



Tahoe Expedition Academy



2020/2021
ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 5 HEAD OF SCHOOL LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**
- 6 MISSION, VISION, VALUES**
- 8 CREATIVITY AND INGENUITY KEPT THE TEA MAGIC ALIVE**
Practicing what we preach in order to survive and thrive
- 9 SHARING THE MAGIC WITH OTHERS**
Codifying our tools and resources to create opportunities for students beyond TEA
- 10 DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING**
Working to create a deep sense of belonging for all
- 12 NEED BASED SCHOLARSHIPS CHANGE LIVES**
Remaining committed to our robust financial aid program
- 14 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT**
Lifting up our students through generosity
- 16 WHY TEA FAMILIES GIVE**
Joining together to create opportunity
- 17 BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION**
TEA's fundamentals
- 18 OUR OUTCOMES**
A snapshot of the Class of 2021
- 20 THE TEAM**
Experts in education and innovation
- 21 HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH**
Welcoming David Maher, TEA's New Head of School
- 22 REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER**
Celebrating 10 years of creative doers and thinkers





WE WERE STRONGER TOGETHER

Dear CommuniTEA,


What an incredible year of growth for all of us! We were fortunate to see great ideas that began as mere conversations come to fruition through thoughtfulness, diligent effort, and cooperation. At the end of the 2020-2021 school year we celebrated a return to in-person learning for all of our students, graduated our largest class of seniors, and celebrated a decade of iteration and expansion at our 10th Birthday Party. These successes illustrate what happens when we recognize our combined potential and direct it toward a shared goal.

It is clear that "giving back" is the core underlying theme to much of what we accomplish on and off the campus. Last winter, our virtual gala brought current families, staff, faculty, alumni and other members of our community together to far exceed our lofty financial goals for the event. In addition, our 2020-21 Annual Giving Campaign displayed once again how the generosity of our communiTEA is such a dependable source for making sure we have the resources to meet our needs. We could not be successful without your gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

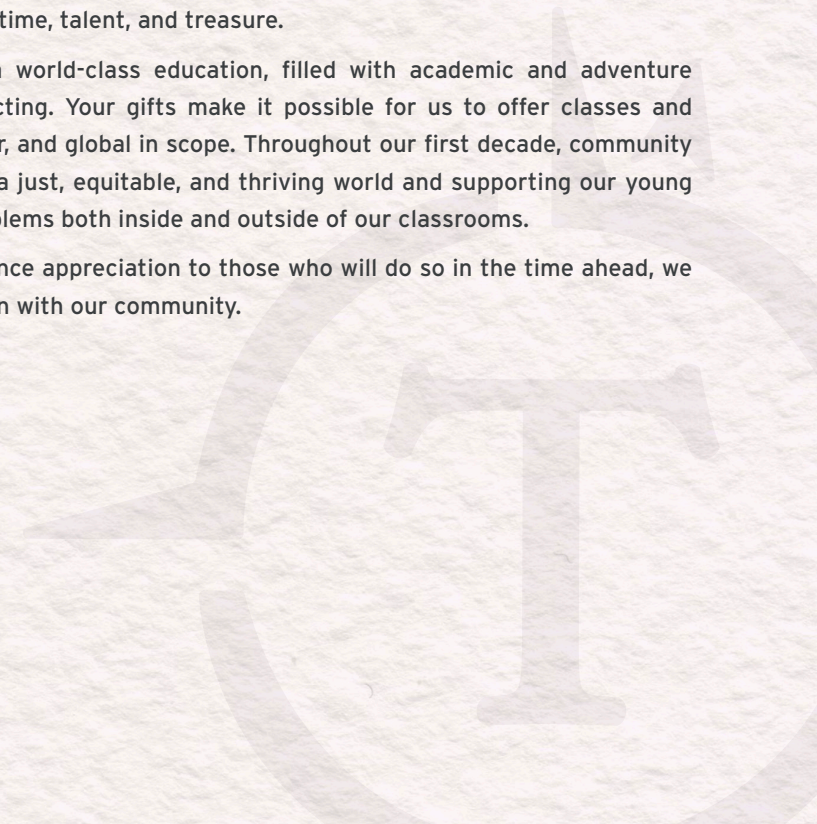
Thanks to this belief in giving, our students enjoy a world-class education, filled with academic and adventure opportunities that are nurturing, enriching, and impacting. Your gifts make it possible for us to offer classes and activities that are innovative, hands-on, cross-curricular, and global in scope. Throughout our first decade, community support has bolstered our commitment to fighting for a just, equitable, and thriving world and supporting our young people as they tackle today's messy and important problems both inside and outside of our classrooms.

With sincere thanks to those who have given, and advance appreciation to those who will do so in the time ahead, we look forward to another memorable year of collaboration with our community.

Appreciatively,



David Maher, Head of School



WE ARE REAL WORLD PROBLEM SOLVERS

VISION

WE BELIEVE IN THE INFINITE POWER OF YOUNG PEOPLE

At our school, we believe students can make a difference in the world now and become the change-makers of today. We're not interested in 'preparing future leaders,' but rather tapping their creativity, right now.

MISSION

EMPOWERING A NEW GENERATION OF CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVERS WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Powered by Constructive Adversity®, TEA's forward thinking educational design combines academic excellence, character building, and real world adventures to develop confident and creative problem solvers who thrive in and contribute to dynamic and challenging environments.



OUR VALUES: GUIDING US FORWARD, TOGETHER

We are a fully accredited, Pre-K-12 school developing creative, resilient and character-rich youth who are using their intelligence to improve the world. Our students are actively solving real-world problems in hands-on environments, all alongside highly trained teachers and trail-blazing industry leaders.

WE BELIEVE IN FIGHTING FOR A JUST AND EQUITABLE WORLD

WE BELIEVE IN TURNING ADVERSITY INTO GROWTH BY TACKLING TODAY'S MESSY AND IMPORTANT PROBLEMS

WE BELIEVE IN COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITIES TO ENACT POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE WORLD

OUR GRADUATES LIVE THESE VALUES:

TEA strives to graduate young people who are prepared to make a difference in the world right now. One opportunity students have to demonstrate this ability is through their Individual Senior Intensive, a semester-long project allowing them to demonstrate their highest level of learning at TEA. They are tasked with choosing a field and defining a problem, becoming a budding expert in that field, conducting relevant service-learning, and creating solution-driven final products. With guidance from teachers, mentors, and crew leaders, students demonstrate their ability to solve problems, conduct research, meet and overcome adversity, organize time and resources, communicate well, and reflect on their efforts.

Jill Coleman, who graduated in June of 2021, chose to tackle the messy real-world problem of Climate Change for her Individual Senior Intensive. She began by researching the carbon sequestration benefits of sea grasses, but ran into multiple obstacles trying to physically plant sea grass in Truckee. After speaking with various experts and conducting additional research, she decided to focus instead on the benefits of planting native grasses, which

not only hold similar benefits of high carbon sequestration, but are drought tolerant which is incredibly important in our high desert climate. Jill wrote a detailed research paper and shared the results of her findings with the local community through presentations to HOA, local landscapers, realtors and community associations.



NATIVE GRASSES

Plant native grasses to capture and sink carbon dioxide and to reduce water consumption.

37 BILLION TONS of carbon were emitted into the atmosphere in 2018, inducing climate change.

9 BILLION GALLONS of water per day are used for landscape irrigation in the US.

Carbon SEQUESTRATION

The root system of native perennial, long living, grasses, can extend up to 6 feet below the surface. The deep roots allows native grasses to pull large amounts of carbon out of the atmosphere and sink it deep into the soil.

DROUGHT TOLERANCE

Native grasses are adapted to the climate and drought prone California environment, so they are less reliant on additional watering and are more resilient to drought

440 TO 2100 POUNDS

of carbon per acre per year are sequestered in native grasslands.

Other Benefits

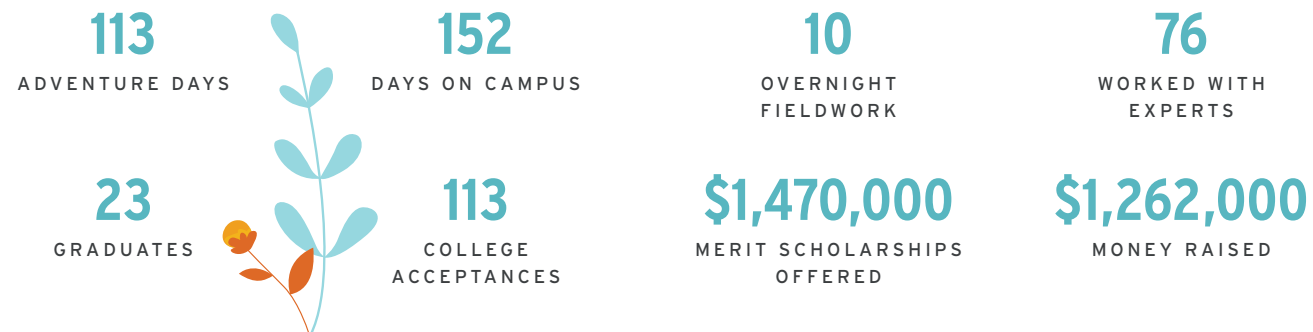
- Low care
- Restores soil health
- Stabilizes soil/prevents erosion
- Filters polluted runoff
- Feeds and provides habitat to native animal species



CREATIVITY AND INGENUITY KEPT THE TEA MAGIC ALIVE

Between wildfire smoke and Covid-19, our TEAm had to practice what they preach by being adaptable in order to survive and thrive. The hard work and dedication that each of our faculty and staff contributed allowed TEA to navigate the tumultuous waters of the pandemic with the utmost care. While it was not a “normal” TEA year, we were able to deliver on some remarkable adventures, tackle real-world problems, and work with a copious amount of experts thanks to the hard work of our faculty and staff, resilience and perseverance of our students, and the support of our parents and donors.

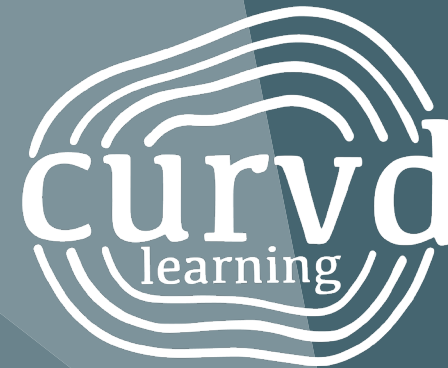
TEA BY THE NUMBERS:



REAL WORLD PROBLEMS TACKLED:

- Immigration
- Climate Change
- Water Rights
- Voting Rights
- Media Literacy
- Racial Equity
- Designing Cities for the Future
- The Case for Play
- Saving the SNYLF
- Healthy Me: Physical, Social and Emotional Health
- Healthy Forests
- Civic Engagement
- International Diplomacy
- Colonization
- Conflict in the Middle East
- Being a Changemaker Using the Design Thinking Process
- Homelessness in Tahoe
- Pollution
- Volcanic Geohazards
- Solar Powered Vehicles
- Ecosystem Development
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Navigating the Census and Data Collection
- Epidemiology
- Civil Discourse
- Healthy Bodies, Healthy Food
- Problems Facing Birds

SHARING THE MAGIC WITH OTHERS



As Curvd Learning’s Lab School, TEA has the privilege of helping to codify tools and resources that create intentional opportunities for students to face challenging situations, take healthy risks, and learn from failure in order to cultivate the skills they need to intelligently face and solve problems of today and the future. In the 2020-21 school year, TEA continued to test curricular models through iterative feedback cycles and improved scientific approaches.

For the past few years, TEA has been using design-centered, project-based learning and throwing “Curveballs” into the mix, where teachers ask students to pivot, learn through failure, and be constantly open to feedback and self-reflection. In the 2020-21 school year, we worked with Dr. Tara Hofkens from the University of Virginia’s School of Education and Human Development to collect valuable data on the efficacy of this approach.

We worked with 95 students in grades 6-10 for our 2020-21 curveball study. Despite it being a rollercoaster of a school year, we were able to see positive results. Overall the study showed students are even more engaged during curveballs than typical classtime, experienced a decrease in psychophysiological stress, an increase in emotional engagement, and that over the course of the year students developed stronger skills like resilience, self-regulation, and growth mindset. In addition, the students who were pushed just beyond their growth zone and into their freak-out zone in the beginning of the year were reflective of what they wanted to improve on and, as the year progressed they became more comfortable, more engaged, and moved back to their growth zone. We believe this is just the beginning of what we can do to measure the efficacy of TEA’s unique approach to learning.

HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW THAT IT’S OVER?

“I feel proud and more able to work with groups and understand what the other people in the group were saying.”

-MS STUDENT

“I definitely always liked curve balls. I know a lot of my classmates didn’t like curve balls, and I’m like, ‘Come on, guys. It’s going to be in the real world so we have to get used to them.’ But now I definitely still see them in college. Just the other day, my writing teacher was like, ‘Oh, scratch whatever was on the agenda, we’re doing something completely different today.’ TEA definitely prepared me to get used to change.”

JOHAN SOTELO, CLASS OF 2021

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

“Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard.”

LIZ FOSSLEIN



Tahoe Expedition Academy has always considered itself to be a project in human potential, and we believe this potential blooms in the context of diverse perspectives and experiences. Experiential education is about students developing the habits of mind and social emotional skills to thrive in the complex, diverse world they inhabit. Additionally, we believe that every one of our students deserves to experience a deep sense of belonging in our school – irrespective of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, gender expression or socioeconomic status - and to be able to create a culture of belonging wherever they may venture.

“As a school, we teach our students how to lean into discomfort, have courageous conversations, and how to advocate for the greater good. So, when students, staff and parents shared how much work we have to do to create a place of belonging for all, we had to put our own lessons into practice. We took action by hiring a DEIB consultant, conducting regular professional development for faculty and staff, engaging our students in conferences like the Student Diversity Leadership Conference hosted by NAIS, and regularly reflecting on how to continue forward in line with our values, vision, and mission. We will need to continue to take steps every day to ensure that each member of our communiTEA drives onto campus with a deep sense of belonging, and I’m grateful for the collaboration we saw last year to start this journey”, said Mara Morrison, TEA Program Director.

In the spring of 2021, a DEIB Board Task force was created and the work to develop a comprehensive and strategic approach began. While the last year was not without challenges and complications, we remain vigilant and committed to continuing to move forward. Our students, staff and families are counting on it.

“Belonging means more than just being seen. Belonging entails having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in your community.”

JOHN POWELL

“In school, children need a sense of belonging to be able to be productive learners. They need to be connected to their fellow students, connected to their teachers, to also be affirmed in who they are in a way that is positive and accepting.”

DR. LINDA HAMMOND

“In my effort to leave TEA more than what it was when I started my freshman year in 2018, I believe that not only because I am a member of the communiTEA, but also because I am a member of the BIPOC community, that it is my responsibility and job to do as much as I can to make current and future students, families, teachers and staff feel that they belong here at TEA. I want students walking through our classrooms and buildings to not have to constantly reassure themselves that they deserve to be here, that they deserve to be a part of this school. I want them to deeply know that they belong. I want to create a safe and welcoming space not only within our classrooms, but within the entire communiTEA as a whole.”

DIEGO MARTINEZ, CLASS OF 2022

TEA'S NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS CHANGE LIVES



TEA's commitment to creating a more just, equitable, diverse and inclusive environment is reflected, in part, by our robust financial aid program. We believe that every student deserves the opportunity to experience our unique, challenging and innovative educational environment and do not want the financial barrier of an independent school to limit our ability to provide this. We are grateful for our generous donors and supporters who help make this program possible.

IN 2020-2021:

36% OF OUR STUDENTS RECEIVED SUPPORT TO ATTEND OUR PROGRAM

ALLOCATED \$1,086,085 IN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

TUITION REMISSION PROVIDED TO ALL FULL-TIME FACULTY AND STAFF

"I learned a lot in school. Well, I memorized a lot. And I learned how to pass tests and BS my way through an essay, usually only to forget what it had been about. And I guess that prepared me well to do the same in college... But one thing I didn't learn anything about was myself. What were my values? How did I fit into the world around me? What could I do to affect positive change? What was it like to take a deep dive into a topic? What do I do when something doesn't go right? What challenges could I overcome if I put my mind to it? And those are the core questions TEA asks its students to ask themselves.

Why do we give to TEA? Because while today the education I received would cost over \$40K a year, we see much more value in the unique combination of character, academics and adventure we're offered for half that. And to deliver on those opportunities, it not only means covering the costs of staff, facilities, materials, buses, insurance, field studies and adventure gear. It means actively inviting local families into the experience regardless of their financial means with scholarships. It means being a contributing part of the Truckee-Tahoe community by seeking out service opportunities and sharing knowledge, resources and facilities. It means enabling our teachers to be even more invested by having their own kids with them at a school they believe in. This all takes time and funds, funds that TEA has consciously opted not to collect through an increased tuition that would make our school out of reach to many.

So we ask ourselves the questions we want our kids to ask themselves. What are our values? How do we fit into the world around us? What could we do to affect positive change?

For 2021-22, we're pledging to pay one additional tuition for each tuition we pay to show the value we see and to make it possible to provide the TEA experience, for ourselves and for the rest of the community."

DAVE AND ANN ZIMMERMAN, PARENTS TO WYNNE IN 2ND AND MAE IN 4TH GRADE

SUPPORTING TEA GRADUATES: THE MILLENNIUM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



TEA's Millennium Scholarship Program was designed by our Student Council in 2019 after we received an initial gift of \$25,000 from the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County. The scholarship program was founded on the premise that young people should have the opportunity to continue their education beyond high school, regardless of financial capacity, and that when supported they can make a significant and important difference in the world. In the spring of 2021, we received an additional \$100,000 gift from the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County in support of the program and we will now be able to continue offering scholarships to our graduating seniors for several more years.

Please join us in congratulating TEA seniors Johan Sotelo and Brennan Berg. Both recipients were awarded \$5,000 grants in order to offset costs associated with their future endeavors. Johan is currently attending Stanford University and Brennan is studying Aerospace Engineering at the University of California, Davis. We are exceptionally proud of their accomplishments and contributions while at TEA and we are excited to support their next adventures.

We are truly grateful for the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County's generosity and beyond thrilled to be able to support the academic dreams of our students.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

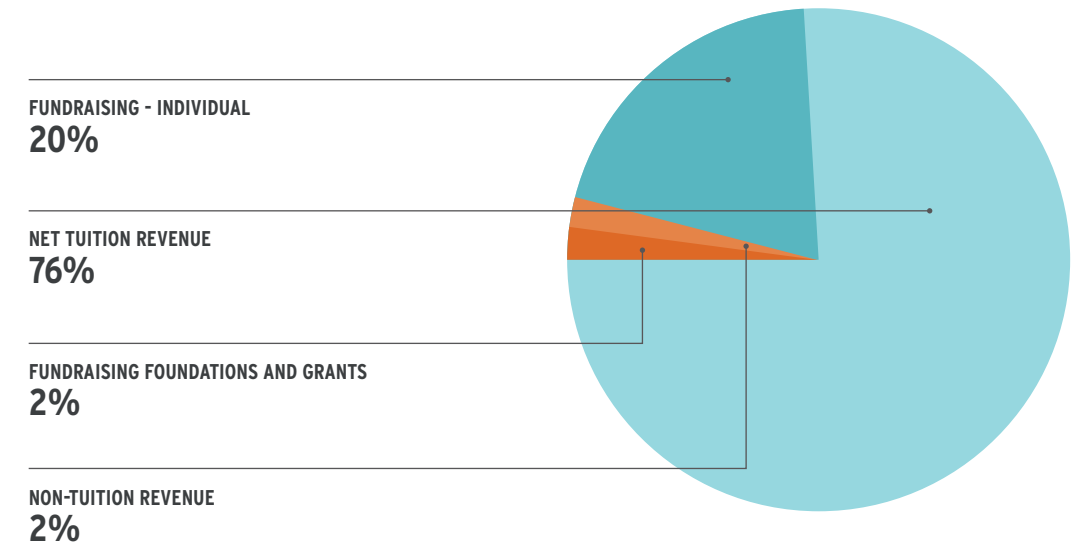
Tahoe Expedition Academy Donors demonstrated their steadfast commitment and tremendous flexibility during the 2020-2021 school year, by generously contributing during our Virtual Auction and Annual Giving Campaign. The theme of last year's campaign, Lean IN to Lift UP, effectively summed up the tone of our community of supporters. Despite the many difficulties that we faced while delivering our program, including wildfire smoke and Covid-19, our donors leaned in, exemplifying that by joining together in the shared purpose of lifting up our students, great things are possible.

INCOME AND CONTRIBUTIONS		
NET TUITION REVENUE	\$4,425,000	76%
NON TUITION REVENUE (ACTIVITIES, OTHER)	\$101,000	2%
FUNDRAISING - INDIVIDUALS	\$1,157,000	20%
FUNDRAISING- FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS	\$111,000	2%
TOTALS	\$5,794,000	

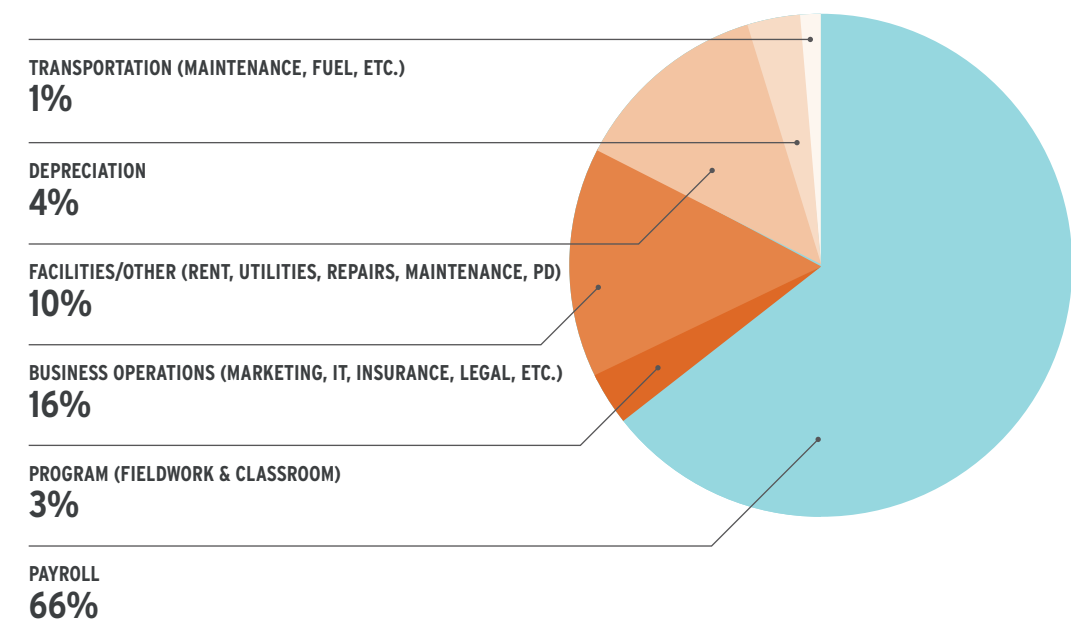
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES		
PAYROLL	\$3,241,000	66%
PROGRAM (FIELDWORK & CLASSROOM)	\$170,000	3%
BUSINESS OPERATIONS (MARKETING, IT, INSURANCE, LEGAL, ETC.)	\$788,000	16%
FACILITIES (RENT, UTILITIES, REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE)	\$464,000	9%
TRANSPORTATION (MAINTENANCE, FUEL, ETC.)	\$49,000	1%
DEPRECIATION	\$187,000	4%
OTHER (PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ETC.)	\$35,000	1%

TOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENSES **\$4,934,000**

OPERATIONAL SOURCES



OPERATIONAL USES



WHY WE GIVE



“We all strive to surround our children with positive role models. For my family, ‘positive’ means individuals who will take on a challenge with a confident attitude, motivate people to work together, and be constructive when faced with adversity (academic or adventure). Our teachers give 100 percent, all the while infusing joy, creativity, compassion, hard work, and academic achievement into everything they do. Yes, they are the magic that is TEA! TEA’s teachers are positive role models and are a big reason we donate to the Annual Giving Campaign. If TEA charged a tuition that truly reflected the cost to educate our children with top teachers willing and able to fully embrace experiential learning in the classroom and in the field, it would make our school out of reach to many families who would otherwise be an amazing part of our community. We all want our children to have a positive impact on the world, and what better way for them to learn how to do that than through TEAchers who are exemplifying our ideals each and every day?”

LAURA BRIGHAM AND BRIAN BEFFORT,
PARENTS TO LOGAN BEFFORT,
12TH-GRADER

“We give to TEA for the same reasons we send both of our kids to TEA. We love the mission of TEA and how it teaches students to not only become capable adults but also caring members of society. Many schools can teach algebra and coding, but not many can teach conquering adversity, leadership, creativity, compassion and worldly views. It is really refreshing to see our kids come to life after their “adventure” outings. We believe studying outside of the classroom is a great way to be open minded and be resilient to real world challenges they will face in the future. The world is getting smaller, so our kids must think bigger. We believe TEA’s unique model of teaching will help our kids think bigger. Of course, teaching requires great teachers. So, we give to TEA because that provides teachers tools such as training in mindfulness, diversity and inclusiveness to execute the TEA mission, and benefit as many students as possible.”

MINMYO KIM AND JON LEI,
PARENTS OF AUSTIN, PRE-K AND
LOGAN, 1ST-GRADER

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

TEA IS AN ACTIVE 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

ALL HIGH SCHOOL COURSES ARE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA A-G APPROVED

TEA IS FULLY ACCREDITED BY THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (WASC) FOR PRE-K-12TH GRADES

TEA USES NATIONAL ACADEMIC STANDARDS AS FOUNDATIONAL PIECES OF THE PROGRAM: COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS, NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS, ART AND MUSIC STANDARDS, NATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS AND NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE STANDARDS



STAFF UPDATE

- 34 full-time faculty and staff hired nationally
- 7:1 student to teacher ratio in 2020-21

STUDENT BODY

- 2011: 72 students in Pre-K-8th grades
- 2020: 232 in Pre-K-12th grades

TEA enrolls students from Reno, NV and Truckee and North Tahoe, CA. Many families have moved to the area to attend the school from places like the NYC, Philadelphia, San Francisco Bay Area, Southern California and Europe.

OUR OUTCOMES



Tahoe Expedition Academy's (TEA) program connects a rigorous standards-based academic program with a modern experiential learning approach. In addition to earning the highest level of accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in 2017, all high school courses are University of California, A-G approved. Our learner outcomes are derived from national standards like Common Core ELA and Math, Next Generation Science, National Social Science, Foreign Language Standards, as well as character and adventure standards we created. In addition to learner outcomes related to critical thinking, global citizenship, communication skills, and creative problem solving, we recently included an "Adapt to Thrive" learner outcome, focused on helping TEA students develop the tools they need to embrace challenges as opportunities. At a recent Alumni Panel, we heard how successfully our students reflect this important real world outcome.

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES 2017 - 2021

100% of our seniors who applied to college since 2017 were accepted to 4-year colleges/universities, earning over \$3,026,360 in merit-based scholarships to date. Acceptances with bold listings are current enrollments from 2017-2021 with asterisks denoting multiple acceptances to the same college/university.

Academy of Art University

Arizona State University (Main Campus)*

Babson College
 Baylor University
 Boston University*
 California Polytechnic State University (San Luis Obispo)*
 California State Polytechnic University (Pomona)
 California State University (Channel Islands)
 California State University (Chico)*
 California State University (Fullerton)
 California State University (Long Beach)
 California State University (Maritime Academy)
 Case Western Reserve University

Chapman University*

Colorado College*

Colorado School of Mines

Colorado State University (Fort Collins)*
 Columbia College (Chicago)
 Eckerd College
 Edinburgh Napier University
 Emerson College*
 Fort Lewis College
 Georgetown University
 Gonzaga University*
 Hult International Business School (San Francisco)
 Ithaca College
 Lewis & Clark College*

Loyola Marymount University*

Loyola University Chicago
 Marquette University
 Michigan State University*
 Montana State University*
 Montana Tech
 New York University
 Northeastern University
 Northern Arizona University*

Oberlin College

Oregon Institute of Technology
 Oregon State University*
 Pennsylvania State University (Main Campus)*
Pitzer College
 Portland State University
Principia College
Quest University Canada*
 Regis University
San Diego State University*
 San Francisco State University
 San Jose State University*
 Santa Clara University*

Scripps College

Seattle Pacific University
 Sierra Nevada University
 Simmons University
 Simon Fraser University
 South Dakota School of Mines and Technology
Southern Methodist University*

Stanford University

Texas Christian University*

The University of Alabama*
 The University of Montana*
 Tulane University of Louisiana
 University of Arizona*

University of British Columbia*

University of California (Berkeley)*

University of California (Davis)*

University of California (Irvine)

University of California (Los Angeles)

University of California (Merced)*

University of California (Riverside)*

University of California (San Diego)*

University of California (Santa Cruz)*

University of Colorado (Colorado Springs)

University of Colorado Boulder*

University of Denver*
 University of Hawaii at Manoa
 University of Idaho
University of Nevada (Reno)*
 University of Portland
 University of Puget Sound
University of San Diego*
 University of San Francisco*
 University of Utah*
 University of Vermont
 University of Washington (Seattle Campus)*
University of Wisconsin (Madison)*

Wesleyan University

Western Colorado University

Western Washington University*

Whittier College

Whitworth University

Willamette University*



"As you get older at TEA, they give you more autonomy to make your own decisions for the group; they let the group decide instead of the teachers. I think your skills for responsibility and independence really start to develop because once you go to college, nobody's telling you when you got to eat, when you got to sleep, what you do in your free time when you have nothing else to do. Those trips, those road trips and making decisions for groups, learning how to take care of yourself, I think it goes a long way."

GRADY BOGER, CLASS OF 2021



"I think the one that always comes to mind for [constructive adversity] was definitely the Bears Ear trip when we were doing canyoneering. That was my worst moment at TEA. I didn't want to go down the canyon and I didn't want to cross the water, but I knew I had to do it. The teachers were not going to let me skip out on it and they were right because after doing that, I'm like, 'I did it', and that was so awesome. What I gained from that is there's going to be challenges in life that are going to look hard at first, but once you get to it, it's going to be such a rewarding experience."

JOHAN SOTELO, CLASS OF 2021

"The small class size and really spending a lot of time with people out in the field, spending a lot of time with that same small group of people, you get pretty good at conflict resolution, being able to work with people when you don't really want to work with those people. And that translates directly into the workplace sometimes. Even if you like all of your coworkers, sometimes you need to be able to know when to lead, know when to follow, know when to say, 'Oh, this is going in a direction I don't really like, but I can tack into this wind.'"

MITCHELL MARTIN, CLASS OF 2017

"In the past, I would've been way too shy to go up and speak to professors, but through TEA they've pushed me to go and speak to experts. When we were out on trips, we'd have to speak to other adult experts and ask them questions. Now, going to professors to ask for help in classes, it's similar; it's going to office hours and coming up with good questions to ask and fostering conversations."

CAROLINE SANDBERG, CLASS OF 2021



"I think being in a primarily affluent area growing up, having exposure to the complete opposite in Panama and just through a lot of our trips and providing service in those experiences makes us a lot more grateful for what we have. It makes us more grateful for what we have and overall, it's made me value my education and ability to go to college a lot more than I think if we hadn't done those things."

ALLIE KENNEDY, CLASS OF 2017



THE TEAM EXPERTS IN EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

TEA has built an internal and external team of experts to guide and lead the school now and into the future. We are grateful to have an exemplary group of individuals who have come forward to volunteer and participate in building this school and changing the future of education.

2020-2021 TEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tori Long, Acting Chair
Lisa Toutant, Vice Chair
Melissa Jarvis, Treasurer
Kim Gallelli
Alice Hahn
Kristin Heavey
Robert Suarez
Matt Tucker

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Taylor Simmers, Co-Director
Mara Morrison, Co-Director
Greg Wright, Director of Marketing and Communications
Laura Quarin, Middle School & High School Instructional Guide
Matt Morrison, Dean of Students
Ken Martin, Director of Finance and Operations
Courtenay Wallpe, Development Director

ADVISORS AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Stephanie Pereira, TEA's Association of Parents, President
James Sohn, Finance Committee
Bryan Wallpe, Finance Committee
Mike Janssen, Finance Committee

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

Dear TEA Community,

In January of 2021, TEA's Board of Trustees initiated a long awaited Head of School Search. After a short three-month process, during which time we received an unprecedented number of applications, we selected David Maher to become our next Head of School, effective July 1, 2021.

In David, we found a dynamic leader who will bring a strong array of experience to TEA. David graduated from James Madison University in Virginia with a B.A. in Economics and a B.S. in Middle Education and eventually completed a Masters Degree focusing on curriculum and instruction. He comes highly qualified and brings a wealth of experience to TEA, including his recent HOS leadership role at Rolling Hills Prep and Renaissance Schools. During his time there, he successfully oversaw the addition of an elementary school for younger students with specialized learning needs. He also steered a strategic plan for facilities and fundraising, began a variety of community partnerships, and led the schools through the transition to distance learning and back again. Prior to joining Rolling Hills, David's career included leadership roles in the U.S. and international institutions such as Chadwick International in Songdo, Korea and Fountain Valley School of Colorado. Initially an English and History teacher, David's career evolved to include roles as Outdoor Education Director, Academic Dean, Upper School Head and ultimately Head of School.

David's many personal interests and experiences enhance his unique passion as an educator and leader. From teaching in Monaco to co-directing a Catholic Relief Project in New York to becoming an avid sailor in Los Angeles, David is deeply engaged and contributes to his community on many fronts. In addition, David has served as a founding board member for Teach United, dedicated to reducing the digital divide in developing nations. He has also led faculty professional development work abroad in countries such as Haiti, Kenya, and Belize.

We want to sincerely thank all members of the TEA community for your commitment to this search process and your invaluable feedback. We are particularly grateful to the Search Committee members who put in long hours over many months in this important initiative, and for the continued support of our dedicated Board of Trustees.

We are indebted to Co-Directors, Taylor Simmers and Mara Morrison, who will work closely on David's transition. They have both provided strong leadership and vision over the years which has enabled TEA to be uniquely positioned for this next chapter of continued growth and evolution.

Sincerely,

Tori Long, Board Chair
Lisa Toutant, Search Committee Chair

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER

We reached a milestone in 2021 by completing our 10th year and graduating our 5th class of seniors. We were able to achieve this goal through the hard work of our TEAChers and leaders and the incredible generosity of our donors and families, who have given to TEA in so many ways over the years. As we reflect on 2021 and envision the next decade of our work, we know one thing for certain – we are stronger together.

Throughout the year, even in the face of a pandemic, we continued to offer hundreds of hands-on, outdoor experiences for our students. While these adventures looked a bit different this year, as international travel was curtailed, we tallied over 120 days in the field. We also adapted to the changing landscape in terms of collaborating with experts. By leaning into video technology, we were able to continue to meet regularly with experts virtually rather than in person, and we logged hundreds of meaningful interactions with this new format to effect positive change in our world and expose our students to some amazing individuals working in fascinating industries.

In addition to solid enrollment numbers, with many new families entering the fold, we grew our Board of Trustees in 2021 by adding members with expertise in both Education and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. As importantly, we were able to hire a new Head of School, David Maher, whose positivity and commitment to our mission will take TEA into our next 10 years.

The world needs creative doers and thinkers, and as a forward thinking, progressive school our vision is to train those doers and changemakers by engaging them in real world issues, right here and right now.

Taylor Simmers, TEA Co-Founder





Tahoe Expedition Academy