



# HERON NEWS

SPRING  
2025



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## WE HAVE BEEN ENRICHED!

Being a completely new student to Riverside, I was given the usual pitch about how this school would give me opportunities. Honestly, I didn't buy it. How can someone take a mundane curriculum and turn it into an enriching experience? Now I know that what makes Riverside special is how the teachers and students commit to enriching their learning, through the Biography Fairs, Community Service Day, taking the classroom skills into the real world, or any other of the many Riverside experiences that surely impacted you or your children in meaningful ways.

During the Biography Fair, students choose an important figure related to our grade's learning content, and over the course of a month or two, we do a deep dive into everything about them. In preparing for our presentations, we learn life skills, such as how to take a tremendous amount of information and present it in a way others can understand, and how to ask for help when projects become overwhelming. We connect with each other and other studies as we consider how these people relate to the themes and eras we're learning about in class.

Service learning happens in varied ways throughout the year, but on Community Service Day the whole school engages in acts of service. Whether it is picking up trash along the side of the road, baking pies for The Darling Inn Meal Site, visiting The Pines Rehab Center, or putting together care packages for neighbors impacted by last summer's floods, we reinforce the importance of sharing and giving. This

year we nested our efforts in the theme of "One World," and we gathered and discussed how each group's work demonstrated community unity. That helped each student understand how their effort, even if it was simply making a card, can be part of something bigger than themselves.

Throughout the year we often have chances to apply what we learn to the real world. 4th and 5th grade students read about our democracy and lawmaking, and then get to visit the state house to observe a legislative session. Additionally, second graders designed a bridge at the Echo Leahy Center to help wildlife cross after learning about the importance of wildlife. These experiences enrich our understanding of how our learning applies to real life.

The enriched education that Riverside provides helps students understand cause and effect, how to tackle seemingly impossible projects, and understand how their actions can lead to change for the better. Riverside develops an eagerness to learn and grow that I think differentiates us from many students and scholars. I hope that in my 8th grade year, the school will continue to provide opportunities, and I hope to help others find the way of learning that they love and that helps them grow.

*Skylar Lindsay '26*

*Winner of the Lindbergh-Newell  
Humanities Award*



# What Does Enrichment Look Like?

## Showing Students That Our Relationships Off Campus Matter



The theme of this year's work was "One World," reinforcing for students that we are each interconnected with the individuals, groups, and organizational efforts nearby and around the globe. After making care packages for neighbors along Red Village Road impacted by summer floods, chopping

many pounds of squash and baking pies for the free

Thanksgiving at the Darling Inn Meal Site, picking up trash on roadsides, and bringing joy with cards and personal visits to The Pines Rehab Center and the Riverside Life Enrichment Center, students worked as a group to represent the experience on a wooden puzzle piece (crafted by teacher Joel Gilbert). When we came back to share as a whole school, we put the puzzle together, and then turned it over to reveal a map of the globe on the other side. The puzzle brought to life the "One World" metaphor for students of all ages, with the active learning and engaged citizenship that drives our mission.

## Knowing Our Extended Families Care About Our Learning

Each year we are thrilled to welcome Riverside's extended family to campus on Grandparents and Special Friends day. This year we started the morning by showing off what we'd accomplished on Community Service Day (see above) and linking it to a performance of "We are the World." Friends and family then spent time with students in classrooms, engaging in both specially designed activities for visitors, and also experiencing much of what a typical Riverside day is like.



The kindergartners taught their grandparents the variety of math games they had learned for practicing number sense of 1-10.



Grandparents learned some Latin verbs in order to be able to play a Latin version of Battleship with their grandchildren.



5th graders interview their grandparents and special friends about what life was like when they were young.



## Having Choice In What We Learn

These big research projects teach Riversiders so much more than just information about the life and achievements of important world figures. Over the course of weeks of work, they learn how to break big tasks into manageable parts, how to seek help from peers and teachers, and to apply their own strengths to the expression of their learning. Between 3rd and 8th grade they deepen and strengthen their research, critical thinking, writing, presenting skills, while also developing greater independence in all those areas. Additionally, each teacher assigns themes to their class that are richly connected to their developmental stage or to other topics of study during the year: 8th grade students of World Issues consider international figures connected to recent events; 6th graders work with the limited historical resources we have about people from ancient history; 3rd graders discover the impact that children can have when they want to make a difference.



8th graders Lila Yerkes as Queen Elizabeth, Lucy Moriarty as Yoko Ono, and Maya Franson as Paul McCartney, it was fun to imagine how these three historical figures would have interacted in real life.



7th grader Amos Donn as Steve Jobs



6th grader Eula Lechuga as Cleopatra



5th grader Alex Swope as speaks to a 3rd grader



3rd grader Emily Reed as Malala Yousafzai

## Learning In The Real World

New discoveries and the application of prior learning when we take Riverside students off campus engages their minds in much different ways than we can on campus. They are enriched by seeing the real context of what they've studied, they interact with individuals who work daily in those fields, they are asked by new educators to think in a new way, they demonstrate to our community that Riverside cares about the future of our world. And possibly more important than any of this, many individual students are stepping beyond their comfort zones to be away from family and familiar routines, and to interact with different peers positively and patiently.



5-7th graders got a close look at the engine of a KC-46 refueling aircraft at Pease Air National Guard Base.



2nd graders Avery Temple and Gertrude Nesbitt tried to create a safe crossing bridge to help native Vermont animals in their migration across roads during an experience at the Echo Leahy Center.



4-5th graders observe the tidal movement on the seacoast of NH and discuss the forces at work on tides with Riverside teacher Nelia Rath



6th grader Audrey DeSaint Johnsburys Acadmyrdins thanks a veteran for his service at Lyndonville's Veterans Day Ceremony in November.



# In Memoriam



**Patrick Ebbett '82** was an alumnus of Riverside's first class and the artist of our first heron logo. He grew up the son of two scientists and was shaped by the Green Mountains, stubborn mud seasons, and spirited dinner-table debates. He developed a sharp wit, a reliable work ethic, and a deep appreciation for the Northeast Kingdom.

Patrick attended Lyndon Institute and University of Vermont. He

moved west to work on a dude ranch and as a horseback guide. He later attended law school at Lewis & Clark in Portland, Oregon, where he built his career as an appellate attorney.

Patrick was also a cross-country skier, a gourmet maximalist, and a lifelong believer that everything tastes better over a campfire. There was no invitation too ambitious or last minute for him to accept. He was, by many accounts, the consummate guest, rounding out many a Thanksgiving table or spontaneous road trip.

Patrick died in April, leaving behind two brothers, six nieces and nephews, and a remarkable number of "best friends."



**Former Teacher Peter Sahlin** passed away in March, during Riverside's Play Week for Into the Woods, which was dedicated in his honor. During April's Festival of Poetry and Prose, students crafted a paper mache bowl out of pages from books Peter taught and filled it with messages to be given to his wife Lavinia as a memory from Riverside. After graduation, we planted a flowering crabapple tree with a dedication plaque for Peter near the Granary.

One could say that Peter wrote our mission statement, he certainly was a leading voice when it was significantly revised soon after he began teaching at Riverside. For two decades in the Granary, Peter taught grammar, Shakespeare, Salinger, Hinton, and so many other wonderful authors. He challenged students to memorize, enact, and reflect on American History. He coached soccer, spearheaded 8th Grade Day, created our system of Houses, and hosted memorable overnight experiences. Peter also cared for a herd of unicorns he said lived in the attic of the Granary, and felt they were emblematic of the Riverside experience.

To those alumni, former staff and friends who came to visit us this spring and remember Peter: you wanting to be together on campus with us was both a testament to the impact of Peter's work here, and also wonderfully supportive of us as we carried on the work of Riverside's mission.

## Class of 2025

**Cora Adams**  
**Carter Amidon**  
**Russell DesJardins**  
**Maya Franson**  
**Earnest Hyde**  
**Zora Kane Tornquist**  
**Conall Kennedy**  
**Louisa Linehan**  
**Lucy Moriarty**  
**Noelle Washington**  
**Lila Yerkes**

Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Edward R. Murrow High School  
Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Saint Johnsbury Academy  
Saint Johnsbury Academy

## Class of 2021

**Emily Counter**  
**Koji Ebbett**  
**Anika Giese**  
**Zoe Glentz Brush**  
**Cameron Griffin**  
**Aubriella Holden**  
**Ethan Lussier**  
**Simon Miller**  
**Beatrix Shackleton**  
**Christopher Watson**  
**Amelie Whittaker**

Rochester Institute of Technology  
University of Vermont  
University of Vermont  
University of Tampa  
University of Vermont  
Husson University  
Vermont State University, Castleton  
Westminster College  
gap year  
Norwich University  
Colby College





# Alumni News



**Rachael MeyersJones '06** married Loquen MeyersJones in April. Her classmate and good friend Asterik Muradian was also in attendance. Rachael lives in Oakland, CA, where she is Executive Director of Youth on Root, a nonprofit dedicated to championing the Youth Environmental Justice Movement in California. Rachael still holds dear the "consistent support,

attention, and care I got at Riverside as my little brain navigated way more than I'd ever know. My teachers took the time to learn how to teach me, never daunted by the way my mind worked. The expectations were high, and the encouragement that I was more than capable of reaching them was essential, even when I struggled to believe in myself. I credit Riverside, and Peter Sahlin in particular, with shaping much of my philosophy as an educator and long-time youth worker. Riverside gave me a consistent community of care when I needed it most, something I strive to do for the youth in my orbit every day."

*"The consistent support, attention, and care I got at Riverside as my little brain navigated way more than I'd ever know."*

—Rachael MeyersJones



**Simon Miller '21** is graduating from Killington Mountain School and will be going to Westminster college in Salt Lake City, UT to study business. This winter Simon won his second national freeski championship for rail jam in open class in Copper, CO. He then competed in the world renowned Jib League, and out of 150 athletes that competed, he was among 15 finalists selected to

compete against freeski industry legends. Simon said it was the most fun competition he has ever entered and it will be available for viewing on YouTube in the near future.

**Katherine Keenan '11** is living in Kittery, Maine, and working at Paul College, UNH's business school, as their photographer/videographer. Katherine loves mentoring and teaching college students in photography and videography, as well taking college courses herself. She's also "launched a pretty robust side hustle photographing weddings." Katherine also occasionally writes for Yankee Magazine, and has a piece coming out in their summer issue about the Newport Folk Festival, of which she's really proud. In her free time she tackles home renovation and gardening projects with her boyfriend Peter or walking her dog Annie at a nearby beach.



**Krystianna (Ingalls) Simoneau '14** had a big year getting married and graduating from University of New England with a Master's in Applied Nutrition and Dietetics. She is now a board-certified nutritionist with the WIC program in Newport, VT. "This job was the reason I wanted to be a dietitian and is so fulfilling. I get to help moms and kids achieve healthy diets,

help parents work through picky eating, help moms troubleshoot breastfeeding difficulties, and provide healthy foods and nutrition education for an at-risk population. We also work closely with other resources and partners in the community to foster a healthier community." Krystianna also visited Riverside's 8th grade health class last year as a guest teacher on the topics of dangerous and unfounded nutrition advice on social media, fad diets, and the real importance of the three macronutrients. She says she's thankful for Riverside shaping her strong sense of self with regular practice in responsibility and self-efficacy.

**Sitota LaRocque '24** is enjoying her high school experience at The Killington Mountain School: "it's small like Riverside and I'm getting a great education on top of the amazing athletic opportunities." Sitota is training daily in the sport of downhill mountain biking and this winter did some of that training and racing in New Zealand. This summer she plans to race in the Eastern Cup Series and the Monster Energy Pro Downhill Series in Utah and California.

# Roy Starling Departs Riverside



*With Head of School Laurie Boswell and parent and engineer Bob Peters after breaking ground on the new barn, 2012.*

After five years of leading The Riverside School, and another eleven years of teaching at Riverside and Lyndon Institute, Roy Starling is leaving the Northeast Kingdom and returning home to Florida to be with his extended family.

Roy's legacy will be marked by a number of institutional accomplishments, including the development of a multi-tiered support system of student supports and special education, utilized by 20% of Riversiders. He has also focused on networking and strategizing to advocate for independent schools as an essential part of the educational ecosystem in Vermont, especially the NEK. He also met his goal of being ready to pay off the mortgage for the new barn early, while also fundraising and stewarding volunteers to erect a pavilion on campus used for learning and community events, dedicated to current and former Riverside teachers.



*Turning grammar into games in Spanish class with 6th graders Rossen Goodwin '14 and Cameron Dwinell '14*



*Working on Latin translations with 7th graders Rose Breen '12 and Erin O'Farrell '12*

Roy began as head of school in the summer of 2020, and his creative and energetic leadership, along with his experience with facilities and construction during the pandemic was a real asset to the community. He was steadfast in his effort to keep the school open and Riverside's program as regular as possible, while supporting individual teachers and families with helpful communications, and spending hours after school and on weekends making sure the facilities and materials were adapted to meet guidelines.

Board President Dave Kennedy says that "Roy possesses a unique combination of intellectual curiosity, limitless energy, flexibility and a commitment to improving the lives of the people with whom he interacts. He loves Riverside both as a school and as an embodiment of the community that it represents, and as he worked to make changes and improvements, he remained laser focused on making sure the values and mission were strengthened. He will leave Riverside even better than it was, which is all that we as a Board could ask of a leader."

Roy has also continued teaching Latin classes; leading electives on topics like solar powered engines, running, or trail building; and organizing enrichment activities like Latin Club competitions and field trips.



*This spring Roy led the Latin Club on an overnight trip to participate in the Harvard Certamen in Cambridge, Mass, including an experience seeing the Boston Symphony Orchestra and visiting the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.*



# MOVING FORWARD WITH CAROLINE THOMPSON

Middle school Mathematics Teacher and Team Leader Caroline Thompson has accepted the role of Head of School for the 2025-2026 school year. Current Head Roy Starling said he “can’t imagine a person with a better skillset for this task and a better understanding of this wonderful ‘unicorn’ of a school we all love so much.” Roy and Caroline have been teaming throughout this school year to orient her to the job. President of the Board Dave Kennedy commented “With over 20 years of teaching experience, a passion for education, and a deep understanding of our mission, Caroline has already demonstrated her love for Riverside, the students, and the community. The Board is delighted to have her take on the role.”

“ *I can’t imagine a person with a better skillset for this task and a better understanding of this wonderful ‘unicorn’ of a school we all love so much.* ”

—Roy Starling



## FOUNDERS SCHOLARSHIP FUND



### THE FOUNDERS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Our surviving founders, James and Sally Newell and Tim and Merle Thompson, along with former Head of School Laurie Boswell, have inspired and seeded a Founders Scholarship Fund, which we hope will enable worthy students who could not otherwise afford it to attend Riverside. It has also been a goal of departing Head of School Roy Starling to broaden the types of students and families that Riverside can serve.

Once again this year the tried-and-true system of public tuition to independent schools, which is widespread here in the Northeast Kingdom, was threatened by legislators and organizations who don’t understand the role we play in the educational ecosystem of Vermont. The tuitioning of students from towns without a school (such as Kirby, Guildhall, grades 7 and 8 in Peacham) allows students from these towns to Riverside. Today over 60% of the Riverside student body receives public tuition funding.

Riverside is determined to maintain diversity with or without public funding. To build Riverside’s sustainability should such funding systems ever change, and to increase accessibility to Riverside for families in towns like Burke, Lyndon, Sutton, Wheelock, and St. Johnsbury (whose public funding goes only to their own schools), we hope to build a fund of at least \$425,000, from which we can draw for tuition assistance. Our current system is limited to drawing from our operating budget for such support.

We hope you’ll consider making a one time gift or a pledge over the next three years to help us reach our goal.

*Make your  
contribution today!*

[www.theriversideschool.org/donate](http://www.theriversideschool.org/donate)



# HERON NEWS



The Riverside School  
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## Upcoming Events

Powers Park Pool Party . . . . . August 17  
8th Grade Day . . . . . August 25  
Back to School Orientation . . . . . August 25  
First Day of School . . . . . August 27  
Fall Field Trip . . . . . September 10-12  
Yard Sale . . . . . October 4

*The complete 25–26 calendar is on our website.*

## ALUMNI ROLES AT GRADUATION



**Marc Lamontagne '16** welcomed the opportunity to fill some big shoes as the accompanist for our processional, Gaudeamus, and Somewhere Only We Know. He wore a pink bow tie in Peter's memory.



Our guest speaker was **Joleil Whitney '14**. The 8th graders worked in advisory to identify someone who would have both valuable insights to offer them and an understanding of the Riverside experience. Joleil is a producer at WCAX and has described departing Head of School Roy Starling as extremely important to her as a teacher, both at Riverside and Lyndon Institute. The theme of her speech was to not be scared by the missteps or lack of plan in your future, but to have faith that if you keep trying, great things will come along.



Trustee **Cath Kane '85** honored Roy with a speech about all the lessons we can take from Roy and that he can take from Riverside, if we think metaphorically about herons, and their collective noun, "siege." The trustees gifted Riverside with a new Heron sculpture in Roy's honor, crafted by local blacksmith Steven Bronstein.