

Powissett Press

A Newsletter for Friends and Supporters of Hale • Fall 2015

[IMPACT]

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• Doing What Comes Naturally •

HALE IS HOME to four ponds, 20 miles of trails, a couple families of beavers, lots of deer, a countless number of trees, and at least two senior snapping turtles; "Fluffy" resides in Noanet Pond, while "Zeus" makes his home in Powissett Pond.

People love Hale's acres of land and natural beauty. For the most part, the programmatic side of what Hale does has worked in unison with Mother Nature. There are times, however, that "She" has the final say – the early months of endless snow to kick off 2015 showed all of New England who is boss. The Hale team did manage to go with the snow, however, and quickly offered snowshoe hiking, much to the delight of participants. For nearly 100 years, Hale staff and nature have worked together to provide dynamic programs.

Initially concerned when a beaver dam began to form in Storrow Pond, Hale staff ultimately recognized the teachable moments this could bring. Noting the location of trees that were nibbled and the distances the beavers would go to build their dams led to discussions about their unique ability to manipulate their environments. Observers of the marks on trees learn that chewing is a means of survival as the large rodents' teeth never stop growing.

The abundance of deer also requires continual monitoring. Hale naturalists are attentive to their grazing patterns and can track their travel in the winter.

With snow on the ground, it is possible to search for bed-down locations, which generates some idea of how many are in a specific proximity. Frequent monitoring, combined with information from abutting properties and state population estimates, helps to determine our policies for population management.

Certainly there are times when coexisting peacefully with nature is done by keeping a safe distance from things that could be harmful. Being able to identify poison ivy or encouraging daily tick checks comes with the territory. Still there is something to be gained from knowing more about the natural world; more knowledge equals better preparedness. For example, New England is scattered with a low growth plant *Urtica dioica*, commonly referred to as nettles or stinging nettles. While not permanently harmful, the tingling, burning sensation that lasts for a while is quite irritating. But, those in the know are aware of the jewelweed that commonly grows next to nettles. Jewelweed's soothing oils from the leaves provide relief from the tingling sensation of nettles (and can help with poison ivy as well).

After nearly 100 years, Hale enthusiasts have come to peacefully coexist nature. Every change in the environment is a direct result of Mother Nature. Even things typically seen as a nuisance- piles of snow, beaver destruction, ticks and invasive plants- play their own part in the ecosystem in the acres of 80 Carby Street. It is just a reminder that Mother knows best.

Haleppily ever after!



Congratulations to two of Hale's favorite former staff members, Samantha Ronan and Alec Bleday. The happy couple had quite a group of Hale friends on hand as they said "I do" this fall.

Hale's New Logo



From time to time, all organizations reflect on their current work and the image and brand that represents their efforts. While Hale's image and brand have served the organization incredibly well for years upon years, it was time to change. This change does not reflect a 180 degree swing

in what Hale does today, but instead a course correction to align its image, logo, mission, and values more closely with the current organization and some future goals.

The process for the change began in the fall of 2014 and has incorporated staff and board of director input throughout. Hale is incredibly fortunate to have had the services of Boathouse Inc. to guide them through all phases of the work. Their dedicated leadership team, a fun group of creatives, and a very attentive account manager made the process easy and enjoyable.

• A Milestone Anniversary •

DIANE COLLINS began working at Hale in 1990 as a bookkeeper. She shared space and one computer with the executive director and a secretary, who preferred the office typewriter. One maintenance supervisor and the ranger oversaw the acres of land. Together they all worked to serve visitors from the Greater Boston area.

Over time, she began to see vast improvements with Hale's programs and facilities. Adding things like two ropes courses, an enrichment program with Boston Public Schools, and a partnership with Aspire, serving children with Asperger's Syndrome, allowed Hale to cater to children with varying interests and learning styles.

Collins notes that some things have remained unceasing over the course of her career. "What hasn't changed since I started is Hale's constant drive to support children and families. No matter if someone has worked here for one year or 25 years, like myself, all of us are dedicated to ensuring the satisfaction of everyone who joins the Hale community. The gorgeous landscape and the passion and energy that all Hale members have only contribute to the positive atmosphere we have here."

With such a small staff, members were often asked to lend a hand by doing work that was not necessarily in their job descriptions and Collins was no exception. She recalls that many years ago, staff would pick up students from school in their own station wagons and bring them to Hale's afterschool program. She enjoyed that because she felt she was making a positive impact and it gave

her an opportunity to experience Hale from a different perspective. She was disappointed when the program ended but is thrilled with the recent revival of a similar afterschool initiative. "We are able to once again offer this program for students, giving them a chance to explore the outdoors and connect with nature."

"What I hope will happen in the next 25 years is exactly what's happened in the past 25! I hope we continue to inspire and share our core values with those in our surrounding communities and even further. I do not think there is a limit to how much we can grow, nurture, and support the children and families who come to Hale to make some of their most important, lasting memories," says Collins.



Diane sitting in front of her IBM computer circa 1990.

• Blue Jeans, Boots and Bling •

The first annual Hale-a-Bratton was a huge success! This September, 240 people joined in an evening of music and fun to support camp scholarships. Event chairs Maureen Erickson and Linda Hunter spearheaded the effort that raised over \$65,000 in support of Hale's programs.

"We weren't sure what to expect, but everything about the event exceeded our expectations," said Hunter. "Initially we hoped to have 100 people but as word spread, so did the excitement. In the end, we had to turn people away."

Guests adorned in "Blue Jeans, Boots and Bling" enjoyed entertainment by local artists Sophia Jane, Jere Shea and Just Another Guru, as well as food from LaStoria's.

Look for details on the 2016 Hale-a-Bratton very soon.



Jere Shea performing at Hale-a-Bratton.

Special thanks to our event sponsors:

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• A Letter from the Executive Director •

Is all impact good? Not necessarily. In some cases the impact can result in something negative such as a physical object hitting another object. (Think coffee cup crashing to the floor.) In other cases, the impact can result in positive change – and that is what Hale is all about. We strive for impact. We want a collision. We aim for a crack in the shield.

When a life accustomed to the ways of urban society collides with the quiet tranquility of the forests at Hale, we know change is coming. When the views of concrete buildings are shattered with the beauty of Noanet Pond, we can see change on a young face. When the perceptions of personal ability are crushed by the success of achievement on the ropes course, we again witness change happening. Hale tries to create these moments of impact when we collide, shatter or crush a belief, understanding, or value that results in opening a mind, generating self-confidence and providing new perspective.

This issue of the "new look" Powissett Press is all about the impact we have at Hale. As Hale marches towards its 100th anniversary in 2018, it is staggering to think about how many people have been impacted, and thus changed, due to Hale. This year, we did it again... and next year it is a top priority.

Thank you to everyone who participates in and supports the impact work we do.

Happy fall!

Eric

Photo Caption: Executive Director Eric Arnold takes a break from the office to "impact" some mountain bikers with the Afterschool Program.

• When 8 Hours Isn't Enough and When It's Too Much •



Family Game Night at Membership Beach.

FAMILIES ARE BUSIER THAN THEY EVER HAVE BEEN and the distractions are numerous. A recent survey from *Britain's Daily Mail* suggests that families spend less than 8 hours per week together. Compare that number to the average of eight hours per day that children spend in front of a screen* and families are heading down a very concerning path.

The reasons families aren't spending time together are sincere, but there are some ways to make time without sacrificing all that has to get done. Spending too much time doing chores on weekends? Divvy up jobs and they'll go faster. Use the time you save to do something fun together. If your kids want to spend time with their friends, invite them along to join you.

Of course schoolwork is important, but the way your children are studying could probably be more efficient. With constant interruptions of cell phones and social

media, some students can only go a few minutes without checking their devices. Make a rule that cell phones are away during study time and see how much more efficient your students get. Another common issue is that parents think their kids are at an age where they do not want to spend time with their family. They seemingly are only

(Article continued on page 7.)

* According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Council on Communications and Media.

• Peace Camps •

IN ADDITION TO serving partner organizations who enjoy camp throughout the summer, Hale offers other groups the chance to explore and partake in teambuilding programs with a one or two day experience. One such group is the Boston Police who recently visited Hale with participants in their Peace Camp initiative.

For several weeks over the summer, groups of young people from Boston came to Hale as part of this program, aimed at giving children a chance to explore outside areas and learn some valuable skills along the way. The Peace Camps initiative is modeled on the concept of the successful district-led Junior Police Academies. The Camps incorporate curriculum and interactive dialogues specific to violence prevention in a number of areas- anti-bullying, cyber safety, trauma awareness, healthy relationships and crime deterrence. In turn, youth form positive relationships with police officers and get to experience guest speakers from other law enforcement and social service agencies.

Although the children always seem to enjoy the activities, it is often the adults who find themselves surprised at what they are seeing. Greg Mahoney, Director of the Boston Police Office of Multimedia, accompanied a group and remarked about how the

kids only took out their cell phones to take photos of all the wildlife they saw. "It struck me that no one was texting, playing games, or looking bored... they were fully engaged and loving their time at Hale!"



Peace Camp participants enjoyed teambuilding initiatives at Hale. Photo courtesy of the Boston Police Department.

[IMPACT] by the Numbers!

Hale's impact over the past 12 months.

\$170,000

Given in financial assistance

220

Summer staff

1

Very successful
and really fun
Hale-a-Bration

Maintained

20

Miles of trails

50,000

Public Visits

6

Eagle Scout
projects

75

Communities
that our
campers
come from

97

Years...And fast
approaching
100!

7,695

People attended
Education programs

140

Trips on the Floating
Classroom

111,000

Swim lessons

15

Boston Marathon
runners

110.6

Inches of snow
plowed on our roads
last winter

100%

The percentage of
Board and staff who
give to Hale

11

Corporate
Volunteer
Groups

90%

Of Hale Day
Camp's alumni
counselors
returned

∞

The number of sticks
we have removed
from Storrow Pond
Dam trying to
discourage the
beavers

2015

Boston Parents Paper
"Top 5 Family Favorite"
award as well as the
Hometown Weekly "Best
Camp in Westwood"
award

26

Organizations
visited Hale for
the first time
through
Education
programs

314

Full Family
memberships
at our Beach

2,000

Campers per day

• A Whole Lot More Than Just Camp •

THERE ARE CERTAIN EXPERIENCES IN LIFE that cannot be measured: raising children, the satisfaction of serving one's community, the importance of genuine friendship. Until recently, the value of a camp experience was only known to those who worked in the field or experienced it firsthand. Organizations, such as the American Camp Association (ACA), now conduct national research on the impact that camp has on children. Overwhelming feedback from parents proved what many of us know to be true: after camp, their children grew significantly in most areas of human development, including independence, peer relationships, friendship skills, values, self-esteem, leadership, social comfort, decision making and a greater sense of adventure and exploration.

According to Marla Coleman of ACA, upon receiving such feedback, "Camp, we then asserted, was a unique educational institution, a 'classroom without walls' that provided the yang to school's yin. Camp is the true north of a young person's moral compass and social character."

Hale Outdoor Learning Adventures (HOLA) takes the "classroom without walls" analogy literally; a partnership between Hale, Boston Public Schools and Boston After School and Beyond, HOLA works to mitigate "summer slide" for urban youth. Up to

two-thirds of the achievement gap between low-income students and their higher income peers is related to summer learning opportunities. At HOLA, that gap is bridged and the results are life-changing.

"I think being at HOLA builds a sense of confidence. Confidence in making new friends. Confidence in trying something you have never attempted before like swimming, boating, or high ropes," says HOLA Director Meghan McKinnon. "When campers arrive at HOLA, they are typically in awe, and sometimes scared, of their new surroundings. They immediately begin spraying copious amounts of insect repellent, forming clouds around themselves. As the weeks pass, they get comfortable and even begin to think of Hale as a 'home.' They can't wait to come back and they learn to apply reasonable amounts of insect repellent!"



Campers working together on a project.



Students working together on a low ropes element.

• Finding a CURE at Hale •

THE CONTINUING UMBRELLA OF RESEARCH EXPERIENCES (CURE) student training program at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute hopes to increase the number of employees from underrepresented backgrounds in healthcare professions. By partnering with schools and community-based organizations in the Greater Boston area, the program identifies high school students with an interest in pursuing careers in healthcare. Providing opportunities, support and guidance to these students ensures they are more likely to achieve their goals and be on the path to success. The CURE group came to Hale as first-time visitors via a referral from Boston Children's Hospital. The students who visited Hale were of high school and college age and were comprised of 78% African American and Hispanic backgrounds; 75% came from low-income/economically disadvantaged families and 47% were first-generation

college students. Since about 75% of the students required financial aid to attend our Education and Adventure team-building programming, Hale was able to subsidize the cost via a reserve fund set up by Hale's Board of Directors.

(Article continued on page 7.)

• Meet Our Campers •

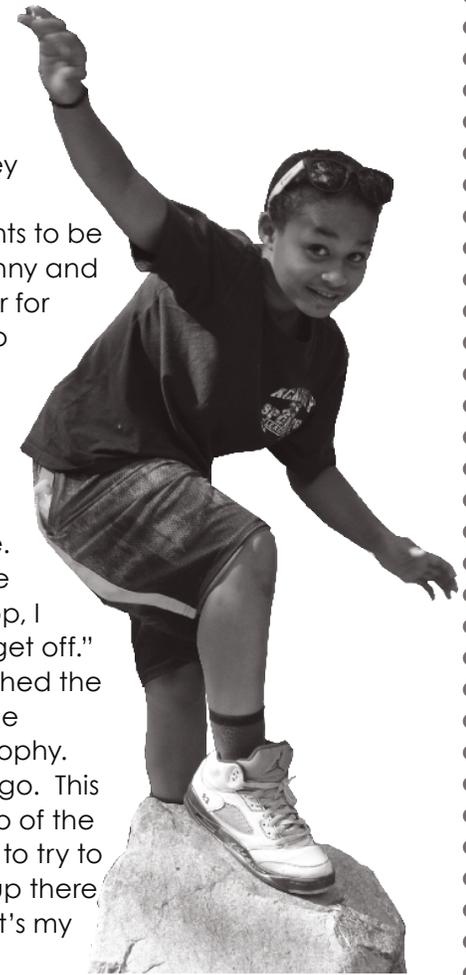


Chalina 11, Bird Street

Chalina is a 6th grader who attends the Lilla G. Frederick Middle School. She lives in Dorchester and has attended the Bird Street Community Center (BSCC) since she "little." She and her 3 siblings come to Hale through the BSCC and she likes camp because she enjoys being around her friends and having fun swimming, playing sports, doing archery and attending "Great Expo" – short for Great Explorations, a nature program at Hale. "I'm a deep ender," referring to her swimming prowess. "Some day I am going to work here." She admits that at Hale, she is much more active than at home, "Hale makes me happy. Being here makes me excited." Her favorite part of Hale might just be the wild turkeys that roam about. "They walk right up the path! That doesn't happen at home."

Edwin, 10, Bird Street

Edwin has been coming to Hale since he was 5. His first memory of Hale is trying to catch fish with a net but they kept falling out. He loves his counselors and says he wants to be like Mr. D because he "is funny and fair." 2015 was a big summer for Edwin. He passed the deep end test, and was happy to have some freedom in the water for the last few weeks of camp. He also made strides with the Leap of Faith on the ropes course. "I got scared but I got to the top. I didn't stand on the top, I told them that I wanted to get off." Relieved when his feet touched the ground, Edwin explained the challenge by choice philosophy. "I choose how far I want to go. This year I chose to go to the top of the pole. Next year I am going to try to hit the balloon. But if I get up there and I change my mind, that's my choice."



Finding a CURE at Hale (continued)

As many of the students come from different schools or work settings, the goals for the day were to do some ice breaking to allow participants to get to know each other, followed by activities and games used to forge stronger relationships and build trustworthiness. Team building work consisted of learning how to positively contribute in a group and the appropriate ways to ask questions about subjects that pique their interest.

Feedback from the students was overwhelmingly positive. The CURE scholars were able to get to know one another in a neutral setting while also learning some skills that will directly correlate back to their studies. One student said, "Hale gave me an opportunity to battle my uneasiness of heights. This has taught me how to approach all situations that make me uncomfortable. I now have a game plan that will help me tackle challenges presented in my future endeavors." Another commented, "The event was super exciting and rewarding to attend. I was able to challenge myself while climbing on the high bridges through the support of my team. I learned a lot about team bonding and that it's okay to rely on team members for support."

When Eight Hours Isn't Enough and When It's Too Much (continued)

interested in watching TV, playing video games or spending time on their phone. The challenge for parents is to stay creative in the activities they plan. Keep things fun and interesting by switching up the locations and trying new things that will pique the interest of all age levels. Getting kids out of their comfort zone and into nature, for example, with a rule that all cell phones are left in the car is one way to get everyone on board with an adventurous hike or kayak trip.

In this day and age, it is an uphill battle to keep traditional family time intact. Be mindful of the challenges technology pose and gently remind those around you that quality time spent together is more valuable than anything that can be viewed on a screen!



• When the Patriots Win, Everyone Wins •

Beyond having lots of Patriots fans who visit, who would have thought their Super Bowl Championship win would have such an impact here on Hale's grounds? In early September, representatives from the New England Patriots, the National Football League, Bose Corporation and the United Way celebrated the champions by doing some wonderful, transformative work at Hale! This

project included some much needed landscaping, building and painting picnic tables, and constructing a new play space at Hale Day Camp.

Retired Patriot's Coach, Dante Scarnecchia summed up the day by saying the group had "emptied their buckets. Hopefully we helped to make Hale a place that a lot of people will enjoy for a long time."

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