

SPIRIT

The Leelanau School Magazine



WHO WE ARE
FALL 2025

Who We Are

SEEN. HEARD. KNOWN.

When you're writing your own story, it's important never to let go of the pen.

At The Leelanau School, we continue to write our story with conviction, clarity, and care. For those who have lived among our pines and oaks—who have felt the rhythm of learning and community on this shoreline—the question of Who We Are is not up for debate. It's lived, known, and deeply felt. And when shared, it offers something profoundly affirming to others still searching.

We are our Students.

They are curious, insightful, ambitious, hilarious, smart, creative, and kind. They show us what's possible when young people are seen, supported, and given the space to grow.

We are an Intentionally Small Community.

Here, everyone is known. Conflicts are faced, not ignored. Laughter is common. Growth is constant. We value the daily practice of being human together.

We are our Faculty and Staff.

They are mission-driven, compassionate, skilled, and tireless in their commitment. They know their students well, and they model authenticity and excellence—in and out of the classroom.

We are Essential.

The education we offer benefits all and is life-changing for some. We restore joy. We open doors. We invite students to be their whole selves—and then help them build lives that reflect that wholeness.

We are our Campus.

A breathtaking stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline surrounded by forest and sky—a place that inspires reflection, wellness, and belonging.



Rob Hansen with Ruby McKenna '25, featured next.

We are Historic.

As one of the founding institutions of Leelanau County, we have shaped generations. Alumni have built careers, families, and lives of service—and many return to this community to give back what was once given to them.

We are a Better Way to Learn.

Through project-based learning, wellness routines, executive function coaching, and a culture of social learning, we prepare students for the real world—not by shielding them from it, but by equipping them to meet it with confidence.

Spend even a short time on our campus, and you'll feel it: the warmth of learning, the buzz of creativity, the ease of relationship. We are an antidote to the pressures and disconnection plaguing today's youth.

We are here.

We are together.

We are growing.

We are celebrating.

We are Leelanau.

Please enjoy our 2025 edition of SPIRIT. We invite you to continue uplifting today's and tomorrow's students through your generosity, your voice, and your heartfelt support.

Pass it on!

Head of School

rhansen@leelanau.org



Artwork by Ruby McKenna, Class of 2025

WE ARE MORE THAN THE SUM

excerpts from Ruby's artist statement

Las Meninas (The Servants) is a painting by Diego Velázquez done in 1656 of Princess Margarita Teresa being attended to by the servants of the royal household. Among her entourage are ladies in waiting, court jesters, courtiers, and, most revolutionary for its time, the artist himself in the background. The painting plays with themes of identity and person-ship, particularly of the artist, and has been recreated and revised by various artists, with Pablo Picasso himself creating over fifty iterations of the piece during the course of his life.

As this year's theme for the Leelanau Art Collaboration [Fall 2024] was identity and community, I was given the opportunity to take part in this 350+ year-old tradition and relate it to my life and experience here at Leelanau. I wanted to focus on what this period of transition has taught me as a graduating senior. Many elements of this painting are inspired by different artists, many of whom are from different cultures and different time periods. I felt this was the best decision I could make to truly represent the diversity of my peers.

As a graduating senior, I've found myself lingering more and more on what Leelanau means to me. Although I have spent the majority of the past 3 years in Leelanau County, this school is not a permanent destination. High school is not the final destination for any of the students who walk through those doors.

This got me thinking about liminal spaces, human-made environments that are places of transition, a place between destinations. I landed on the imagery of a subway. The temporary nature of a transit vehicle filled with passengers from all walks of life felt right for a depiction of Leelanau.

It can be overwhelming and confusing at first, this collection of people who don't quite seem to fit with one another, but it is not entirely foreign. The courtiers still seek to comfort, the fools still seek to amuse, and the artist still catalogs the moment. The composition of the painting is still the same, even if the people are not.

Though this group of individuals will eventually arrive at their destination and get off the subway, for a brief period, these individuals who would otherwise never meet, still manage to fit in amongst one another, becoming more than the sum of their parts.

RUBY IS ONE OF A SMALL HANDFUL OF STUDENTS SELECTED FOR THE CONCEPT DESIGN PROGRAM AT THE COLLEGE OF CREATIVE STUDIES IN DETROIT.



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SPIRIT

THE LEELANAU SCHOOL MAGAZINE

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OUR MISSION

The Leelanau School ignites a passion for learning in a boarding school environment where students thrive by engaging academically and celebrating everyone's unique learning styles in a culture of acceptance, preparing for successful and meaningful lives in higher education, careers, citizenship, and service.

WE ARE OUR STUDENTS

WE ARE ENGAGED

” Hugh has shown the kind of confidence and enthusiasm to write home about! Further, he is kind-hearted and thoughtful. As a new teacher, I create lessons and activities, hoping they are engaging for my students. My first memories of Hugh are when I would explain an activity, and he would respond with genuine excitement to get started, without hesitation. This goes a long way with a teacher! As the year has progressed, I have observed Hugh in his role as Student Council Vice President, where he has been steadfast and responsible, maintaining a positive demeanor and serving as an effective model of leadership. Hugh’s positive attitude and zest for learning are evident in everything he does. He is perceptive and keen, and this is evident in his discourse. He is eager and upbeat, often one step ahead. Hugh’s knowledgeable and intellectual approach has prepared him to launch into the world, with plans to enroll in the computer science program at the University of Puget Sound this fall! ”

- Mike Gaden | Math and Science Faculty



Hugh arrived at Leelanau as a Junior, having previously participated in two different high school programs. He had been anxious in prior school settings, juggling medical issues, including type-1 diabetes. Hugh flourished at Leelanau, was VP of the Student Council, and designed an AI medical chatbot in senior seminar to answer questions about diabetes.



Evey joined Leelanau as a Junior, having struggled, like so many teens, with anxiety beginning in junior high. With support and grace, she earned her diploma this past spring, pursuing many of her passions including early childhood education, creative writing, and support for mental health for those in need.

WE ARE RESILIENT

” Evey has grown tremendously since her start at Leelanau. She is a kind, hard-working, and compassionate student and peer. Evey’s empathetic nature thrives in Creative Writing, where she has blossomed as a young poet. She has also flourished as a musician under both Laura Hood and Mr. Rogers, where she takes her passion for music and performs with dedication and love. My favorite memory with Evey was just last week when we drove around beautiful Northern Michigan. She sang as we viewed the sun peaking through the budding leaves. Next year, she will begin her dream of becoming a preschool teacher at Oakland Community College. Evey’s independence in academic, social, and work environments proves that she is more than ready to fly from our cozy Leelanau nest. ”

- Angela Repke | Leelanau Learning Specialist



WE ARE CURIOUS



“For the past four years, Mark has been a vibrant and unforgettable presence on campus—radiating curiosity, kindness, and an unshakable sense of joy. Whether offering a “shout out” to the rain, marveling at the small wonders of daily life, or diving headfirst into learning and experimentation, Mark has walked the Leelanau path with honor, heart, and purpose.

A dedicated scholar, motivated self-learner, and thoughtful listener, Mark has grown into a self-aware leader and true Leelanau legend. Reliable positivity and perfectly-timed silliness have inspired classmates and teachers alike.

Mark’s authenticity builds trust, and a deep sense of integrity fosters connection. From day one, Mark showed us what it means to “let it shine”—embracing every single day as the most important one yet.

As the next chapter begins, Mark’s future is wide open, full of promise, and the horizon is speckled with goals. Being “daVinci-esque” makes it all possible. Mark will be attending Harper College next fall to become an EMT. Once achieved, Mark will pursue degrees in medicine or marine biology...or both and more. The stars will light the way! ”

- Rob Hansen | Head of School

“Leelanau radically altered the entire course of my child’s life. From a perception that school is filled with drudgery and dread, it has restored Mark’s love of learning and exploration. Without nourishing that spark in childhood and teenage years, a kid can literally fall off a cliff never to return. We were scared of that happening to our kiddo. Leelanau has renewed that and more – put Mark on a positive life trajectory. This is something that we will never be more grateful for. I cannot wait to continue to see where Mark goes from here.” - Annie Cruz-Porter, mother of Mark, 2025 Valedictorian



WE ARE CONNECTED

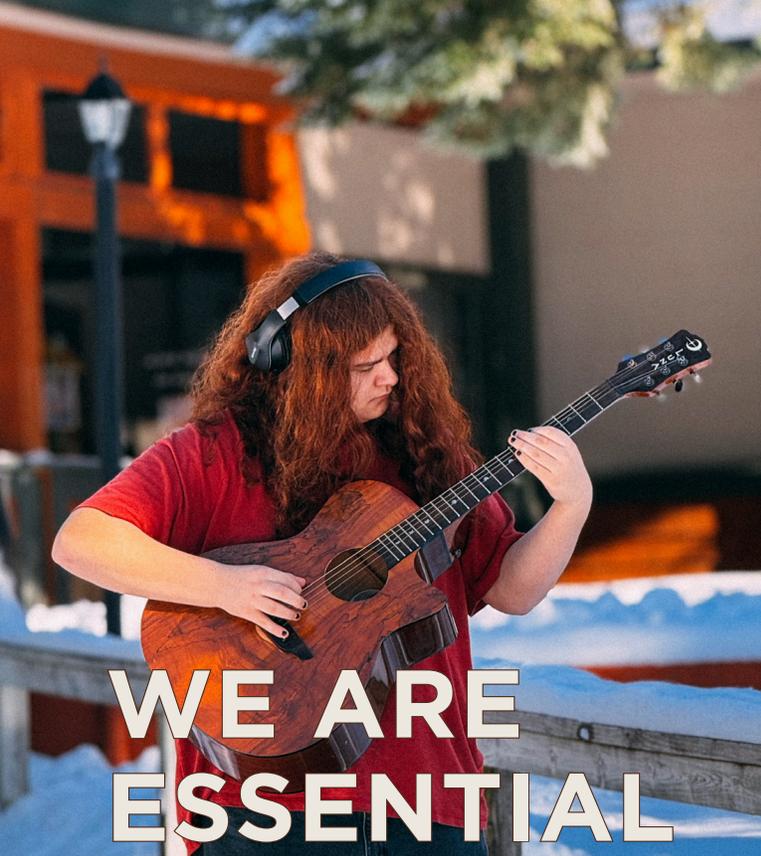


“Alessandra is a passionate spark within The Leelanau School, joining our community as a sophomore. She quickly connected with students from all grades, acting as a leader among them. She is curious and energetic, joining many groups and activities, including Student Council. She always weighs in with wisdom, compassion and a worldly perspective of what’s going on, especially since her family has been in foreign service, taking them to six different countries.

Ale is an outstanding student, and her smile and laugh are contagious. Her poetry draws us in, giving us glimpses into her heart and soul. We are grateful she will be with us for two more years! ”

- Melissa Ellsworth | Spanish Faculty

During the Admission process, Alessandra was asked what she would want teachers to know about her. Her poignant response, “I don’t really know because I don’t think there has been a teacher who has ever asked.”



**WE ARE
ESSENTIAL**



INTEGRATING WELLNESS INTO INSTRUCTION

“Clarity, consistency, flexibility, kindness, connection — help every student who’s overwhelmed, anxious, distracted, or just having a hard day. When we align how we teach with how we care, when we integrate wellness into instruction instead of rigidity, we’re not just serving a diagnosis — we’re building a better school for everyone.” — Rob Hansen, Head of School

Over the decades, The Leelanau School has learned some essential lessons. When you create a school that supports all students’ need for more variety, encouragement, and understanding than a traditional classroom can provide, you’re not just meeting individual needs—you’re building a community where every student learns more authentically and effectively. When students feel heard, seen, and truly known, they grow into their most curious and capable selves.

At first, it may seem that students with ADHD, dyslexia, depression, anxiety, or even those simply disengaged by boredom require something “extra”—more structure, more flexibility, more patience, more movement. And they do.

But what we’ve discovered is that these supports aren’t special accommodations; they are the foundations of great teaching. In fact, they reflect the way all children learn best.

Students thrive when routines are predictable, expectations are clear, and lessons are broken into manageable steps. They flourish when compassionate teachers guide them in developing essential skills like organization, time management, and self-advocacy.



But none of this matters if a child walks into the classroom already overwhelmed.

That’s why, at The Leelanau School, we weave movement, mindfulness, and connection into every day. These aren’t extras — they’re essentials. A student who has had time to move, breathe, laugh, and connect shows up ready to learn. Morning meetings, movement breaks, outdoor time, and intentional opportunities to socialize aren’t perks. They’re strategies for life — and they help every student flourish.

The following pages outline many of these strategies, disguised as joyful learning!

"The reason I chose Leelanau is because it felt safe, with a capital S. I can't articulate, not fully, how important it is to feel safe and fulfilled in a learning environment. It affects every part of your life....I didn't feel safe going to Junior High—I didn't even feel seen. But here? Even as a bright-eyed, incredibly annoying, and very loud freshman, I felt respected and accepted by my peers. From then to now, that feeling of belonging has only strengthened, and I find myself doing things that I never thought I would ever enjoy....This safety is what makes Leelanau what it is....You can be yourself here, and learn what being yourself even means."

- Mark Porter '25

4-year senior and Valedictorian



From “Deficit” to Superpower

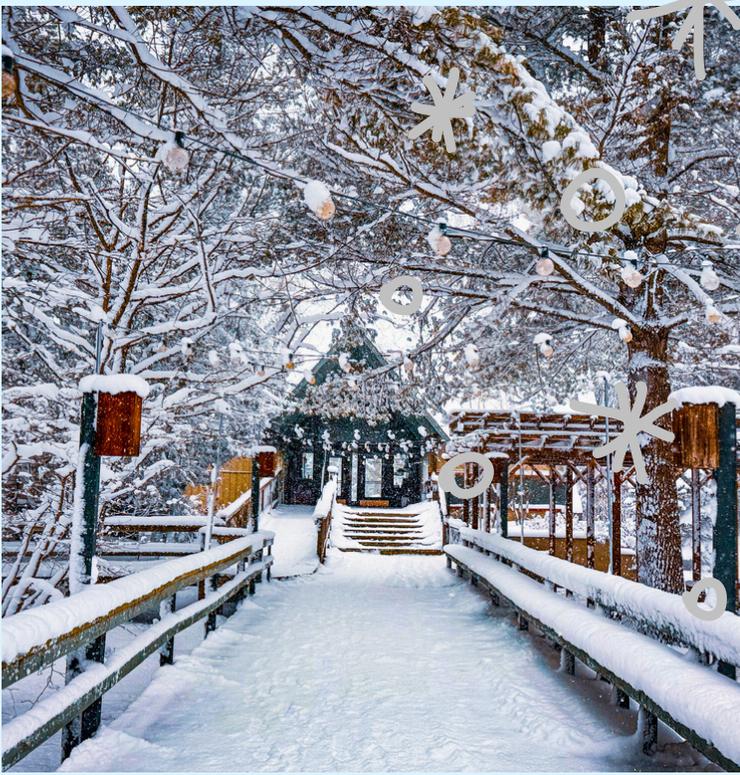
Here's the part we don't celebrate enough: once students are in environments where they can thrive, what was once seen as a “deficit” often becomes a superpower.

Curiosity. Creativity. Energy. Outside-the-box thinking. Hyperfocus on topics they care about. Big-picture vision.

Students come alive when they are no longer burning all their energy just trying to survive in a system that wasn't built for them.

When schools meet students with understanding and adaptation — not blame and correction — students unlock their potential. They stop fighting their brains and start using their unique strengths to fuel learning, innovation, and growth.





WE PREPARE. WE ADAPT.

This January's Winter Term brought its usual avalanche of snow — and creativity. Students dove into new adventures like exploring the laser engraver in the Charles E. Scripps Creativity Center, writing poetry and making jewelry, studying the cozy art of Hygge, and bringing surprising energy to a Cold War seminar. An epic journey to Japan expanded horizons, while filmmaking on a budget, math support, and a survival guide for stranded time travelers gave students one-on-one time with faculty. Timeless favorites returned as well — Food is Love, Digital Photography, Songwriting, and thankfully, a blissfully snowy Snow Sports season.

Wintering Northern Michigan is no small feat. This past winter was a doozy: short days, endless layers of clothing, and lake-effect snow that reminded us nature is in charge. Crawling out of bed is a challenge, even when a hot Leelanau breakfast is waiting. Yet what comes from these months is more than resilience — it's transformation.

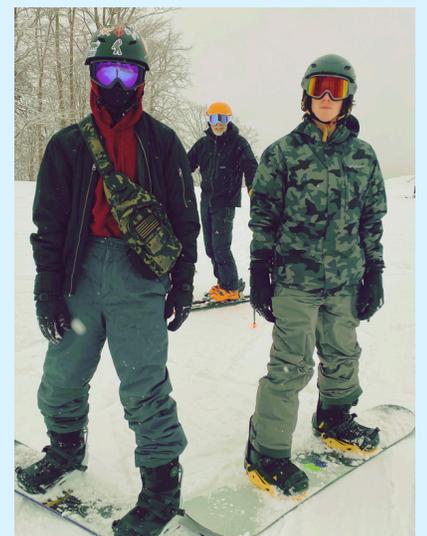
The Leelanau School works its quiet magic in Winter, especially during Winter Term. We slow down the pace, shift the rhythm of each day, shuffle classmates and faculty, and create space for new discoveries.

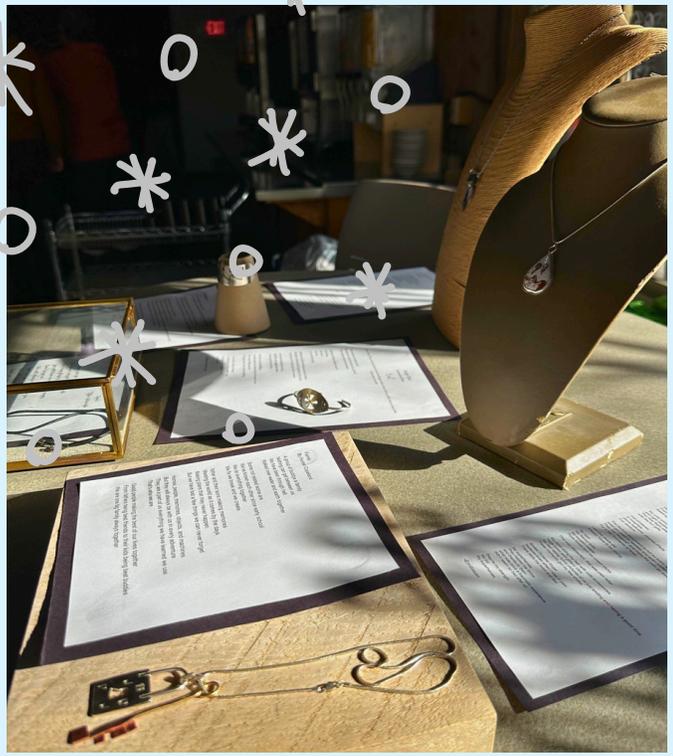


It's a season that doesn't just test us — it shapes us.

With the support of devoted faculty, "We prepare. We adapt. We perform extraordinary acts of metamorphosis." It's how we make it through the long northern winter — and grow stronger because of it. While learning at Leelanau is always creative and compelling, January's courses, activities, and travel become a crucible, a place where students push past boundaries and discover what they are truly capable of. They dive into new topics, try something different, reflect on ideas, and expand their horizons and life experiences.

Winter here isn't simply endured — it becomes a launching point for fresh thinking, new perspectives, and, ultimately, the promise of spring.





WINTER TERM: A METAMORPHOSIS

“The changes that take place in winter are a kind of alchemy—an enchantment performed by ordinary creatures to survive...Wintering brings about some of the most profound and insightful moments. Plants and animals don’t fight the winter. They don’t pretend it’s not happening in an attempt to carry on living the same lives that they lived in the summer. They prepare. They adapt. They perform extraordinary acts of metamorphosis to get them through.

Winter is not the death of the lifecycle but its crucible.”

- Katherine May, from "Wintering"



WE ARE BUILDING AWARENESS



Did you know The Leelanau School is the second oldest business in the region? Sadly, few do. And even fewer of our neighbors have stepped foot on our campus or met our students.

In an attempt to create a haven for our students over the decades, we've protected—perhaps overprotected—our campus community. Educating our neighbors, educational partners, and prospective families about Leelanau are important goals in Leelanau's comprehensive strategic plan. Sharing what and why we do what we do can only grow awareness and appreciation for our remarkable community.

“Being a well-kept secret is not a great business plan,” admits Rob Hansen, Head of School.

Leelanau is delighted with the new friends, colleagues, and partners joining us on our beautiful campus. It doesn't take them long to recognize the magic of this place. “It feels like a movie set,” was a favorite reaction from a member of Leelanau's newest partnership, The Glen Arbor Players.

Similarly, outreach and volunteerism is an important part of our learning process. “Leelanau kids love to work” is a common refrain when we step in to assist area nonprofits, the Park Service, and the Leelanau Conservancy.

Counterclockwise: The Glen Arbor Players rehearse and perform “Kalamazoo” and “Kitchen Witches” in our school auditorium, the Food is Love class prepares and serves lunch for a Traverse City food bank, Leelanau hosts the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference in August. Rob Hansen standing in the school's Auditorium, a cornerstone facility built in 1953 as part of the “new” Leelanau campus.



Northern Michigan Small Farm photo credits: Gary Howe and Katrina Daniels

AND EXPANDING COMMUNITY



Counterclockwise: Spring and Fall Educational Consultant visits to the Leelanau campus, North Flight emergency transport practicing landings on Leelanau's soccer field, supporting alumna and trustee Gretchen Knoblock's Pony Pals program, Summer weddings on the Leelanau School beach, volunteering at Samaritan's Closet on MLK Day, students clearing fallen trees for the Leelanau Conservancy and moving sand for the National Park Service, one of two community blood drives on the Leelanau School campus.





HISTORY

FAMILY

WE ARE HISTORIC. MULTIGENERATIONAL.

This past academic year, particularly November's Thanksgiving Feast, was a delightful reminder of Leelanau's legacy. Within minutes of being seated, feast guests started to connect the dots on their shared Leelanau history, memories, and stories. It was a true family affair—complete with disco pumpkins!



1



2



3

1. Trustees Lisa Pappas '82 and Gretchen Knoblock '82 were friends and roommates with new Res Life instructor Avery Kostrzewa's mom, Amy '82.

2. Danica's mom, Emily Cutler, graduated Leelanau in 1999, and Danica will graduate during Leelanau's 99th year!

3. Sonja Dean, Valedictorian of the class of 1990, watched her son, Kiernan Dean-Hall, join the Leelanau faculty in fall 2024. Kiernan is awesome smart, too!

4. The Kindel House Family at Thanksgiving Feast.



4

“ I believe we are born and perfect in every way, not unlike the acorn or the pine seed I am holding in my hand...We don't need to change, life is a journey of becoming who you truly are... Things impact how straight this pine, or sturdy this oak will grow, but everything you need to be who you are is in you. You have it within you to reach great heights, to weather the storms that life brings...Any graduate of Leelanau is no stranger to storms or challenges...In Anishinaabek tradition, we are taught that to grow healthy and strong, you have to be in a healthy forest, healthy soil, with the right and different ages of plants and trees with you. It's an ecology of spirit, and Leelanau has been, and will be that place for so many people to heal the forest of their experience up until this point...Don't go changing, just be who you are and go forth and be a part of the healing of the forest that surrounds this magical, intentional community of Leelanau. ”

- Tricia Denton, Graduation Speaker
Leelanau Parent and Trustee



6. Graduation speaker, Tricia Denton, serves on Leelanau's Board of Trustees and is pictured above with her family—Cecelia '20, rising junior Thomas, husband Sean, and incoming freshman Ursella.

7. Emilissan's '25 mother learned about Leelanau from alumna Milu Muhungo '99, which helps explain her extraordinary journey to Leelanau from Angola!

WE ARE FAMILY.



5. “ The Leelanau School has been like a dream come true for our family! We have felt so taken care of from the first phone call to our first semester in the books. We have gained a new family. We feel seen, heard, embraced—especially our son! The best part is he is happy learning again in the most amazing environment!!! ”

- Michelle Bordeaux,
Leelanau parent

4. “ The Leelanau School has been a great experience for our son. He was struggling and we didn't feel like his previous school had the resources for someone who might not excel in a traditional learning environment. The Leelanau School's focus on hands-on learning and the individual student has been a life changing thing for Max. He is engaged and challenged, and my wife and I feel more involved than ever in his education, despite our child being away from home. We're grateful to be part of the Leelanau family! ”

- David and Jennifer Fairman Kirchegeessner '87
(son Max '25 is second from the left)



8. Three generations of Karners at the Thanksgiving Feast. Welcome to the family, baby Atticus!

9. Jesse Karner '00 hanging around at June's Alumni Reunion/Retreat.

WE ARE TURNING 100!



Leelanau School Centennial Campaign

Leelanau's recently adopted strategic plan includes increasing critical scholarship support for students in need, sustaining the school's financial future, and providing more professional development opportunities for the staff.

The Board of Trustees has committed to raising \$5 million by 2029 to augment these goals. The focus will be on annual, endowed, and planned gifts to support scholarships, build an endowment, provide more professional development, and eliminate the last remnants of old debt.

THEY WILL NEED YOUR HELP!
Please answer the call when it comes.

TO INQUIRE ABOUT A CENTENNIAL GIFT

contact the Board of Trustees at
boardchair@leelanau.org

or via the Development Office
at 231.334.5841 or
development@leelanau.org



Leelanau School Centennial Celebration Summer 2029



We are mapping out plans for a campus-wide Leela-palooza in celebration of 100! Be ready to book your travel, share you photos and stories, and rally your friends to join us for the fun.



WE ARE IN THE SPOTLIGHT



SEEN. HEARD. KNOWN.



For those who know and love her, it should come as no surprise that Elizabeth Blondia has been named one of the ten 2025 Outstanding Educators in our region. This Award is in recognition of dedication to student success and positive impact in the school community. “These educators excel in their academic instruction but also embody the essence of true mentorship. They inspire a love for learning, foster critical thinking, and cultivate an environment where students feel valued and empowered.”

- Spokesperson. Karen Browne



The Leelanau School is honored to have received a \$50,000 grant from Rotary Charities of Traverse City in May 2025. This “Assets for Thriving Communities” award will help transform our Auditorium into a vibrant hub for the arts, cultural enrichment, and community gatherings. With this support, the space will welcome students, neighbors, and local organizations—fostering growth, creativity, and stronger connections for all.



Jack Simermeyer, Student Council President and Salutatorian of the Class of 2020, has been elected to serve as the youngest member of Leelanau’s Board of Trustees. Jack recently completed a BA in Political Science at the University of Puget Sound, where he sat on the student senate and was Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Undergraduate Political Science Journal. Jack is currently serving in Campaign Communications for Washington State’s Speaker of the House, Laurie Jinkins.



Head of School Rob Hansen has become a highly sought out guest speaker on the small boarding school and Independent Educational Consultant circuits. While many schools are scrambling to address rising youth mental health challenges within their communities, The Leelanau School’s holistic approach treats emotional wellness, identity development, and academic growth as inseparable parts of a healthy adolescence—a model for other schools and educational communities.

WE ARE WHAT WE SHARE

LEELANAU'S STONE SOUP

Remember the tale of stone soup? A traveler places a stone in a pot of boiling water and invites curious villagers to help. At first, people hesitate—what good is a stone for supper? But one by one, neighbors step forward. Someone offers a carrot, another a handful of beans, another a bit of meat. Soon the pot is brimming with flavor, and the entire village gathers to share a meal richer than anyone could have made alone. The story is not about the stone—it is about the generosity that transforms scarcity into abundance.

The Leelanau School is that big cauldron. Every gift to Leelanau—whether small or large—adds an essential ingredient. A pinch of herbs, a hearty potato, or a meaty bone: each contribution enriches the whole. Together, they create a sustaining blend that nourishes our students and community.

Our school thrives because of this spirit of cooperation. Alumni who remember their Exploratory trips, parents who have seen their children flourish, neighbors who value the arts and culture we can bring to Glen Arbor and Leelanau County—all add to the pot. Each gift strengthens our shared table, extending opportunity, creativity, and belonging.

Now, as we grow our village and extend our reach, we invite you to bring your own ingredient. Your gift—no matter the size—makes the whole soup richer. When we work together, Leelanau becomes more than a school: it becomes a feast of learning, resilience, and joy, shared around a table of kindness.

Ways to Give



- Return the enclosed envelope
- Make a one-time or monthly, recurring gift
online at leelanau.org/whoweare
- Assist with our Faculty Wishlist later this fall
- Support Giving Tuesday on December 2, 2025
- Speak to a Trustee re: Centennial Campaign Support at boardchair@leelanau.org
- Learn more about the Alumni Key Scholarship by visiting leelanau.org/alumnikey
- **Contact Kate Olson, Director of Alumni and Development, at 231.334.5841 or kolson@leelanau.org to make a credit card gift, or discuss gifts-in-kind, planned gifts, stock transfers, IRAs, etc.**



Will you add to the pot today? Together, we can make a soup worthy of every student who hungers for growth, community, and a place to belong.



**YOU ARE THE
SECRET
INGREDIENT THAT
MAKES ALL THE
DIFFERENCE!**

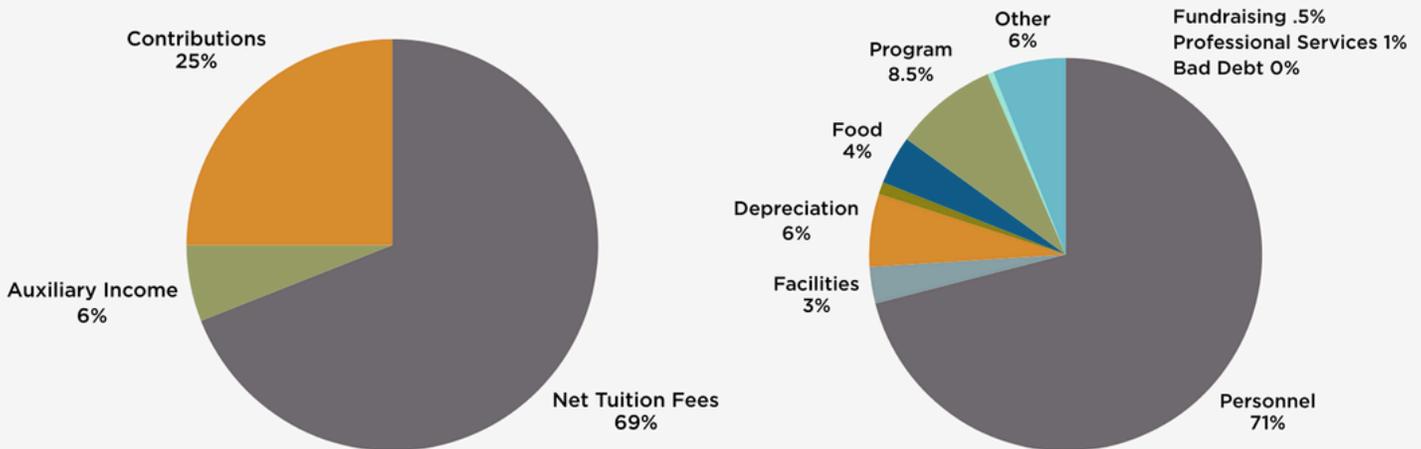
YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION



FY25 Income and Expenses

Operating and Other Income = \$2,603,139

Operating and Other Expenses = \$2,957,415



As the cost of food, insurance, and energy skyrocketed this year, Leelanau held fast to careful spending, directing every dollar back to students and faculty. Remarkably, our expenses today remain nearly identical to what the school community spent two decades ago. While old debt from decades past still lingers—now less than \$1M—we are committed to eliminating this burden as soon as possible.

Thanks to you, even in this challenging climate, our students flourished. Your generosity touched every corner of campus. You supplied art materials, laser engraver tools, waders, and greenhouse equipment for hands-on learning. You underwrote community celebrations like the ice-skating party, Snowball Dance, and casino-themed Prom. You even saved one of Leelanau’s treasured Voyageur canoes.

Your support also sent faculty and staff to national conferences for professional growth, stocked our English classrooms with new books, and made possible a visit from Educational Consultants whose insights and connections continue to shape our work.

Last fall, you rose to the “double the impact” challenge—raising more than \$100K in just twelve weeks to secure a matching pledge. Leading the way, Leelanau’s Board gave with both generosity and heart.

Above all, your gifts open doors. By providing scholarship support, you ensure Leelanau remains accessible to the students who need us most. You change lives.

THANK YOU. WE ARE SUSTAINED BY YOUR KINDNESS.

WE ARE GRATEFUL

Our gratitude flows like the Crystal River, steady and enduring, shaping the landscape of our community and carving deep channels of connection over time.

The Leelanau School is honored to recognize these alumni, parents, friends, foundations, and organizations that contributed to our programs, capital, and scholarship funds or made gifts-in-kind between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. We are deeply grateful for our community of supporters—our champions.

Leadership Gifts of \$50,000 and above

Anonymous

Joan Conway Family Fund

Mary Beth Hardwicke and Bob Provenzano

Rotary Charities of Traverse City

Leadership Gifts of \$10,000 and above

Bob and T. Boles

Charlevoix County Community Foundation

Mike* and Rhea Dow

Richard and Hope O'Quinn Hana*

David M. Handy Estate*

Peder Jacobson*

Kalamazoo Community Foundation

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Miller III

Dellora A. & Lester J. Norris Foundation

John and Janet Norris

Jane* and John Todd III

Charitable and Sustaining Gifts and Gifts-in-Kind

Barbara Alldredge

Anonymous

ScottAllen Barber* | Kohahna Foundation

Sharon Wilbur Barovsky

Lisa Berkel Beiriger*

Joan Berland

David and Lindsay Best

Russell* and Trary Bishop III

James Blondia

Elizabeth and Joe Blondia

Elaine A. Bridges, grandmother of Ellie Herman* '22

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Leelanau Legacy Society

We are especially grateful to alumna **Melissa Richter Ayers '83** and her husband, **Michael**, for creating a new planned gift to help cover Exploratory expenses, ensuring that students facing financial hardship can fully participate.

To learn more about establishing estate gifts, please contact the development office at 231.334.5841 or development@leelanau.org.

“Who are we, if not measured by our impact on others? That's who we are! We're not who we say we are, we're not who we want to be — we are the sum of the influence and impact that we have, in our lives, on others.” 21
— Carl Sagan

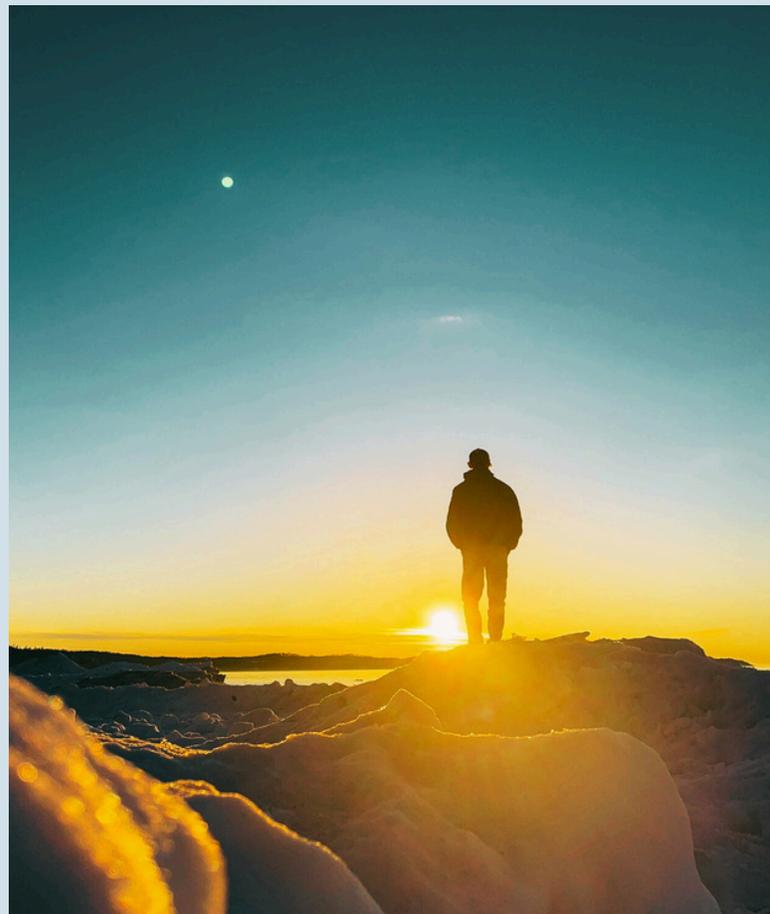
WE BELONG HERE



At Leelanau, on the banks
Of the Crystal,
Is the place for which
I always yearn.
Leelanau is the place
I hold sacred.
And my friends,
This is why we return.



— chorus from “Leelanau”
by Dean Cavill ‘72



Slow Down and Look Around

—Anika Eisenstat | Coordinator of Res Life

At Leelanau, small moments are where the magic happens. We can all get caught up in the big moments of life, preparing our youth and selves for the next milestone - making sure students are understanding the material, accumulating developmental assets, and learning independence in order for them to be productive members of society. Sometimes we all forget to slow down and look around.

The small moments often get glossed over in life because we are reaching for the next big goal. The quiet victories, opportunities for help, and daily demonstrations of character can get lost in the shuffle of life. But these moments are what make learning and living special. It is essential to celebrate all the small things because “life is a journey, not a destination.”

Success in education requires taking time to get to know students and families. It is what makes growth and development possible. It is what allows a school to become a connected community, a village where learning is fueled by joy and all students thrive. It’s a “Better Way To Learn.”

Building a Learning Community Based on Joy and Belonging

At Leelanau, we intentionally make the time to sit down with our students, families, and coworkers to have conversations about life. It is an essential part of our curriculum. We provide opportunities for students to try new things and celebrate our students stepping out of their comfort zone. Our intentionally small community provides us with the power to see each moment, celebrate them, build upon them, and watch our community grow stronger. Doing so adds value to others, builds curiosity, reveals wonder, fosters gratitude, and creates connections.

To find joy in learning, we need to pay attention to every footstep.

And gratefully, we are taking these footsteps in one of the most beautiful places on earth. We are rooted here. We are forever connected to the ecology of this incredible place we call Leelanau.





THE
LEELANAU
SCHOOL

1 Old Homestead Rd
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WE ARE LEELANAU

Celebrating seven decades of alumni at June's Reunion/Retreat!



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