



The Owllet

Hoosac School Source for Alumni News and Nonsense

Positive Solutions

Alumni and Hoosac Trustee, Jill Larson '91, brings Leadership and Life Skills to Students

Jill Larson, a 1991 graduate of Hoosac School, returned last year to work with prefects on developing better life skills to positively impact student leadership on campus. Jill said her early years at Hoosac taught her some of the core values she strives to help instill in others today. Jill and her husband Lars, launched the Positive Solutions for Success Total Wellness Program inspiring a subsequent book written by Jill, Positive Solutions for Success, born out of her passion to help others find balance and in doing so, achieve success.

The goal is balance. When you feel safe, secure, loved, then you have the confidence to achieve what you want to achieve.

help from teachers.

“I think I always had doubts, like even a word problem in math; I didn’t know how to approach it. There are so many subtleties and when you don’t have confidence, you doubt yourself all day long about how you’re going to approach a homework assignment or a test.” She said supportive faculty made a difference. And the experience taught her the importance of staying organized and more importantly, of asking for help.



Jill Larson '91

“I really believe that that’s one of my little superpowers,” said Jill. “I think it came from being dyslexic and knowing that I had to ask for help.”

Jill’s determination resulted in a nomination for prefect at the end of IVth Form. “It was challenging to be a leader at that age, because nobody taught me how to be a leader.

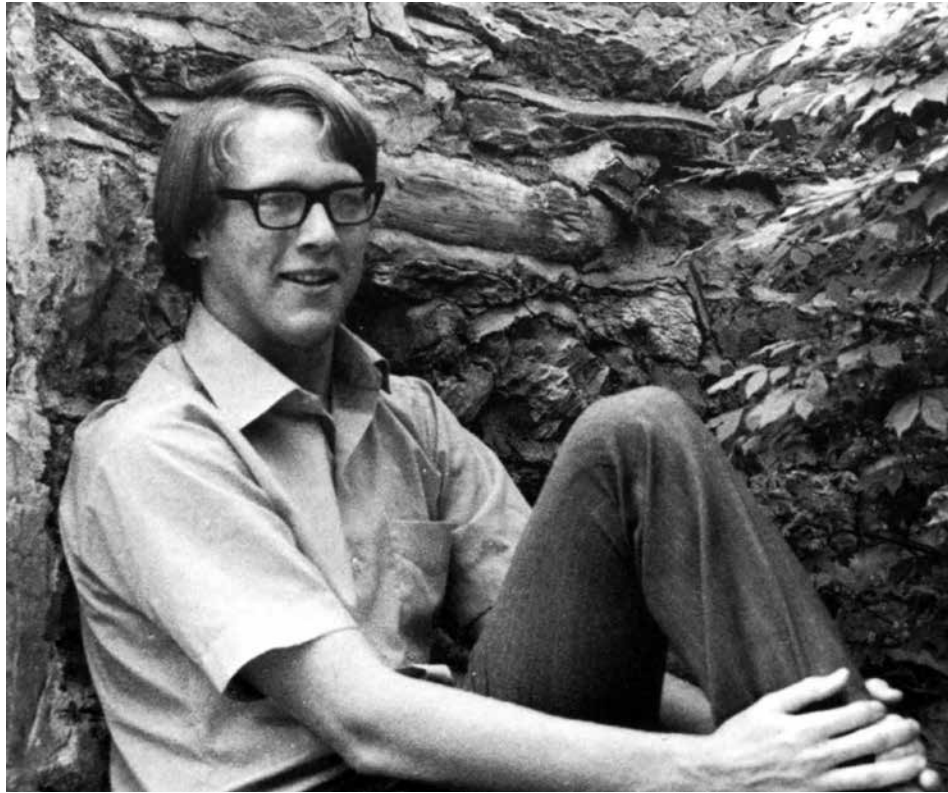
You were expected to lead. Presumably by example.”

She said it was a task that taught her to rely on the strengths of others in working out the best way to lead, organize, and accomplish the tasks assigned to the student prefects. “We were sort of collaborating and helping each other. A lot of ideas in the book Positive Solutions for Success came from everything I learned from Hoosac out onward as far as how to be organized.”

Following Hoosac, Jill developed her leadership skills, becoming involved in the hospitality industry and active in environmentalism. She met her husband, now a chiropractor



Celebrating 50 Years of Public Service



Dave during his last year at Hoosac

I am entering my 50th year of public service. I was a volunteer firefighter with South Schodack Fire Department, being a line officer with their rescue truck. I spent 35 years in law enforcement starting as a Police officer with Schodack Police and moving on to the Rensselaer County Sheriff's as a Road Patrol Deputy, where I was promoted to an investigator.

I later went on to work for the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles as an investigator in their Auto Theft Unit. I worked in Kingston for two years, returned to Albany and then went to a Federal Task Force in Rouses Point, NY working with US Custom, Border Patrol, New York State Police, and Plattsburgh City Police for five years.

My promotion to Senior Investigator took me to Brooklyn in our Office of the Deputy Inspector General.

After five years, I finally returned to Albany in their Identity Theft/Homeland Security unit chasing terrorist. I retired in 2007 to a great life of golf and camping but did not give up serving. I became an EMT with Castleton Volunteer Ambulance and have served as their President, Vice President and in other capacities within the administrative office. I continue with them today.

In 2017, I ran for and won Supervisor of the Town of Schodack where I oversee over 80 employees as well as being the Commissioner of the Schodack Police. This year will

finish my term and I have decided not to run again.

Retirement will bring a lot more golf, traveling in my 5th wheel, and enjoying life. My wife and I want to spend a lot more time with our six grand children and three grown children. I also stay active in my Masonic Lodge and have served there as well as the State level as a District Deputy Grand Master.

A few years ago that, being a member of Cyprus Shrine, to take up being a clown, so I will progress with that.

I always think of my time at Hoosac and all that it had to offer. For me, it was the best time of my life with so many advantages.

Deus Regit,

David Harris '91



From John Highland '55

via Class Agent Frank Bulkley

This was a little mini reunion we had not long ago at Turnstone Casino in New York. In the photo, you'll find Stan ('56) and Margaret Wegner, Frank ('56) and Mary Romary, myself and Bev Highland, Jim Tucker ('56) and Dave Hebert ('55). I'm sure you remember how we used to watch movies in the dining hall at the old school. One evening we saw *Last of the Mohicans* (1936). When it was over, I went back to my room in the meeting house. Pulsifer came over and told me to get down on one knee, and said, "I dub thee UNCA!" Reason being, that I was always out in the woods. The Wegners and Romarys travel a lot. Stan and Margaret go to Reno and Vegas quite often. They north of San Francisco. We keep active.



Ville Manninen '14 is living in Barcelona studying for his MA in finance at EADA business school. He relocated to Luxembourg this summer and is working as a portfolio officer.



ALUMNI NEWS IN BRIEF

Class of 1960 News

It is with sadness that we remember **Norman Bohn** who died in late June of colon cancer. We all have our memories of Norm, and mine extend to Montclair, NJ, where we both lived along with **Bill Areson** and where the three of us would get together at times when not at Hoosac.

One memory that stands out for me took place on Prize Day when Norman received so many sports awards that someone commented that it could have been called "Norman Bohn Day!"

As I have been in continual touch with Norm these past many years, I will especially miss him.

Bill Areson is currently living in Thailand where he has a house though there are complications for staying due to Covid-19. Bill recently married, and we wish them both God's blessings.

Steve Grochowski phoned recently letting me know that he is alive and fairly well although with greater restricted movement. It was good to hear his voice.

Donald Hunt '59 is doing well and living in his native Rhode Island. At Hoosac, Don was an outstanding soccer goalie and one year played semi-pro soccer in Albany along with Norm Bohn and Steve Grochowski encouraged by Coach Dickie.

Timothy Parsons, Hoosac Class Agent

Hoosac School welcomes *four* new class agents!

Minqi 'Jocelyn' Hu '21, Ethan McDonald '21, Tina Vaccarella White '96, and Steven Heinzerling '72 are stepping up to keep Hoosac alumni connected and updated.

Thank you Class Agents!



POSITIVE SOLUTIONS continued FROM COVER

and health and wellness consultant, and the two began growing a wellness business, while also getting married, having a baby, and buying a house. Jill realized her life of wellness was in jeopardy.

“We started our first natural healing center in 1998 and started offering our Positive Solutions for Success program to schools, businesses, and organizations in 2017.”

Jill recognized early on the importance of life coaching.

“I tell people all the time, when you’re juggling and you feel like you really need to reach out and get help, that that’s a sign of strength; not a sign of weakness. I really like to convey to people that I work with, no matter what age, that getting help is a sign of strength.”

The extra guidance allowed Jill the space to reconvene on her ultimate goal of finding balance in her life. “If you’re not okay with your relationships, or you’re not working out and eating healthy, or not managing your finances well, the whole thing affects your person and stress level.” She said she often hears from mothers who are managing multiple schedules without any kind of calendar or planner. “I’ll meet with a single mom with three kids that have soccer practice and this and that, girls scouts, and they’ve never had a day planner. I just don’t even know how that’s possible; I would be so stressed out. Being responsible for four people and you don’t even have a calendar. I run across that more than you could possibly imagine.”

Jill suggests people take the time to put task to pen and get the thoughts organized and manageable on paper to reduce stress. She also said she tells people not to focus on goals, but instead to revisit the areas of their lives that sustain them each day so they can develop a strong foundation for future success.

“I go through how I’m doing mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially. Am I making, spending, saving, investing; how am I doing with my relationships, my family, my kids, husband, co-workers, friends; how am I doing in each of these areas? It is so easy and natural to balance that when you revisit it daily. And so goals don’t really come into that; the goal is balance. When you feel safe, secure, loved, then you have the confidence to achieve what you want to achieve.”

This year Jill offered her Positive Solutions for Success curriculum to students at Hoosac School. The program includes her book and a planner for each student plus what Jill calls her video “snippets,” labeled by topic. Once a student completes the program, they will be certified as having completed a Leadership and Life Skills Program. They will also have regular access to Jill for questions, followup, and guidance.

Jill said scheduling and maintaining balance takes practice, whether you’re a student or an adult.

“Scheduling is complex. I’m supposed to be here and I’m

scheduled for that. It can cause a lot of anxiety for people.” She said visiting each area of a student’s life can improve not just how they perform, but how they feel.

“If you’re eating a double cheeseburger from McDonalds and washing it down with a soda and fries; you’re not going to feel good. It’s going to affect how you feel health-wise, emotionally.”

Instead, Jill helps students learn to make decisions for themselves based on revisiting each day those areas of their lives which need attention. “Students today feel over-scheduled and overstretched and the international students feel more pressure to perform because they’ve been given an opportunity and an expectation that they need to live up to. I think one of the big problems no one is talking about is that we put a lot of emphasis on good CT scores; we put so much emphasis on those college applications and getting into the best school, but not, to my knowledge, career counseling. Education is really expensive now. So, I’m running into this huge crisis of student debt and for a lot of them it’s because they are confused and don’t know what direction to go in and it’s so expensive; they’re running into debt.”

According to Jill, in the United States four in 10 college students don’t graduate, but still incur the debt of the segmented education. “At Hoosac, I want to teach students how to research careers; teach them how to approach that process.” And doesn’t take much time to teach this simple skill. “In four hours, we can teach them how to research a career and see if it’s something they’re interested in.”

Jill said students are generally reactive and they’ve been taught to be. “Teacher demands, parent demands, we all know what it feels like to just please and react. We can become very robotic. They’re just trying to make their teachers happy and they don’t know themselves enough yet. There’s no breathing space there to be able to make their own decisions. So, if as adults, we encourage them to have those conversations about the decision-making process instead of telling them what to do all the time, they’ll be ready to be an adult.”

Rather than ask leading questions, Jill said start a conversation. “If you ask questions in a leading way, they’re going to feel like you’re trying to control them through the question and people don’t like to feel interrogated. So, if you have a conversation from a place of talking it out, it’ll disarm the person. It’s a lot of brainstorming.”

This fall, all Hoosac students were given a Hoosac planner and a copy of Jill’s book. They will also have opportunities to take or repeat the Positive Solutions for Success Leadership and Life Skills coursework annually. “It’s going to be different when you revisit a year later, and a year later, and a year later, because we’re evolving. No two days alike and we’re going to answer these questions differently and it’s important to have that repetition,” said Jill. Students will receive certification for their participation in the course.

Congratulations



Kelsey Tabor '12 announced in August she will be pursuing her MBA at Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management as a Forte Foundation Fellow.



Jayde Dukette '18 completed her cadet summer training program through the United States Army this summer.

Tyler Derrick '06 and his partner celebrated the birth of a daughter, Scarlett, in August.



David Savic '19 and spouse Hannah recently relocated to Kansas City. David will be graduating from Missouri Valley College in December.



Ryan Moreau '04 and spouse Lauren welcomed a son, Austin, this June.

Michael Forcillo '08 is building a successful career in real estate with the Coldwell Banker Peggy Carter Team of New Hampshire.

Aleksandar Krilov '17 completed his degree from William Carey University.



This staff photo in the 1961 yearbook is one of the few to include all four Frost family members. Marion Frost is listed as “Head of Household and Infirmary,” Frank Frost “Superintendent of Maintenance,” and Gilbert and Frank Frost are listed as “Maintenance.” Wilson Frost, Alan’s great-uncle, is also in the photo. He worked as Maintenance and as the “Relief Night Watchman.”

A Family Affair



In June, Hoosac welcomed Alan and Colin Frost, son and grandson of Jim and Marion Frost, former employees of Hoosac School. Alan’s grandfather, Frank, and his uncle, Gilbert, were also employed by the school. Jim Frost acted as General Contractor during the construction Hoosac’s dining hall.

HOOSAC TODAY NEWS



Selin Oncul '19 stayed on campus this summer and helped show prospective students all Hoosac has to offer. She is currently living in England studying medicine.



J.B. Zissu '69 visited former classmate **Morrison Howard Beach '69** in July at his home in Perkinsville, VT where Beach is restoring a late-18th century farmhouse.

Scott Kiely Yonce '03 visited campus this August and enjoyed a tour with Headmaster Dean Foster and fellow alumni and Hoosac staff member **Matt Laporte '03**.

BREAKING NEWS!

The 2021/2022 school year will open with the highest enrollment in school history (total enrollment, boarding enrollment, *and* female enrollment) as well as the most diverse student population on record with 34 countries currently represented. Hoosac is now the 5th most diverse high school in New York according to *Niche.com*.



Hoosac's Ed Strong '70 takes a moment to peruse the alumni magazine with his granddaughter Lily.



A Post-Pandemic Mental Health Check-in with Hoosac's Mike McCaslin '09

Covid-19 and the shut down of an economy presented an entirely new challenge to the field of mental/behavioral health. With the shutdowns, most of those in-person community supports like gyms, churches, recreational outlets, malls, and social groups or clubs were no longer accessible. As a care manager who works with children with emotional/behavioral health needs, I can say these natural supports are very beneficial for youth and family members. Pursuing an interest or hobby helps people find balance.

Burn-out can follow long periods without access to natural supports. Mental burn-out occurs when you spend long periods of time working, but not enough time on healthy self-care activities. While some activities such as working out at home, reading a book, or listening to music can be done at home, many of the activities that include social interactions were off-limits.

Other natural supports include visits to friends and family. Keeping close communications with your family members is essential, even if by phone or through Zoom. Sometimes you cannot replace in-person reciprocal interactions.

We saw this with children, where school was attended virtually, putting added pressure on care-givers already overwhelmed with changes to daily routines and pandemic-related anxieties.

These along with many other variables made Covid-19 a complex and multifaceted problem for the families mental health.

The pandemic could be considered a traumatic event. As such, it's fair to say it could very well affect some persons mental health for an extended period of time. This means for many people simply attending therapy for a couple months may not be sufficient to increase their functioning in the home and community.

My suggestions for support during this period of transition of "back to normal" as they may say are:

Connect with close family members, friends, neighbors, or anyone who you feel is a close emotional support. You may be benefiting them as much as they are benefiting you!

Some people like exercise while others like to read or paint. There are many activities you could engage in which would be helpful in keeping some balance. **Focus on something that brings you contentment** or joy.

If possible, **connect with more formal support** such as out-patient therapy. Although some may believe Covid cannot affect their mental health, they have still experienced trauma. This will help in processing before behaviors manifest years down the road such as violence or substance use.

Sometimes we see mental health behaviors arise that are tied to a traumatic event (like surviving a global pandemic). This deferred emotional response may include some of the aforementioned substance abuse, violent outbursts, or depression. I would encourage everyone to **communicate** with their family members or anyone who they feel may not be reaching out for help from others at this time. This is the time when we must take special care to acknowledge what we've just experienced and help each other get through it.

If you are struggling with depression or thoughts of ending your life, please reach out to the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255**. Help is available 24 hours a day.



Mike McCaslin '09 works with Caring Partners of Morris and Sussex, where he coordinates supports and services for youth with moderate to high needs and their families. He works with families to develop sustainable long-term plans help youth and families succeed.

TRIVIA QUESTION

Where was the first
Hoosac Asado Day held?

Email sgraves@hoosac.org with your answer.
First correct response wins a Hoosac prize!

You are Hoosac.

Make Hoosac part of *Your* Legacy

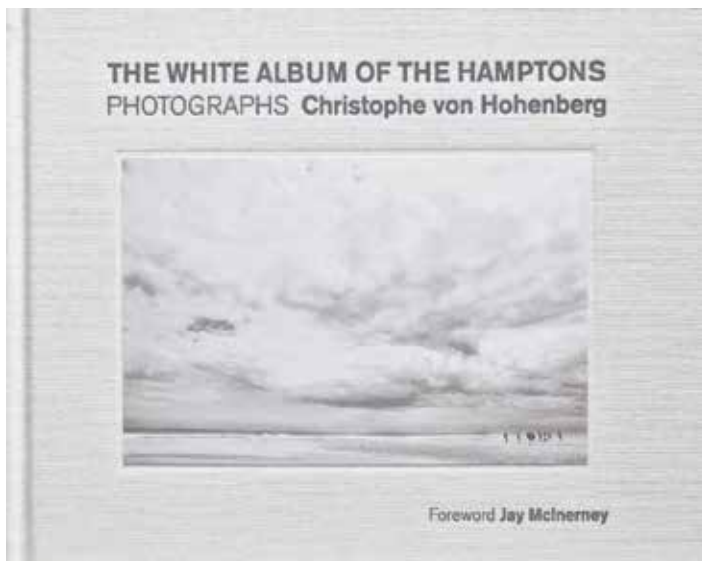
Hoosac graduates know what it means to *Be Hoosac*. It isn't something taught in a textbook; it's something that comes from shared experience. In short, *Be Hoosac* means something a little different for each of us. It's inspiring others, rising above doubt, it's nurturing volunteerism in yourself and others, it's finding yourself and helping others do the same.

The *Be Hoosac* we share in common is that part we carry forward in the spirit of optimism and generosity.

Your legacy is a gift to future generations. Protect the long-standing traditions and culture of Hoosac and make Hoosac School a partial beneficiary to your assets, estate, will, or life insurance so that your Hoosac story will be forever part of *your* legacy.

For more information on how to benefit Hoosac with a legacy gift, please contact Headmaster Dean Foster at (518) 686-7331 or email headmaster@hoosac.org.

Be Hoosac in all you do.



Christophe von Hohenberg '71 released a new book, *The White Album of the Hamptons*, in July. The book features images from his travels through the Hamptons.

