

Overlaker

ALUMNI AND SCHOOL NEWS FOR THE OVERLAKE SCHOOL COMMUNITY **FALL 2025**

A photograph of a modern campus with a wooden building on the left and a white building on the right, surrounded by trees and a paved area. The image is overlaid with a brown banner at the top and a shower of colorful confetti (yellow, green, blue, orange) falling from the top. In the foreground, there are some plants and a large rock.

Cause for
Celebration!

Overlaker

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FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

It's time to celebrate!

Dear Overlake Community,

As I look back on this past year, I'm struck by how much there is to celebrate, and how deeply that spirit of celebration is woven into the pages that follow. This issue captures something essential about Overlake: a community that honors where we've come from, invests boldly in where we're going, and never loses sight of the people who make it all possible.

You'll read about the major milestones we reached together, including the successful completion of our capital campaign, the hard and honest work of our reaccreditation, and the conclusion of a five-year strategic plan that has strengthened the foundation of this school in lasting ways. These efforts didn't happen overnight. They represent years of persistence, thoughtful stewardship, and a community willing to roll up its sleeves and do the work.

You'll also meet the newest members of our faculty and staff, each bringing fresh expertise and a genuine love for students. You'll see how our student broadcasters stepped behind the camera to tell our stories and how alumni across generations continue to carry the Overlake spirit into the world by building businesses, leading in science and technology, creating art, giving back, and living with curiosity and heart.

What stands out to me, through all these stories, is how often people describe Overlake as the place where they were truly seen, challenged, and supported. That combination of care paired with high expectations has long been part of the Overlake way. It's timeless. At the same time, we're a school that keeps evolving, always asking what our students need now and what will serve them well in the future.

As we enter our year of strategic bridges, we have the rare opportunity to pause, take stock, and align our next steps thoughtfully. This work respects our roots while also urging us forward. I'm grateful to be doing it alongside you.

Thank you for the trust you place in this school and for the countless ways you contribute to the life of this community. My hope is that, as you read, you feel the same joy and pride I do, because this magazine is, at its core, a celebration of all of us.

With appreciation,

Gretchen Warner
Head of School

Around the Nest



INTRODUCTION

Meet Dr. Debbie Bensadon, Our New Assistant Head of School for Inclusive Excellence

At seven years old, Debbie Bensadon and her family moved from Venezuela to Seattle, where her parents registered her for first grade. Bensadon didn't speak any English—in fact, hers was the only Spanish-speaking family in the entire school. The school attempted to place her in the special education program, and if not for the advocacy of her mother, who had previously lived in Seattle and spoke English, she may have stayed in that system for years.

Later in her life, she realized the impact this could have had on her life trajectory. Her mother's awareness of the system and insistence ensured that her placement matched her needs, and she learned English and was keeping up with her peers within four months. Bensadon eventually earned her MA in Modern Languages at the University of Arizona, her PhD in Hispanic Language and Literatures at the University of Pittsburgh and

taught Spanish language and literature courses at Eckerd College.

That early experience in Seattle taught Bensadon that institutional systems can fail students who don't fit the mold—a lesson that now drives her work identifying and dismantling barriers in school practices that impact curriculum, programming, and school culture. As the new Assistant Head of School for Inclusive Excellence, her role oversees the Experiential Education program, Information and Literacy, and inclusive practices. In other words, she examines the frameworks our students learn within, identifying areas of opportunity in both curriculum and day-to-day practices for students to become planning-forward individuals, build self-study habits, and increase their executive functioning skills and strategies.

Bensadon is working in a faculty and staff-facing role, equipping our educators with the tools to help our

students graduate not just with a grasp of subject matter, but a deep understanding of the ethical complexities and nuances attached to their fields of study. For example, when encountering an engineering problem, our students will learn to think beyond the mechanics of the solution, which can probably already be solved by AI. Overlake students, however, will have

"When a student encounters a problem in their field of interest, whether it's politics or technology or medicine, I'd love for them to already have a framework that's thinking about the ethical and inclusive complexities."

the skills to think critically and develop solutions that account for complexity, and therefore serve a broader audience and purpose. They will be adept at asking the question, "How am I reflecting a responsibility to the other humans on the planet?"

Bensadon's work is like a bridge between the many islands at Overlake. In most schools, academics operate independently from extracurriculars and experiential education, which operate separately from health and wellness, which operates separately from Information Literacy, which operates separately from student identity and Culturally Responsive Practices. Her job? To find and fill in these gaps in our system so they begin to connect and work together for our students. Her goal? For all students to leave Overlake as curious, thoughtful problem solvers, equipped with robust sets of skills to question, reimagine, and improve the systems they encounter.

For Bensadon, success means our programs, systems, and structures are inclusive and that students, families, and employees have the resources and tools they need to be successful.

A TIME-HONORED OVERLAKE TRADITION

Celebrating Our Senior Student Athletes

At Overlake, Athletics Senior Nights are more than a ceremony. With each sports season, we set aside time to recognize our senior players, honoring not only their athletic achievements but also the leadership and camaraderie they've brought to their teams throughout their years here. These special evenings are heartfelt celebrations of commitment, community, and the lasting impact our student-athletes have on our program and their peers.

"Some of these seniors have played a specific sport at Overlake since fifth grade, while others may have started playing in the Upper School," explains Athletic Director John Wiley. "Either way, the impact they made in addition to the friendships they will take with them is evident as soon as the head coach starts speaking about them in front of their teammates, friends, and family."

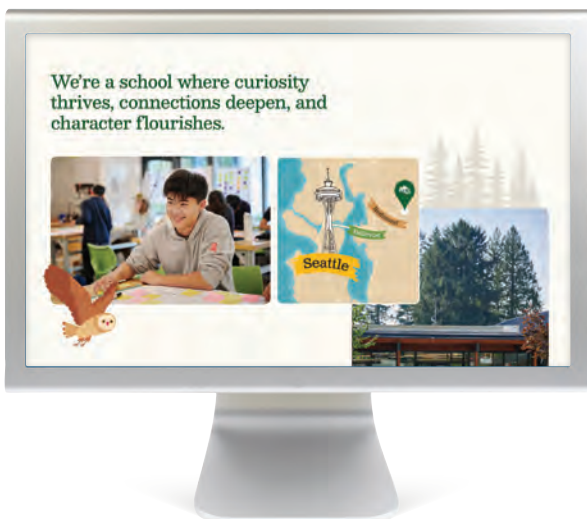
These evenings are marked by meaningful traditions. "Some coaches hold banquets; others produce extensive keepsake programs complete with little league photos side-by-side with their varsity photos. However they celebrate, each coach speaks with gratitude, respect, and a little humor," recalls Wiley. Additionally, many teachers, advisors, and other community members come out to Senior Nights to cheer on their students, showing their support for the skills, talents, and passion of their students outside the classroom. For many student-athletes, seeing their friends, families, and teachers rally around them on Senior Night is the highlight of their athletic career at Overlake!

Of course, the celebrations wouldn't be complete without plenty of hugs, flowers, speeches from teammates, group photos, and the shared knowledge that these moments will be



remembered long after the season ends. Senior Night is not a farewell — it's a recognition of the legacy these students leave behind, and a celebration of what lies ahead for our Seniors.

Go Owls!



REDESIGNING OUR NEST

A New Website for Overlake

Did you know there have been seven websites in the School's history, with the first one dating back to 1998? In fact, a small group of Upper School students developed and designed the first one.



"I think I was recruited to work on it," recalls Matthew Johnson ('98). "I was also a member of the Student Tech Team (STT) like Nathaniel Dirksen ('98) and Bailey Renner ('99), and we were also doing a lot of the basic tech support stuff for teachers around the school, so this was in line with that."

Johnson credits learning HTML during Project Week and over the summer months, building a small website. "Websites weren't very understood by people yet but were becoming more important. It was nice to feel that I'd earned faculty/staff trust to that level."

Johnson, along with classmates Dirksen and Renner were all part of the creation of the first website. And now, after 8 years since the last redesign, the School is reimagining yet again. But redesigning a website is more than moving around content and redefining the website architecture, it is recreating Overlake's first impression. "We want people to feel the joy, to know what makes us different, and to experience the authentic Overlake vibe through our website," explains Gretchen Warner, Head of School.

The impetus to redesign Overlake.org was born out of the School's last strategic plan, under the Institutional Identity pillar, which identified the need for refinement and clarification of Overlake's image and message to the greater community.

"As we developed our mission and first-ever vision statements under this work, we saw an opportunity to deepen our identity," explains Susan Messier, Director of Communications & Marketing. "By articulating who we are, and the value and impact of an Overlake education on our website for prospective families and employees to see, we are aligning what we do and what we say we do."

The new website will be unveiled in early December.



Number of subpages on Overlake's website in 1998.



Number of subpages on Overlake's website today.

The work to redo hundreds of web pages is no small feat. To put it into a visual perspective, take a look at the above radial tree graphs. The root Overlake website is in the center, with the various subpages within the site surrounding. As the website has grown over the years, it has become much more complex. The top graph represents our first website in 1998, with the bottom graph looking at our current site.

(Graphs taken from The Wayback Machine at web.archive.org)



FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE SIDELINES

Student Broadcasters Go Live

This summer, a new collaboration between the Arts and Athletics departments was born. After years of the Athletic Department broadcasting games through the NFHS Network with broadcasters Mike Davidson (Middle School Head) and John Wiley (Athletic Director), the Athletics Department was ready to take it to the



Chris Schwalm

next level. Video production teacher Chris Schwalm and Associate Athletic Director Mike Fine hatched a plan to place students themselves behind cameras to share school events. “We are collaborating with the Athletic Department to provide students with live multi-camera production streaming opportunities as part of a bigger endeavor to support live-to-stream or live-to-tape coverage of other school events — such as live-to-tape archival recordings of music concerts and theater performances,” says Schwalm.

The project will allow students to be front and center, sharing school events, giving them leadership opportunities, hands-on practice with live broadcast equipment, and newsroom experience. For this year, Schwalm and Fine have identified one indoor sporting event per season with the long-term goal for expansion into live-to-tape archival recordings of music and theater performances, a graduation ceremony live-stream, and even red-carpet-style multi-cams for campus events!

The first production was a livestream of the “Dig for a Cure” volleyball game supporting the Hydrocephalus Association, when our Owl family packed the gym to fundraise and cheer on our volleyball squad. Overseen by Schwalm, a crew of five students worked to simulate a professional production team, managing multiple cameras and broadcasting equipment to share the game with viewers online. Student announcer Virginia Lee (’27) worked with co-announcer Mike Davidson to provide commentary of the game on-air, demonstrating the kind of real-world learning experiences

that prepare our students for future careers in media and communications.

And it’s not just our Video Production class getting involved — for future student productions, students in the Graphic Design class will have the opportunity to participate by creating logos, graphics, and other assets to support the production.

A priority for Fine is that there are no barriers for viewers to watch their athletes play. Whether the game is over a holiday or families are tuning in from a different country, “we want to be able to show them all the action,” he says. This includes upping the quality of the current, automated broadcasts to manual tracking of the games, with students behind the camera zooming in on the action as it happens. “By the second or third sets of the volleyball match, they were on fire,” Fine recalls. “The more kids we can get doing this, the more events we can do and put that personal touch on. The sky’s the limit!”

WELCOME TO OVERLAKE!

Introducing Our Newest Faculty and Staff Members



Kristal Balboa
CASHIER & OPERATIONS ASSISTANT

Kristal Balboa joins the food services team after most recently working with Nintendo of America as a Switch Specialist assisting consumers with technical issues related to the popular gaming system. Our students will surely appreciate talking Switch gaming with her at the cafeteria check out!



Amman Berhe
SUPPORT LEAD

As Support Lead in the IT department, Amman Berhe is the go-to for anyone (or any space) on campus with a tech issue. He is a friendly and innovative problem-solver and has already brought more efficiency and order to our Information Literacy & Technology department! As a former production manager, Berhe brings with him years of quality-assurance practices and inventory management.



Georgia Brown
ADMISSIONS COORDINATOR

Georgia Brown joins the Overlake Admissions team as our new Admissions Coordinator. She is a recent graduate of the University of Washington's Jackson School of International Studies and minored in French. Brown's experience includes studying abroad at the Copenhagen Business School and working as an Admissions Representative at UW, where she advised prospective students and supported admissions counselors.



Dr. Debbie Bensadon
ASSISTANT HEAD FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Dr. Debbie Bensadon joins Overlake as the first Assistant Head for Inclusive Excellence. She brings extensive experience in strategic leadership and community engagement, and will oversee various school programs, including identity and affinity programs, experiential education, and health and wellness initiatives. Dr. Bensadon is originally a Spanish teacher and most recently the Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at Lakeside School.

You can read more about Dr. Bensadon's new role on page 2.



Jan Berlin
PART-TIME SPORTS BUS DRIVER

Jan Berlin joins our transportation team as a sports bus driver. With specialized experience in the King County Metro Transit Control Center, Berlin brings with her a deep understanding of our region's transit systems. We're looking forward to having Berlin and her 32 years of transit experience on our team, for our teams!



Hanani Dube
US FRENCH TEACHER

Hanani Dube is returning to Overlake full-time this year after helping as a substitute in the World Languages department last school year. Dube will teach French to our Upper School students. She most recently taught French at Alliance Francaise de Harare in Zimbabwe, as well as serving as an assistant lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe.



Paul Faeh

US SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER

Paul Faeh is the newest addition to the Social Studies Department and will teach in the Upper School. After 18 years at Hinsdale South High School in Darien, Illinois, Faeh comes to Overlake with extensive experience and numerous awards, including the school's Teacher of the Year and a nomination for Illinois State Teacher of the Year. Faeh has also scored AP tests since 2001, including serving in leadership roles and setting scoring standards for other graders.



Brittany Flajole

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Filling Overlake's inaugural role of Director of Human Resources is Brittany Flajole. With 10+ years of experience in HR (most recently as Senior VP of People at Thrive Communities) Flajole brings both passion and expertise to everything she does. She is working closely with school leadership to develop inclusive policies, streamline our hiring practices, and build a collaborative environment for all Overlake employees.

John Gallegos

PART TIME BUS DRIVER

John Gallegos brings his extensive driving experience to the transportation team as he shuttles our students to and from school this year. Gallegos most recently worked at Lake Washington School District as a driver for 19 years. He's also worked at Northshore School District as a para-educator substitute and cafeteria monitor.



Chap Grubb

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Chap Grubb ('10) returns to Overlake as our Experiential Education Program Coordinator! As a longtime lover of the outdoors, Grubb will help champion Overlake's commitment to experiential education by coordinating and leading student opportunities, including Project Week, Service Days, outdoor trips, and Senior Projects. We're so glad to have Grubb bring his positivity and leadership skills back to Overlake!



Mark Hartman

PART TIME BUS DRIVER

Mark Hartman is one of the new faces behind the wheel this year as he brings his extensive driving experience to Overlake. Hartman previously worked for King County Metro for 36 years. When not driving a bus, Hartman is a part-time player assistant at Echo Falls Golf Club.



Rose Ju

DEVELOPMENT DATA MANAGER

Rose Ju joins Overlake as the new Development Data Manager and will support the team with data analysis, accuracy, and streamlined processes. Ju's experience in marketing, development, and data science complement our Development team and we're excited to bring her expertise to our campus! Most recently, Ju has worked at Kin On as a Marketing & Annual Giving Coordinator, and previously a marketing specialist at International Community Health Services.



Hayley Knowlton

MS ENGLISH TEACHER

Welcome Hayley Knowlton to Overlake's English Department. This past school year, she worked in the Issaquah School District as a substitute teacher after earning her Master in Teaching from Seattle University. Previously, she was a student intern at Interlake High School where she supported students and teachers and designed coursework for 9th and 10th graders. With a background in environmental studies and literature, Knowlton brings a valuable perspective to our campus!



Jodi Kusak
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT

Jodi Kusak joins the Development team as the Assistant Director. Prior to Overlake, Kusak worked at her child's school volunteering with the PTA's annual fund and serving as the chair of the campaign. She has also worked as a board member and chair for other various school events, such as a walk-a-thon and teacher appreciation week.



Rex Moye
MAINTENANCE TECH

Rounding out our maintenance team this year is Rex Moye, an experienced groundskeeper. Moye comes to us from The Plateau Club in Sammamish and has also worked for the City of Issaquah Parks Department and Allied Universal. We're happy to have him on our top-notch maintenance team!



Kendi Quidachay
MS MATH TEACHER

The Overlake Math Department welcomes Kendi Quidachay as a new Middle School math teacher. After teaching for several years in the Comal Independent School District in New Braunfels, Texas, Quidachay was elevated to a Campus Instructional Coach where she supported teachers in their instructional strategies. We're happy to have Quidachay and her expertise on our instructional team!



**Lalo Marroquin
Ledezma**
DISHWASHER

Lalo Marroquin Ledezma joins Overlake with the food services team after working for a moving company. We're lucky to have him join us after a recommendation from fellow food services team member India Jennings! When not helping the team in the Campus Center, you will find Ledezma behind a pool cue or video game controller!



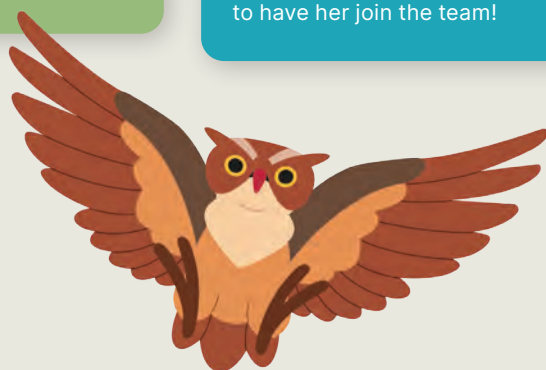
**Denia Maldonado
Olivas**
US ENGLISH TEACHER

Joining our Upper School English Department is Denia Maldonado Olivas. A student-centered, adaptable teammate, Maldonado Olivas most recently taught in Glendale, Arizona, at Glenview College Prep High School, and she is a current bookseller at Barnes & Noble. She is experienced in creative, multi-modal teaching strategies, bringing digital media into the classroom alongside traditional materials. We're excited to have her join the team!



Taylor Steck
LEARNING SPECIALIST

Taylor Steck joins Overlake as a Learning Specialist. After graduating with a master's in English from Clemson University, Steck worked in the University of Washington's Student-Athlete Academic Services, providing academic coaching to student-athletes. She will serve as an advocate for students, helping them identify any additional academic supports they may need.



Jimmy Yamauchi
BUS DRIVER

Jimmy Yamauchi joins Overlake as a full-time bus driver with most recent driving experience transporting seniors residing at Fairwinds Brittany Park, as well as students at Cedar Park Christian School. Prior to his driving gigs, Yamauchi worked at GTE/Verizon for 16 years.

SPECIAL THANKS

Celebrating Faculty and Staff Milestones



30 Years

John Wiley, Erin Gabriel



25 Years

Mireille Machefert



20 Years

Mollie Montgomery,
Rebecca Moore



15 Years

Ben Castro, Jun Castro,
Tina Proctor



10 Years

Pictured left to right: Jay Heath, Greg Morse, Bill Neil,
Janet Jones, Laura Triebold

Not pictured: Kate Asgari, Dwayne Scholten



5 Years

Pictured left to right: Samantha Hillyer, Krishna Davda, Allison
Gillman, Raheleh Hassanisadi, Katie Hill, Connor Middleton

Not pictured: Jennifer Friend, Regina Quiban



Retirement

Mireille Machefert, 25 years
Denise Renno, 22 years
Michael Krumbholz, 17 years
Ernesto Sanchez, 9 years
Pam Tietje, 7 years





Cause for Celebration!

There's always something worth celebrating," says Head of School Gretchen Warner. "Closing out my first year at Overlake in the midst of such meaningful milestones feels both humbling and energizing. This year has given me the chance to understand this community more deeply — its long-held values, its commitments, and the thoughtful work that has been underway for years."

She's reflecting on the completion of the eight-year *Doors to Discovery* capital campaign, the five-year *Coming Together* strategic plan, and the multi-year NWAIS re-accreditation.

"What drew me to Overlake is the School's intentional approach to learning and growth," Warner continues. "To see the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, and families so engaged in strategic, legacy-building efforts speaks to the strength and health of this institution."

These achievements position the School for meaningful progress in the years ahead. "Each of these initiatives sets us up for continued success and ensures we remain focused on what matters most — doing what is best for our students," she adds.



Celebrating a Successful Capital Campaign

500+

DONORS TO THE
DOORS TO DISCOVERY CAMPAIGN

More than eight years ago, Overlake embarked on its most ambitious capital campaign which raised over \$29 million, more than all of the School's previous capital campaigns combined. The campaign supported three major School priorities; a new 30,000-square-foot Whitten Math & Sciences Center, expanded financial aid endowment to enable the School to meet 100% of demonstrated need for families, and the new 8,000-square-foot Student & Community Center.

"It is astounding to see the generosity that poured forward from our more than 500 donors," beams Brisen Brady, Director of Development. "Our community came together to support the campaign in a way we have never seen in Overlake's history!"

"I feel like we've invested in the next generation of growth for the School," explains Tanya Vail, parent to alums Alanna ('22) and Avery ('24), and Chair of the Capital Campaign Steering Committee from 2017-2023, a group of staff and volunteers who met weekly throughout the duration of the campaign, even during COVID lockdown. "A lot of people helped. It was really a collaborative team effort. I am particularly grateful to those that fit this effort around their own work. I was always inspired seeing a volunteer join us on a Teams meeting from a phone room at their job: it shows how much people care. For me, failure was also never an option, so we kept moving forward and aiming for milestones," says Vail.

Beyond building brick and mortar infrastructure in this campaign, *Doors to Discovery* also strengthened a foundational part of Overlake's mission and vision, which is growing the School's financial aid endowment. With more than \$8 million in financial aid endowment now available, families are provided 100% of their demonstrated need to ensure a family's income is not a barrier to an Overlake education.

"We didn't just open doors, we blew them wide open," exclaims Andrea Dancs, Chair of the Capital Campaign Steering Committee from 2023-2025, and parent to alum Olivia ('23) and current junior Samantha ('27). "Thanks to this community, the door to innovation is open with the Whitten Math & Sciences Center.



THE NEW STUDENT & COMMUNITY CENTER IS THE FIRST FULLY ELECTRIC BUILDING ON CAMPUS



Offering new courses, additional sections, an Idea Lab, and a home to robotics, anything is possible. The door to access is open with the tripling of our financial aid endowment, ensuring that more families — now and for generations to come — can be part of this community. The door to connection and collaboration is now open with the New Student & Community Center. A place where students, faculty, staff, and families can come together to exchange ideas, deepen relationships, and celebrate milestones.”

“Our community came together to support the campaign in a way we have never seen in Overlake’s history!”

BRISEN BRADY, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The success of this capital campaign can be immediately seen with the creation of two new buildings that serve as a gateway to the School. And success is also felt over time, with future families joining our community without barriers to affording their student’s education. Either today or in the future, success is always possible when people come together.

Clockwise from top: Ribbon cutting of the new Student & Community Center; inside Bernier McCaw Hall in the Student & Community Center; beam signing for placement inside Whitten Math & Sciences Center

164

520W SOLAR PANELS INSTALLED ON THE WHITTEN MATH & SCIENCES CENTER, TOTALING 85.28KW OF ENERGY

3x

FINANCIAL AID ENDOWMENT FUNDS RAISED





Coming Together, a Successful Strategic Plan Concludes

Head of School Gretchen Warner's first year at Overlake was the final year of the School's five-year strategic plan, which has been described as having some "really big, audacious goals," as reflected by Head of Operations & Research, Jay Heath. Heath helped guide the final year of the Plan, resulting in major foundational improvements to the organization.

Coming Together focused efforts along four pillars of work: Well-being, Attract & Retain, Diversity & Inclusion, and Institutional Identity. Each pillar having measured success in moving the School forward in tangible ways.

"We entered well-being in our community, focused on bringing forward a human resources department to attract and retain the best talent, we took a deep focus in our institutional identity creating the School's new mission and first-ever vision statement, and we continued the important work of diversity and inclusion by bringing it into an overarching school-wide strategic pillar," says Heath. "By getting everybody on the same page about those four pillars we've now institutionalized them where there are people and structures who are driving them forward."

How to continue to improve moving forward outside of a formal strategic plan has been the focus as *Coming Together* was wrapping up. By leveraging the work of strategic bridges this year, the School will iterate and evolve while laying the groundwork for other strategic planning cycles in the future.



Strategic Bridges Q&A

At the end of the 2024-25 school year, Overlake successfully wrapped up the *Coming Together* strategic plan, launched in 2020. After five years of focused progress, and following the completion of the *Doors to Discovery* campaign, a successful reaccreditation, and the arrival of a new Head of School, Overlake now finds itself at a natural point of reflection and transition.

So what comes next?

We sat down with our Head Owl to talk about the importance of this in-between moment and what the community can expect in the year ahead.

Q: What is a Strategic Bridge?

GW: Think of a Strategic Bridge as a bridge between two long-term planning cycles. We just completed a five-year plan and several other major initiatives, and now we have the opportunity to pause—to reflect on what we've accomplished, celebrate our successes, and take stock of what's still ahead.



My Belief: the Purpose of School

*If a student can do advanced math,
speak three languages,
or receive top grades;
but can't manage their emotions,
practice conflict resolution,
or handle stress,
none of that other stuff
is really going to matter.*

- Unknown



JOY LOVE

Rather than rushing into a brand-new, multi-year plan, we're seizing this moment to focus on a handful of unfinished priorities, test ideas, and set the stage for our next chapter of visioning. In short, a Strategic Bridge keeps our momentum going while giving us the flexibility to learn, adjust, and prepare for the future.

Q: Why choose a bridge instead of starting another traditional strategic plan right away?

GW: Our reaccreditation process and conversations across campus made it clear that there are still key areas from the last plan that need more attention.

These include:

- Clarifying and communicating our institutional identity
- Strengthening systems of equity and inclusion
- Deepening our understanding of student well-being

A bridge—lasting 12-18 months—gives us the chance to zero in on these priorities in an intentional, focused way before launching a full new cycle of long-term planning. It's an innovative

way to honor what we've accomplished while ensuring we're ready for what's next.

Q: Can you share an example of a focus area and why it matters?

GW: One recommendation from our reaccreditation was to examine the perceived tension between academic achievement and wellness in our student culture. We already collect a great deal of data as a school, but the next step is to pause and study it—along with gathering more—to better understand the authentic student experience.

How do we measure wellness in ways that reflect reality, not just assumptions? How do we balance ambition with well-being? By asking these questions with curiosity and openness, we can uncover the truths that will help our community thrive. That's one of the great strengths of a bridge: it allows us to move forward with fresh eyes and open minds.

Q: How will the Overlake community be involved in a Strategic Bridge?

GW: This isn't just an administrative exercise—it's a community effort. Everyone has a role to play:

- Trustees will provide big-picture guidance and approve frameworks that keep us aligned with our mission.
- Faculty and staff will test ideas, give feedback from classrooms and programs, and help us refine approaches in real time.
- Students will share their voices through discussions, advisory and affinity groups, and feedback loops.
- Families will be invited into conversations and surveys, sharing perspectives and partnering with us on student well-being and inclusion.

Our identity, our balance between achievement and wellness, and our vision for inclusion will only grow stronger if every part of the Overlake community helps shape them. That collective spirit is what makes these bridges so exciting.

Successfully Achieving NWAIS Reaccreditation

“Having a team of outside experts take a deep dive into our practices, seeing what aligns with our mission, and what might need further refinement, is a healthy way to move the School forward into the next several years.”

GRETCHEN WARNER
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Overlake was recently acknowledged and reaffirmed for living its mission by the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS) and its successful reaccreditation process. “Having a team of outside experts, who work at other independent schools, take a deep dive into our practices, seeing what aligns with our mission, and what might need further refinement, is a healthy way to move the School forward into the next several years,” explains Head of School, Gretchen Warner.

The work to prepare for reaccreditation began in the 2023-24 school year as all faculty and staff started the creation of the self-study report. This document serves as an overarching look at how the School is performing not only with its academic program, but its facilities, culture, and mission. It was provided to NWAIS in its final form in December 2024. The following spring, a team of reaccreditation members visited the campus for three days for observation and to make their final report with recommendations and commendations.

“Over and over, I heard from our visiting team how open and welcoming they felt by our community. How it is apparent to them that the work we do is laser focused in support and partnership with our students. They noted that we are not afraid to roll up our sleeves and work on moving the school forward, and that we have a roadmap for how we are doing that work,” explains Warner.

To that end, the reaccreditation visiting team made the following commendations and recommendations:

Commendations

Culture of Care: The school fosters a supportive and dynamic educational environment, with faculty, staff, and leadership deeply committed to student well-being and success. Its evolving “culture of caring” nurtures relationships, metacognition, and student agency, strengthening the fabric of the community.

Exemplary Self-Study: The self-study report demonstrates meaningful reflection and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Strategic Governance: The Board of Trustees has renewed its focus on forward-looking, strategic governance that ensures the school’s long-term vitality.

Data-Informed Practice: The school thoughtfully gathers, reflects upon, and communicates longitudinal data, enhancing understanding of the experiences of all constituents.

Thoughtful Student Experience: Students benefit from an exceptional range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities — including advanced academics, Project Week, the Arts, clubs, and Experiential Education — that embody the excellence of the school.

Recommendations

Student Well-Being: Re-examine the strategic pillar on well-being to ensure alignment between the school's vision of whole-student development and the pressures of an achievement-oriented culture. Take deliberate steps to strengthen student balance, health, and resilience.

Identity & Inclusion: Reassess progress on the strategic pillars of Institutional Identity and Inclusion. Clarify aspirations, define a focused strategy, and secure resources to achieve meaningful and sustainable progress.

Safety & Security: Conduct a comprehensive audit of campus safety and security. Implement improvements that enhance student safety while preserving the openness and natural beauty of the 75-acre campus.

"We are so fortunate to have these thoughtful insights from the reaccreditation visiting team," says Warner. "They allow us to put strategies in place to address these recommendations." For example, the School will be working with school-focused safety firms to conduct a study this year on campus. Also, the addition of the inaugural Assistant Head for Inclusive Excellence to the community ensures focused attention to the important and on-going work in inclusion and well-being. *(editor's note: meet Overlake's Assistant Head for Inclusive Excellence on page 2)*

“Over and over, I heard from our visiting team how open and welcoming they felt by our community. How it is apparent to them that the work we do is laser focused in support and partnership with our students.”

GRETCHEN WARNER
HEAD OF SCHOOL



Alumni News



Celebrating Connection in Our Alumni Community

JENNI BALDWIN, DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

I am often asked what my favorite part of my job is, and the answer is simple — relationships. Reconnecting with my former students and meeting alumni who are new to my world, is one of the greatest joys of being your Director of Alumni Engagement. Watching our Owls take flight — running businesses, giving back to their communities, leading in their fields, and creating art (sometimes the kind you can eat!) — fills me with pride. Our alumni are the living, walking proof of how an Overlake education shapes lives by fostering compassion, integrity, initiative, and, above all, curiosity. Read through the alumni section to catch in-depth spotlights on incredible alumni leaders, learn about our alumni program and its growth, and catch up on Owl the alumni news in Class Notes.

It's an honor to celebrate our incredible alumni community every day, and this season, I invite you to join in a chorus of cheerful hoots as we celebrate connection, growth, and Owl the ways you make Overlake proud.



Scan the QR code to visit our Alumni page on the new Overlake website!

Celebrating Alumni Connections: Alumni Events & Opportunities for Connection

There's nothing quite like returning to the Nest! Whether you're mentoring seniors for their Senior Projects, supporting clubs, joining outdoor education adventures, inviting students to intern at your organization, hosting students for service day, presenting as a speaker, or connecting at alumni-student networking events, you help students see the lifelong impact of being an Owl. Our students are eager to meet you — and I'd love to help make that happen! Complete the Alumni Interest Form or email alumni@overlake.org to get involved.

Celebrating Alumni Voice: Alumni Feedback and Program Growth

This June, Overlake's all-alumni survey invited feedback about what keeps our alumni connected to Overlake and how an Overlake education continues to shape alumni paths beyond graduation. With 49 class years represented and hundreds of responses, we're thrilled by your participation — thank you!

Our alumni program is spreading its wings in big ways:

- **More intentional communication:** The *Owls in the Wild* regular newsletter is packed with alumni news and exclusive Owl offerings. Not receiving the newsletter? Be sure to update your contact info with the QR code at left. Additionally, a reunion post card save the date, two videos, and dozens of emails landed in your virtual and physical mailboxes.
- **Social media growth:** A staggering 300% increase in Instagram followers and a 150% boost in LinkedIn Alumni Group members showed we're really soaring online!
- **New recognition:** Our new 10 Under 10 program celebrates standout young alumni for their leadership, education, and service.



- **Alumni events season was poppin':** Fourteen new alumni events from October 2024 to May 2025, including the 2025 All-Class Reunion with over 350 guests, gave more opportunities to connect in real life.
- **A refreshed identity:** A new alumni seal, fresh gear, and updated branding that reflects our alumni of today — join the next alumni event to get your alumni-branded merch!
- **A new horizon of alumni generosity:** 100% Alumni Board participation in the 2024-25 Overlake Fund, 86% participation in the 2025 Senior Class Giving campaign (with a 100% alumni match!), and a 170% increase in overall alumni giving, show you are "Owl in for Overlake!" Stay tuned for our first Owls Give Big day coming in 2026!

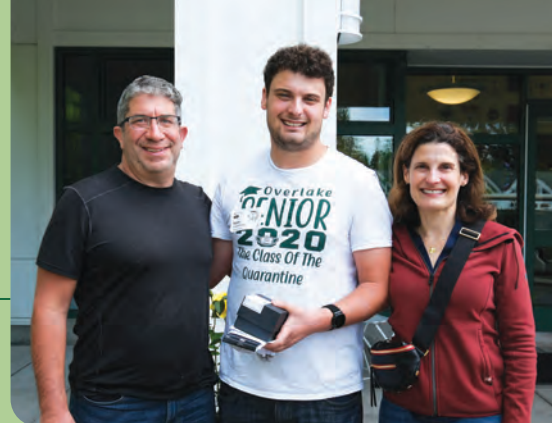
Continuing to Connect: One Owl at a Time

My favorite way to connect with alumni is through meaningful one-one or small group interactions — just like those classic Overlake small class sizes and office hours that made learning feel personal and powerful! Last year alone, 50 alumni met me for coffee, 100+ joined virtual meetings or chats, over 1,000 reached out through social media, and 40+ Owls flew back to campus for a visit or tour. Let's keep those numbers soaring!

I hope you will attend a virtual or in-person alumni event soon and stay connected with me on social media. If you find yourself near campus, swoop by for a visit! Drop me a note at alumni@overlake.org and I'll be sure to roll out the welcome mat (and reach out to any faculty or staff you'd like to see while you're here).

I look forward to deepening my connections with so many of you, meeting even more new faces in the year ahead, and continuing to create meaningful ways for you to engage — with each other, with our students and faculty, and with the broader Overlake community.

Most of all, thank you to every alum who has attended an event, volunteered, sent a note, shared a story, supported a campaign, or found a way to connect and/or give back. Our alumni program is getting wings and soaring to new heights...and that's certainly something to celebrate with a hoot and a holler!



Upcoming Events

Attending an alumni event is a great way to reconnect with classmates, visit favorite faculty, staff, advisors, and coaches, and make new memories. Check out these upcoming gatherings:

Welcome Back to the Nest: Alumni Seahawks Watch Party THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2025

Drop by the new Student & Community Center between 5:00-8:30 p.m. for pizza, cookie decorating, and football fun! Sport your Seahawks gear, bring the family, and RSVP to join this all-ages event.

Grads Return THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026

Calling all recent grads! Join us on campus from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. for our annual Grads Return program to share your wisdom with our current Upper School students. Then, fly on over to Flatstick in Redmond from 2:00-5:00 p.m. for appetizers and mini golf. Faculty and staff will pop by to join the fun as classes wrap for the day. Please register to let us know you're coming.

All-Class Reunion SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2026

Join us on campus from 4:30-7:30 p.m. for the second annual All-Class Reunion. An evening of festivities you won't want to miss: food, games, campus tours, a photobooth, and milestone celebrations for our classes ending in 1s and 6's. Save the date to fly back to the Nest for a hootin' good time!



Alumni event
registration

Champions of Connection

Celebrating Overlake's alumni leaders

The Overlake Alumni Board supports the school's mission through leadership, service, and connection within the alumni community. Composed of dedicated graduates spanning multiple decades, the board serves as a bridge between Overlake and its alumni, ensuring that the values of curiosity, integrity, and inclusion continue to thrive well beyond the classroom. Through mentorship, event planning, and active engagement, board members strengthen the bonds between alumni, current students, and faculty. Whether coordinating reunions, mentoring recent graduates, or advising on alumni programs, our board members embody Overlake's enduring green and gold spirit—one that values lifelong learning, community, and giving back. We celebrate our incredible Alumni Board members and thank them for their service and continued dedication to Overlake.



**Jessica Klein
DiStefano ('95)**

ALUMNI BOARD PRESIDENT

Serving on the Alumni Board since 2020, Jessica has been our fearless Alumni Board President since 2024. What she loves most about being on the board is connecting with alumni from all classes and hearing how Overlake has impacted their lives.

Jessica remembers her own Overlake experience as one deeply rooted in community—the respectful relationships between students, teachers, and staff, a shared thirst for learning and trailblazing new adventures, and a curriculum that taught essential self-advocacy and communication skills. “Self-advocacy helps me stay in the driver’s seat in my own life,” shares Jessica.

Today, she enjoys seeing the school through the dual lens of alum and parent to seventh grader Henry. When she’s not serving on the Alumni Board or volunteering as a parent, Jessica owns and runs Hobart Farms Nursery, a garden center in Maple Valley, and works as an actress on local film and commercial sets alongside her husband and kids.



**Anshuman
Srivastava ('00)**

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER

Serving on the board since 2017, Anshuman is also an Overlake parent of seventh grader Ananya. “Overlake has been instrumental in my growth, providing the supportive environment that helped me become more confident in myself,” he shares. “Overlake is where I learned how to write and communicate, and it fostered my curiosity to learn and stretch myself, which has impacted my professional career.”

After earning his BSE/MSE in computer science at the University of Pennsylvania, Anshuman returned to the Woodinville area. A 20-year veteran in the tech field, he’s currently Senior Director of Engineering at Axon, where he leads cloud and firmware teams expanding products into new markets like retail and healthcare. In his free time, Anshuman loves spending time with family, reading fantasy or history books, and playing the occasional PS5 game.



Samantha Hillyer ('01)

**ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER;
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND
WELLNESS**

After returning to Seattle post-med school, Sam joined the Alumni Board, eager to give back to the school that helped prepare her for success. As Overlake's Director of Health and Wellness, she finds joy in coming to work on the beautiful campus each day.

Hired during the COVID lockdown to help reopen the school safely, Sam now oversees daily health operations and leads the Health and Wellness Department. Nicknamed "Dr. Chan" as a student for her determination to pursue medicine, she's living out that moniker today.

When reflecting on her Overlake years, Sam recalls her relationships most fondly — the small-school atmosphere that fostered close bonds with classmates and teachers alike. "Not only did the science classes inspire me," she says, "but my senior project also provided a springboard for my career through an internship at a hospital's pathology department."



Matt Bellamy ('00)

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER

Matt joined the board in 2023 to give back to an organization that gave him so much. "Overlake taught me how to think, not what to think, and to always remain rooted as a positive uplifting contributor to society," he shares. "I am forever grateful that Overlake instilled a sense of natural curiosity in me."

Some of Matt's favorite memories include spending time between classes with four of his best friends — Gabe, Paul, Bridge, and Chandler — who all lived on the same street and remain his closest friends today.

A longtime tech professional, Matt began as a backend engineer and now leads teams while holding 21 patents — a testament to his curiosity. Outside work, he enjoys football, working out, and indulging in his favorite comfort foods. "I have the same palate I did when I was six," he laughs. "My favorite foods are cereal and fair food — do the Puyallup!"



Sarah (Marsh) Tompkins ('05)

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER

Sarah lives in Bridle Trails, Bellevue, with her husband, Troy, and their Jack Russell Terrier, Russel Wilson. An accomplished and decorated rare disease patient advocate and person living with a rare disease herself, Sarah has undergone more than 50 stabilization and repair surgeries to make mobility and travel possible.

More gold than green, this Owl uses her love of fashion and glamour to further her advocacy work, serving on the Boards of Directors for Connective Strength and the NW Rare Disease Coalition. Her advocacy has taken her to the White House Rare Disease Forum and into research collaborations across the country. Sarah was also named Overlake's 2024-25 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient and even earned the title Ms. Wheelchair USA!



Kate Berry ('08)

**ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER;
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBER**

Kate joined the Alumni Board in 2019 and the Board of Trustees in 2024. "Overlake profoundly shaped who I am as a person," she shares. "Not only did I enter adulthood academically prepared, Overlake (and, particularly, my teachers) instilled a confidence in my own capabilities and resilience."

Her favorite memories include Project Week in Cambodia, JSA/debate tournaments, and unique history electives. After a decade on the East Coast, Kate returned to Seattle to pursue a legal career and now works in human rights law at a tech company.

When she's not working, Kate enjoys walks to the coffee shop and fire station with her toddler, searching for a Seattle bagel that rivals New York's, and attending book club with fellow alum Allison (Schoening) Rataezyk ('08).



Ryan AuYeung ('09)

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER

Ryan joined the board in 2022 after returning to the Pacific Northwest, eager to give back to an institution that helped prepare him for a global career in airline corporate strategy. From billion-dollar aircraft purchases to managing air service in geopolitically complex regions, Ryan credits Overlake's education and global outlook with shaping his approach to leadership.

Reflecting on his time as a student, Ryan notes how the early 2000s — marked by terrorism, war, and the 2008 election — combined with Overlake's commitment to thoughtful discussion left a lasting impression. "An institution's job is to give adolescents the skills and knowledge to navigate a future that we ourselves may not see, but our children will," he says. "I believe Overlake and its people understand and act to meet that responsibility."

Ryan works in corporate strategy for United Airlines, commuting between Seattle and Chicago. Outside work, he enjoys cooking, hiking, and reading history and geopolitics.



Chris Faulkner ('10)

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER

Serving since 2016, Chris joined the board shortly after returning from the East Coast. "Overlake's culture — open, accepting, and dedicated to pursuing excellence — made learning both cool and fun," he shares. "It didn't take long in the 'real world' for me to recognize what a unique community Overlake was, and that I wanted to be intentional about staying connected."

Chris remains close with his class of 2010 "bros," who, along with their partners, now serve as "Uncles and Aunties" in his young family's village. He works in the AI data space, analyzing model output, and when he finds time, plays rec soccer with alumni and keeps up his Overlake gym habit.



Jimena Sanchez Gallego ('12)

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER

Jimena serves on the Alumni Board to give back to a community that shaped who she is today. Moving to Seattle from Mexico City at 14 was challenging, but Overlake provided a fresh start. "Overlake taught me the importance of fostering curiosity and being a lifelong learner," she says.

She fondly recalls her senior Project Week cooking in the school cafeteria with former faculty member Lisa Orenstein: "It wasn't as fancy or adventurous as going abroad, but we had an absolute blast."

After Tufts University—where she triple-majored in international relations, public health, and French—Jimena built a career in social impact and health tech. Now Chief of Staff at a VC-backed dental-tech startup, she thrives in fast-paced, collaborative environments. Based in Brooklyn with her husband, Jimena's favorite pastime is exploring new restaurants as part of their Friday Shabbat tradition.



Colton Umberger ('14)

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER; ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS

Colton joined the board in 2024 to strengthen alumni engagement and community connections. Now in his eighth year coaching varsity lacrosse and third year on the Admissions team, he brings a deep passion for the school that shaped him. "Overlake is where I met my best friends and made some unbelievable memories," he says. "My hope in working here is that our current students can have the same opportunities I had."

After starting his career in software consulting, Colton followed his heart into education and now serves as Assistant Director of Admissions. Outside work, he loves golf, hiking with his dog Nash, and cheering on students from the sidelines of Field 1.



Lucie (Lundquist) Tompkins ('17)

ALUMNI BOARD MEMBER

Newcomer on the Alumni Board this year and owner of her own interior design company, Lucie Lundquist Design, Lucie launched her business after graduating from Texas Christian University. "Overlake encouraged me to participate in new things, from sports to theater, leadership opportunities, outdoor excursions, and even traveling to Europe with my Latin class," she shares.

Lucie credits Overlake's inclusive community for her confidence and willingness to say "yes" to new experiences—including saying "Yes!" to marrying her husband, John, this summer, with many Owls in attendance. Passionate about antiques and gardening, Lucie also helped plan our All-Class Reunion last spring and continues to bring her creativity and energy to the Alumni Board.



Celebrating a Life of Learning

**Greg Bamford ('92) named
2025-26 Distinguished Alumni
Award winner**

At Overlake, we don't just celebrate achievements—we celebrate the spirit of initiative and leadership, especially in our alumni community. Few embody that more than Greg Bamford ('92). His story is pure Overlake: curiosity, creativity, and community in action.

Each year, the Overlake Alumni Board selects a recipient for the Distinguished Alumni Award, launched in 2018 to honor those who exemplify The Overlake School's mission and values and who stand out as leaders in our alumni community. This year's honoree is not only an alum, but also a former faculty member, coach, Trustee, and lifelong supporter of Overlake.

Though Greg is now a nationally recognized education leader, his Overlake journey began in 1988 as an incoming ninth grader—"smart but underperforming," as he recalls—who was admitted on academic probation. "Overlake is the first place where I was really challenged," he says.

And challenged he was. In Bill (Army) Armstrong's English 9 course, Greg misunderstood the directions for the first assignment and wrote an 11-paragraph paper instead of 11 sentences on *The Lord of the Flies*. "It was a happy accident because I learned how to write a paper. It's like I got lost on the 5K track and wound up running a marathon by accident."

Despite that rocky start, Greg flourished. "I loved it all," he says. "I couldn't say one single thing I loved most about being a student because I truly loved it all." What stands out most are the relationships: "I loved being seen and challenged by my teachers—and really consistently. I responded well to that challenge."

Greg threw himself into every opportunity. Free blocks in the library led him to drama after a teacher pulled him into a play because "he needed a really loud person, and [Greg] was really loud." In 1990, Greg played on Overlake's first lacrosse team coached by faculty member Bob Bristol, reflecting "though I didn't play well, I loved that Overlake encouraged me to give new things a try." Greg and a friend started a debate team that competed at tournaments simply because they convinced their teacher to take them to competitions. Even the summer of junior year, Greg and friends launched an independent Overlake newspaper they printed at Kinko's. "Overlake really taught me initiative. I learned to put things out in the world and to try things. And those chances shaped me and my life to come."

By senior year, Greg realized he might want to teach. In Jill Anthony's art history class, she encouraged him to consider education as a career. That idea stuck through Greg's undergrad at Georgetown and a postgrad year spent working with AmeriCorps. "I was running a food bank and knew I wanted to do something in service to others," he recalls. Seeking advice, he turned to Lynn Pierle, an Overlake English teacher and Upper School Head. Her suggestion: try substitute teaching.

Greg became a highly requested sub in the late 1990s, working almost daily at Overlake, SAAS, and the Jewish Day School. "I even bought a pager so I could be contacted first and be the most reliable sub," he jokes. A crafty idea that

know how it would go, but I saw an opportunity to start a conversation." That event led to student design thinking workshops and eventually to co-founding (along with former Overlake Dean of Students Ryan Burke) Leadership + Design, a nonprofit that provides consulting services serving schools nationwide offering intentionally designed professional development experiences. "By being curious, you often end up being among the first to learn or try something new — and that puts you in a situation where people look to you for help" Greg reflects.

He also carries forward lessons every Owl can appreciate: "At any point in the middle I could have easily given up, especially when the business hadn't added up to anything

“

Overlake really taught me initiative. I learned to put things out in the world and to try things.

----- GREG BAMFORD ('92) -----

kept him busy, and curious. He went on to earn his master's while teaching in small alternative schools, then returned to Overlake four years later as a full-time faculty member.

"I loved coming back to Overlake. For me, it's the people. The camaraderie in faculty meetings, the morning coffee talks in the Campus Center — Overlake is full of smart and creative people, and there was never a boring day." Over the years, Greg taught English and history, coached, advised, and influenced students who went on to become educators themselves such as Allison (Rataeyk) Schoening ('08) and Benjamin Heimfeld ('08). One, Jordan Griffith ('09), was later spotlighted on KOMO 4 News as an "education hero."

Greg eventually left the classroom but not the world of education, going on to serve as Head of School at Watershed School, a young, innovative independent school in Colorado that broadened Greg's perspective about what education can look like, leading to more questions and exploration.

Later, consulting grew out of Greg's curiosity and commitment to schools. "I organized a TEDx about learning. I didn't

yet. But you have to be willing to see things through, even in the messy moments. Trust that the path will emerge."

These days, Greg is celebrating the good life. With his eldest off to college and after years of service on Overlake's Board of Trustees, he has more time to kayak on Puget Sound, post reels of seals and morning light, experiment with his neighborhood "free little bakery" in Tacoma, and plan his next culinary adventure — like his 50th birthday trip to Oaxaca that took place earlier this year.

The life of a lifelong learner, it turns out, is pretty sweet. Greg was honored at the Distinguished Alumni assembly in November and celebrated later that evening at an alumni happy hour. Cheers to Greg Bamford, our 2025-26 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, who continues to spark ideas, connection, and learning wherever he goes — and whose story is a true celebration of The Overlake School's mission in action.

Green, Gold, and Together Again

A reunion for the ages

The Overlake campus came alive in a sea of green and gold on Saturday, May 31, 2025, as more than 350 Owls — alumni, faculty, staff, and former administrators — flocked home for the first-annual All-Class Reunion. From lawn games to laughter-filled photo booth moments, the event buzzed with energy, memories, and unmistakable Owl pride.

Throughout the evening, guests mingled over delicious catered food, local wine and craft beer, and a dessert buffet that was almost too good to leave behind. Alumni browsed the memorabilia table lined with yearbooks, sparkled with new keepsakes from the permanent jewelry stand, stocked up on exclusive alumni branded gear, and took campus tours that blended nostalgia with discovery.

For **Delaney Hewitt ('16)**, who oversaw the Photo Booth capturing hundreds of joyful moments, the day was filled with nostalgia and gratitude. "It was so much fun to see classmates and teachers I hadn't reconnected with in a few years," she said, adding that hearing updates on her teachers' families and revisiting old memories "was such a great reminder of what makes the Overlake community so special."

Milestone alumni awards, a recap of Overlake's growing alumni program, and a toast to the years ahead showed that our Owl spirit only grows stronger with time. Between GOLA pop-up games, squeals from young alumni and future Owls running through the Gym, and cross-generational conversations that lingered even as the stars started to sparkle over campus, it was clear — this wasn't just a reunion, it was the start of something new.

Joanna (Beard) Guiler ('03), alumna and current faculty member, found herself reflecting on both the past and the future. "My favorite moment was when I watched my kids playing soccer with **Sam Chan Hillyer's ('01)** kids and **Michael Armstrong's ('01)** kids too!" Adding, "It was so fun for me to see the next generation coming together and enjoying our beautiful campus. I also got to see my class-

mate **Rozlyn Goff ('03)** and her sweet new baby and still-bestie-to-this-day **Katie Al-Khoury's ('03)** family."

As both alumna and faculty member, Guiler also cherished the chance to reconnect with former teachers and mentors. "It was really special to connect with faculty who aren't here every day anymore, in particular Dave Bennett who went from being my 7th grade advisor and teacher to my teaching partner for a few years. So special!"

For reunion committee member **Madison Hitchcock ('18)**, helping organize the event was a meaningful way to reconnect and give back. She shared how powerful it was "to catch up with fellow alumni and see how everyone has grown, bringing their professional skills and unique talents back to Overlake." For her, being part of the planning was about more than logistics — it was "a special way to give back to the school that shaped us."

That same sense of gratitude and joy was echoed by Ashleigh Roth, fellow committee member and Overlake coach, who reflected on the energy that filled the day. "Watching Owls reconnect with old friends and celebrate those being honored for their impact out in the world was a vivid reminder that Overlake fuels curiosity that extends far beyond campus." One of her favorite parts of the day was the permanent jewelry booth, sharing "I still wear my bracelet as a reminder of the festivities!"

From shared laughter to deep conversations, the reunion embodied the enduring bonds that define the Overlake community. As alumni and their families lingered long after the event officially ended, the sense of belonging was unmistakable — a reminder that once an Owl, always an Owl.

A huge thank you to our reunion planning committee including **Katie (Riese) Al-Khoury ('03)**, **Joanna (Beard) Guiler ('03)**, **Katie Hill ('14)**, **Braxton Baker ('16)**, **Delaney Hewitt ('16)**, **Lucie Lundquist ('17)**, **Maddie Hitchcock ('18)**, and coach Ashleigh Roth, as well as to the dozens of volunteers including current faculty and staff and alumni parents who Owl helped to make this reunion extra special.



SAVE THE DATE

2026 All-Class Reunion

Saturday, June 13
4:30-7:30p.m. on campus

Want to join in the reunion planning or help organize a gathering for your class's milestone celebration on reunion weekend this next year? Reach out at alumni@overlake.org and let's make more magic happen!



Celebrating Sweet Success

Alumni bake up a cookbook and a friendship

These days, life is pretty sweet for alumni **Linda Dootson ('75)** and **Shannon (Robinson) Hoffer ('82)**. The two friends have teamed up to publish a cookbook of desserts with a healthy twist — *Fantastic Cookbook of Futuristic Desserts*. But like any good cake, there are many layers to their story.

Though both Linda and Shannon graduated from Overlake, their classes were far enough apart that they didn't know each other as Owls. Fast forward a few decades: they both landed in Seattle's Broadmoor neighborhood and discovered their shared Overlake roots. From there, a fast friendship rose — through yoga classes, rotating dinner parties, and even a stretch of living together during the pandemic. Their shared love of cooking and experimenting in the kitchen became the secret ingredient to a lifelong bond.

The cookbook idea, however, had already been simmering for years. Back when Linda's oldest son, Overlake alum **Tyler Pigott ('00)**, was in elementary school, she

noticed the less-than-nutritious snacks — Oreos and the like — that kept showing up in lunchrooms. Determined to whip up something better, Linda began experimenting with recipes that didn't just cut sugar but folded in nutrition from whole foods like spinach, chia seeds, carrots, beans, and even beets.

Not every trial was a treat. "At first, my kids spat out the avocado cake frosting," Linda laughs. But she kept stirring the pot and whisking away, convinced she could do better. Eventually, Shannon joined in, and together they tested recipes on anyone who would agree to take a bite. "Desserts are the hardest, which is why we started there," says Shannon. Getting the balance just right was its own recipe for persistence.

And their persistence and initiative — the secret ingredients for their success — came squarely from their time at



Overlake. Linda recalls how Overlake didn't serve lunches at the time and when she saw how her friends didn't have lunches, Linda "made and sold sandwiches and milk so kids would have food during the day" along with the help of teacher Mark Kimble. Overlake was a place that inspired enterprise. "If Overlake didn't offer what you wanted, you made it exist!" exclaims Linda.

“

When I think back to being a student,
I realized how many mentors and
adults believed in us and that instilled
a deep sense of confidence that has
stuck with me throughout life.
Overlake gave me that.”

----- SHANNON HOFFER ('82) -----

Eleven years later, their labor of love — and patience — came out of the oven: their first cookbook hit shelves this June. A second edition is already in print, and more projects are on the menu, including a desserts-and-smoothies sequel and eventually a collection of mains and sides. Pumpkin and cinnamon — two of their favorite ingredients — will likely be featured.

These chefs-turned-authors aren't just hiding away in the kitchen, either. With West Coast book tour underway, they've been signing books and serving samples at events like Madison Books this summer. "We love popups because people really want to talk about the recipes," says Shannon. "Guests take ideas—like pressing the liquid out of spinach or zucchini before baking—and apply them at home. It changes how they cook."

So what's their most beloved recipe? For Shannon, it's the decadent peanut butter truffles (yes, with hidden spinach!) — a crowd-pleaser and a frequent flyer in their kitchen. Linda loves them, too, because they remind her of her favorite candy: Reese's. "When little kids taste our truffles at a signing and exclaim how they taste just like Reese's, that's the sweetest compliment," she says.

Their mission is clear: no more "healthy" cookies that taste like cardboard. Instead, they aim for recipes that are, as Linda puts it, "chock full of nutrition and loaded with fruits and veggies — not just a token sprinkle." Or, in Shannon's words, "wholesome, delicious, and actually satisfying."

For the Overlake community, Linda and Shannon have generously shared their Owl Cookie recipe (Linda's favorite!). The cookies are named for Owl Hill on Whidbey Island, where Shannon's family owns property and where the two have spent countless hours together in the kitchen. Bake a batch, snap a photo, and tag the Overlake alumni Instagram — we'd love to see your creations! #OwlCookies

Owl Cookies

from *Fantastic Cookbook of Futuristic Desserts*

Ingredients

2 1/4 cups Bon Society Multigrain Pastry Flour* **
1 cup almond flour
1/2 cup golden flax seed meal
1/2 cup Bon Society Powdered Sugar***
1/4 tsp powdered monk fruit
1 tsp baking powder
3/4 tsp mineral rich salt/sea salt
3/4 cup browned butter
1/4 cup vegan butter (palm shortening)
1/4 cup raw unfiltered honey
2 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp almond extract

* Set aside 1/4 cup Bon Society Multigrain Pastry Flour for rolling

** Substitute for Bon Society Multigrain Pastry Flour: sift together 1/3 whole wheat pastry flour, 1/3 barley flour & 1/3 oat flour

*** Substitute for Bon Society Powdered Sugar: 2 cups erythritol, 1/2 cup chicory inulin, 1/4 cup tapioca flour, 1/4 tsp powdered monk fruit: layer in Vitamix type blender and blitz for 10 seconds

Owl Decoration Ingredients

16 whole raw almonds cut in half (for the beak)
32 Dark Chocolate M & M's (eyes)
Cinnamon (Erythritol) Sugar to sprinkle on wings

Directions

- 1) Preheat oven to 350° F.
- 2) In food processor pulse to blend Bon Society Multigrain Pastry Flour, almond flour, flaxseed, Bon Society powdered sugar, baking powder, and salt.
- 3) Add butters, honey, vanilla and almond extracts. Process until dough holds together.
- 4) Sprinkle reserved multigrain flour on wax paper. Roll out to 1/4" thickness.
- 5) Use a 2.5" to 3.5" round cookie cutter to make owls. Place on cookie sheets lined with parchment paper.
- 6) Use cookie cutter to make indentations for the wings, press gently (do not cut through the cookie dough).
- 7) Using 1/4 tsp dough for each, form two balls. Affix balls to cookie as eyes and press gently to flatten. Press an M&M into center of each eye. Press almond sliver between eyes to resemble a beak. Use a fork to press into cookie for feet. Sprinkle cinnamon (erythritol) sugar on wings.
- 8) Refrigerate cookies for 10 minutes.
- 9) Bake at 350° 8-10 minutes for 2.5" cookies or 10-12 minutes for 3.5" cookies. Cool on rack (if you can be patient!).



Cleats to Community

Celebrating the magic of the game

If you've ever had the chance to watch a professional soccer match, you can picture the scene: the crowd erupting with joy, the chants of "olé, olé" reverberating through the stands, and the player scoring the winning goal leaping into a celebratory dance. But every player on the pitch carries a story that started long before that moment—the first time they laced up cleats, the first attempt at a wobbly dribble, the first spark of love for the game.

For alum **Joseph Raymond ('19)**, that spark has grown into a gift he now shares with the next generation: a lifelong love of soccer. And it all began with a flyer that happened to land on his desk.

At the time, Joe was working as a community relations manager for Soccer Post when he noticed an announcement about Connect Casino Road, a nonprofit serving the Everett community with after-school programs, parent support, free

“

When I blew the final whistle, the kids were mad. They didn't want to stop. They wanted more. And that's what's stayed with me — because I can give them more.”

----- JOSEPH RAYMOND ('19) -----

medical clinics, and more. Inspired, Joe began brainstorming ways Soccer Post could partner with the organization. Out of that collaboration, an idea was born: a free soccer clinic for underserved youth.

His involvement with Connect Casino Road quickly deepened. Attending a networking event called Engage Everett, Joe was invited to give a soapbox speech. “I was the youngest person in the room,” he recalls, “but I told my story. I shared how I started playing soccer at 14 only because someone helped me play for free. That opportunity carried me through high school, college, and even semipro teams. Soccer changed my life — and I wanted to pay that forward.”

The impact was immediate. Joe walked away with a sponsorship from Zippy, 100 new backpacks with Orca cards from Sound Transit, snacks for both days, and a coach from Tommy's Express Carwash. With the City of Everett donating field space, Joe only needed players — and cleats.



That's when the Sounders came into play. While organizing a press meetup for star Jesús Ferreira, Joe turned the event into a donation drive: bring gently used cleats, enter a raffle for Sounders tickets and autographed gear, meet a Sounders player. The response was overwhelming and before he knew it, Joe was armed with enough cleats to outfit a camp full of eager young soccer-players-to-be.

Circling back to Connect Casino Road, Joe set up a booth at their summer resource fair to distribute the cleats and the results were instant: within 20 minutes of working the booth, every shoe was claimed, and the camp sign-ups were full.

The momentum didn't stop there. Former Sounders player and international soccer legend Román Torres — Joe's onetime coach — joined in, bringing not just his expertise but also his voice in the kids' own language. “I knew when he stopped by Soccer Post to ask about the camp that he'd be a perfect fit. He speaks Spanish and this was an opportunity to not just break down barriers for free admission and access, but also to make the coaching and camp experience a part of the kids' native language. I didn't want English-to-Spanish translation,” Joe explains. “I wanted the default to be Spanish, so these kids felt at home.”

And the camp itself? Pure magic. Over two days this past July, 100 kids between the ages of 6 and 17 played, laughed, and learned — with no cost but their effort and heart. “When I blew the final whistle,” Joe remembers, “the kids were mad. They didn't want to stop. They wanted more. And that's what's stayed with me — because I can give them more.”

And he is. Joe is already planning three more camps in White Center, Tukwila, and Everett, and he's partnering with Torres to expand the Roman Torres Foundation in the U.S. Their dream: a dedicated facility in Everett where kids can play for free, supported by academic tutoring, counseling, nutrition, and mentorship — mirroring the holistic center Torres built in Panama.

Joe is celebrating what he's built, dreaming of what's next, and showing what happens when community, passion, and purpose come together.

Class Notes

Overlake community members give a hoot about what's happening within our alumni community! In Class Notes, we share events big and small, personal or professional, chance meetings, fun adventures, travel stories, etc. If you have an alumni story to share, send it to alumni@overlake.org.

2020s

A paper **Stephanie Abib ('25)** co-authored with [RTA] Bertacco and Dr. William Weeks has been accepted for publication in the Microsoft Journal of Applied Research. In it, Abib, Weeks, and Bertacco study performance of Copilot, Gemini, and ChatGPT in answering diet and nutrition questions in Brazilian, Portuguese, and English, diving into how major AI tools perform across languages, particularly in healthcare related questions. Stephanie shares that the work was an "eye opening experience exploring the intersection of AI, language, and public health."

Theo Chapman ('25) worked as a construction intern at Planetary Holdings on Allan Island this past summer, entering his freshman year this fall at Columbia where he will be studying computer science.

Bridging her love of music from Overlake to college, **Molly Keller ('25)** has been accepted into the Columbia University Orchestra for the 2025-26 academic year.

Mahi Malladi ('25) spent her summer serving as one of the five youth summer interns for WA's 1st Congressional Districts and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chair, which Mahi shares "was an awakening, enthusing experience led by



DelBene's Political Director Melissa Plummer and Henry Denberg." Mahi canvassed, walked in parades, and organized week after week for city council races. Mahi is a voter's rights advocate, working tirelessly to remind fellow Washingtonians about their right to vote. Mahi joined the incoming Class of 2029 at the University of Washington this fall.

Arnav Chopra ('24) spent the summer working at the founder's office at Grip Invest, an innovative investment platform improving access to alternative assets. Arnav worked on curating and analyzing data for 15 debt mutual funds, helping build investment-ready profiles for 500,000 users on the platform.

Bess Hurlock ('24) began two new collegiate positions. First, Bess is now the Director of Public Relations at Chapman University Undergraduate Law Review, and second, Bess is also a Peace & Justice Student Advisor and Office Assistant at Chapman.

Nathan Kang ('24) spent his summer interning at Tax Services in Seattle before returning to London where he's studying economics at The London School of Economics and Political Science. Nathan also stopped by the Class of 2024 Molly Moon's ice cream social this summer along with more than 20 of his classmates and nearly all the class advisors.

Catherine Liu ('24) worked as a strategic marketing and business development intern at FOMO Pay in Singapore, getting to explore the region on her days off.

Sylvia Lou ('24) started a new position as administrative chair at Tri Delta at the University of Southern California.

Evan Spinner ('24) completed a 12-week internship at Dynamic Television where he had the opportunity to "read endless stacks of scripts, work on a myriad of television shows, and help pitch stories that need to be told around the world!" Evan continues to study media production and film at Chapman University where he is currently a sophomore studying at the Dodge College of Film and Media Arts.

Catherine Tang ('24) received a 2025 summer undergraduate research grant from the Office of Undergraduate Research at Northwestern University. Under the mentorship of Professor Mercouri Kanatzidis and PhD candidate Arbor Reynolds, both in Northwestern's Department of Chemistry, Catherine spent the summer researching hybrid metal halides.

Sadie Wickham ('24) earned a certificate from the Atlantic Coast Conference for being on the academic honor roll at the University of Notre Dame. Hoot hoot, Sadie!

University of Washington junior **Nicole Chen ('23)** spent her summer as a business operations intern at Space X. This fall, Nicole popped by the Husky Owl gathering at Chipotle in U-Village with fellow "Owlskies" and classmates **Neha Dubhashi ('23)**, **Jack Wiley ('23)**, and others!

Ashwin Chintalapati ('23), currently at University of Texas Austin studying computer science, joined Snowflake as a software engineering intern on the delta storage team.

Musab Chummun ('23) served as ASB president when he was a student at Overlake, and now as a junior at University of Pennsylvania, he is spreading his wings by serving as the 2025-26 Undergraduate Assembly's vice president with fellow undergraduate Nia Matthews (who is serving as UA president). Musab was elected by 1,319 votes, noting that the campaign was "one of the most exhilarating, eventful, and moving things" he's ever done.



Winner of Food Network's season 5 Kids Baking Championship while a student at Overlake, alum **Natasha Jiwani ('23)** is back in the kitchen,

hosting Cornell University's on-campus restaurant as part of her restaurant management course. With a "Beyond the Seven Seas" themed menu featuring spicy tuna crispy rice and miso black cod with bok choy, complemented by specialty beverages including Natasha's Yuzu Drop and Lychee Refresher, Natasha not only delighted Cornell patrons but also her family, including parents Munira and Hafiz, and sisters **Alyssa ('20)** and **Jasmine ('22)**.

Sydney Martin ('23) spent her summer in Lisbon, Portugal working as a data analytics and marketing intern at Unicage cleaning up data using artificial intelligence. What a cool experience!



Kiran Mitra ('23) spent the summer interning at tech start-up TerraCity working as an artificial intelligence and machine learning engineer. Kiran enjoyed the experience to "venture into the exciting new realm of AI agents" by "building one for TerraCity's Pathway Zero platform." Kiran has continued working for TerraCity this fall while pursuing a computer science degree at Cornell.

Kamya Raman ('23) started a new position as a researcher at Brown University.

Rishi Sujit ('23) joined LiveArena Technologies AB for a chance to intern at an artificial intelligence and technology startup. Located in Sweden, Rishi enjoyed working and traveling in the region this past summer.



Erik Vank ('23) shares that Narrative (YC F25) is now backed by Y Combinator thanks to a partnership with David Leib. Narrative is a video editor created by Erik and classmate **Victor Chapman ('23)** that uses AI to generate edits and search through terabytes of footage in minutes, helping you get to a final edit faster. The two spent time in startup school together and Erik pitched their idea to the Y Combinator General Partner. We love hearing about Overlake alumni who take initiative to bring their ideas to fruition, use their office hours networking habits, and pitch delivery skills too!

Daniel Welicki ('23) spent his summer interning as part of Amazon's connect team where he learned new concepts, wrote code and software, gained valuable user insight, and networked with mentor colleagues. Daniel was also recently accepted into the Paul G. Allen School's BS/MS program at the University of Washington where he's studying computer science and working as a TA.

Andy Yang ('23) worked as a software engineer intern at Meta this summer and he's currently studying electrical engineering and computer science at UC Berkeley.

Yuchen Yang ('23) spent the summer at Northrop Grumman in Cincinnati, Ohio, working as an electrical engineering intern.

Mariam Cosmos ('22), a rising senior at Northwestern University studying science in journalism and international studies spent her summer as a labor market access intern researching East African

portfolios for Refugees International. At the end of summer, Mariam popped by the young alumni gathering at Tavolata to visit with her former teachers Mia Wall and Jenni Baldwin, as well as to visit with her classmates.

Griffin Hehmeyer ('22) was awarded one of the University of Washington's 2025 Husky 100, a recognition awarded to 100 students who have made the most of their Husky Experience through leadership, service, and academic excellence. Griffin was the only philosophy major selected in 2025 and one of only four juniors across all three UW campuses to be selected. Griffin shares, "This honor reflects the incredible mentors, professors, and peers who have challenged, guided, and supported me throughout my time at UW. Thank you for helping me grow — both in and beyond the classroom." Hoot hoot hooray, Griffin!

Annie Hirsch ('22) worked as a sales and business development intern at Hundred Days, a record label and marketing agency, this summer between terms at Chapman University where she is studying strategic and corporate communication.



Adelaide Sapirstein ('22) worked as a specialized industries analyst at JP Morgan Chase in their commercial banking sector this summer. Pictured here, Addie was networking with JPMC Global Banking Head of Product, Practices and Culture Ryan Baldwin (also husband of Director of Alumni Engagement, Jenni Baldwin!) atop the Seattle office in July.

Sophie Sharp ('22) completed a learning path for Microsoft Copilot Productivity this summer and, before returning to Santa Clara where she is studying marketing and sustainability, she popped by the young alumni event at Tavolata in September with friend and former Owl **Sofia Peniche ('21)** in tow.

Adrian Avram ('21) began a full-time position as a software engineer for Meta in their Menlo Park location.

After graduating from Cornell University with a bachelor's degree in animal science last spring, **Jada Boggs ('21)** returned to the West Coast this fall to attend the College of Veterinary Medicine at Western University of Health Sciences College in Pomona, California. Jada notes "I look forward to starting this next chapter and pursuing my childhood dream of becoming a veterinarian!"

From Owl to Lion, **Rohan Chatterjee ('21)** joined Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health in August, beginning a program to earn his master's in public health with a focus on infectious disease epidemiology! Rohan shares that he has "dreamt about being a Columbia Lion and living in New York since [he] was a kid," sharing that he's "ecstatic for this next chapter in his life."

This summer, **Will Dessler ('21)** worked as a research associate at Fascination Lab in Los Angeles.

Sydney Goad ('21) graduated cum laude from the University of San Diego's Knauss School of Business with a bachelor's degree in business administration in marketing and real estate. Sydney spent her summer as a community outreach and events intern at Honor Pilates in La Jolla, California.

Marc Huang ('21) shares that he started a new position as a corporate development analyst at MARA!

Ananth Iyer ('21) recently graduated from Carleton College with a Bachelor of Arts, chemistry, and statistics. Ananth is now working as a medical scribe at Overlake Medical Center in Bellevue, gaining valuable clinical documentation skills. Welcome home!

Shayna Lathia ('21) graduated magna cum laude from Babson College with a Bachelor of Science in business administration. Shayna recently created and proposed an internship program when she did some consulting work for the Boston Red Sox.

Ryan Owens ('21) graduated magna cum laude from Santa Clara University with a degree in mechanical engineering this past June. He is excited to be joining Cascadia as an investment banking analyst on the industrials team.

Allie Pae ('21) recently graduated from Wesleyan University with a BA in History and Government where she received the Dutcher Prize for her outstanding record in the history major. Additionally, Allie's senior thesis titled "On Tour: The Development of American Tourism in Thailand" received high honors from the history department at Wesleyan.



Roman Peterson ('21) recently graduated from the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin where he studied business and minored in entrepreneurship and informatics. Roman is already putting that degree to good use sharing he's accepted a position as a financial analyst at Oracle and is

working in their corporate headquarters in Austin, Texas. Pictured here, Roman smiles on graduation day with his dad **Chris ('85)** and mom Karin.

Noelani Phillips ('21), a recent undergraduate from Carnegie Mellon University with a Bachelor's in statistics as well as machine learning and artificial intelligence, spent her summer as a data science intern for Reddit in New York before returning this fall to Carnegie Mellon to begin a master's degree program for computational data science.



Alexandra Przysucha ('21) (Alex) graduated from NYU last spring with a bachelor's degree in data science and computer science. Alex shares that she has accepted a position as a data scientist at Ernst & Young where is working in their New York office. It's a bright future in the Big Apple for this Owl!

Ruta Rajpathak ('21) shares that her college speech team won nationals for the fourth year in a row, ever the accomplished Owl, Ruta placed in the semifinals, earning a place in the top for extemporaneous speaking and impromptu speaking. Ruta shares that her love for speech is attributed to her time on Overlake's Speech and Debate Team and the incredible coaching the team received from faculty member and alum parent Robin Monteith.

Megan Culbert ('20) interned for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) this past summer where she supported data trend analysis, capacity building, and mentorship.

A computer science graduate of Wellesley in 2022, **Tiffany Horter ('20)** is pursuing a PhD in human-robot interaction at the University of Oxford after interning at Microsoft and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Elle Penarczyk ('20) accepted a position at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom and Affiliates as a legal practice assistant in June.

2010s

This summer, **Evan Coulson ('19)** began a new role as a software engineer at Meter.

Current Overlake coach **Zach Foster ('19)** joined the personal risk team as a specialist at USI Insurance Services earlier this fall.

Grace Fujinaga ('19) graduated from Northwestern University with a Master of Science in data science and artificial intelligence in June, which also marked the end of her six-year collegiate lacrosse career. Grace played lacrosse at both University of Pennsylvania and Northwestern, where she "gained lifelong friendships" and "lived out [her] dreams." Grace began a role at Microsoft gaming as a software engineer earlier this fall. Grace also attended the Young Alumni event at Tavolata in September, sharing she had plans to move to New York the following week to live near her brother, fellow Overlake alum, **Ben ('17)**. We wish the Fujinaga family happy adventures in the Big Apple!

After working as an RN in Boston Children's Hospital for two years, **Alessandra Masone ('19)** is thrilled to attend Yale University School of Nursing for her master's in nursing, joining their Class of 2027 dual midwifery and women's health nurse practitioner program, sharing "I've dreamt about attending Yale since I was a little 7th grader across the street. Go Bulldogs!"

Kayla Ngai ('19) and classmate **Alex Masone ('19)** ran the Chicago Marathon in October, along with faculty member **Dave Parsons**, who won in his age group. Amazing job, Owl runners!

Joseph Raymond, Jr. ('19) launched a free youth soccer camp for kids ages 6-17 in Everett this past summer. Partnering with Connect Casino Road, Joe's camp gave young players a place to build soccer skills, teamwork, and develop a lifelong love of the game. Joe organized all the details including getting the City of Everett to donate the fields and lunch for over 70 campers provided through volunteers. *Check out the feature story on Joe on page 30.*

Julia Steen ('19) recently graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a Master of Arts degree in sociology and psychology. Her final dissertation was titled "Consent and Punishment: Investigating Punitive Attitudes Towards Sexual Assault Perpetrators Depending on Coercion Type and Perpetrator Gender." Congrats Julia!

Peregrin Charest ('18) obtained a new certification as an occupational therapist after graduating from Washington University in St. Louis last year.

In honor of Women's History Month, **Devika Chipalkatti ('18)** was recognized as a woman who is "making waves" as a software engineer at The Walt Disney Company. Devika was also recognized as a 10 Under 10 award recipient in our alumni community last year for her leadership in her field, particularly in how she empowers other women who code.

Bryce DeLay ('18) proposed to his girlfriend of 3 years, Kylie Lyman of Cambridge, Minnesota, on Saturday, September 20 in Duluth, Minnesota along the Northshore. The wedding date has been set for June 2027 in Woodinville, WA, a



happy hometown wedding plan for the groom and his family including Director of Facilities Lance DeLay.

Currently located in Rochester, New York, **Mary Javier ('18)** has embarked on a fellowship called Leadership Education in Neurodevelopment and Related Disabilities, which focuses on improving care for patients with disabilities, as well as their families and/or caretakers. Mary remarks that this training is "enhancing what I'm learning in dental school by adding more to consider in terms of holistic patient care."

Teya Hisel ('18) has moved to Chicago where she has started working as a senior research associate at Daley Strategies, virtually supporting the Los Angeles and California policy world where she formerly worked at a nonprofit before relocating this summer. We were also delighted to see Teya at the All-Class Reunion last May. Hoot hoot!

Liv Sather ('18) accepted a position as a product marketing manager on the developer solutions team at software development company Atlassian in June.

This September, **Annie Vert ('18)** enjoyed a visit from fellow alum **Matt Gold ('14)** in London. The two enjoyed a meal together before Matt continued his journey to Italy for a family wedding.

Nick Waalkes ('18) began a new position as an associate on the investment team at Serent Capital, working from their San Francisco office and joining a parliament of Bay Area Owls.



Betsy Button ('17) and now-husband Jonathan Carrasco-Noriega got hitched this summer with an epic ceremony at the top of Aspen Mountain. The couple said "I do" at 11,212 ft taking their love to soaring new heights!

Sebastian Chrysafidis ('17), a traveling winemaker, joined the team at Cellar Hand of Novelty Hill-Januiik Winery this summer.

Caleb Cramer ('17) began a master's program this fall at the University of Washington where he's studying applied and computational mathematics. Go Dawgs!



Sela Dragich ('17) and now fiancé, Nick, were engaged in August. Congrats to the happy couple!



Kevin Gartland ('17) announced his engagement this fall. Kevin popped the question to girl-

friend Maddie Sheedy in picturesque Santorini, Greece. Congrats to the happy couple!



Cate Gwinn ('17), along with classmates **Izzy Silber ('17)** and **Elle Parks ('17)**, ran the Jack and Jill half marathon in July. Owls who spring together, stay together. Hoot hoot!



Lucie Lundquist ('17) tied the knot with now-hubby John this past summer. The Hilgers said "I do" with many Overlake community members in attendance including **Hannah Sather ('17)**, **Peter Dudunakis ('17)**, and **Ryan Eldridge ('17)** as well as the bride's brother, **Tellier ('18)**. Congratulations to the happy couple!



Julia Noble ('17), daughter of faculty member and beloved fifth grade teacher Patricia Noble, was engaged to Jimmy Flores last spring. Congrats to the husband and wife to be!

Trent D'Alessio ('16) obtained a new certification as a Professional Engineer from the Florida Board of Professional Engineers. Congrats Trent!

Allie Hill ('16) enrolled in the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan this fall after leaving the classroom. Allie had been teaching second grade at Convent & Stuart Hall in San Francisco, which gave her "a profound appreciation for early childhood educators."

Hayley Pothering ('16) began a new role as social media manager at Mountain Hardwear in July.

Harriet Sinclair ('16) is beginning a new position as a social media associate at Galvanize USA. Congratulations on your new role!



Cat Cunningham ('15) played tour guide, giving **Meike Buhaly ('15)** the insider's experience of Owl the happening places in New York. The late summer weather was perfect for playing tourist in the Big Apple.

Matthew Charchenko ('15) joined Expedia as a risk specialist on the travel disruptions operations, trust and safety team. Matthew shares "I'm excited to bring my operational experience in analyzing fast-changing situations and providing clear, actionable guidance to a role helping travelers stay informed and supported when disruptions occur, powering global travel for everyone, everywhere."

Shawn McCall ('15) took on the role of Director of Soccer at Camp Laurel in Maine this past summer.

Andrew Gold ('14) participated in a Relay for Life fundraiser last spring, raising money for the American Cancer Society, an organization he's been philanthropically supporting since he was a student at Overlake.



Alum and faculty **Katie Hill ('14)** married classmate **Eli Waalkes ('14)** this summer at the Mountain Springs Lodge in Leavenworth surrounded by family, friends, and fellow alumni. Cheers to the happy couple!

Maddie Gwinn ('15) released her first solo feature film — Palace of Youth — earlier this year and won the audience award at DokuFest. Maddie is currently being interviewed as a profile subject by Overlake students in faculty member Chris Schwalm's Upper School Media Production course, a story that will be pitched to PBS's call out for student stories about artists who draw people together.

Rina Rosnow ('15) started a new position on the cobranded credit card team for Amazon at JP Morgan Chase this summer.



Congratulations are in order for newly engaged **Sasha Tilles ('12)** and husband-to-be Steve. Hoot hoot hooray!



Alexa (Anthony) Linamen ('11) tied the knot with now-husband David Linamen in Portofino, Italy. Congratulations to the happy couple!

Alex Kummert ('11) and his wife welcomed a new baby in June making Uncle **Nick ('06)** and Uncle **Ben ('18)** proud. In other news, Alex also took on a new role at Google where he is helping lead Android-focused PR programs. Double congrats to Alex and family!

Lauren (Ambielli) Cardoni ('10) recently accepted a position as the Director of Design at Foundant Technologies.



Chris Faulkner ('10) and his wife, Grace, welcomed new daughter and future Owl Lucy

last June. Baby Lucy could not be more excited to sport her Overlake onesie. When Chris isn't busy wrangling kiddos in his expanding family, he's serving on the Alumni Board to expand, shepherd, and lead alumni programming, events, and offerings.

This summer, **Scott Heiner ('10)** shared that his start-up, Surge AI, continues to develop rapidly, hitting more than \$1 billion in revenue last year.

Sahana Somasegar ('10) wrapped a gynecologic oncology fellowship at Stanford this summer where she spent "the most challenging and rewarding chapter" of her life as she became a gynecologic oncologist and cancer surgeon.

2000s

Cofounder and head brewer **David Skiba ('09)** celebrated a special honor this fall. His brewery, Snoqualmie's No Boat Brewing Company, has been recognized by Washington Wild with the 2025 Brewshed Alliance Award, honoring the brewery's commitment to clean water, healthy watersheds, and community stewardship. The brewery is described by David as a "gateway between the city and the mountains." Fun fact: No Boat Brewing Co is located in a building owned by Brian and Rana Gardner, parent of former Owls **Bryce Gardner ('16)** and **Trent Gardner ('18)**.

Jeffrey Herron ('05), former Distinguished Alumni Award recipient and Associate Professor of Neurological Surgery at the University of Washington, was part of a team that implanted the first CorTec Brain Interchange in an NIH study seeking to improve the outcomes for patients who have suffered a stroke. Jeff and team are investigating the use of neural stimulation to enhance connectivity during rehabilitation to help the brain relearn how use the arm after

stroke. Through this work, Jeff shares they "hope to establish new therapies to help stroke patients overcome their long-lasting disabilities and live more independent lives."

Sarah Tompkins ('05) co-hosted and rolled in her pink electric wheelchair in non-profit Connective Strength's Disability Empowerment Fashion Show at the North Kirkland Community Center this November. The event raised funds for Connective Strength's next book, Graceful Days, which offers practical guidance for navigating daily life with disabilities, including tips on travel, housing, work and school accommodations, and healthcare advocacy. The fashion show celebrated the unique style and confidence of the PNW's disability communities, with models who showcased their favorite outfits and mobility devices, highlighting the beauty of self-expression and adaptive fashion. Here's to the style, grace, and advocacy of our 2024-25 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient and Alumni Board member, Sarah.

Olivia Gerami ('03) will return as our resident photographer for the second annual Hops and Headshots event on Sunday, March 1, 2026, in Woodinville. Check out the alumni events page on our website to register to attend this alum gathering where you'll enjoy food, beverages, and the company of your peers, faculty, and administration, and leave with an updated headshot!

Chelsea (Mortell) Petsime ('03), owner of Juanita Family Dentistry, was awarded for being a leader in Invisalign and recognized for her effort in Invisalign training for other dentists.

Jenny Nordin ('02) and husband **John Nordin ('00)** celebrated the opening of their nonprofit's new Community Center in Bothell which opened this year. Congratulations to Jenny, John, and all the folks at Dog Gone Seattle!

Chris Rawson ('01) welcomed a little one last year, perhaps a future Owl just like Chris and **Uncle Brett ('03)**.

1990s

Amanda (Harris) Singer ('99) was recently promoted to Deputy Executive Director at The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) where she will build on LLS's ongoing efforts with dedicated staff and phenomenal volunteers across the Upper Plains region, spanning Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, and North Dakota, focusing on various peer-to-peer fundraising initiatives. We love Owls who make a difference.



Tina (Beisswenger) Andrae ('98) visited campus with her family while they were in town on summer holiday. Based in Germany, it was a special opportunity to connect not only with the campus but with her former host family as well — The Chaney's. Tina attended Overlake as an exchange student and loved seeing how the campus has transformed over the years, sharing that her favorite memories took place in the Art Barn as she participated in school musicals and arts performances with Erin Gabriel and C. Jaap.

Terry Crane ('98), founder and artistic director at The Acrobatic Conundrum, directed and performed in a show this October called "Threads." The Acrobatic Conundrum is a fusion of circus arts and contemporary

theater, and this show featured a tangled world of rope that elevated dance-storytelling into the air. Conundrum's movement-poets swung and spun, telling stories that unraveled love and grief. Catch Terry on stage or behind the scenes at The Acrobatic Conundrum!

Keith Wells ('98) officiated a wedding this fall and can add a new title to his Overlake experience — parent! Keith's son Carter joined the 9th grade and will become a fellow alum with the Class of 2029 and his son Logan is in 7th grade with an expected graduation in 2031!

Jessica Klein DiStefano ('95) Alumni Board President, parent of an Owl, and owner of Hobart Farms Nursery in Maple Valley hosted the first-ever Music in the Meadow concert at Hobart Farms in August. The event featured local musicians Jane Laredo, Faith Martin, Talia Klein, and more.

Katie Lyman ('95) founded a nonprofit called The Art Supply Project, which brings art supplies to underfunded art teachers in low socio-economic areas. Katie hopes the project will help art teachers to have the materials to inspire the next generation of young creative thinkers.



Adam Burkner ('93) and **Josh Burkner ('91)** popped by campus in August and took a photo with their former English teacher and current Overlake

Archivist and resident knower of all things Overlake history, Bill "Army" Armstrong.



Sara McGregor ('91) ran into Bill "Army" Armstrong at Lowe's a few months ago, sharing that their chance meeting was "absolutely magical." We love those "Army is that you?!" moments!

1980s

In August, **Leigh Ann Hines ('85)** hosted a celebratory brunch for the Class of 1985 at her home to commemorate the 40th anniversary of their graduation from Overlake.

Julie King Hatley, Mark Hedges, Troy Lannoye, Gretchen Carlson Kimbell, Nika Herford Owens, Cyrina Thurman Keller, Art Mabbott, Colin Walker, Andrew Kaplan, Scott Trethewey, Heidi Hentz Traverso, and other classmates were in attendance along with former faculty member **Janet Rothfels**.



Johnny Sangster ('83), who works as a producer, sound engineer, and recording artist, partnered with **Molly Keller ('25)** during her senior project last spring, offering her three weeks of time at his studio

Crackle & Pop in Ballard. Molly learned about the recording process, including both digital and analog (tape), and even enjoyed a jam session with alum and former Director of Alumni Engagement, **Christian Fulghum ('77)**. Thank you to Johnny and other alumni who have volunteered to support senior projects.

1970s

Greg Helfrich ('78) has begun selling Pacific Northwest inspired photographs through his website gregbgh.org and runs a streaming radio channel where he plays electronic music.

Barb Stanton ('76) competed in a tennis tournament in Portland this fall. Way to go, Barb!



Linda (Dootson) Berry ('75) and **Shannon (Hoffer) Robinson ('82)** published the *Fantastic Cookbook of Futuristic Desserts* featuring healthy takes on sweet treats. Pick up your copy today at Madison Books or pop by the Overlake campus for a visit to the library and page through the recipes including a recipe for Owl Cookies! See their feature story on page 28.

Current and Retired Faculty and Staff

Sarah Fitzpatrick, along with current faculty member **Bill Johns**, attended Squeeze, an innovative show featuring **Terry Crane ('98)** last spring. Terry supported the Overlake Arts production of *Big Fish* a few years ago when the students played circus characters. See Terry's note on the previous page to hear what he's been up to this fall!

Susan Lin, former Learning Specialist at Overlake, won a Toastmasters speech contest this summer for her speech entitled "A Gift of Hope." Susan shares that "writing, refining, and delivering this speech challenged [her] to find authenticity, connect with an audience, and grow as a communicator." Hoot hoot, Susan!

This summer, **Mark Manuel**, former Director of Diversity at Overlake, accepted a new role as King County Metro's Interim Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager. Mark also serves as the Governance Chair for Atlantic Street Center's Board of Directors and as Vice Chair of the Burien Human Services Commission. Congrats Mark!

Jasmine Park recently accepted a role as Interim Director of Enrollment Management at Charles Wright Academy.

Stephen Ringo has been enjoying another fall as a retired teacher, this time taking a three-week solo trip to Sicily and Tunisia and soaking up the mediterranean food and sights. Hiking, swimming, and sunning, and of course haiku-writing, Ringo is living his best life!

Meghan Waddle obtained her real estate broker license and has been working with Windermere where she's loved learning a new industry and growing her network. Meghan shares, "When people ask what kind of real estate I specialize in, my answer is always the same: the people kind. For me, real estate has always been about relationships — not just transactions." Meghan's wife, Allison, is following in her footsteps to earn her broker license and the two plan to co-list properties in the future.

Bob Wood recently enjoyed a trip to Africa, including a safari, a real bucket list trip! Bob has popped by many alumni gatherings in this past year, including the recent young alumni social hour at Tavolata in September.

In Memory

Matt Hwang ('21)



Overlake mourns the loss of alum **Matt Hwang ('21)** who passed away on June 13, 2025. He is survived by his parents, Irene and Wayne, and his sister, fellow Overlake graduate **Kristen Hwang ('24)**.

Matt had just graduated from UW and was an active member of his college community. He is remembered by his former homeroom advisor, **Mireille**

Machefert, for "radiating happiness, joy, and a love of life" and as someone who "always had a snack in hand and illuminated every room he walked into with his smile and energy." Matt's former English teacher **Stephen Ringo** remembers him as "a happy-go-lucky guy who was always ultra kind, authentic, and genuine."

Matt's best memories of Overlake came from his time on the field playing varsity baseball. Ringo remembers how "the game of baseball infiltrated parts of his character and more so as a catcher behind the plate." Classmates and Overlake community members recall Matt's "dashes of silliness" and his "rascal sense of humor" and how he "never took life too seriously."

Matt will be deeply missed by his Overlake family, and especially by his peers from the Class of 2021. The Overlake community joined the Hwang family in a memorial service on July 26, and Matt will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Peter Helfrich ('76)

Peter Helfrich ('76) passed away on July 17, 2025, shortly after suffering a stroke. He is survived by his brother **Greg ('78)**. A service was held at St. Marks Chapel on October 4 and attended by **Tom Isaacson ('77)** and **Christian Fulghum ('77)**. The Helfrich/Gamble family were early supporters of Overlake, and the original Student Center was named in memory of Peter and Greg's beloved sister Catherine. We wish Greg and family peace in the wake of the loss of Peter.

Peter Acker ('73)

Peter Acker ('73) passed away in June after experiencing complications with lung function. Peter kept in touch with fellow Overlakers including **Jane Holloway Daquila ('75)**, **Duncan Wilson ('75)** and **Bill "Army" and Anna Armstrong**. A private memorial was attended by many Owls, including **Spafford Robbins ('77)**, **Tom McNutt ('77)**, **Christian Fulghum ('77)**, **Jill Jacobsen Jack ('78)**, and **Peggy McCroskey Bigelow ('78)**. Sending all those who mourn the loss of Peter love and peace from your Overlake community.



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