

# The Voyage

Paul Cuffee School 🚢 A Maritime Charter School for Providence Children 🚢 Summer 2016 🚢 Vol. 13 Issue 2

## Greetings from the Head of School

Christopher J. Haskins

**D**EAR FRIENDS OF PAUL CUFFEE SCHOOL:

As we end another school year, I want to thank you for your continued commitment to our school. It was a year of significant growth for our school, in terms of our development as an organization and in moving towards the strategic priorities in our strategic plan.

This plan, developed over the course of several months, included in its creation a variety of the school's stakeholders and it has set the course for our continuous improvements.

Our first strategic priority, the continued improvement of academic achievement and social-emotional growth, has been our

top commitment this year. A number of teachers and administrators met frequently to review research and identify strategies to improve literacy rates, resulting in a school-wide focus to improve vocabulary acquisition. New and robust science programming in grades K-8; a partnership with the Rhode Island Urban Debate

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

**Heidi Silverio**

*PCS Class of 2014*



Until the day she left for college, Heidi Silverio wanted to be an actor. All that changed when she entered Salve Regina University in Newport, RI. A member of PCS's first graduating class in 2014, Heidi is now entering her junior year at Salve. A political science major and philosophy major, she plans to go into human rights law.

Her passion for public policy and international relations was born of her Paul Cuffee School experience on the Debate Team. "I loved being on the Debate Team," Heidi enthused. "I was in the Student Senate, guided by Mr. Woodward, and saw the value right then of getting involved in the Paul Cuffee School community." Humanities teacher, Ms. Megan Thoma, was also an influence. In humanities class, Heidi learned that she liked to help, to be involved, not to sit on the sidelines, to speak up. "Ms. Thoma's class taught me to make educated responses," Heidi reminisced.

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*PCS 6th grader dissects squid as part of the new hands-on life science curriculum.*

## Greetings from the Head of School *(continued from front page)*

League to implement evidence-based argumentation in grades 9-12; and, the integration of educational technology and blended learning in our mathematics classrooms in grades 6-12 are only a few of the ways we have worked to increase our academic outcomes.

Knowing that social and emotional learning is as important and very much related to academic achievement, the school continued to focus efforts on community, collaboration, and teamwork. If you have had the

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“...we are prepared to embrace the next school year with the enthusiasm, vibrancy, and commitment to excellence that characterize this remarkable learning community.”

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opportunity to visit a Town Meeting or All-School Meeting then you have witnessed the impact of student-facilitated community celebration. We are growing student leaders, here. Courage, confidence, and empathy are the characteristics we value in our students and they continue to have multiple opportunities to develop these qualities.

It has not been an easy year, and we have risen to the challenges. Our Middle School developed a slogan last year: *Rough seas, tough sailors*. While the waters will quiet down somewhat over the summer weeks, I know we are prepared to embrace the next school year with the enthusiasm, vibrancy and commitment to excellence that characterize this remarkable learning community.

You're an important part of that and, on behalf of our School, thank you for your support and involvement. 🚢



### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

*(continued from front page)*

She was further convinced of her life's path this spring when she traveled down South during spring break on a university-sponsored civil rights tour. Wending her way south after visiting the Martin Luther King Jr. and Lincoln Memorials in Washington, D.C., Heidi felt moved as she visited venues of the civil rights movement: Greensboro, Selma, Memphis, Atlanta, Birmingham, and Montgomery and spoke with actual Freedom Riders.

Amazed and disheartened, she commented, “This wasn’t 200 years ago; this was 1960.”

Now half-way through her college studies, Heidi plans to pursue graduate studies in a joint program that Salve shares with Fordham University’s law school. In her family, children are taught that there are no limits. With what she has planned for her future, limitations don’t seem to be part of it. 🚢



**David Burnham**  
MARITIME FUND

The David Burnham Maritime Fund, which officially launched in November of 2014 in honor of the late David Burnham, Founding President of the Board of Trustees, awarded its first fellowships to rising juniors and seniors this spring (read about the students’ experiences on Hurricane Island at right). The Fund is only \$25,000 away from its ambitious goal of \$250,000.

Help us reach our goal by donating today at <https://donations.paulcuffee.org/donate-now/> and select David Burnham Maritime Fund.



### Thank You for a Year of Smooth Sailing!

To each of you who contributed to the Annual Fund or the David Burnham Maritime Fund; who provided grants to enhance the educational experiences for our students; who volunteered your time and talents to enrich our students’ experiences; and who sang, read, baked, or rendered other invaluable services to our school, we are profoundly grateful and hopeful we can count on you next year.



# Hurricane Island Affords Rising Juniors and Seniors a Glimpse of Life off the Grid

by PCS teachers, Alysia D'Urso  
and Sissela Tucker

**V**ISITING HURRICANE ISLAND WITH OUR STUDENTS proved to be a life changing experience. Students learned about the environment, science, and art while blossoming into leaders. We are grateful for having had the opportunity to engage in the Hurricane Island curriculum because it brings to life the concepts learned at the Paul Cuffee Upper School (PCUS).

This year, science classes fully adopted Next Generation Science Standards which students were able to experience in real-world applications at Hurricane Island. Physical hands-on science experiences included making conceptual links to marine science through physics standards about waves, currents, and tectonic plate movement. Life science standard connections included ecosystem interactions, dynamic homeostasis, and marine organismal anatomy. Additionally, topics related to chemistry included water quality determination, disruptions to geochemical cycles, and renewable forms of energy. Students came to the realization that concepts learned in their classrooms at PCUS were not just

words in a book but rather vital knowledge to understand how the living world functions.

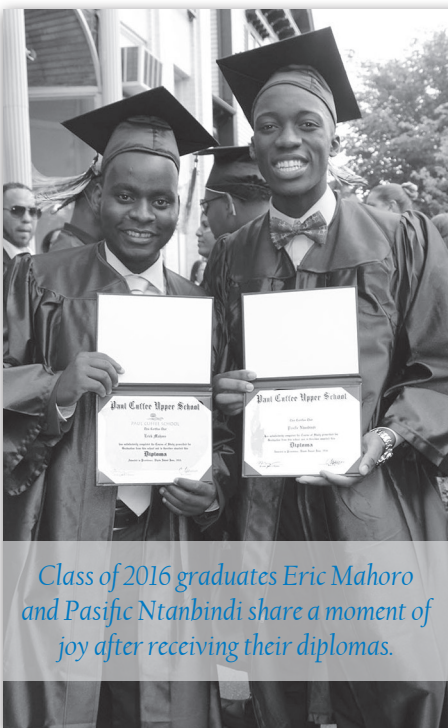
Learning was a constant on the island, even down to meal time, students were continuously learning. An overarching theme of the island was sustainability and being thoughtful about what one does to their environment, whether that is the island or their hometowns. The environment of the island showed clear signs of human interference. Through marine debris cleanup, students learned that 98% of the water surrounding the island was found to contain dissolved plastic particles. These particles are the result of thousands of years of human pollution all across the globe.



*Students take off on a foggy dawn for a hike around Hurricane Island.*

Appreciating the natural beauty of the environment inspired us to create ephemeral art projects. Students turned trash that washed up on shore and marine debris into temporary art installations. "Leave no trace" became a mantra of our group. Students quickly

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*Class of 2016 graduates Eric Mahoro and Pasific Ntanbindi share a moment of joy after receiving their diplomas.*

## Congratulations Class of 2016

### PCS's Class of 2016 was Admitted to...

Allegheny College \*  
Anna Maria College \*  
Bryant University  
Clark University \*  
Community College of Rhode Island  
Cornell College \*  
Curry College  
Dean College \*  
Eckerd College \*  
Florida Southern College \*  
Franklin Pierce University  
Goucher College \*  
Guilford College

University of Hartford  
Illinois College \*  
Johnson & Wales University (Providence)  
Lasell College  
Lesley University \*  
Lyndon State College \*  
Manhattanville College \*  
Merrimack College  
Mitchell College \*  
New College of Florida \*  
New England College  
University of New Haven  
New England Institute of Technology \*  
Providence College

Regis College  
Rhode Island College  
University of Rhode Island  
Rivier University  
Roger Williams University  
Saint Leo University  
The College of Saint Rose \*  
Salve Regina University  
Southern New Hampshire University \*  
Stonehill College \*  
Thomas College \*  
Wheaton College MA  
Wheeling Jesuit University \*

*\* indicates college acceptances that are new for this year.*

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## Hurricane Island *(continued from previous page)*

became invested in the dogma of the island and took their academic experiences back to school.

Additionally, the island allowed many opportunities for personal growth. Every moment was spent working alongside peers and teachers towards a common goal. Off the grid and without cell phones, students learned more than ever what it means to rely on each other. Edwin Lantigua succinctly summed up the experience when saying, “Being away from our normal routines really brought us together and I never thought



*Students examine marine life in the intertidal zone on Hurricane Island.*

hope to take what they’ve learned into their senior year and leave a positive legacy for future PCUS students. 📍

that would happen.” The group bonded as a class, especially through experiences such as handing one another towels after completing the island’s “rite of passage” by jumping into 47 degree water.

At school, the students are a new, science community who are aware of their surroundings. Similar to the island’s mission of leaving the world a better place than each generation finds it, students