



Year in Review 2019-2020

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A special issue from *The Choate News*

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Colony Hall



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Over the summer, construction on Choate's new performing arts center, Ann and George Colony Hall, was completed.

The building has a seating capacity of 1,070 people and occupies 51,761 square feet. Its size fulfills a goal outlined in the 2013 Strategic Plan to "allocate appropriate resources so that the entire school can gather to share, celebrate, and reflect."

Designed by Robert A. M. Stern Architects, Colony Hall is certified LEED Gold, featuring geothermal walls and solar panels. The building was designed to complement the adjacent Paul Mellon Arts Center with a similar materials palette and massive floor-to-ceiling windows that look out onto the Great Lawn and Archbold.

Although it was officially dedicated in October, Colony Hall was opened for student use on September 3, when Choate students gathered before the building's main entrance to watch Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis cut the blue ribbon in front of the main doors. Students quickly crowded into the building, excited to take a first look at the newest addition to the Choate campus before gathering in the auditorium for Convocation.

Colony Hall has become an integral part of student life, with practice rooms, a recital hall, new dance studio, and a main auditorium that houses School Meetings and other events that only the building's state-of-the-art facilities and enlarged space are able to support.

John Legend

On October 3, the Choate community gathered in the auditorium of the newly-opened Ann and George Colony Hall for a private concert with singer-songwriter John Legend, to celebrate the opening of the new arts building.

Starting the concert by giving thanks to Mr. George Colony '72 and Mrs. Ann Colony, Head of School Alex Curtis soon turned over the show to the award-winning artist. During the concert, Mr. Legend performed both covers and a collection of his own songs, interacting with the audience along the way. Finishing the show with the renowned "All of Me," Mr. Legend prompted the audience to dance and sing along.

In addition to his musical performance, Mr. Legend took the time to speak to students about their generation's ability to influence national political discourse by standing up for their beliefs, and he encouraged students who could to exercise their right to vote. Mr. Legend's performance helped not only to connect the Choate community but also to inspire the student body to take a stand for what they believe in.



Photo courtesy of Al Ferreira

Tara Westover

On October 29, the Summer Reading Series speaker Dr. Tara Westover spoke to students and faculty about her memoir, *Educated*, which was Choate's required summer reading book for 2019. In the memoir, Dr. Westover writes about the Mormon survivalist lifestyle she was raised in and her journey to pursue higher education. Readers come to understand the tribulations Dr. Westover experiences and the changes in her thought process as she becomes more aware of the world beyond her life in rural Idaho. She faces difficulties in deciding whether to prioritize her family or her education and livelihood. She becomes stronger throughout this journey by learning to embrace her vulnerabilities.



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

On stage, English teacher Ms. Brooke Fichera asked Dr. Westover questions submitted by students. The author began by giving students helpful tips to improve their creative writing. Students and faculty then learned more about Dr. Westover and her views on gender discrimination, modern technology, and her plans as a writer. Following School Meeting, students were given the opportunity to get their copies of *Educated* signed and talk to Dr. Westover in person.

September 3

October 3

October 29

September 20

October 4

Climate Change Protests

With more than four million people participating across 163 countries, the September 2019 climate strikes protested the lack of government action toward fighting climate change. Inspired by 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, more than 1,000 protesters gathered at the Connecticut State Capitol, in Hartford, and more than 600 protesters convened in New Haven to participate in the strike on Friday, September 20. Nearly 50 Choate students were among these protesters. University of Connecticut freshman Sena Wazer and Eastern Connecticut State University sophomore Mitchel Kveder, leaders of the Hartford protest, presented a formal resolution to Governor Ned Lamont demanding that the state declare an official climate emergency and enact emergency legislation to confront the climate crisis. During the three-hour protest, speeches from numerous organizations discussed the issue of climate change, while rhythmic chants energized the crowd. The strikes represented the battle for the global community to notice and address the detrimental effects of climate change and create a safer future for generations to come.



Photo courtesy of Charissa Lin

Community Carnival

Following the John Legend concert, the Choate community congregated on the Great Lawn for a carnival on October 4. Proposed by a committee led by Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations Mr. Dan Courcay and English Department Head Ms. Ellen Devine, the event was intended to celebrate the dedication of Ann and George Colony Hall while also providing a bonding experience for the Choate community.

At the carnival, members of the Choate community were not only offered free and unlimited turns on rides such as Zero Gravity, YoYo, Cliffhanger, and a Ferris wheel, but also free food from local vendors serving sandwiches, Indian cuisine, french fries, ice cream, cannolis, pizza, and more from food trucks brought to campus. Director of Sustainability Ms. Katrina Linthorst Homan was able to promote sustainability initiatives during the carnival by ensuring the use of compostable plates and cutlery for all food trucks. Students and faculty continued to celebrate late into the night, going on numerous rides and finishing off an average of five servings of food per person.



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr



Student Council Elections



Photo by The Choate News

On February 13, Ula Lucas '21 and Max O'Connor '21 were elected as President and Vice President of the student body, succeeding Vikram Sharma '20 and William Robertson '20 in their respective roles. Prior to the elections, candidates delivered speeches at School Meeting about what they had done to improve student life and their future plans. Some changes implemented by Lucas and O'Connor during their previous time on Student

Council include allowing fifth formers to sign out to the fitness center during study hours, giving sixth formers gaming counsel privileges, removing WiFi restrictions for upperclassmen, and re-establishing the weekend activity of inviting Wallingford food vendors to sell on campus (which was set to start in the spring). Proposals that Lucas and O'Connor are hoping to carry out include placing water fountains and compost bins in all dorms, installing charging stations all around campus, reimagining the early check-in and day student sleepover processes, a revamped wellness program, shuttling students from the Wallingford train station to Choate, a WiFi extension for sophomores, and relaxing course graduation requirements so that students can tailor their schedules. Student Council has shown that its main initiative is caring for, and uniting, the Choate community, with Lucas making this clear in her campaign slogan: "A vote for Ula is a vote for you-la."

February 13

CRHO Performs at Kennedy Center

On February 14, this year's President's Day, the Choate Rosemary Hall Symphony Orchestra (CRHO) played at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, in Washington, D.C. The CRHO was one of four youth orchestras invited to the Capital Orchestra Festival, a distinguished event held by Music Celebrations International to recognize the best youth orchestras in the nation. Choate alumni, faculty, and family all gathered at the Kennedy Center to enjoy the CRHO's performance of Aaron Copland's "Lincoln Portrait" and Ludwig van Beethoven's "Symphony No. 5," which were specifically chosen to celebrate Beethoven and President Abraham Lincoln's birthdays. At the alumni luncheon following the performance, the Ventre Fund was announced in honor of music teacher and Director of the CRHO Mr. Phil Ventre's 50th, and final, year teaching at Choate, as well as the 50th anniversary of the CRHO. Organized by trustees Ms. Buffy Cafritz RH '47, Ms. Jacqueline Mars GP'18, 21, and the Jones family and supported by Mr. Michael Welles '72, Ms. Mari Jones, and Ms. Leslie Welles, the fund serves to ensure all students will have the opportunity to attend ensemble tours regardless of their financial situation. Mr. Ventre's legacy and his dedication to the orchestra program lives on in both the Ventre Fund and the hearts of Choate's musicians.



Photo courtesy of Kalya Yannatos

February 14

January 30-31

Strategic Planning Retreat

This year, Choate began developing a Strategic Plan for the first time since 2013, outlining the School's goals in the years to come. To gauge what the community hoped for the School's future, members of the Choate administration conducted surveys and discussion groups with students and faculty during the fall. Following the period of data-collecting, on January 30-31, a group of 60 people, including the Board of Trustees, administrators, and selected students and faculty went on a retreat in Stamford, Conn., to discuss the Plan in further detail. Caroline Rispoli '20, Vikram Sharma '20, Maxwell Brown '21, and Ula Lucas '21 were selected to represent the student perspective at the retreat. Retreat participants discussed topics such as the School's endowment, financial aid, diversity, and student learning. From these discussions, the administration generated a list of goals to include in the Strategic Plan. Once back on campus, a writing committee was assigned to draft the Plan.



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

February 13-15

A Midsummer Night's Dream



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Choate students put on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* under the direction of acting teacher Ms. Tracy Ginder-Delventhal. Rehearsals for the play started during the winter term, and the show played for three nights. Students seized the opportunity to support the work of their peers while also taking a break from term-end preparations. The play was rooted in the Shakespeare classic but added its own modern twist. Ms. Ginder-Delventhal deliberately assigned roles depending only on which actors she thought were the best fit for each character, without any regard for the gender of the actors. In this way, she challenged the firm role gender plays in our lives and showed that it is not the driving force behind a character's actions. This exploration of gender in this well-known play demonstrated the ability of art to change people's perceptions of what is considered normal and create new norms for our times.

February

Growing Concerns Over Coronavirus

By February 2020, the coronavirus had spread from China to more than 20 countries, with 30,000 people infected and 900 dead worldwide. Many nations, including the U.S., began to implement travel restrictions limiting or barring international flights.

Following the implementation of these guidelines, Choate decided to cancel the upcoming study abroad program in China. Soon after, all other study abroad programs and spring break trips were also cancelled.

A Model United Nations conference at Yale, attended by students from around the world including 12 from Choate, suddenly ended due to fears that a student from China had contracted the virus.

In addition, the Chinese Club and Choate Public Health teamed up to raise money to support those affected by the pandemic. Their collected funds were donated to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Crisis Fund.



Photo courtesy of Global Biodefense



Keeping Traditions Alive

The Choate community prides itself on its many hallowed traditions. The coronavirus pandemic has stymied get-togethers and made some of these traditions impossible, but Choate students and their school spirit persevere. The School innovated ways to maintain normalcy despite the uncertain and foreign times.

The annual Pratt-Packard declamation contest was, for the first time, not conducted in front of the student body. The contest semi-finalists presented their speeches to the panel of judges and the finalists presented again at the May 5 pre-taped school meeting. The changes to Choate's to the speech contest emboldened some and dismayed others. Sakura Hayakawa '21 noted, "I was personally disappointed about the finals being held online since I submitted my speech partly because of the opportunity to speak in front of the School." While Joe Monti '21 remarked, "I think the online nature of the contest was a positive for me since there weren't as many eyes watching me, which would have made me more nervous."

The class of 2020 were especially impacted by losing an in-person Spring term. Many students lamented missing out on the excitement of Senior Spring, an experience that many had waited four years for. Some events were able to carry over to the online format. Senior bingo, a small tradition, was played over Zoom. Other senior rites of passage were harder to translate. In place of Last Hurrah, Mr. and Mrs. VanMierlo hosted virtual dance lessons that the seniors could tune into and follow along with. Garden party, a tradition that the senior and junior girls celebrate, harkens back to Rosemary Hall. Garden party typically involves senior girls proposing to their garden party dates in elaborate and public ways, dressing up, and handing down awards from the senior class to the juniors. This year, the junior and senior girls received a video of some of the senior girls giving their garden party awards to their junior dates.

"It's a difficult thing to come to terms with," said Grace Zhang '20. "You make all these plans and look forward to this time for three and a half years, and it felt like nothing would interrupt it." Seniors attended a modified graduation over Zoom on Sunday May 31. Julia Gottschalk '20 praised the graduation: "For what it was, it was really great and I don't think they could have done any better. It was good because my entire extended family and friends were able to watch. The sad part was not being able to celebrate with everyone from Choate, but altogether it worked."



Photo courtesy of Irie Cooper

SAC Events

Despite the challenge of faulty Wi-Fi and differences in time zones, the Student Activities Center — along with club life — persisted online during the spring term. Director of the Student Activities Center Ms. Alex Long and Assistant Director of the Student Activities Center Ms. Colleen Kazar made efforts to keep the Choate community united despite the physical distance separating students and faculty. On April 3, the SAC held its first virtual Zoom dance, hosted by Max Brown '21, and later on May 29, the SAC held a second Zoom dance. Other events included a joint trivia night with Deerfield Academy and a Zoom open mic night, as well as more senior-orientated events such as Senior Bingo and Senior Dance Lessons.

"We've also been really successful with some of our passive Instagram challenges or postings where students can just watch things that are going on across the community with faculty and staff or other students, even though they're from afar," said Ms. Kazar. The SAC helped to promote several club events through BoarCast emails and Instagram story posts, including a movie night hosted by the Film Club, a Zoom event hosted by the Do It Club, and a cooking event sponsored by the Cooking Exploration Club.

Many clubs moved their meetings to a virtual format. In addition to continuing pod meetings over Zoom, the Debate Team held a virtual debate tournament with Deerfield on May 9. The Environment Action Coalition (EAC) held more discussion-based meetings and a WALL-E movie night. Several clubs decided to hold joint meetings with each other, such as Girl Up and Choate Women in Business.

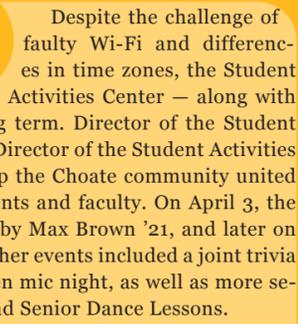


Photo by Peter Di Natale/The Choate News

February 27

Administration asks all students to defer travel to China or South Korea during spring break.

March 10

Break extended until March 24. Remote learning set to take place until April 3.

March 17

Remote learning extended through the end of the spring term. First day of classes announced as March 27.

February 11

Administration offers to help find housing for those with families affected by the virus.

March 5

All term abroad trips cancelled. Students traveling to level 2 or 3 countries must remain symptom-free for 14 days before returning to campus.

March 13

Administration announces the School will support remote learning for international students throughout the spring, if necessary.

March 19

Choate alumni receive a letter stating reunion weekend has been cancelled.



Photo courtesy of Taylor Mitchell



Photo courtesy of Mirielle Ma

Staying in Touch

Social distancing guidelines have prevented normal birthday celebrations for those born in the spring or summer months. However, many communities have still managed to find ways to gather together — at a safe distance — and celebrate. Trademarked by the line of cars slowly maneuvering down a driveway and sounds of honks and screams, drive-by birthdays were a popular fix to the social distancing dilemma. Friends and family drove by the birthday boy or girl's house, hanging out of windows and sunroofs while holding brightly decorated posters and presents. Festivities range from a few friends gathered along the driveway to parades with firetrucks and streamers hanging from the cars. Friends have even been organizing Zoom birthday parties, gathering together a group of friends to surprise the birthday boy or girl.

Students have also been keeping in touch through Netflix Party, a browser extension that synchronizes a movie or show and includes a group chat for friends to watch Netflix together and chat remotely. During all that extra time in quarantine, students can finally feel a little more comfort watching that horror movie or rom-com with friends rather than alone.

Despite FaceTiming and Zooming each other, car circles have become a popular choice for friends who want to hang out in person. Many friends will gather together in an empty parking lot or outside of a friend's house and sit in the trunk of their cars, often bringing food or other sources of entertainment. Some people have also gathered together in their backyards, sitting six feet apart in lawn chairs.

Some students have resorted to sending care packages and hand-written letters as a more intimate way of keeping in touch compared to texts. Hannah Wallinger '21 sent her friends boxes filled with cookies decorated with the Choate "C."

Students who chose to game their way through quarantine have been communicating and socializing through video game chats and headphone sets. Video games not only engage students and prompt them to work together, but also serve as a prime source of entertainment for many students. In addition, Boar Pen and other student groups have organized team gaming competitions against Deerfield Academy through gaming platforms such as FIFA, Madden, and Fortnite — streamed live for students from both schools to enjoy and comment.

Belongings

With students scattered across the globe and unable to pack up dorm belongings, Choate provided three alternatives to this unique situation: return to campus and pack belongings, ship belongings to home, or store belongings at Choate. Due to the circumstances of COVID-19, students who decided to return and pack their belongings on campus are strictly limited to certain time frames within the day, where only one student is allowed in one level of every dorm during that period. The School also implemented a set of guidelines to ensure the safety and efficiency of every student's move-out process, which included maintaining social distancing measures, wearing face masks and gloves in all buildings, and refraining from going back to campus if experiencing symptoms.

For students who chose for their belongings to be shipped home or stored on campus, the School has arranged for a packing company to pack up all belongings. Regarding the concern over the handling of prohibited items and substances, the School offered students the opportunity to use Amnesty — an option for students to alert Dean of Students Mike Velez '00 prior to May 22 about any banned items. Though these prohibited items will be confiscated and parents will be notified, students who report to Mr. Velez before the required date will not be subject to disciplinary charges.

In addition, the School continued to offer the store book buyback program, where students can now return their used school books in good condition to their dorms and receive money.



Photo courtesy of Taylor Mitchell



Photo courtesy of Betsy Overstrum

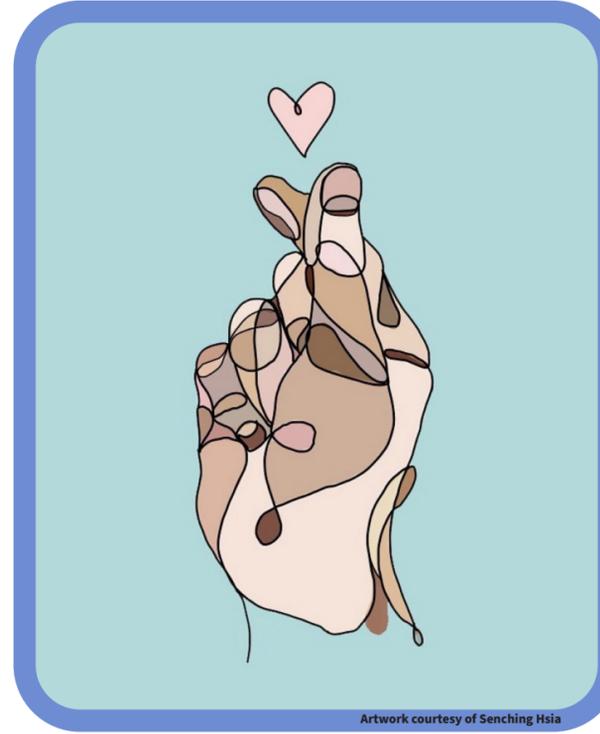
Sports

Despite the cancellation of the spring season, sports teams have found creative ways of staying in touch during this virtual spring term, whether through Zoom, text, or team events. Both the Boys' and Girls' Choate Crew team have been staying in shape through rigorous group workouts on Zoom. While the Girls' team have been using Strava to keep track of fitness and running challenges and share their times with each other, the Boys' team have been challenging themselves to Olympic level workouts—each team motivating the other to push harder.

Boys' Varsity Lacrosse has also found unique ways to stay committed to the sport and uphold team spirit. Everyday, the team participates and competes with each other in vigorous workout routines designed to mimic the team's schedule during a regular season. The team has also implemented Zoom team dinners on Friday nights to maintain friendships and team morale during the virtual season.



Graphic by Elton Zheng/The Choate News



Artwork courtesy of Senching Hsia

Student Council Initiatives

During the remote spring term, Choate Student Council worked hard to facilitate several measures meant to enhance off-campus student life in addition to the online learning experience. The council's work this spring was split between initiatives for the virtual spring term and proposals for the upcoming year. Because the conventional proposal process could result in it taking weeks for an initiative to be passed, council members this term felt that a more efficient system was needed. So, they worked with faculty on their independent initiatives and were expected to check in every week with other members and give updates on their progress.

The Pass/D/Fail grading system was one major change carried out with help from the council. Student Council discussed with Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00, Director of Studies Mr. Kevin Rogers, and members of the College Counseling Office. They reasoned that with all students back at home, priorities may shift and education may not be a student's primary concern. As a result, ahead of the start of the online spring term, Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis emailed the School regarding the alteration in the grading system.

Student Body President Ula Lucas '21, when asked about the experiences she gained from the online term, remarked, "When it comes to the council, I think we are really getting to understand the true importance of collaboration and self-motivation. We're not meeting weekly anymore or seeing each other around campus, so connecting with our individual passions for this community and being self-starters are more important than ever before."

In regards to the upcoming year, Student Council members have already launched proposals including allocating day student parking spaces closer to St. John Hall, eliminating assigned seating in school meetings, and giving students the ability to early check-in on Saturdays in any dorm.

Arts

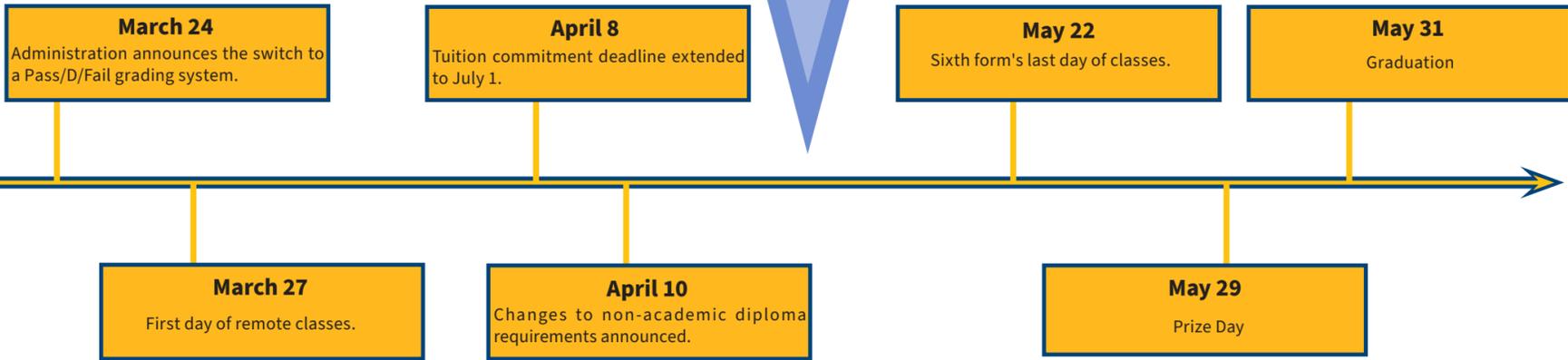
In a time of confusion and chaos, Choate's students found a way to brighten up peoples' days through

their art. Third Form Class Representative Joy An '23 created a competition on the Student Council Instagram account known as "Choate Creates." Students created works of art — paintings, songs, poems, and photographs — based on the one-word prompt released every Friday. These prompts included "memory", "hero", and "storm." The students in Arts Concentration also began postin their work on the @choate_arts Instagram.

The Choate C-Proctors also started Project Earth, an initiative that encouraged students to get creative and make a sustainable art project from recycled materials in order to celebrate Earth Day. Students made crafts ranging from photo collages made from old, cut-up magazines to decorative containers made from repurposed jars and animal toys.



Photo courtesy of Austin Small



Community Service

This term, many Choate students used their new free time to assist communities in need.

Due to the coronavirus, healthcare workers have been stretched thin. To provide more support for these workers in her hometown of Alexandria, Va., Mealy Cronin '23 organized a fundraiser on the crowdfunding site GoFundMe to collect funds for healthcare workers' meals. Creating the campaign "Let's Help Those Who Are Helping Us" in late March, Cronin raised enough in a month to collaborate with a restaurant chain and provide lunches for healthcare workers in six different hospitals. With more funds, Cronin was able to continue her support for healthcare workers with other meal batches a few weeks later.

Some communities are more vulnerable to the virus than others, especially the homeless and immunocompromised. To provide more protection in the form of personal protection equipment, Juliet Lin '22, along with four other friends, created a nonprofit organization called Mariposa Masks Initiative. The organization makes its masks with the help of money raised on GoFundMe before distributing those masks to Connecticut and Massachusetts communities in need. As of mid-May, the organization had distributed more than 2,000 masks.

While the pandemic poses health threats to healthcare workers and vulnerable communities, it has also created countless financial struggles for many organizations that rely on opening to sustain their operating status. One of those organizations struggling with their finances is Outreach360, an educational non-profit organization in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua that operates learning centers for over 200 students. Volunteers of the organization Chloe Lewis '22 and Orville Amankwah '22 have stepped up to organize fundraisers along with many others to keep Outreach360 afloat and ensure that the education of the students that the organization supports remains intact.

With the switch to remote learning, many students around the world may find learning certain concepts more difficult. In order to combat this new challenge, Andrew Shenouda '21, Kai Joseph '21, and Henry Mars '21 founded Tadpole Tutoring, a non-profit organization and online tutoring service that gives all of its tutoring proceeds to charitable organizations. The organization enlists the help of several other Choate students as tutors.

Despite not being on the frontlines, these students did what they could to alleviate the effects of the coronavirus.



Photo courtesy of Mariposa Masks Initiative

Information and Technology

As the School transitions to virtual learning, many members of the Choate community expressed concerns regarding the change's limit to the Choate experience. Creating a safe and collaborative learning environment for both students and faculty, the Information and Technology Services (ITS) introduced two major communication platforms: Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

What used to be in-person classes and meetings are now held through the virtual platform Zoom. Zoom includes many beneficial aspects for a virtual classroom such as the ability to screen share, record sessions, and arrange smaller breakout rooms. To acquire the skills used for this application, ITS directly trained a smaller group of faculty with Zoom basics, who then instructed the rest of the faculty in smaller groups. The platform was more difficult to set up than expected; with the help from the Choate Programming Union, ITS was able to catalog all meeting IDs and links into one website.

For Microsoft Teams, the platform was introduced to Choate a year and a half ago as a way to initiate small conversations online within the Choate community. Head of the ITS Department Mr. Andrew Speyer noted, "It's been my dream to get the School into one place where we could do a lot more electronic conversations and small group work together." One of Mr. Speyer's goal is rather than ITS answering all the tech questions, members of the Choate community can post questions in a group space for anyone to respond, utilizing the wisdom of the crowd.

ITS is currently available through Microsoft Teams and has hosted daily Zoom calls with Academic Technology and the Andrew Mellon Library to explore ways to administer support to faculty and students amid the global pandemic.



Photo courtesy of Chloe Lewis

Senior Reflections

A PERIOD OF TREMENDOUS GROWTH

Being an international boarding student thousands of miles away from home has brought its own unique pains and struggles. Since I arrived at Choate as a new sophomore three years ago, I have missed big events back home like birthdays, graduations, and funerals all while trying to overcome culture shock and homesickness. But despite all this, I will forever treasure my time at Choate. The experiences I had here were what led to my tremendous growth during my high school years.

I remember the first time I stepped foot on the Choate campus. It was summer of 2016, and immediately, I knew

ments, being at Choate allowed me to become more independent and discover my passion for psychology, neither of which would have happened at my old school.

It wasn't until Covid-19 abruptly ended my time on campus that I fully realized the magnitude of the impact that these past three years have had on me. I'm thankful for everyone that has been a part of the journey, whether they're still in my life or not: those classmates, teammates, dormmates, and club members who I had never really gotten to know and those who have become lifelong friends; those faculty members who were always willing to lend a hand and those who supported me through it all.

My one piece of advice: take a moment to appreciate it all, even at the lowest of times, and don't be afraid to do the thing that you have been pushing off because you were waiting for the "right time." Choate has seen me through all of the emotions and experiences I'd never felt or imagined before. Far from home, Choate became my second home. Though at times I felt like I was drifting away from my friends back home, I found comfort in the meaningful relationships I formed at Choate.

Once again, just like three years ago when



I boarded the Kenya Airways flight and left home for Choate, it feels like I'm leaving a huge part of me behind — only this time, I'm not able to truly come to terms with it and bid my final adieu. One thing's for sure, though: Forever true, Gold and Blue! Goodbye, Choate.

—Dasha Asienka '20

My one piece of advice: take a moment to appreciate it all, even at the lowest of times.

that Choate had so much in store for me. I knew that by the end of my time there, I would be a much better and stronger person. I wasn't wrong. Although hefty workloads and being away from home presented trials and disappoint-

A GRATEFUL GOODBYE



No forewarning could have prepared me for the moment I heard the news that the last term of my Choate career would occur only remotely. As it happened, I was shopping at Target in Miami when the fateful Outlook notification popped up on my screen. An intense vertigo overwhelmed me on the spot, literally forcing me onto the floor. I sat cross-legged in the aisle where I had been searching for linguini for that night's dinner, trying to steady myself with deep breaths. It's hard to describe the emptiness I felt as the scale of what I had just lost began to hit me. Just like that, senior spring — and my time in Wallingford — was over.

The next few days, memories flooded my mind in a jumbled sequence, a movie I wasn't entirely sure I wanted to watch. Orchestra rehearsals in Colony Hall; coffee while lounging on the orange couches in Lanphy; warm spring sunlight flooding through the PMAC balcony's large, dreamy skylights. I pictured the suit and tie I would have worn for Last Hurrah, pictured the cross-country course on Sunday mornings, pictured going to New Haven with my friends. It scared me how quickly all of it had vanished.

It felt as though I had lost a loved one. And in a way, that's what it was, right? We seniors lost all the time we thought we

would be spending together — all the moments and interactions we would have had with friends and teachers. We were prematurely cut off from the sources of meaning and fulfillment in our lives, and we were denied the ability to form memories we felt entitled to.

Not long after the day I heard the news, I boarded a series of flights back to Hong Kong, where I've spent the spring term. I've been trying to keep up a semblance of normalcy while I'm back here: swimming at the beach, meeting up with old friends (while following all social-distancing guidelines, of course), and spending time with family. A lot of Netflix and SNL binging and even more reading. Everything has been one large effort to bury the

More often than I care to admit, I selfishly wonder: Why did it have to be my year and my friends that had to lose it all? What were the odds?

thought of my losses deep in the back of my mind. I just want to forget it all happened. Because, if I embark on that unending cycle of thought about everything I would have had in my senior spring, everything from loneliness to anger to emptiness will begin to wash over me again.

The School's efforts to create some vaguely normal experience — Zoom classes, video messages, packages bearing alumni vests — are nice, and I am very appreciative of the



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

School's many efforts to simulate a typical spring term online. But — by no one's fault — remote engagement with one another hardly makes up for the real thing. More often than I care to admit, I selfishly wonder: Why did it have to be my year and my friends that had to lose it all? What were the odds?

I want to recognize here that, of course, my situation is not the worst, by far. People around the world have lost much more than time at school. I feel extremely lucky that my family, friends, and I are healthy; that we have a roof over our heads; and that we get to spend this period of isolation together. These are privileges that many don't have.

I merely want to express here, in my final words for the newspaper I've worked on for two years, that I — along with the rest of Choate's Class of 2020, as well as all the other classes of 2020 across the globe — am hurting. By sheer misfortune, we were forced away from our homes and friends without any closure, and, unlike our younger peers, it is not a matter of when we'll see each other again, but if we'll ever see each other again. Who can really say where we seniors will be months from now?

For now, and though this is in no way how I would have ever imagined I'd be doing it, let me say: Goodbye, Choate Rosemary Hall, and thank you for everything.

—Derek Ng '20

THE NO-REGRET CHOATE EXPERIENCE



Coming to Choate as a new sophomore, I had no idea what to expect. I didn't expect that I would spend three years living above the Andrew Mellon Library with advisers who would become my second moms or that I would meet friends and teachers who would help me grow into the best possible version of myself. I

didn't expect the late-night talks, or the

blood, sweat, and tears shed into Lake Quonnapaug and the Larry Hart Pool. Of course, I couldn't have expected to attend a graduation from my home on May 31. These past few months have allowed me to realize how valuable those awkward hellos on the path, those dance parties in Lib Lob, and those long hours spent singing in the Seymour St. John Chapel were. I didn't realize how much real estate these experiences took up in my heart until they were ripped away from me before

I had the chance to say goodbye. To all the underclassmen, I know everyone will tell you this, but cherish every single moment, and do that thing that you are on the fence about. Never regret experiences; use them as learning opportunities instead. Sing at the top of your lungs with your friends on the path, dance your heart out at a SAC dance, have a debate in the dining hall, look

I didn't realize how much real estate these experiences took up in my heart until they were ripped away from me

up at the stars from the soccer field, and find people who make you laugh until you can't breathe. Those moments will make everything worth it, no matter what happens down the line.

—Laryssa Gazda '20

WHERE DID THE CRAZY NIGHTS GO?

in my room until 3 a.m., I thought I could use this remote spring term as a chance to catch up on some sleep. But, I've found that I can't fall asleep these days. I'm missing desperately those late-night rushes of energy and fun.

I would like to give a shout out to all the boys in Quantrell who distracted me from my work and made me ask for more extensions this year than all of my previous years at Choate combined. I wouldn't have traded my experience in the dorm this year for anything else. The only downside was getting a modicum amount of sleep, especially when you all decided it would

be a great idea to have a "Trailer Park Boys" binge in my room right before our SATs.

I feel a sense of being lost after 12:00 AM.

You all opened my eyes to the world, whether by blasting music during my sleep-ins or convincing me that I do, in fact, have the potential to achieve my dreams. I only knew a few of you before this year, and I'm now proud to say that our shared experiences, though mostly rambunctious, were a nice distraction from the stress of school and gave me a set of brothers for life.

—Revant Kantamneni '20

What's the hardest part of being home this term, rather than in Quantrell? I feel a sense of being lost after 12:00 a.m. In the dorm, I would usually be chugging through all of the work I had procrastinated on until a hoard of dorm-mates either barged through my door or made a ruckus in the common room. Though I enjoyed my interactions with my dorm-mates when I would help them with homework or hang out with them



MY SLOW-BURNING LOVE



My love for Choate came slowly — an unhurried, tentative process that ebbed and flowed like waves. On more than one day during these last three years, I would have done anything to see Jakarta's jumbled skyline instead of the order of red-brick academic buildings. I felt suffocated by the quietness of my surroundings and overwhelmed by the responsibilities asked of me. But, it was easy to fall in love with Choate after every Saturday night dinner at Siriman's; every night spent crying within the

warm confines of my roommate's arms; every rant about another impossible assignment with my

I will have to summon the courage to let go of a place that has given me so much in so little time

SRP classmates; every revolutionary English discussion; every cookie Dr. Chen Lin baked; every

scolding for being too loud in the library; every impromptu trip to Walmart; every sentimental email I wrote to a teacher who has changed my life; and every time I realized Choate gave me friends who are so inspiring.

I loved Choate — but my love only blossomed to its extreme as my time here came to an end. All events in life are so fleeting and delicate. None of us will ever be in the exact same place or time again. Although futile, it is human nature to cling onto the familiar — to the memories of a moment once lived. I, myself, yearn to do everything I loved about Choate just once more. I will have to summon the courage to let go of a place that has given me so much in so little time; but in the meantime, I will dream about the unsaid thank-yous, missed farewells, and all the beautiful souls I've met.

—Erica Vandenbulcke '20



Favorite spot on campus?

The PMAC when it's raining.
—Peter Loiselle
The grass above the track — perfect sunset view.
—Haley Strom

What was the best course you took at Choate?

International Relations.
—Lambert Perkins
Reverse Engineering.
—Jamie Shin



What would you change about your Choate career?

Come to Choate earlier.
—John Mahoney
I wish I gained my confidence earlier; it would have saved me a lot of heartache.
—Roshni Surpur
Nothing.
—Jessie Yau



What is something you would have done (gone "full send" on) had we gone back to campus?

Come out to the whole school.
—Di'Anna Bonomolo
Last Hurrah proposal.
—Ryan Kim



Favorite campus pet?

Dwyer Farrell
—Brennan Connell
Jeeves
—Ally Chadha

Highlight of your Choate career?

Winning the MacGyver challenge junior year in Dr. Hogue's physics class.
—Julianna Sekula
Summer Abroad in Paris.
—Noah Trudeau
Believe it or not, John Legend was my first real concert.
—Dasha Asienga



Teacher that changed your life at Choate?

Dr. Hogue and Tiz
—Jimmy Sullivan
Mr. Peed
—Fenn Suter
Dr. Curtis
—Sam Curtis

What song got you through senior year?

"Mamma Mia"
—Chandler Littleford
"All Star"
—Esi Dunyoh
"Brazil"
—Aisha Pasha



Best Overheard at Choate quote?

"Not now. Too many emails."
"They can't get us ALL in trouble."
"I just want to be in love with somebody."

What advice about Choate would you give your younger self?

Treasure every moment you have on campus because you have no idea how fast it ends.
—Meagan Best
No one remembers your embarrassing moments, so live it up and do what you want.
—Sophie Ray
Make mistakes.
—Lillie Lanphier



Which local foods will you miss the most?

Rivas Taqueria.
—Ahmed Wise
Cafe Ra breakfast on Saturday morning.
—Isa Caputo

What will you miss most?

Staying in the dining hall to talk until they kick us out.
—Laura Solano-Florez
The homies
—Tommy Styron



A TRANSFORMATIVE PRESENCE IN THE ARTS, MR. PHIL VENTRE RETIRES AFTER 50 YEARS

By **Renee Jiang '22** and **Alexis Lien '23**
Copy Editor and Staff Reporter

Since his arrival at Choate, in 1970, Faculty Marshall Mr. Phil Ventre has rebuilt the School's music program from the ground up, developing it into one of the best in the nation.

Today, Choate is the only secondary school in the U.S. that offers seven music history courses and 31 private music

teachers who teach lessons on in-

struments ranging from bagpipes to the banjo to the Caribbean steelpan. During his time at Choate, Mr. Ventre taught theory, harmony, counterpoint, and six of the music history classes. He has also directed the Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, String Orchestra, and Symphony Orchestra.

Some of Mr. Ventre's greatest accomplishments are the Symphony Orchestra's many performances in prestigious locations across the globe. Over the years, it has performed in China, South Korea, a dozen locations across Europe, New York's Carnegie Hall, Washington's Lincoln Center, and Yale University. The group was recently selected as one of four youth orchestras in the nation to perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington, as part of the Capital Orchestra Festival.

Mr. Ventre was dedicated to his students and shared his love for music with each of them. Supriya Chang '21 said, "He exposed me to a whole world of art that I wouldn't have explored without his guidance. Although tough on us, there is no one more dedicated than Mr. Ventre is to our success and happiness. The Choate music community owes everything to him."

Jayden Khuu '21 added, "When he's in the room, time stops — all you



Photos courtesy of Choate Archives

want to do is create art with him. You feel an obligation to play well to respect the music and its composer. He was more than my teacher and conductor. He was my friend."

Mr. Ventre said he stayed at Choate for half a century "because everyone is so sincere...the students work very conscientiously: they love music. I love introducing them to the great composers in my history classes; I love having them play the greatest musical masterworks by all the greatest composers. I've loved every minute."

In his retirement, Mr. Ventre plans to continue working with the Wallingford Symphony Orches-

tra, which he founded in 1974; conducting in China, which he has been doing since 1998; guest conducting in the U.S.; spending more time with his daughters and grandchildren; and traveling with his wife.

Mr. Ventre offered one final message to his students: "You have all shown such sincerity of purpose, such kindness and care, and you are so dedicated, and you all work so conscientiously. As you know, because many of your colleagues have told you, the Choate Orchestra is your family."

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LONGTIME ENGLISH TEACHER MR. ED McCATTY CLOSES THE BOOK ON CHOATE

By **Stephanie Chen '23** and **Sabrina Wang '23**
Copy Editor and Reporter

When English teacher Mr. Ed McCatty came to Choate in 1992, he had not expected to end up spending the next 28 years of his life at the School. However, when he attended his very first School Meeting, he was deeply moved by what he refers to as the "attitude of the school."

"The School's

attitude about some things were just so different, so progressive, so wonderful, that I just said, "Yes, this is it," recalled Mr. McCatty. The environment Choate fostered led Mr. McCatty to take a job at the School, a decision which, looking back, has left him deeply satisfied. "I have loved being at this place," he said.

As a member of the Choate faculty, Mr. McCatty taught English at the 200, 300, and 400 levels, teaching American Literature every year. Kevin Tang '21 said, "Having been both his advisee and student, Mr. McCatty is not only one of the best teachers I have ever had, but also one of the best people I have ever had the fortune to meet. His teaching really pushed his students to think for themselves and I'm grateful for that. I will miss his encouraging teaching, charming presence in the classroom, and staple humorous personality."

In addition to being an integral and beloved member of the Choate English Department, Mr. McCatty was also a crew coach and a faculty adviser to the Judicial Committee in his early years at Choate. He has also helped organize many of Choate's annual Pratt-Packard Speech Contests.

Adrienne Chacón '22 remembers that Mr. McCatty "always kept a sense of decorum when con-

ducting the speech contest. He took it as a great tradition that he was tasked with upholding. He values English and the power of speech and words that all people possess."

This unique sense of duty has pushed Mr. McCatty to work and improve every program of which he was a part. His determination and inextinguishable school spirit have left an immeasurable impact on the Choate community that will undoubtedly be remembered and felt for years to come.

After nearly 30 years at Choate, Mr. McCatty has made the decision to retire. After departing, Mr. McCatty plans on moving back to his home in New Hampshire where he looks forward to gardening, honing his passion for photography, reading, cooking with friends, and involving himself in volunteering.

His parting advice reflects his undying love for Choate and its transformative abilities: "Appreciate this place. Work to find the good if it's not readily obvious to you, because it is there. This is a phenomenal place to grow, to develop various interests, to try different things. Make sure you have friends that will be your lifelong friends, and take part in things. Don't sit in your room."



Photo courtesy of Choate Archives

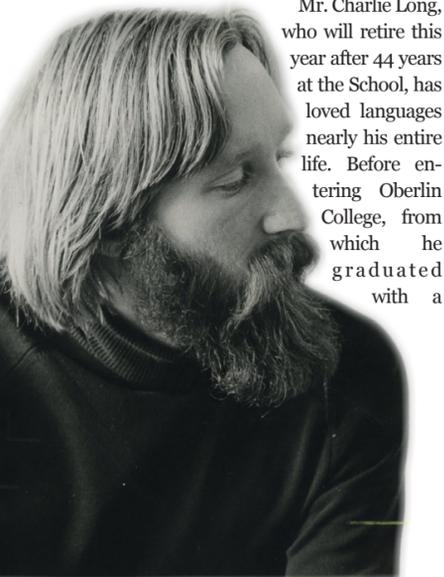
Mr. McCatty embodies this adventurous attitude. Even now, Mr. McCatty still keeps in contact with former students, sometimes even traveling abroad to visit Choate families.

Beyond appreciating life at Choate, Mr. McCatty also hopes that Choate students will be able to use what they're taught at Choate for something greater. "What I'd like to instill in all Choate students is that you are more fortunate than the rest of the world. Use that to the benefit of the rest of the world."

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AFTER MORE THAN FOUR DECADES, SPANISH TEACHER MR. CHARLIE LONG SAYS ADIOS

By **Linda Phan '22** and **Heidi Li '23**
Copy Editor and Reporter

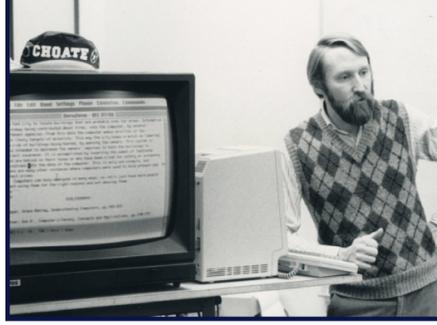


Mr. Charlie Long, who will retire this year after 44 years at the School, has loved languages nearly his entire life. Before entering Oberlin College, from which he graduated with a

triple major in Spanish, German, and the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, Mr. Long took a gap year to teach English in Spain. Upon arriving at Choate, in 1976, Mr. Long was one of the teachers who taught the first Computer Applications Course.

Mr. Long also took up teaching Spanish, leaving a lasting impression on many of his students, who know him as "Don Carlos." Jordan Azzinaro '22, who was in Mr. Long's Spanish 125 class during her freshman year, said, "He cultivated an energetic and fun atmosphere in the classroom, and some of the students I shared Spanish 125 with are still my best friends today. Even at times when I found it hard to adjust to life at Choate, I could always count on that class to make me feel comfortable and happy at school while learning Spanish along the way. Don Carlos never fails to make his students smile and laugh, and I am very grateful to have had him as a teacher."

Students also commented on Mr. Long's willingness to help his students when they needed assistance. "Coming from a public school, I never really had a legitimate Spanish class where I truly learned to speak the language. He had high expectations of his students but would do anything to help them meet those expectations. He was very



devoted to teaching his students and helping them learn all they could," said Kayce Madancy '22.

While his students enjoyed his classes, Mr. Long, himself, had fun teaching them. He says he will miss the classroom and students more than any other aspect of working at Choate. As a Spanish teacher, Mr. Long was also interested in expanding the language department by further developing special programs. He held positions that include the Director of Language Learning Center, the Director of International Programs, and the Founding Director of Term Abroad in Spain.



Photos courtesy of Choate Archives

Mr. Long has also taken on a large role in Choate Athletics during his time here at Choate. He led the Ski Club and coached the Ski Team, Boys' JV Lacrosse, and Girls' JV Hockey.

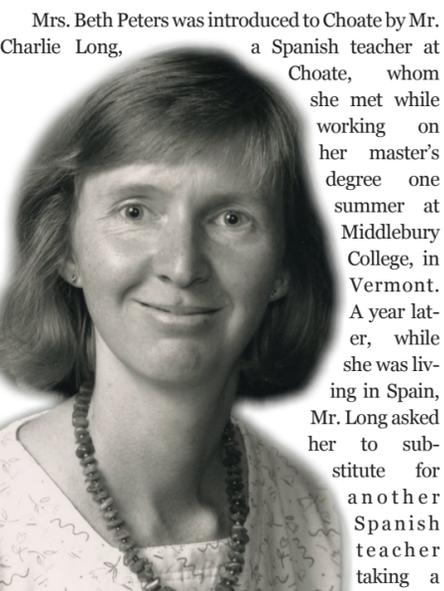
After his retirement from Choate, Mr. Long hopes to spend time with his family, ski, and bicycle.

Certainly, his contributions to the Choate community as a beloved Spanish teacher and athletics coach will be remembered for years to come.

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MRS. BETH PETERS RETIRES WITH LEGACY IN THE LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

By **Angel Guo '22** and **Jessica Wu '22**
Staff Reporter and Copy Editor



Mrs. Beth Peters was introduced to Choate by Mr. Charlie Long, a Spanish teacher at Choate, whom she met while working on her master's degree one summer at Middlebury College, in Vermont. A year later, while she was living in Spain, Mr. Long asked her to substitute for another Spanish teacher taking a

one-year leave of absence. Rather than temporarily filling in a job for a year, Mrs. Peters eventually ended up staying at Choate for 32 years. Mr. Long described her as "a talented speaker of Spanish with a tremendous insight into the language and culture of Spain."

During her time at Choate, Mrs. Peters was the head of the Spanish Section for three years. In this position, she reviewed new texts for lower-level classes and organized a day trip to visit the Goya exhibition in Boston. In addition, she created the SP450 sequence — a fourth-year honors literature course — for students to learn more about Spanish literature before proceeding to the AP-level Spanish course previously offered at Choate. She also created the SP 511/512/513 cinema course, which exposed students to a variety of Spanish films from the 1950s and 1960s.

When asked what she liked most about teaching at Choate, Mrs. Peters said, "I love seeing students' faces when they realize that they can communicate in another language. I also love seeing students inspired or moved by literature and cinema in Spanish."

Her dedication to her teaching and love for her students was obvious; after breaking her arm this fall, she held class in her living room at home. Allyson Alavez '22 said, "Every class, without fail, she would have a snack waiting for the class on her cof-

fee table. Once we went back to our regular classroom, she still continued to do this."

Esi Dunyoh '20, who took Mrs. Peters' Latin American Literature course, added, "Mrs. Peters showed me how to read more efficiently in Spanish but to also be all right with taking risks. She encouraged me to speak even when I wasn't sure of the terminology or sentence structure. I really appreciated my time with her."

In addition to helping to make great advancements in the language department, Mrs. Peters was also heavily involved with the Choate community. She served as a house adviser in the Health Center for three years when it served as a dormitory, Lewis House for nine years, and Nichols for three years. She also coached archery, even though she'd practice archery only during her time at summer camp. She made up for her inexperience by taking various workshops and adult lessons before the archery season began each year. Mrs. Peters also volunteered as a judge for the Choate Debate Team, tutored inmates at the Cheshire Correctional Institution along with other Choate students, and drove Choate students to Master's Manna and the Wallingford Boys and Girls Club.

After leaving Choate, Mrs. Peters — who is a certified Spanish/English federal court interpreter —



Photo courtesy of Choate Archives

hopes to continue her previous career in translation and interpretation, working closely with organizations that promote better lives for people with disabilities.

Reflecting on her time at Choate, Mrs. Peters said, "It has been a joyful experience. I've enjoyed having the freedom to teach what I think is important and the liberty to create new courses with the support of the School."

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