



# PRINCETON-BLAIRSTOWN

# OUTLOOK

FALL 2023

## 115 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES!

In 1908, a 700-pound “electric ball” descended from the flagpole atop the New York Times building, Wilbur Wright embarked on a groundbreaking two-and-a-half-hour flight, and the Model T began production at Henry Ford’s Michigan plant. **Amidst these remarkable events, a quieter yet still significant initiative took shape: the founding of the Princeton Summer Camp.**

Timothy Newell Pfeiffer (Class of 1908) and George M. Duff (Class of 1907) spearheaded the efforts of the Philadelphian Society in 1908, bringing 17 boys the first week and 13 boys the second week from the Children’s Country Week Association in Philadelphia to a borrowed campsite. Today, their visionary legacy continues through the present-day work of the Princeton-Blairstown Center.

### Here are some interesting facts about the history of PBC:

- The Princeton Summer Camp was run entirely by Princeton students with faculty oversight for 63 years. From 1908-1929, at least 63 Princeton students served as student directors, head counselors, or managers. From 1930-1970, 37 different Princeton students served as student directors with Henry Reining, Jr., R Kenneth Fairman, Ev Pinneo, Leonard Brown, and Andre Washington working multiple years.
- Four sites were used to run the program: The Hill School’s camp near Beach Haven, NJ (1908); a Bay Head, NJ site on the shore of the Metedeconk River (1909-1928); a campsite at Bear Mountain, NY (1929); and the current Blairstown site (1930-present).



Many iconic PBC activities have endured through the decades, such as the Dam Rappel. Here, a participant rappels down the Bass Lake dam in 1984.

- The Princeton University football team practiced at the Blairstown site during the first two weeks of August from 1949-1972.
- The only times that an on-site summer program for young people did not run was from 1942-1945 due to WWII, and in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Many names have graced the organization since it was founded – the Philadelphian Society, Student Christian Association, Princeton Summer Camp, Princeton Education Center at Blairstown, and Princeton-Blairstown Center.
- In 1909 it cost \$4,300 to operate for a summer; in 1940, it cost \$12,383; by 1966, it cost \$30,000.
- Princeton University classes from 1897, 1907, 1908, 1912, 1916, 1918, and 1920, as well as the Princeton Club of Philadelphia all fundraised to help refurbish the cabins at Blairstown.

In 1960, a summer staff member made \$300-\$400 for their work. In 2023, summer staff members made between \$4,800 and \$5,400.

### While much has changed in the last 115 years, the core needs of young people from historically marginalized communities remain.

They need opportunities to work with dedicated mentors who believe in them, engage in high-quality summer learning experiences, connect with nature, and develop essential social-emotional skills. They do this at PBC!

For over a century, these transformative opportunities for young people to **LEARN, GROW, and LEAD** have been made possible by the unwavering support of loyal donors and supporters like you. **If you haven’t made your gift this year, we urge you to do so.**

If you can, **please consider making a larger gift** to ensure that we can continue providing these life-changing opportunities to even more young people in the year ahead.

With gratitude,

Shawn Maxam  
Board Chair

Pam Gregory  
President & CEO



# Princeton-Blairstown Center: A 115-Year History of Impact!

**1908**

In 1908, a group of Princeton University undergraduates and alumni founded the Princeton Summer Camp. They were determined to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged inner-city children by offering healthy and character-building camping experiences.



**1930**

In 1930, the Blairstown Campus, which eventually grew to 268 acres, was purchased and managed by Princeton undergraduates. The Blairstown Campus is one of the most unique and defining features of the Princeton-Blairstown Center.



**1946**

The Princeton Summer Camp became one of the first camps in the United States to integrate and welcomed its first black campers. Dr. Robert Rivers was among the first black campers to attend the Princeton Summer Camp and reminisces that receiving the "Best Camper" Award in 1946 was one of the defining moments of his life.



**1973**

The site was winterized and professional staff began providing experiential education to urban youth. Preparing the Campus for winter has become an annual tradition called "Woodcutter's Day" where volunteers complete tasks such as splitting logs, raking leaves, and clearing trails.



**1979**

Former Student Camp Director, Ev Pinneo returns to PBC to serve as Executive Director from 1979-1989 and then as Director of Development from 1990-1992. Ev's decades-long affiliation and loyalty to PBC has greatly influenced the organization's trajectory and growth.



**1989**

PBC hires its first non-Princetonian and female executive director, Jennie Curtis.



**1993**

Hendricks Davis becomes the fourth Executive Director of the Princeton-Blairstown Center. He served from 1993 to 2004. PBC honored Hendricks for his work with the Center with a bench dedicated in his name in 2022.



**2015**

The Princeton-Blairstown Center developed and implemented Summer Bridge: a one-week leadership and academic enrichment program designed to serve approximately 550 young people from historically marginalized communities, free of charge.



**2018**

The Ev Pinneo Award was established as part of the 110th Anniversary of the Princeton-Blairstown Center to honor and recognize Ev's commitment to PBC.

Read more about the most recent Pinneo Award recipient, Rev. Dr. Alison Boden, on page 5.



# PBC's Leader-in-Training Program Returns for 2023

After a multi-year hiatus due to COVID-19, PBC's Leader-in-Training (LIT) Program made a triumphant return for Summer 2023. Under the guidance of Program Manager Handy Pierre and Vice President of Programs Dr. Mark DeBiase, the program underwent a thoughtful redesign, including a new curriculum.

The result was an unforgettable experience for eight rising high school juniors and seniors who dedicated six weeks to developing robust leadership skills, participating in academically rigorous STEAM and literacy sessions, enhancing their 21st Century and social-emotional skills, and gaining invaluable hands-on employment experience. This intensive program spanned a six-week residential stay at PBC, and will be complemented by ongoing program touchpoints.

Candidates for the program were nominated by teachers, counselors, and mentors from Newark and Trenton. Following nominations, students underwent an application process, which included competitive interviews. Those fortunate enough to secure a spot also earned a \$1,000 stipend, presented at the end of the summer.

When asked about their favorite aspect of the program, the LITs unanimously agreed that living in a diverse community enriched their experience. LIT Malaysia Rice shared, "What impacted me the most was the deep sense of community and trust I built at PBC. Learning from people who, at first glance, were complete opposites of me, and discovering our shared similarities, helped me develop my social skills and become a more engaged team member. I'm still in touch with most of my fellow LITs; we formed a tight-knit group that shared a unique experience."

During their time at Blirstown, LITs worked together to build leadership, communication, problem-solving, and relationship skills, and model healthy risk-taking. Their experiential education curriculum used many facets of PBC's 268 acres and its low- and high-rope courses. In addition, they participated in financial literacy and college and



The LIT team – LIT Mentors: Howard "Jodie" Dawkins and Jema Espinosa (far left and far right, respectively), with LITs Jakai, Awa, Nicola, Al'Jaleel, Tora, Nehemiah, Malaysia, and Anthony.

career readiness sessions, engaging with volunteer professionals during two career panels. Their summer book club's primary read was **Atomic Habits** by James Clear. They also camped together on an overnight excursion to PBC's "Back 40," where they reflected on their time in the program.

sheetrock, fixing leaky faucets, and even constructing a set of stairs for the loading dock. Remarkably, almost all LITs found each rotation equally fulfilling, thanks to the mentorship and support provided by their supervisors.

"These young leaders were one of the best groups of LITs I have seen at PBC over the last decade." said PBC CEO Pam Gregory. "I look forward to seeing them return to work at the Center and inspire the next generation of young people to lead our organization forward."

"At the sprawling 268 acres of Princeton-Blairstown Center, I also enjoyed the peaceful and tranquil environment. My favorite view was of Bass Lake, especially from the porch of Twins Cabin, where I lived all summer. From that porch, I saw some deer, a pair of blue herons, and a copperhead snake."

- Malaysia Rice, 2023 LIT

In the latter half of their stay, LITs led Participant Choice activities for Summer Bridge Program participants, orchestrating sessions on dancing, soccer, game nights, trivia, comic writing, and crafts. Additionally, they spent half-days working alongside full-time staff. In the kitchen, they honed culinary skills and helped manage logistics. With the facilities team, they tackled tasks like repairing



VP of Facilities Jody Zengulis instructs an LIT on use of a circular saw during their work rotation.

## Venture Out: “The Cleanest Water I Have Seen in My Life”

During her first day at PBC, Nikki and nine of her classmates met their facilitator, Tabs, who led them through a series of teambuilding exercises before they went on a hike around Bass Lake. The hike was the first time Nikki had been in the woods and crossed a stream via a three-line bridge. Her group learned about deer, turkeys, beavers, bears, and other animals that live in the forest and how they are all interconnected, as well as how to identify the first signs of spring. They discussed climate change and how it might affect the date when spring would arrive.

After a hearty lunch, Nikki and her classmates completed three simulation exercises that demonstrated how animal populations increase and decrease from year to year and which ecosystem factors affect population change. They also learned about how elements of ecological systems exist in a web of interdependence. Nikki was excited by these activities because they were fun, hands-on, and included graphing with math, a subject at which she excelled.

Nikki’s group headed out after dinner for a night hike followed by a campfire and s’mores. The students regrouped in the Upper Field to lay on tarps and look at the sky. Clouds rolled in... it didn’t seem like they would get to see anything. Waiting for the clouds to clear, Senior Facilitator Alicia Navarrete read a Navajo legend about how stars were placed in the sky. But, when the clouds didn’t pass, she started talking about the phases of the moon and pointed out the planet Venus -- the only two features visible in the cloudy sky. Nikki and her classmates popped their heads up and gasped, “Where?! That’s Venus?!” They were so excited to see a planet, it didn’t matter they couldn’t see stars.

The following morning, Nikki and her classmates checked the PBC weather station and learned how to use data from the instruments in the weather station to predict the weather. From there, they walked to Blair Creek where they conducted a stream study, checking for the presence or absence



Students work together to reassemble skeletons from their dissected owl pellets during Venture Out.

of different macroinvertebrates to determine if the water was healthy, collecting data to support their hypotheses.

Nikki’s facilitator said the group was running behind when they started their stream study, so she completely forgot to tell the students, “Don’t get your feet wet.” Less than 10 minutes into the activity, multiple students were standing in the middle of the stream, attempting to collect organisms, having the time of their lives. Nikki’s chaperone was so pleased with their enthusiasm that she encouraged them by saying, “Get in there and get dirty!” - and they did. When the students brought their water samples back to the lab, they looked at them through microscopes. Nikki remarked, “It’s the cleanest water I have ever seen in my life.”

They spent the afternoon learning about owls and dissecting owl pellets in the Hunt Environmental Education Center. This was the first time Nikki and her classmates had ever dissected anything. Using special tools, they first were pensive, then excited, as they carefully extracted bones from the pellets and identified each prey animal. Malik Church, one of PBC’s Senior Facilitators, said that student reactions during the lessons range from amazed to disgusted, but that

activities like the owl pellet dissection encourage students to “come out of their comfort zone, welcome getting dirty, and practice analysis and categorization.”

The Center’s goal for Venture Out is for it to become a core experience for Trenton middle-school students. By partnering with schools and community groups, PBC has the power to transform the lives of students like Nikki by providing equitable access to nature, inspiring a new generation of empathetic young adults who value themselves, each other, and the world around them.



A student considers her catch in Blair Creek.

# Links to Youth Golf Outing: A Beautiful Day for a Great Cause



Brian Bernabe, Peter Capiello, Greg Farrell, and Mike Peters from Silver Sponsor Get Beyond scored an impressive 12 below par on the Fox Hollow course.

On Friday, September 22nd, PBC held its eighth annual Links to Youth Golf Outing at the Fox Hollow Golf Club in Branchburg, NJ. The weather was near perfect for the nearly 85 golfers and guests who attended. The event raised more than \$75,000 to support PBC's award-winning Summer Bridge Program. We are also tremendously grateful to our three-time Links to Youth Golf Outing co-chairs, Heather Reilly and Derek Simpkins, for their time, energy, and incredible efforts organizing and executing this successful event.

At the dinner celebration following the tournament, the Ev Pinneo Award was presented to longtime PBC Board Member, Reverend Dr. Alison Boden. Established in 2018 as part of the 110th Anniversary of the Center, the Ev Pinneo Award is given to a volunteer or staff member who has gone above and beyond in their dedication and commitment to the mission of PBC in much the same way that Ev has throughout his seven-decade association with PBC.

Alison joined the Board of Trustees of the Princeton-Blairstown Center in 2007, shortly after being named

Dean of Religious Life and the Chapel at Princeton University. (Historically, the Dean of the Chapel at Princeton has served on the Board of PBC.)

When the Center became a standalone non-profit in 2013, instead of cycling off the Board like many of her peers, Alison's engagement and commitment to the Center deepened. She became Chair of the Governance Committee and helped to build a vibrant, diverse, and skills-based Board. She also



Rev. Boden (second from right) holding the Ev Pinneo Award with her family at Fox Hollow.

became one of the longest serving Secretaries of the Board, and a member of the Executive Committee. As an officer, she helped lead the organization through several critical times, including the transition from Princeton University and the COVID-19 pandemic.

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# HelloFresh: Fostering Critical Life Skills Through Cooking



Summer Staff member Maxat Niaz (center) works with Summer Bridge students during a HelloFresh meal.

PBC has enjoyed a productive partnership with HelloFresh since 2021, with HelloFresh generously donating meal kits for more than 300 students and their families during both summers of 2022 and 2023. Their generosity ensured that every participant in the Center’s Summer Bridge Program could engage in a communal cooking event during their week-long Summer Bridge experience known as “The Great PBC-HelloFresh Cook-Off Challenge.”

Cooking a meal together is the epitome of hands-on learning. By exposing young people to wholesome and fresh ingredients, the collaboration adds layers of educational value to their culinary experiences. The act of creating a meal from start to finish fosters skills such as sharing, cooperation, leadership, teambuilding, and task distribution, as participants collaborate to produce wholesome and appealing dishes for shared enjoyment. Suman Rao, PBC Trustee and Vice President, US Business Technology & Analytics for HelloFresh, envisions that this partnership holds the potential to enhance and shape students’ encounters at the Center.

One of PBC’s Leader-in-Training (LIT) participants shared that cooking with peers can be remarkably enjoyable. Having spent much of his life preparing meals for himself and his siblings, his time at PBC illuminated the joys of communal cooking and the simultaneous accomplishment of tasks. He stated, “There is always something somebody can do. We found something for everybody to do to feel included, so we all had a great time.”

A number of HelloFresh team members paid a visit to the Center, some of whom engaged in teambuilding exercises facilitated by PBC staff. All had the chance to observe the

partnership in action. Witnessing the students’ enthusiasm for culinary activities and their enjoyment in the cooking process inspired a fresh perspective on customer centricity for HelloFresh. The interaction between the students and the HelloFresh team left an indelible impact not only on the HelloFresh staff, but also on PBC’s Summer Bridge participants.



Summer Bridge students prepare HelloFresh ingredients together.

Another LIT participant noted the encouragement and warmth displayed by the HelloFresh team, and appreciated the experience of interacting with the creators of the recipes. This student plans to become a chef and is enrolled in her high school’s culinary program during the academic year. She praised the quality of the fresh ingredients found in HelloFresh meal kits and loved the opportunity to learn culinary tricks to employ at home and school. Her sage sentiment that “even though HelloFresh provides instructions, you can always add your personal touch,” underscores the creative mindset that is essential for any budding chef.

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## Shawn Maxam Elected as PBC Board Chair

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Princeton resident Shawn Maxam is the new Board Chair, succeeding outgoing chair Claudia Franco Kelly who had served in the role since 2021. Shawn is the Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion at Princeton University. There, he leads strategic institutional DEI initiatives including academic climate and inclusion, the History and Sense of Place initiative, racial equity action planning, and more. Prior to his current role, he served as the Senior Associate Director and as Assistant Director for Diversity and Inclusion, Provost Office, as well as the Prevention Coordinator for Men's Initiatives for Princeton's University Health Services.

Shawn holds both a Master of Law and Social Policy and a Master of Social Service from Bryn Mawr College, as well as a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Long Island University. Originally from Brooklyn, NY, Shawn is a first-generation college graduate. He is the son of Jamaican immigrants and knows firsthand the importance of providing enriching educational opportunities to empower young people, especially for youth from historically marginalized communities. Shawn's

educational background and professional experience give him a unique perspective that serves the Board, staff, and young people of PBC in myriad ways each and every day.



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## PBC Welcomes Three New Members to the Board of Trustees

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Kate Danser, the Director of Human Resources for Princeton University Press, joins PBC with 15 years of progressive HR experience and is a Society for HR Management Certified Professional (SHRM-CP). She is deeply dedicated to diversity and inclusion and has served on the board of the HR Management Association of Princeton. Her passion for outdoor education, rooted in her early experiences as a Girl Scout, aligns perfectly with the Center's outdoor education focus. Kate holds a bachelor's degree from the College of New Jersey, and her goal is to help young people develop crucial life skills.

Jennifer Golson is a senior manager on the Integrated Content team at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. Her extensive background includes journalism roles at The Star-Ledger, Reuters, and the former Rockland Journal-News, as well as marketing and communications with Ernst & Young LLP. Jennifer is actively involved with the Central Jersey Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., reflecting her commitment to community service. Her academic achievements, including a bachelor's degree from Howard University and a master's degree from Columbia University, underscore her dedication to excellence.

Lubaina Maimoon is the Director of Strategic Operations at Inside Edge Consulting. Lubaina has years of product and project management experience in the healthcare technology and public health field. She has a master's degree in biotechnology and an MBA. She loves combining science and business to develop unique perspectives on the healthcare industry that can support patients, especially those that are underserved. She loves creative problem-solving, organization, and strategy development. She is a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma honor society and an alumna of the McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Arizona.



KATE DANSER



JENNIFER GOLSON



LUBAINA MAIMOON



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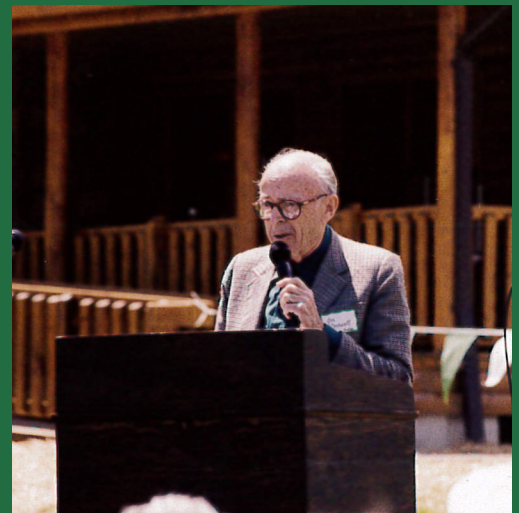
## IS THE PRINCETON-BLAIRSTOWN CENTER INCLUDED IN YOUR WILL?

The greatest assurance that the valuable work of the Princeton-Blairstown Center will continue for another century is through a bequest from you. Please consider the Princeton-Blairstown Center as you provide security to those you love and honor and include us in that special group.

Through a bequest, you will join the 1908 Legacy Society which honors the visionaries who have left an unsurpassed legacy like Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cornwall; Mr. and Mrs. Carl Egner; Mrs. Mary "Randy" Hobler; Rev. David H. McAlpin, Jr.; and Sarah Tantillo, Ed.D.

Their gifts have helped to ensure that deserving youth can experience the transformative power of our Blairstown Campus.

Please contact Meredith Murray at [mmurray@princetonblairstown.org](mailto:mmurray@princetonblairstown.org) for more information.



Joe Cornwall '39 at the 1995 dedication of Egner Lodge.