISH?

Dining hall memories at Peddie are packed with tales of “Exploding Chicken,” early morning treats and the comfort of timeless favorites. We asked students and alumni to share their favorite dining hall dishes, and their responses reflect not just the food they loved, but the memories and connections that came with them.



FEEDING MINDS

Peddie's food-focused lessons equip students to tackle global challenges.

Peddie students work with Science Teacher Madeline Cozine in the school garden, where students grow vegetables to donate to local food pantries.

At Peddie, food is more than just a subject of study – it's a gateway to understanding complex social, environmental and cultural issues. Students learn to navigate the connections between what's on their plates and the world around them, preparing them to tackle some of the most critical global challenges.

SCIENCE MEETS SUSTAINABILITY

In AP Environmental Science, Nika Blank '16 leads her students through the tactile process of growing microgreens, a hands-on project designed to teach them the intricacies – and fragility – of food production. The challenge isn't just cultivating the greens but realizing how a minor oversight, like missing a watering session, can devastate a crop.

But the most striking revelation comes when students realize their disconnect from the very food they've grown. "Some ask, 'Wait, we can eat these? Is it safe?'" Blank recalled, highlighting how distant many students are from their food sources. It's a revelation that carries weight, especially as Blank pushes her students to think critically about sustainability and the scale required to feed a growing population.

Blank recalled an eye-opening moment when Peddie Food Service Executive Chef Jeremy Stahl and Catering Manager Pamela Houskeeper visited her class to discuss the logistics of feeding the school. "The students were surprised at the cost variation, and how produce can sometimes be the most expensive item on Chef Jeremy's shopping list," Blank said. It was a stark reminder that feeding a school mirrors the global struggles in producing affordable, sustainable food.

A TASTE OF CULTURE

In Peddie's French classes, food is essential to learning about culture. French Teacher Nathalie Letourneau moves beyond traditional language instruction to explore the significance of meals in society. "It's really about how much cultural knowledge and competency we can develop in students," she said. "And food is such a great gateway for that."

In French III, students explore the traditions surrounding mealtimes, while those in French IV dig into the history of the Michelin Guide and its influence on global culinary prestige. By AP French, students are exploring critical global topics like food insecurity and the debate over genetically modified organisms. Along the way, they make crêpes in the dining hall and brew traditional Moroccan mint tea, finding that language, like food, is best digested with experience and reflection.

FOOD AS A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

While science teaches the mechanics of food production, art delves into its emotional resonance. Joyce Chen, who teaches Drawing and Painting, asks students to illustrate or paint dishes that hold deep personal significance in her food autobiography project. Whether it's a beloved childhood snack or a traditional

"The goal is for students to reflect critically on how food is shaped by their lives and communities."

— JOYCE CHEN, ART TEACHER

family meal, the students' art reveals how food is tied to memory, culture and identity.

"The goal," Chen said, "is for students to reflect critically on how food is shaped by their lives and communities. I want them to think about the systems, values and traditions that shape their food choices and, ultimately, who they are."

What begins as an intimate exercise in nostalgia quickly becomes a broader examination of how personal identity and cultural history are entangled in what we eat. From family traditions to the impact of globalization on local cuisines, Chen's students gain a layered understanding of the role food plays in their lives.

THE SCIENCE OF EATING

In Madeline Cozine's Food Science course, students are invited to step into the kitchen as both scientists and chefs. Here, they experiment with cooking techniques while engaging in broader discussions about food production's ethical, social and environmental implications. Beyond the classroom, students venture into community-based projects, growing vegetables alongside Peddie's environmental club members to donate to local food pantries, emphasizing the connection between scientific knowledge and social responsibility.

PERFORMANCE ON A PLATE

Jordi Serrato's Sports Science class tackles nutrition from an entirely different angle, teaching students how to fuel their bodies for optimal athletic performance. "I want to teach them the basics – like nutrition requirements and reading a food label – and build it from there," Serrato said. From understanding macronutrients and hydration to meal prepping for specific athletic goals, students learn how food choices can enhance their physical and mental capabilities.

Serrato takes it further by encouraging his students to engage with the ethical dilemmas of sports nutrition, including debates on performance-enhancing drugs and supplements. This focus on sports nutrition reflects a holistic understanding that food not only fuels the body but also shapes athletic integrity and ethical decision-making.

Peddie students explore the connections between personal identity, cultural history and food.



CAMPUS CRAVINGS

From the warmth of a fresh chocolate chip cookie at The Grille to the juicy goodness of a burger at the old Canteen, Peddie's campus snacks have been a tasty tradition for generations. We asked students and alumni to share their favorite go-to bites.

THE GRILLE

Warm chocolate chip cookies in The Grille. They were huge and so good, plus Fran always served them up with a smile.

— *Lauren Einhorn '08*

Warm cookies at The Grille.

— *Julia Ulrich '25*

Cookies from The Grille!

— *Charis Chien '27*

Fresh chocolate chip cookies remain a favorite at The Grille.

Annie Bortey '06 and I always got bowtie donuts from The Grille during DMX.

— *Allie Rich '06*

Cookies from The Grille!

— *Caitlin McCorkle '07*

They had these twist donuts at The Grille that were about a buck. Washing that down with a 99 cent Arnold Palmer gave me the fuel to get through some late nights of study!

— *Alexander Dacey '03*

The Dunkin' Donuts muffins in The Grille. Even better is the memory of Fran, who always asked, "Want a muffin, honey?" when you walked up to order. She had such a sweet and unique voice. I still use this phrase in my best Fran voice with my kids today.

— *Jennifer Miksis-Olds '92*

Warm chocolate chip cookies at The Grille.

— *Jennifer (Prostoff) Braciak '11*

Big cookie and a Mountain Dew Code Red from The Grille.

— *Brian Chaszar '02*

THE ANNENBERG CAFE & THE PEDDIE STORE

Biscoff cookies or jalapeño chips from the Annenberg Cafe.

— *Aarushi Gupta '26*

Haribo gummies from The Peddie Store.

— *Dasyer Bullock '26*

Chocolate Hello Panda Snacks from the Annenberg Cafe.

— *Grace Lee '26*

Hi-Chew from the Annenberg Cafe!

— *Sophie Liz Wang '27*

Cold chocolate milk from the Annenberg Cafe, paired with Hello Panda.

— *Ophelia Ni '26*

A Stewart's root beer from the bookstore was the perfect post-chapel drink. In the winter, I'd grab a couple before chapel for my friend and me, then deposit them in a snowbank. When we got out, they were perfectly frosted, and we didn't have to wait in line for anything before the long block.

— *Bryce Hillman '07*

THE CANTEEN

Toasted roll with jelly and butter from the Canteen. 10 cents.

— *Thomas Bifano '76*

Drake's Cherry Fruit Pies. I went to the Canteen almost every night for a pack. Still eating them today.

— *Bart M. Rogers Jr. '75*

Bagels and Snapples from Frannie in the Canteen!

— *Nicole Rossi O'Brien '95*

I liked the Canteen's cheeseburgers in 9th grade.

— *Claude Elenewich '75*

Fried onion sandwich on a hard roll. 10 cents in the old Canteen.

— *Wes Lawson '76*

Fried bologna sandwich at the Canteen. 20 cents.

— *Richard Benes '65*

The Canteen. I remember the French fries.

— *Gerard Fritz '81*

Canteen. Rose Lipszic Hayet '72 and I would go. Cherry Coke and matchbox football.

— *Deborah Tiff-Tufts '72*

Not even a question: Frannie's chocolate chip cookies from the Canteen.

— *Jonathan Besler '98*

Burger at the Canteen.

— *Bob Dunne '71*

I worked part-time in the Canteen. A favorite snack for myself and many others was a grilled hard roll done on the flat top.

— *Mary Stella '75*



Peddie students enjoy snacks and conversation in the late 1960s at the Canteen, a favorite campus hangout.

Muffins in the Canteen! Fran behind the counter would say, "Can I help you, hon?" "Muffin, please." "Blueberry or chocolate chip?" "Chocolate chip!"

— *Marisa Coppola Procopio '87*

A burger and chocolate milkshake at the Canteen. Sometimes, when busy, we got to go behind the counter to make our own.

— *Robbie Lobban '74*

Went to the Canteen for greasy burgers.

— *David Mintzer '71*

Canteen. The milkshakes, of course!

— *Sharon Evans '63*

Grilled cheese from the Canteen.

— *Lisa Gonnella '86*

Anyone from my era is going to say the apple bombs from Frannie at the Canteen.

— *Kevin Sanderson '92*

Probably milk.

— *Dave Ennis '58*

Hostess Apple Fruit Pies from the Canteen.

— *Kathryn Riley Andrew '84*

Canteen. I would have a glazed donut pretty much every day.

— *Stephen Bratcher '69*

Hamburger at the Canteen.

— *Paul Rossos M.D. '72*

A coffee roll donut from the Canteen, always saved for me by the lovely Frannie who would set it aside knowing I'd be in to buy it before lunchtime.

— *Amy Elkes-Simon '95*

Fries from the Canteen coupled with Super Mario Bros.

— *Jon Siegel '91*

Between classes, there was a stop at the Canteen for a Ring Ding and a Cherry Coke.

— *Ted Brooks '64*

ALUMNI FOOD

INDUSTRY

IN THE ME

NINE ALUMNI SHARE INSIGHTS FROM VARIOUS ROLES IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY, FROM BUSTLING RESTAURANTS TO VITAL EFFORTS IN TACKLING FOOD INSECURITY AND ENHANCING TODDLER NUTRITION. THEIR EXPERIENCES HIGHLIGHT THE MEANINGFUL WAYS IN WHICH FOOD CONNECTS US ALL.

SPICING UP THE CULINARY WORLD CINDY GILBERT '95

As McCormick & Company's culinary development manager, Chef Cindy Gilbert '95 is the creative force behind recipes enjoyed by millions. Gilbert's culinary adventure surprisingly began not in a kitchen but at Christie's Auction House in New York City. Immersed in the city's vibrant culture, the art history major discovered a new passion that would ultimately reshape her career.

"New York City has a pretty robust food scene," said Gilbert. "It was there that I decided to transition into the food industry." With that revelation, she pivoted from fine art to fine dining.

Eager to dive into her newfound calling, Gilbert relocated to Boston, where she split her time between an internship at America's Test Kitchen and night shifts as a line cook at an upscale seafood restaurant. The dual experience offered valuable insights into meticulous recipe development and the fast-paced restaurant industry.

"It showed me that restaurants are definitely not for me," Gilbert admitted. "It was the recipe development side of things from America's Test Kitchen that I fell in love with because it speaks to my type A personality that loves the minutiae and why this works or doesn't work."

Determined to hone her skills further, Gilbert returned to New York to study at the Institute of Culinary Education. Her career blossomed with positions in the test kitchens at "Good Housekeeping" and "Family Circle" before she joined McCormick in 2014.

Gilbert's role at McCormick is wide-ranging. She develops recipes for product packaging and the company's website, coordinates photo shoots, and ensures that home cooks experience McCormick's flavors at their finest, just as the company's food scientists intended. Her influence extends to product innovation and high-profile campaigns, including the buzzworthy

French's mustard ice cream she helped develop for National Mustard Day in 2019.

Gilbert has been influential in popular licensing collaborations like Old Bay Seasoning Goldfish and Frank's RedHot Goldfish. This season, she's especially excited

"New York City has a pretty robust food scene. It was there that I decided to transition into the food industry."

about the launch of new holiday finishing sugars. "Working on those big holiday campaigns is really, really fun," she said.

Through it all, Gilbert finds deep satisfaction in her work: "I love my job because it allows me to have a real, tangible impact on people's lives — helping them enjoy life more through the food we eat and the meals we share."



THE RISE OF AN ICONIC DINING EMPIRE

ELLEN KORETZ
BROMBERG '80



In 1992, Ellen Bromberg '80, her husband, Eric, and his brother, Bruce — both chefs — took a leap of faith and opened Blue Ribbon Brasserie in New York City's Soho. What started as a single restaurant has since blossomed into Blue Ribbon Restaurants, a renowned culinary empire with 20 locations spanning multiple states, many specializing in sushi and Japanese-inspired cuisine. Among their most iconic dishes is Blue Ribbon's fried chicken, a signature

noting Blue Ribbon's staff numbers around 1,000. "It's a balancing act to make sure everything is done the way we want, every day, in every location." Despite the challenges, she finds it incredibly rewarding to provide so many people with jobs and to witness their growth alongside the restaurant group. "We value

“It's a balancing act to make sure everything is done the way we want, every day, in every location.”

favorite born from a spontaneous kitchen experiment that has delighted diners for over 30 years.

"The story behind the fried chicken is actually funny," Bromberg explained. "One evening, the kitchen had a bowl of egg whites left over from making crème brûlée, and there was matzah meal on the counter. My husband had the idea to use those ingredients to make a crust for fried chicken, and it came out great!"

Running a successful restaurant group comes with challenges, and staffing remains one of the most demanding aspects of Bromberg's role. "There are so many moving parts, and so many employees," she said,

our staff, and seven of our original ten employees are still with us today."

Bromberg continues to expand the Blue Ribbon brand. Their latest ventures include two restaurants in Las Vegas — a sushi spot and a Mediterranean-inspired concept — further enhancing an already impressive portfolio across Los Angeles, Miami and beyond.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, Bromberg offers simple but sage advice: "It's a tough business with a high rate of failure that requires a ridiculous amount of hours, but as for my family, I can't think of anything else we would rather do."

CULTIVATING SOLUTIONS FOR GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

FRED DAVIES '67



As a horticulturist and plant biologist, Fred Davies '67 has spent his career tackling one of the world's most pressing issues: how to feed an ever-growing population sustainably.

"We've got this wicked problem," Davies explained, referring to the challenge of feeding an additional billion people in the next 13 years. "It's a problem that you can't easily solve. A lot of times when you fix one part of the problem, you create other problems you've got to deal with."

soil microorganisms. His work has taken him from the high altitudes of Peru to the laboratories of Texas A&M University.

Davies emphasized the critical distinction between food security and nutritional security. "Food security is about having sufficient calories," he explained, "but nutritional security involves having adequate minerals, micronutrients and vitamins from nutrient-dense fruits, vegetables and protein sources." He pointed out that "hidden hunger"

food security. However, he remains optimistic about the future, citing technological advancements and innovative approaches like vertical farming, controlled environment agriculture, and even the potential of insect protein.

Davies' passion for his work is palpable, and his optimism is infectious. "We can live in a dystopian world of winners and losers

“Nutritious food should be a universal right.”

Davies' journey into the world of horticulture began with humble roots in Cranbury, New Jersey, where he and his three younger brothers attended Peddie as day students. As a teenager, Davies worked on local potato farms, gaining practical experience that would later influence his career path. However, it wasn't until after college, during a year-long backpacking trip around the world with a horticulturist friend, that Davies found his true calling.

"About three months into our travels, we were in Mexico and decided, 'Hey, let's start to focus on agriculture and horticulture,'" Davies recalled. This decision led them to visit research centers, farms and plantations worldwide, igniting Davies' passion for the field.

Throughout his career, Davies has worn many hats. He's worked on enhancing production systems for the green industry, collaborated with NASA on their "Salad Bowl" program to grow plants in space, and spent over 30 years studying beneficial

due to malnutrition and insufficient micronutrients is a significant global problem, leading to issues such as obesity, stunted growth and cognitive impairment.

"Nutritious food should be a universal right," said Davies. He pointed out that one-third of the world's food is wasted, enough to feed about 2 billion people. "We're super spoiled," he said. "We want to have that unblemished fruit, that unblemished vegetable, that perfect shape, which we call No. 1. If it doesn't make that No. 1 standard, a lot of times it just gets chucked."

Davies stressed the importance of "sustainable intensification" — doing more with less. This approach involves finding innovative ways to increase food production while minimizing environmental impact. "We have the ability to do this. It's not simple, but there are real opportunities," he said.

Climate change, population growth and deforestation are significant challenges Davies identified in the quest for global

— or we can live in a world of abundance of water, energy, food — if we have the political will and smart and sustainable policies in place," he stated.

"There is a food revolution going on," Davies concluded. "People are interested in eating healthier, tastier — trying new food and recipes. What a great time for producers, chefs, restaurateurs and food delivery!"

ALOHA SPIRIT: RESTAURATEUR'S JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY

JIM ANDERSON '75



For Jim Anderson '75, owning Dollies Pub & Cafe in Maui is about more than running a business — it's about fostering a sense of community. When Anderson became the seventh owner of the once-struggling restaurant, he transformed Dollies into a thriving local favorite. "I was the seventh owner but the longest and most successful one," he said.

“It will take 10-15 years to rebuild one of the most beautiful places in the world.”

Anderson's journey to Maui's food scene was anything but straightforward. After graduating from the University of Florida as a four-time All-American swimmer, he ventured into the food and beverage industry as a bartender. His career took him across the globe, leading him to top roles in major hospitality brands like Planet Hollywood and Rainforest Cafe. But it was a call from an old boss that lured him to Hawaii, where he became the Food & Beverage Director at the Ilikai Hotel.

In 2010, Anderson acquired Dollies, paying tribute to its namesake — a dog named Dollie — by naming his own Labrador after the pub's mascot. Under his leadership, Dollies became known for its award-winning pizza, even earning the

Ai'pono Award for the best pizza on Maui.

Expanding his culinary reach, Anderson opened Beach House Bar & Grill at the Sands of Kahana resort and established a second Dollies location on Maui's Northshore.

In August 2023, when wildfires devastated Lahaina, Anderson's restaurants were spared, but he witnessed the destruction of over 1,000 homes, 100 businesses, and the heartbreaking loss of life. In response, Anderson and his team donated \$40,000 in food and supplies and provided free breakfast and dinner to the West Maui community for ten days. "Things are still very sad in Maui, and it will never be the same," he said. "It will take 10-15 years to rebuild one of the most beautiful places in the world."

As Anderson plans for semi-retirement on the mainland next year, he remains committed to hospitality. "The most important thing is to get to know your guests," he emphasized, "and I pride myself on manager table visits. That visit makes a difference."

Anderson named his yellow Labrador "Dollie," after the restaurant's namesake. The original owner named the restaurant "Dollies" after his dog more than 40 years ago.

LEADING INNOVATION IN MEAL DELIVERY AT HELLOFRESH

LAURA LOUGHRAN '10



Laura Loughran '10 serves as the general manager of new ventures at HelloFresh, where she drives the growth of the company's diverse portfolio. This includes meal kits, ready-to-eat meals, seafood and meat delivery, premium pet food, and most recently, supplements, which were introduced in September. Loughran's role encompasses marketing, product development, and brand strategy, with oversight of brands like Factor, known for its dietitian-approved, health-conscious meal service. "At HelloFresh, the general manager role is like being the CEO of your brand," Loughran explained. "I'm responsible for the financial success of the brand and everything that goes along with it."

Loughran's transition to HelloFresh followed a career in tech, including positions at IBM and various startups. A positive experience shared by a friend at HelloFresh sparked her interest and led her to the company.

“We're trying to do what we can to meet people where they are at in terms of how much time they have to cook or consume food.”

Her commitment to improving food options for busy lives drives Loughran's work. "We're trying to do what we can to meet people where they are at in terms of how much time they have to cook or consume food. What mechanisms, what innovations can we use to help them with that time saving, but not at the cost of sacrificing the quality or the nutrition of the food that they eat? I see a lot of opportunity in that space moving forward."

Reflecting on her Peddie days, Loughran credited her experience as a varsity swimmer for refining her time management and prioritization skills. She fondly remembers Pierogi Day and ziti pizza at Mannino's, joking, "When you're 16 and swimming a lot, you can eat things like that."

The Mai brothers have distilled their love for coffee and design into a thriving business.

In 2015, Robert Mai '08 and Charles Mai '11 co-founded Ovalware, a Los Angeles-based company known for its elegantly designed, functional coffee brewing equipment. Their mission: to enrich the daily coffee ritual for home brewers who appreciate both craftsmanship and the sensory

elements of a perfect cup.

While Charles spoke for this interview, the company is very much a collaborative effort. "Our journey with Ovalware began from a shared passion for design,

and coffee quickly became the medium through which our passion grew," Charles said.

Ovalware's specialty lies in premium brewing products, with their Cold Brew Maker emerging as a bestseller. The company distinguishes itself through sleek, minimalist designs that elevate the art of homebrewing. Recent innovations include stainless steel filters to reduce paper waste, part of a broader sustainability initiative that includes a transition to zero-plastic packaging.

“The creative experiences at Peddie significantly shaped my approach to entrepreneurship.”

Charles attributes much of his entrepreneurial spirit to his time at Peddie, particularly the creativity he explored in Andrew Harrison's art classes. "The creative experiences at Peddie significantly shaped my approach to entrepreneurship. Just as creativity knows no boundaries, being an entrepreneur is about pushing beyond what you already know and venturing into the unknown. I frequently ask myself, "What if we tried this instead? What if we combined these elements?" It's this ongoing process of testing and trial and error that defines the entrepreneurial spirit."

With their commitment to sustainability and focus on enhancing the coffee experience, the Mai brothers are brewing more than just coffee — they're crafting a better future, one cup at a time.

**BREWING
A BETTER
FUTURE:
THE MAI
BROTHERS'
COFFEE
JOURNEY**



Whether you're picking up a sandwich at Wawa or buying a bagged salad at Wegmans, there's a good chance Michele Williams '90 played a role in making it happen.

At Taylor Farms, one of the largest producers of ready-to-eat salads and fresh foods in the U.S., Williams ensures that healthy, convenient meals and fresh produce are available at grocery chains, restaurants and convenience stores nationwide.

Williams works closely with retailers to drive innovation under the Taylor Farms brand and for the retailers' private labels, helping the company thrive in three key areas: food service, retail and convenience. "If you buy a Taco Bell taco, that shredded lettuce is made by us," she



**FRESH
VISIONARY:
HOW THIS
PEDDIE
ALUMNA IS
KEEPING
THE SALAD
INDUSTRY
CRISP**

**MICHELE CONKLIN
WILLIAMS '90**

explained. "And if you grab a sandwich for lunch at Wawa, that lettuce, along with all those snacks and fruit and grab-and-go, Taylor Farms does all of that product." The company also supplies fresh foods to restaurant chains like Olive Garden and to major retailers like Starbucks, Walmart, Trader Joe's and Wegmans.

Managing the complexities of fresh produce is no small feat. "We're developing an infrastructure to get to every major retailer quickly with the freshest product," Williams said. "With products that have a shelf life of seven days or less, it's not like selling a box of cereal."

Williams' passion for the food industry began when she worked in her family's restaurants along the Jersey Shore. This early experience, coupled with a degree in food marketing from the Rochester Institute of Technology, set the foundation for her successful career.

Beyond her work at Taylor Farms, Williams is a managing member of St. Pete's Brewing Company in Florida, where her husband, Tom Williams '90, serves as president and CEO.

Looking ahead, Williams is enthusiastic about emerging trends like hyperlocal sourcing, hydroponics and sustainable packaging. In an industry constantly evolving, she continues to lead with innovation, helping shape the future of fresh food.

UNCORKING SUCCESS AT MICHELIN-STARRED MUSKET ROOM

STELLA MARTINDALE '16

Stella Martindale '16 has found her stride as the wine director at New York City's Michelin-starred Musket Room, where her role encompasses far more than recommending the perfect pairing. As she puts it, she manages "all things wine," from selecting and purchasing to storage and staff education.

Martindale discovered her love for the wine industry in college. After gaining hands-on experience in wine production and retail, she found her niche in the restaurant world.

"I really fell in love with restaurants when I realized the impact I have on the biggest moments in people's lives," she said.

"I have gotten to be a part of some truly amazing moments, including graduations, engagements and birthdays."

Despite her success, Martindale hasn't been immune to the challenges women face in the wine industry. "I still get remarks about how people are so shocked I am a female sommelier," she revealed. "I also find that staff are more likely to try and correct me than my male colleagues." However, at Musket Room, with its all-female ownership and management team, Martindale has found an environment where inclusivity thrives. "I think the type of people you work for really resonates even down to the type of guests you have walking through the door," she said.

When curating Musket Room's wine list, Martindale focuses on farmers who are passionate about their craft. She aims to create a diverse, globally representative selection that highlights the best of each region while delivering good value.

For those considering a career in food and beverage, Martindale's advice is straightforward: Start at the bottom.

"I have worked every hourly front-of-the-house job

"I really fell in love with restaurants when I realized the impact I have on the biggest moments in people's lives."

in a restaurant," she said. "I think because I have done this, I have a better understanding of how restaurants work and more respect for how the entire system works together."

To aspiring sommeliers, Martindale encourages persistence: "Keep going," she urged. "Guests can be mean, and days can be hard. I have had days when I leave in tears, convinced I know nothing about wine. I still show up the next day and talk about and serve wine."



REVOLUTIONIZING TODDLER NUTRITION WITH PEDIAGROW

ZAC OMAR '21



Zac Omar '21 is making waves in child nutrition with his company, PediaGrow, which will soon be available in baby store giant Buy Buy Baby. After two years at George Washington University, Omar made a bold decision to leave school and dedicate himself fully to creating a better nutritional alternative for toddlers. PediaGrow offers a clean, nutrient-packed formula crafted from grass-fed, French-made milk and has earned endorsements from leading pediatricians across the U.S.

The idea for PediaGrow was born in the summer of 2022, during the infant formula shortage that shook the United States. Moved by the crisis, and inspired by research he had begun for an entrepreneurship class, Omar immersed himself in FDA guidelines, market analysis and scientific data. His growing passion for the project led to a pivotal decision: leaving college to pursue his vision full-time. "There wasn't an ounce of anxiety," he said. "It was pure passion and excitement. I knew I could do really meaningful work. I was excited about it."

PediaGrow's toddler formula, designed for children 12 months and older, addresses the nutritional needs of early childhood, particularly for those struggling with the transition to solid foods. The company's commitment to quality sets it apart — no corn

syrup or unnecessary additives. From sourcing milk from farms in Normandy to ensuring rigorous safety standards, Omar's attention to detail is firm. "Quality and safety is where we start. It's got to be number one," he emphasized.

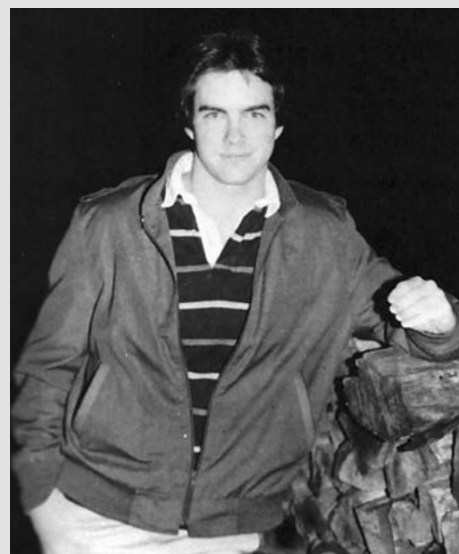
Omar credits Peddie for nurturing his self-reliance, which has fueled his entrepreneurial journey. "I left there a lot more independent and confident in what I could do," he reflected.

Looking ahead, Omar is preparing to launch an infant formula by the end of 2024 and is in talks with other major retailers. His advice for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Just read everything. The more prepared you can be, the more confident you'll feel in every situation."



INTRODUCING THE 2024 PEDDIE SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

During Reunion Weekend, Peddie proudly welcomed a new class of extraordinary athletes into the Peddie Sports Hall of Fame. For more than three decades, the Hall of Fame Committee has celebrated individuals who exemplify the spirit and excellence of Peddie athletics.



PJ HORGAN '84 *Football, Basketball, Baseball*

PJ Horgan's tenure at Peddie was defined by his dedication and versatility. He excelled in not just one, but three sports — football, basketball and baseball. A previous Hall of Fame inductee with the 1983 baseball team, Horgan was instrumental in the success of the 1982-83 NJISAA Prep 'A' Championship baseball team. "Whenever we walked on the field, I believed we were going to win," he recalled.

Horgan also played three years of varsity basketball and football, and he competed in winter track during his senior year. His football teammate Rich Rebh '84 remembered Horgan's grit and determination, recounting a critical play against Blair that defined their senior year.

When a botched snap threatened a scoring attempt, Horgan's quick thinking turned the situation into a touchdown, securing a 22-20 victory. This moment of quick decision-making not only secured a win but also inspired his teammates. "That one play was the catalyst of that whole game and defined our entire senior year," said Rebh.

Reflecting on his time at Peddie, Horgan expressed gratitude for the strong foundation it provided. "Traditional team sports are really the centerpiece for life learning skills," he said.



MELANIE NICHOLAS '04 *Track & Field*

Melanie Nicholas '04 is one of Peddie's most decorated track and field athletes, holding school records in six individual events and one relay until 2023. Recognized as the best female high jumper in Peddie's history, Nicholas still holds outdoor records for the 100-meter high hurdles, triple jump, and high jump and is part of the record-holding high jump relay team. Indoors, she retains records in the 50-yard high hurdles, 60-meter high hurdles and high jump.

Nicholas amassed 11 MAPL Championships and 10 state titles, earning four varsity letters in both indoor and outdoor track. She was twice awarded the Robert Lawson Leadership Award and the Outstanding Award for outdoor track. Her coach, Tim Brennan, highlighted her method and adaptability. "She was extremely disciplined and one of the happiest athletes I've ever coached," he said.

At the 2004 National Championships at The Armory in New York City, Nicholas placed fifth in the high jump, setting a school record of 5-7 that still stands today and earning All-American honors.

SHELLEY PEARSON '09 *Rowing*

Shelley Pearson '09 has already earned a place in the Peddie Sports Hall of Fame with her teammates from the legendary 2007, 2008 and 2009 Girls Varsity Fours. These crews achieved an undefeated three-year streak in dual competitions, back-to-back Stotesbury Cup victories, two Youth National Championships, and set a course record at the Henley Women's Regatta in England.

Though rowing is a team sport, Pearson's individual accomplishments are equally impressive. She earned a seat on the U.S. Junior Women's National Team Four as a junior, finishing sixth at the 2008 World Rowing Junior Championships. In 2009, she became a World Champion in the U.S. Junior Women's Eight. Recruited by Harvard, she rowed in the Radcliffe Varsity Eight and later earned an MBA from Oxford, where she won The Women's Boat Race in 2015. Pearson represented Bermuda in the 2016 Rio Olympics, finishing 16th in the women's single (IX) and becoming the first Bermudian woman to compete in rowing at the Olympics. "I tried to put Bermuda on the rowing map," she said.

Pearson credits Peddie for laying the foundation for her success, where she found a supportive environment that nurtured her ambitions. She also holds the school record as part of the 2007 indoor track 4x800-meter relay team.



1999 BASEBALL TEAM

The 1999 Falcons marked the beginning of Peddie baseball's most successful era, becoming the first team in school history to win both the Mercer County Championship and the NJISAA Prep 'A' Championship in the same season.

The Falcons' triumphs were a testament to teamwork and resilience. Entering the Mercer County Championship as the fifth seed, they upset the third, second and top seeds to claim victory in an all-prep school final — a rare achievement. Pitching was crucial, with freshman Matt Pustay '02 and Cam Van der Veer '99 allowing just seven hits to defeat top-seeded Lawrenceville. Pustay, the tournament MVP, pitched six and one-third innings, while Van der Veer secured the final outs.

Their momentum continued in the NJISAA Prep 'A' Championship, where Clay Nixon's '99 clutch two-run double and Jung Wi's '00 complete game sealed the title, finishing the season 18-7. The 1999 Falcons set a new standard for Peddie baseball, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire future teams.



2014 BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

The 2013-14 Falcons, led by Head Coach Joe Rulewich and Assistant Coach Matthew Roach, delivered a season that would redefine Peddie basketball, finishing with a 19-4 record and remaining undefeated at home.

Post-graduates Nate Hickman '14, Bryan Rivers '14 and George Langberg '14 led the team to a PSIT Championship, ending a 20-year drought and paving the way for three titles in four years. Their leadership and dedication to the team earned them the respect of their peers and the audience. Rivers secured a 61-59 victory over Wilbraham & Monson with a clutch floater in the lane with just 2.5 seconds left in the title game. Both Rivers and Hickman were named to the All-Tournament team, with Hickman earning MVP honors.

The Falcons also claimed the Mercer Invitational Tournament title, defeating Episcopal High School (Va.) 63-44 in the final. Everson Davis '15 was named Most Outstanding Player, with Rivers also making the All-Tournament team. Coach Rulewich earned his 100th career win during the season.

This well-balanced and relentless team laid the groundwork for future success, including Peddie's first MAPL Championship in 2017. Their dynamic play and unwavering commitment to excellence established a lasting legacy in Peddie basketball.

2009 GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM

The 2009 Peddie girls basketball team epitomized toughness and excellence, achieving a remarkable 24-2 record and securing the MAPL and NJISAA Prep 'A' Championships. This season stands as one of the greatest in Peddie girls basketball history.

The team was led by standout players Lexie Gerson '09 and Haley Peters '10, who reached the milestone of 1,000 career points in the same game during the NJISAA Prep 'A' semifinals against Lawrenceville — a first for the program — and the team's dominance was undeniable.

Coach Sean Casey earned his 300th career win that season, and Assistant Coach Eric Gustavson fostered a culture of accountability, hard work and camaraderie. "Things were always done the right way, and there was an expectation that we would all do things the right way," said Peters.

Despite their success, the team remained humble and focused, balancing seriousness with fun. Their commitment to the team's goals and their strong sense of unity was a testament to the culture Coach Casey built at Peddie.












Class Notes

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