

# SPIRIT

THE LEELANAU SCHOOL MAGAZINE

seeking balance

a better way to learn  
FALL 2022



# seeking balance

by Rob Hansen  
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As Leelanau educators, we devote a great deal of time contemplating balance. Is our student-to-teacher ratio right? Is the school day the right combination of work, play, and rest? Do we offer the right balance of course offerings to meet the potential of our students? Is our student body balanced across grade levels to help to ensure the continuity and growth of our program?

Because of Leelanau's educational aspirations for this critical moment during adolescence, we also focus on the important balance between discovery and exploration in the classroom and beyond. As teens seek greater independence, they must assume greater responsibility. As students participate in our Leelanau social environment, they encounter new and different perspectives. As their personal goals take on greater significance, so does their obligation to work harder and persevere. The grandeur of living becomes so much more adventurous and exciting while increasingly anxious and consequential. But in our intentionally small boarding environment, this transition from childhood to adulthood allows us to observe and address these juxtapositions in ordinary and extraordinary ways; embracing the ebb and flow and ups and downs of living is something we endeavor to teach at Leelanau and master throughout our lives.

Achieving **BALANCE** as we walk this beautifully tumultuous path demands a perspective much wider than the moment at hand. Tying our emotions to any single accomplishment or challenge will whipsaw and distract us from achieving broader success. Staring at our feet will cause us to miss the sunrise. The best way to steady our balance is to look to the horizon. We look to the horizon and imagine tomorrow.

**Balancing this broader perspective, or long game, becomes our daily habit at Leelanau. The horizon is our mission: to ignite a passion for learning, celebrate everyone's unique learning styles, and encourage and sustain a culture of acceptance. This is our core contribution in helping young people prepare for successful and meaningful lives. Our stepping stones are the vast collection of moments we create and encounter: challenge, work, celebration, relationships, awkwardness, health, traumas, courage, anxieties, and thankfully, laughter.**

Students step along these stones, balancing themselves with growing confidence because they are focused on the horizon and surrounded by a community that will help them if they stumble. They are cheered onward by those who have experienced the journey themselves. Our community is supported by faculty, families, classmates, and the alumni who came before them. Supporting today's students, *in the same manner you were supported in your time*, most assuredly steadies their feet and fuels their resolve.

Thank you for continuing to encourage the students of The Leelanau School, enlivening their experience with your engagement and gifts, and demonstrating the critical balance that will enrich their journey.



# SPIRIT

THE LEELANAU SCHOOL MAGAZINE

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**SPIRIT** Magazine was born from the idea that since its founding in 1929, Leelanau has been fueled by a spirit to ignite a passion for learning – to inspire, push, and support student discovery; to encourage creativity and meaningful questioning, and to immerse students in meaningful learning.

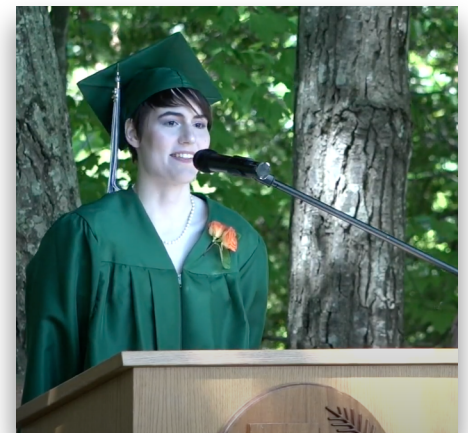


## the versatile class of '22

The small but mighty Leelanau Class of 2022 taught us lessons in balance this year. Our seniors navigated the pandemic with grace and resilience, experienced personal hardship and triumph, surmounted illness, expressed creativity, demonstrated academic excellence, and led their classmates with honor and friendship - qualities and skills that will carry them through their next learning odysseys.

While preparing for college studies in political science, music, Spanish literature, engineering, and renewable energy vehicle design, this curious and versatile group were members of our Mighty Snappy band, wrote and performed original songs and poetry, created beautiful visual art, led our student council, and were dedicated stewards of our community and environment. They skied and snowboarded, participated in (and won) The Leelanau School Outdoor Challenge, and researched and presented senior seminar projects as diverse as "three styles of classical piano music" to "the similarities between 1930s Germany and today's Russia."

We will miss their Leelanau leadership, laughter, and spirit on campus! Godspeed, seniors.



**“ Overall my time at Leelanau has truly been one of the most happy accidents I have every had the pleasure of taking part in. Leelanau took me, an overachieving student on the brink of burnout, and helped me find my love and curiosity to be excited to learn again. So, I guess for myself at least, Leelanau truly was a better way to learn. ”**

**- Valedictorian Ellie Herman, '22**



# exploring courage and community

“ One day, the mountain that is in front of you will be so far behind you, it will barely be visible in the distance. But the person you become in learning to get over it? That will stay with you forever. And that is the point of the mountain. ” - Brianna Wiest



Not many schools welcome students to Fall Orientation only to show them the door a few hours later. Leelanau’s September exploratory programs are designed to do just that. Students arrive on campus, unpack, tour, eat dinner, then repack for an outdoor adventure with classmates and teachers.

Leadership, resilience, interconnectedness, courage, and awareness are but a few of Leelanau’s core values introduced during Exploratory week. In the forests and along the waters of northern Michigan, many students find themselves in brand-new circumstances: tenting, paddling, hiking, and bugs. For some, this is the first hint of what true connection to an FAU parent or teacher really means at Leelanau. For many, the experiences are a defining moment in their Leelanau journey. In her graduation address to our senior class, alumna and valedictorian Libby Benjamin '07 remarked,

“ One of my earliest and strongest memories of Leelanau was sophomore exploratory week...I hadn’t spent the night in a tent anywhere but my back yard...we spent the next day paddling the Pigeon River, which was another new experience for me...both of the days were long and tiring but were capped off by long hours laughing and getting to know one another around the campfire. Exploratory week allowed my class to bond and form relationships that have lasted to this day, even when we rarely see each other in person. ”

Was it fate, accident, or ecological balance when Libby bumped into Leelanau’s class of 2022 while leading a mushroom hike on a beautiful day last fall in the Pigeon River natural area? We’ll credit exploratory magic and the Leelanau Spirit!



**Leelanau's exploratory experiences** do not end with Fall Orientation. The senior Voyager canoe trip, Winter Term travel, backpacking on North Manitou Island, and adventures throughout the year provide opportunities to discover, develop, learn, bond, and rejuvenate.

Not limited to outdoor programs, exploratory learning also includes local field trips, service projects, musical and theater performances, gallery exhibits, guest speakers, etc.

### **New in 2023**

Through an inspirational alumni gift, planning has begun for expanded exploratory experiences throughout the year, devoted specifically to leadership. These new hands-on experiences will reinforce one of Leelanau's important core values and provide an immersive introduction to our Leelanau community for mid-year enrollees.





# uncommonly

As an intentionally small school, Leelanau is deliberately big-thinking regarding curriculum offerings for students. Our college-preparatory, immersive teaching approach is enhanced by the creative talents of our faculty. Courses are designed with student interests in mind. At Leelanau, faculty have freedom to teach to student curiosity and passion - not "the test."

This year, three new and exciting courses will be offered in the natural sciences; freshwater ecology, sustainability | greenhouse, and ornithology. Facets of these subjects have been explored during Leelanau's Winter Term, but this opportunity will enable students to delve deeper into the pressing ecological issues of our time while gaining a better understanding of our interconnectedness to our environment and each other. All three courses will be offered by Bruce Hood. Head of School, Rob Hansen, will step back into the classroom to teach chemistry, his academic specialty.

Leelanau is delighted to integrate hands-on learning and entrepreneurship with the addition of the new Charles E. Scripps, Jr. Creativity Center and state-of-the-art laser cutter/etcher. Funding and architectural plans have been secured to create this workspace devoted to metals, welding, wood, 3-D printing, and laser projects.

Winter Term also provides a wonderful window into creative teaching. Last January, students explored courses as wide-ranging as German Culture, Zen and Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (yes, students built a bike in the Cook Learning Commons), the popular LGBTQIA+ Representation in Film and Television course, and a cooking class aptly titled "Food is Love." Songwriting, skiing, and other Leelanau favorites rounded out the month.

In January 2023, Leelanau is excited to reintroduce international travel with a trip entitled "Sharks, Service & Sustainability" at The Island School on Cape Eleuthera, Bahamas.







# good curriculum and space

It is fair to state that The Leelanau School is one of the most beautiful campuses on the planet. The Crystal River, Lake Michigan, and the pines and oaks that adorn our northern Michigan home are unparalleled.

It is also fair to say campus interiors need to keep pace with this sense of place and beauty. Gratefully, many generous friends have stepped in recently to help update critical needs for learning and living, better reflecting the beauty and resources of our campus.

Generous gifts from the Doug and Dianne Cook family of Chicago kick-started these renovations. Last year's transformation of the Karman Activity Center was followed this spring by major improvements to our dining room and learning commons. Paint, carpeting, and new furnishings have updated these shared learning spaces. New carpeting in the Academic Building was installed late summer, and upgraded lighting in the Cook Learning Commons is forthcoming.

Through the generosity of an anonymous donor family, Cochran House will also receive new furnishings this fall.

And, for the first time in nearly 30 years, new construction will begin with the new Charles E. Scripps, Jr. Creativity Center, located adjacent to the Cora Beals Art Center.

Our sincerest gratitude for all those helping us provide beautiful spaces and resources for our students and faculty.

**If there are projects that speak to your Leelanau experience or goals for our community, please contact Head of School, Rob Hansen at [rhansen@leelanau.org](mailto:rhansen@leelanau.org) or Kate Olson, Director of Alumni and Development at [kolson@leelanau.org](mailto:kolson@leelanau.org).**



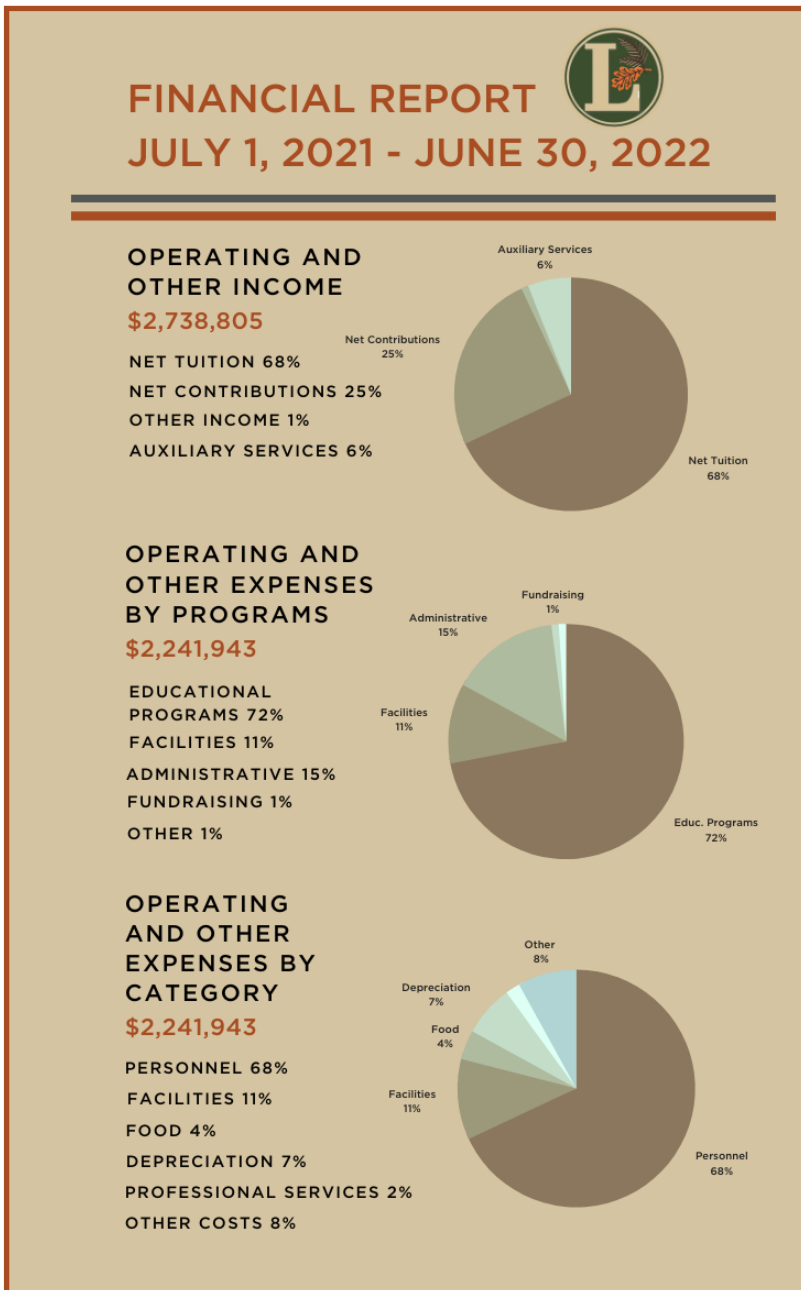
# annual report | 2021-2022

## balancing the budget and forward momentum!

Leelanau emerged from FY22 with a balanced budget and a buoyed spirit. Thanks to strong enrollments, generous contributions, and careful planning, we had the fiscal resources to support students and faculty, replace exploratory and classroom equipment, continue long-overdue renovations and repairs, purchase new vehicles, and launch a new Creativity Center for arts and academic programs. Strong enrollments for Fall 2023 are encouraging for the months ahead.

Leelanau is also on the brink of eliminating the final burden of decades-old school debt thanks to heroic efforts from dedicated Leelanau friends and alumni. This last step toward financial independence will free up nearly \$100,000 a year to devote to the programs and people of Leelanau.

We are truly grateful for those guiding and uplifting our mission through leadership and charitable giving. We welcome continuing and new support to ensure this forward momentum toward our future and second century!



- SO MANY WAYS TO GIVE ...**
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  - refer a student
  - make an online gift
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  - create a sustaining gift
  - make an in-kind donation
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From September 1 until December 31, 2022, **YOUR** gift will initiate a **BONUS** gift from Leelanau's Board of Trustees!

- **Returning Donors** | \$100 will be automatically added to your contribution!
- **New Donors** | Our Trustees will add \$200 to your gift, no matter the size!
- **New Sustaining Donors** | Your commitment to a monthly donation of any size will be increased by \$200!



TO MAKE A GIFT or learn more, please:

- Return a gift in the enclosed envelope.
- Visit our website at [leelanau.org/balance](https://leelanau.org/balance)
- Or contact: Kate Olson  
Dir. of Alumni and Development  
1 Old Homestead Rd  
Glen Arbor, MI 49636  
[kolson@leelanau.org](mailto:kolson@leelanau.org)  
231.334.5841

## What's a sustaining gift?

A sustaining gift is a monthly contribution, charged automatically to your credit card or checking account, just like Netflix or Disney+.

You decide the gift amount and the length of your philanthropic giving.

Our current sustainers make gifts ranging from \$10-\$200 monthly, providing valuable and reliable support to The Leelanau School.

To join, please visit [leelanau.org/giving](https://leelanau.org/giving) or contact Kate Olson at [kolson@leelanau.org](mailto:kolson@leelanau.org).

# Our light is strengthened by your generosity. Thank you.



The Leelanau School is honored to recognize these alumni, parents, friends, foundations, and organizations that contributed to our program, capital, and scholarship funds or made gifts in-kind between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

## LEADERSHIP GIFTS (\$10,000+)

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“ When you rise in the morning  
give thanks for the light, for  
your life, for your strength. ”  
- Tecumseh

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Donald Mitchell  
Marcia Rose  
Mary Soltys

# cultivating curiosity

Integrating academic preparation and support, whole-person wellness, and joyful learning takes a team of dedicated faculty. Creativity, adaptability, patience, and teamwork are concepts promoted and practiced. "My love language is persistence," admits Provost and Learning Skills Department Chair Becca Dymond.

Every effort is made to balance a rigorous academic schedule within a day built around community, movement, reflection, and fun. For many enrolling students, these educational integrations and connections have been lost over time due to large class sizes, remote learning, neurodiversity, or sheer boredom in their local classrooms.

“ Sometimes students arrive as hesitant or reluctant learners. There are a myriad of reasons why that might be the case - but my hope is always that we can reopen their curiosity. Curiosity is something that’s not rewarded in many school environments - so kids who are curious in class get shut down. It turns learning into a very linear, factory kind of approach where you have to finish specific tasks to put the work behind you. But for real learning, we need to take the time to ask those questions and to be curious. One of the things I love most about teaching is when kids ask me questions I can’t answer, and when I see the looks on their faces when I tell them, ‘I don’t know - but let’s find out.’ ”

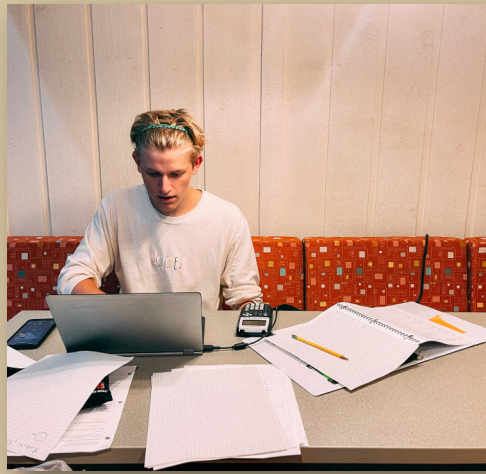
- Bruce Hood | Math and Science Department Chair,  
Science and Ceramics Faculty Member



Education  
is what remains  
after one has  
**forgotten**  
what one  
has learned  
in school.

- Albert Einstein





# Curious about what's next for Leelanau?

We are never out of ideas - or needs- at The Leelanau School! There is much to do to enrich programming, bolster faculty salaries, increase scholarship support, and update our campus facilities and technology. Renovations to the Art Center, Student Center, Auditorium, Observatory, and Chippewa Lodge are long overdue and in our sights.

To join these efforts, please visit [leelanau.org/balance](http://leelanau.org/balance) or contact Rob Hansen at [rhansen@leelanau.org](mailto:rhansen@leelanau.org).

## The Leelanau School Core Values

- interconnectedness
- awareness
- leadership
- integrity
- courage
- resilience
- stewardship





# balancing tradition with today

“ I realized in all the cases where I was happy with the decision I made, there were two common threads; Surround myself with the smartest people who challenge you to think about things in new ways, and do something you are not ready to do so you can learn the most. ” ~ Marissa Mayer



Few schools have the luxury of creating a learning philosophy, and fewer still have the privilege of watching that philosophy take root and bloom over a near century. As we reflect on The Leelanau School's rich and varied past, the Beals' plan to build an educational community focused on challenging and creative teaching, a balanced approach to work and play, and immersion in nature still rings true. It is evident in our day-to-day practices and our aspirational goals for Leelanau students and graduates. It is our Leelanau tradition.



Discovering or re-learning joy and balance in the classroom (and life) often begins suddenly and unexpectedly. A kindness, a connection, a moment of inspiration, or a passion uncovered. It arrives when the anxiety and stresses of the past are put into context and given a name. It may spark during an engaging conversation around a campfire, or the moment a new language "clicks" in your brain. It shines when someone you respect is proud of your work and you believe them.

The Leelanau School has never taken these moments of joy for granted. It is our passion, purpose, and origin story. It has taken many forms over the years, but the core remains. Deep thinking, challenge, faculty support, and a sense of place have been our common language over the decades.



Technology, cell phones, social media, neurodiversity, COVID, mental health, school and social anxiety, gender identity, diversity, equity, inclusion and so many other current-day school concerns were not likely on the Beals' or Hueys' to-do list when shaping The Leelanau School, but how remarkable that the school they designed to build curiosity, resilience, confidence, life-skills, and fellowship are the perfect answer and antidote to today's educational challenges.

How fortunate we are to be a part of this innovative and enduring community.



“ Those adventures piled up to make a magnificent educational experience. Skipper's attitude and techniques made us optimistic, and I am still optimistic about tomorrow in spite of reading current events and in spite of all the confusion in the world ... Without curiosity, without criticism, without people working together to get things done, it would be a pretty discouraging world. But with the right attitude life becomes a thrilling educational experience. ” - Will Hawkins '32



“ It was great to be back for the reunion in July and walk the campus seeing graduation green, crossing the Crystal River where we caught our specimen for biology class, and strolling past the fire pit to the beach and observatory where we not only learned about the night sky, but read Thoreau, Shakespeare, and Dostoevsky in senior year English class. In conversations with current faculty, I saw the same creativity and passion for hands-on learning that I remember well from my days at Leelanau. ”  
- Virginia Budinger Krueger '93



“ During my tenure and subsequently, the school has featured a low student-to-faculty ratio that affords enhanced learning prospects and a family-style community. I believe that this educational situation follows and remains true to the school founders' vision. The longevity of some key, exceptional classroom educators has facilitated this special situation that has proved invaluable to many Leelanau School students. ” - Rick Taylor '86



## 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.



# Leelanau news

## new trustees

Leelanau parent Barb Garrow and alumnus J.P. Larkin '87 were elected to the Board this spring, and joined Trustees on campus during the August 2022 meeting.

With backgrounds in finance, business, organizational performance, and personal connections to Leelanau, they will make splendid additions to our dedicated leadership team.

Additional biographical information can be found at [leelanau.org/discover](http://leelanau.org/discover).



## welcome director of admission, Kate Caliri

Kate Caliri holds a B.A. and M.A. in Education from Cornerstone University, where she graduated as salutatorian and summa cum laude, respectively. She is the child of school teachers and has taught preschool, elementary, middle, and high school, with experience in public, parochial, charter, and independent schools and special education programs. She joins us from The Pathfinder School in Traverse City. Kate has taught high school math, developed a creative writing curriculum and citizen science project with local nature centers, mentored new teachers from GVSU, created healthy-living clubs, formed partnerships with local art museums, led retreats for HIV patients in Africa, and was the

favorite teacher of many generations of students. Kate has received many awards for teaching excellence.

Kate's vast teaching career makes her acutely aware of the issues facing young learners, and has witnessed the positive transformations possible through challenging, creative, and compassionate teaching. She will continue the Leelanau Admission tradition of listening, helping families put words to their experiences, and offering them a warm and patient hand throughout the admission process.



## alumni - please save the date

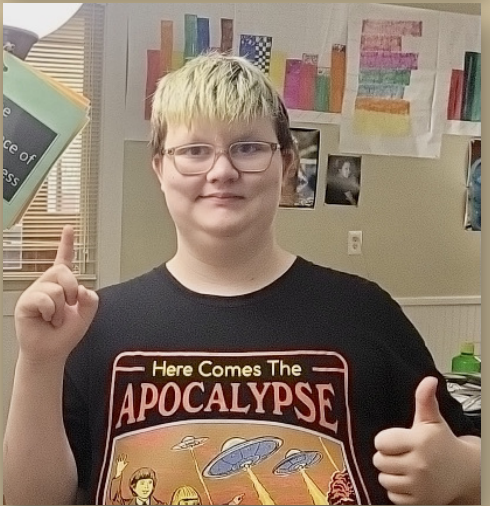
We were delighted to return to our "all-come" Alumni Reunion in July 2022. Forty guests spent time catching up, visiting favorite spots on campus and the region, and exploring updates on campus.

We are pleased to announce:

**ALUMNI REUNION 2023 | JUNE 23-25, 2023**

Details will follow in the new year. Please plan to join us!





## admission corner | welcoming NEW faces

Leelanau is accepting applications for Winter, Spring, and Fall Terms 2023, and your connections could help a deserving student discover our great school.

Leelanau's new Director of Admission, Kate Caliri, looks forward to speaking with you, and ushering your friends, family, or students through the discovery and admission process.

For additional Admission information, visit [leelanau.org/admission](https://leelanau.org/admission) or call 231.334.5826.



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