



# PRINCETON-BLAIRSTOWN

# OUTLOOK

Fall 2020

## PBC ADAPTS - OUR CLIENTS RESPOND



Family Campers cross the Three-Line Bridge during a socially-distanced hike on Campus.

Over the past eight months, the Princeton-Blairstown Center (PBC) has had to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. Limited in the type of programs we could offer in-person, our Program Team created new ways to help young people develop the social-emotional skills that are so important during these challenging times, and our clients have responded with great enthusiasm.

### Spring and Fall: Virtual SEL Lessons and Environmental Education Videos

Because our usual school and community-based groups could not travel to Blairstown, our team put together weekly SEL lessons to help teachers, youth leaders, and students build relationships and social-emotional skills. Nicole Spinelli from ASCS Middle School wrote, "I just wanted to reach out and thank you for sharing all the SEL activities. I have been sending them to my teachers to do

with their students during their class meeting times on Fridays. I have received such positive feedback; the students have really been enjoying the activities." In addition, recognizing the clients in quarantine wanted to explore nature more than ever, the team produced a series of environmental education videos and Facebook Live segments, releasing new content several times each week.

### Summer and Fall: Virtual Summer Bridge and Family Camp

PBC's flagship Summer Bridge Program provides students with a week of academic and leadership enrichment completely free of charge. While we couldn't share the same experience this year, our program staff researched, planned, and executed a **Virtual Summer Bridge (VSB) Program** for two of our partners from Trenton – Mercer Street Friends and the Center for Child and Family Achievement. Students were provided with

"PBC in a Bag" that included STEAM kits, snacks, a PBC tee shirt, an age appropriate book, and other goodies. PBC Facilitators engaged with students through both live programming and asynchronous lessons. Students built catapults, practiced meditation and mindfulness, and conducted other hands-on experiments with the materials supplied.

To better utilize the Blairstown Campus in the absence of student groups, we created a new **Family Camp program** that was fully booked in July and August and then extended to the fall. Families spent three hours a day engaged in staff-led programming including hiking, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, paddle boarding, movie nights, bingo, campfires, and games. Every day, Chef Bob prepared delicious farm-to-table style meals for families to enjoy on the Egner Lodge porch.

Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive: • We had a great time and made wonderful memories here. Thank you for everything. It was truly a healing experience for our family after many challenging and anxiety-inducing months during the pandemic.

• Each of our family members had a phenomenal experience during our stay. [The] activities provided my family with the opportunity to develop our teamwork skills in addition to our social and emotional stability as individuals.

• At the end of one of the days here my kids said the only thing that could have made this day better is if we found treasure.

• This was our second time . . . We really enjoyed our time. Danielson was wonderful and very comfortable . . . You have an amazingly welcoming and kind staff. They went out of their way consistently to greet us, engage with us, etc. The nighttime hike was a true highlight. We were the only family there last week and we received royal treatment...My parents, both in their 80s, really enjoyed the time as well. It was their first vacation during the COVID pandemic and they felt safe and welcomed.

(continued on Page 3)

# Remembering Joe Bolster '52 : A Life of Integrity & Purpose

Joe Bolster '52, Former Trustee and Honorary Trustee, passed away in July at the age of 92.

Joe's daughter Peggy shared, "My father had a big place in his heart for Blairstown and all it stood for and did." And, Blairstown has a big place in our hearts for Joe and all that he stood for. Ev Pinneo '48, Former Executive Director, wrote "Joe's caring and support of PBC's mission population are a true reflection of his long-time impact on the youth served. A life nobly lived, Joe."

PBC's former Board Chairs shared the following thoughts and remembrances:

Jane Fremon '75: "What a life he lived, filled to the brim with integrity and purpose. An inspiration for all of us."

Janet Dickerson: "Joe was a force of nature, and he leaves great memories and a lasting legacy! With gratitude for his life."

Mark Antin: "When Joe spoke, he did so quietly and from the heart. Everyone listened and attended to his message. He was a Blairstown stalwart. His spirit will be fondly remembered and carried on by those who follow him."

Peter Smith: "If PBC had a 'Hall of Fame,' Joe Bolster would be in my 'Top 5' nominees. He was a marvelous human being."

Joe was born in Albany, New York and grew up in Williamstown and Pittsfield, Massachusetts. After graduation, he served a year in Occupied Japan before returning to the U.S. to study at Princeton on the G.I. bill. At Princeton, Joe majored in history and became an active member of the school community, joining the Senior Class Council, becoming President of The Princeton Charter Club, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Inter-Club Committee.

He ran cross country and track at Princeton, captaining both the freshman and varsity track



Former Trustee Joe Bolster (right) with his son at PBC's 2019 Soirée Under the Stars.

teams during his four-year career. In April of 2019, he trained for and competed at the Penn Relays at the age of 91!

After graduation, Joe embarked on a 39-year career at Princeton University, settling in town with his wife "Tink" and raising 14 children together. He started in the Bureau of Student Aid and subsequently held positions in the Admissions Office and as Secretary of the Alumni Schools Committees. In 1965, he joined Princeton's Annual Giving Office, where he spent the next 26 years, 24 of them as Director. In his role as Director of Annual Giving, Joe worked with PBC's first Executive Director, John Danielson, to help raise funds for one of PBC's very successful capital campaigns. During his directorship, the Annual Giving Office raised more than \$200 million in fully unrestricted funds for the

for more than a decade, Joe helped PBC complete several important capital initiatives. In addition, Tink and Joe were generous supporters of PBC for nearly 30 years, and also left a planned gift through a charitable trust.

In honor of Joe's unwavering support of PBC, the Board of Trustees voted in September to rename The Farmhouse, "The Bolster Farmhouse" so that other servant leaders may remember Joe's incredible example in furthering PBC's mission.

Joe is survived by his six daughters (Carrie, Jane, Mary, Martha, Libby, and Peggy), eight sons (Joe, Jim, Andy, Michael, Tom, Charley, John, and Richard), and 20 grandchildren (Martha, Frances, Kate, Bolster, Willa, John, Dana, Henry, Michael Mac, Callye, Jake, Eva, Luke, Jack Henry, Ethan, Clay, Jack Dashiell, Kayla, Magdalena, and Leo).

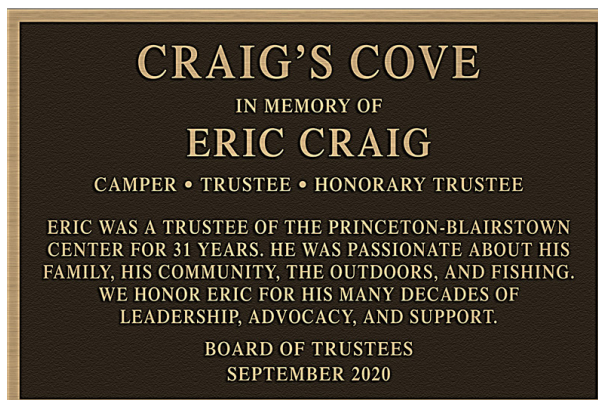
University. Joe was also a member of the Board of Advisors, the Committee on Minority Affairs, and a coach for the freshman cross country and track teams.

After his retirement from the University, Joe joined the Board of the Princeton-Blairstown Center (PBC) in 1999 as a University-appointed Trustee during President Harold Shapiro's tenure. Joe served on the Board for 14 years from 1999 until 2013, when he became an Honorary Trustee. Leading PBC's Board development efforts

## In Memory of Eric Craig - Craig's Cove

In the Spring 2020 "Outlook," we wrote an article about the passing of Former Trustee and Honorary Trustee, Eric Craig. As a correction, Eric served on the Board of the Center for 31 years, not three as we erroneously stated. In 2018, Eric was appointed an Honorary Trustee.

Eric grew up in Princeton and attended the Princeton Summer Camp as a child. After graduation from Princeton High School, he worked at various building and carpentry jobs, but his real passion was his work at Princeton University, where his career spanned 33 years.



Eric was active in the Witherspoon-Jackson Neighborhood Association and several community groups, and served on the school board for Princeton Public Schools. He was passionate about his family, his community, his faith, the outdoors, and fishing. To honor Eric's deep commitment to PBC, the Board of Trustees voted to name a section of the Bass Lake shoreline "Craig's Cove." Jody Zengulis, Director of Facilities, repurposed some rustic benches that will be placed at the site, creating a special place for staff and guests to fish and enjoy Bass Lake - just as Eric did as a camper and a Trustee.

## PBC Adapts (continued from Page 1)

### Fall: Virtual Programs, Off-Site Programs, and Wilderness Leadership School





The Virtual Summer Bridge Program was so well-received that our Trenton partners and a New York City partner asked PBC staff to provide a **Virtual After School Program** two days a week throughout the upcoming school year. Additionally, our team provided Virtual Orientations for several long-term partners including Delaware Valley Friends

School, Dwight Englewood, and Princeton University Preparatory Program.

In October, PBC staff travelled to Newark to provide five days of off-site programming for each high school grade attending Great Oaks Legacy Charter School (GOLCS). Staff worked with students outdoors at Independence Park for teambuilding, communication skill work, and other activities (see page 4 for more).

PBC's Facilitators also provided additional teambuilding for a cohort of GOLCS Fellows.

Finally, for local students who live near our Blairstown Campus participating in a hybrid or remote learning, we created a **Wilderness Leadership School** that meets each Wednesday. This nine-part series includes lunch and a full day of lessons in STEAM, environmental science, ecology, wilderness and outdoor skills, canoeing, nature journaling, and more.

<p><b>Family Camp</b> 205 Participants</p> <hr/> <p>60 Days of Program Delivery</p> 	 <p><b>Off-Site Programs</b> 169 Students &amp; Staff</p> <hr/> <p>6 Days of Program Delivery</p>	<p><b>Virtual Orientations</b></p> <p>371 Students from 3 Partner Organizations</p> 	 <p><b>Wilderness Leadership School</b> 14 Students</p> <hr/> <p>9 Days of Program Delivery</p>
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Like all nonprofit organizations, PBC has been hard hit by the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. But as you can see, we have worked together to reimagine our program offerings and continue to serve young people throughout our region. **If you can, please consider a more generous gift during these very difficult times. Our ability to adapt and provide innovative programming that meets real needs and keeps students, chaperones, and staff safe is only possible because of the generous support of our loyal donors.**

With gratitude,

Sarah Tantillo, Ed.D.  
Board Chair

Pam Gregory  
President & CEO

## Fifth Annual Links to Youth Golf Outing Exceeds Expectations

On October 2nd, PBC held its fifth annual Links to Youth Golf Outing at the Fox Hollow Golf Club in Branchburg, NJ. In a year of great uncertainty, our supporters came through – together,

registration fees, sponsors, and the silent auction raised nearly \$83,000, and the event hosted a record 90 golfers! The proceeds support our ongoing work with young people from under-resourced communities, helping youth develop and strengthen self-awareness, responsible decision-making, teamwork, leadership, and other 21st Century skills through virtual and in-person programming.



2020's winning foursome (left to right): Joe Duarte, Antoine Johnson, Michael Dawson, and event co-chair Derek Simpkins.

In non-pandemic years, our golf outing supports our award-winning Summer Bridge Program, helping approximately 550 students lessen summer learning loss and build critical social-emotional skills at our 268-acre campus in Blairstown, NJ. Our hope is that the public health situation will allow us to welcome middle and high school students back to attend our award-winning Summer Bridge Program free of charge, and in person, in the summer of 2021.

This year's winning foursome included Michael Dawson of North Brunswick, NJ; Joe Duarte of Columbus, NJ; Antoine Johnson of East Brunswick, NJ; and Derek Simpkins of Ringoes, NJ.

We are grateful to our golfers, silent auction participants, and our new and returning sponsors: AMSkier Insurance; Berkshire Bank; Blue Ridge Lumber Company; Bryn Mawr Trust; ConsensusHealth; Fieldston Associates; Gennet, Kallmann, Antin, Sweetman & Nichols, PC; Inside Edge Consulting Group, Inc.; Lear & Pannepacker, LLP; Mazza Recycling; Northfield Bank; Payday Payroll; Pinneo Construction; Princeton Corridor Rotary Club; and Shawn Baldwin Building, LLC.

# Great Oaks Legacy Students Build Relationships & Community

High school students at Great Oaks Legacy Charter School (GOLCS) made the following comments during a day of team-building for each grade level, led by PBC Facilitators at Independence Park in Newark, New Jersey last month:

"It felt good to finally feel a little bit normal."  
"I never met some people in person [before]."  
"It was more fun than I thought it would be."

Senior Program Manager Ron Franco noted, "With GOLCS choosing to offer all-remote learning right now, this was the first time any of the students had a chance to see one another in a school setting in person [this year], and also the first chance for some teachers to meet their students face-to-face, too...It was very important to GOLCS leadership that the students come together to spend a day bonding, sharing, and strengthening community ties."



Activities like the "Walking A-Frame" were part of the day's experiential education focus.



Students in each high school grade spent a full day teambuilding with PBC Facilitators.

Originally, the plan was to have students travel to PBC so students and staff could connect face-to-face, outdoors in a socially distant

way, using the healing power of nature and working with PBC's Facilitators to gain skills, build community, and process the challenges and traumas experienced over the past seven months. However, because parents and administrators were uncomfortable with students travelling together on buses, PBC staff and GOLCS administrators brainstormed how to achieve the school's goals while bringing the excitement and adventure of a PBC trip to the students safely.

Working in small groups of 10 to 12, PBC Facilitators lead a series of problem-solving initiatives for each grade level cohort using the park as their classroom. Students and staff engaged in a half-dozen initiatives that required them to engage in critical 21st Century skills like communication, cooperation, creativity, and critical thinking. Activities included reconstructing shapes that only one group member had seen; moving objects and people across a specified distance while working as a

cohesive unit; and determining how to most efficiently complete an assigned task that required every group member to step on numbers in order while standing in a circle, refining their approach over multiple rounds to apply lessons from their previous attempts.

Students also enjoyed having lunch together and "feeling a little bit normal" for the first time since March. GOLCS staff talked about how important and uplifting it was to connect directly with their students.

The tenets of experiential learning were central to the days' activities, encouraging students to learn from one other through active participation; share with peers in thought-provoking debriefs and reflections following each activity; and work with Facilitators and teachers to imagine ways to transfer their shared experiences back to their day-to-day interactions with classmates, at home, and in the community.

## PBC Elects Two New Trustees



**Jessica Perry** currently serves as principal at Six Doors Consulting, and has spent more than 20 years overseeing transformation efforts of major media companies and non-profits. Most recently, as Chief Digital Officer at the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), she led revenue, content, and digital reinvention as head of an award-winning 53-person sales, editorial, and creative team. Jessica's prior senior leadership roles focused on digital strategy, business development, and marketing at Atlantic Media, Condé Nast Digital, and The Wall Street Journal. She also recently served as chairperson for the Software & Information Industry Association. Jessica holds both a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Journalism from Northwestern University.



**Karen Richardson** is a former summer staff member of PBC and currently serves as Dean of Admission at Princeton University. She spent three summers working at PBC's Blairstown Campus during her time as an undergraduate at Princeton. Prior to her return to Princeton, where she served as Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Admission from 2002 to 2004, Karen spent more than a decade serving in the admissions office at Tufts University. She also worked in the public education system, serving as deputy superintendent for the Boston Public School System from 2005 to 2008. Karen received a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from Princeton University, and a Master of Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

# Where Are They Now? PBC Alumna Sarah Raffinan

Sarah Foster Raffinan '99 had not been to the Blairstown Campus in more than 20 years when she returned this summer with her husband and three children for PBC's new Family Camp program. Since the start of the pandemic, Sarah and her family had not ventured far from home. Family Camp provided her an opportunity to return to a special place while also offering her family a safe vacation. Being back on Campus brought a flood of memories for Sarah of her time as a Princeton undergraduate and working at PBC during the summer before her senior year.

## How did you first learn about PBC?

I was involved with the Student Volunteer Council at Princeton and there was a binder of volunteer opportunities for students. I knew I wanted to be a teacher and had an interest in working with youth from all kinds of backgrounds, and I loved being outdoors, so PBC seemed like a perfect fit.

## What was your job in Blairstown?

I don't remember the exact title, but I was a supervisor who helped support the people who were working directly with kids. I also got trained on the high ropes courses and worked with groups. Part of my job was to help kids who were struggling to thrive – I loved spending my time focusing on those kids.

## What was a highlight of your time at PBC?

A highlight was definitely the people I worked with. I became friends with Ray Ferrer, a PBC pro who really helped me get acclimated even



Sarah Raffinan and her family during their visit to Family Camp at PBC this summer.

though we were very different. Chris Shepherd used to organize trail runs for the staff on the weekends. These people were Blairstown at its best.

## How did your time at PBC impact how you saw the world as a young person?

My time in Blairstown was a profound, eye-opening experience. I lived and worked with people who were totally different from me

and it was a real gift. It helped me live in a more diverse world and it made me a better citizen because of that.

## In what way did your time at PBC influence your future career choices?

The experience didn't change my desire to be a teacher but it changed the kind of teacher I was. I learned empathy and compassion; I learned how to ask questions and how to listen. I found my voice, even in hard situations. I also think it made me a better parent. My kids benefit from me having been there because I learned so many skills that translate to how I parent. I hope they have a different kind of compassion and acceptance because of my time at PBC.

## Do you have a story or memory to share?

There are so many memories! I remember participating in an African drum circle as part of a staff development exercise, and sleeping under the stars on the football field. I used to love being assigned to work in the kitchen and I still love to cook today. We used to have to walk through the woods at night and I remember thinking one night, "Wow! I can't believe I'm brave enough to do this."

If you wish to share your story, please contact Meredith Murray at [mmurray@princetonblairstown.org](mailto:mmurray@princetonblairstown.org) or 609-216-7025.



The PBC Summer Staff of 1998 pose in front of Bass Lake. Sarah is fifth from right in the back row.



Princeton-Blairstown Center  
13 Roszel Road, Suite C204A  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
(609) 921-0070  
www.princetonblairstown.org

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**IS THE PRINCETON-BLAIRSTOWN CENTER INCLUDED IN YOUR WILL?**

The greatest assurance that the valuable work of the Princeton-Blairstown Center will continue for another century is through a bequest from you. Please consider the Princeton-Blairstown Center as you provide security to those you love and honor and include us in that special group.

Through a bequest, trust, or other estate planning tool, you will join the **1908 Legacy Society** which honors the visionaries who have left an unsurpassed legacy like Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bolster, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cornwall, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Egner, Mrs. Mary "Randy" Hobler, Mr. and Mrs. John Sherrerd, and Mr. Winthrop Short. Their gifts have helped to ensure that deserving youth can experience the transformative power of our Blairstown Campus.

Please call Director of Development Meredith Murray at 609.216.7025, or email [mmurray@princetonblairstown.org](mailto:mmurray@princetonblairstown.org) for more information.