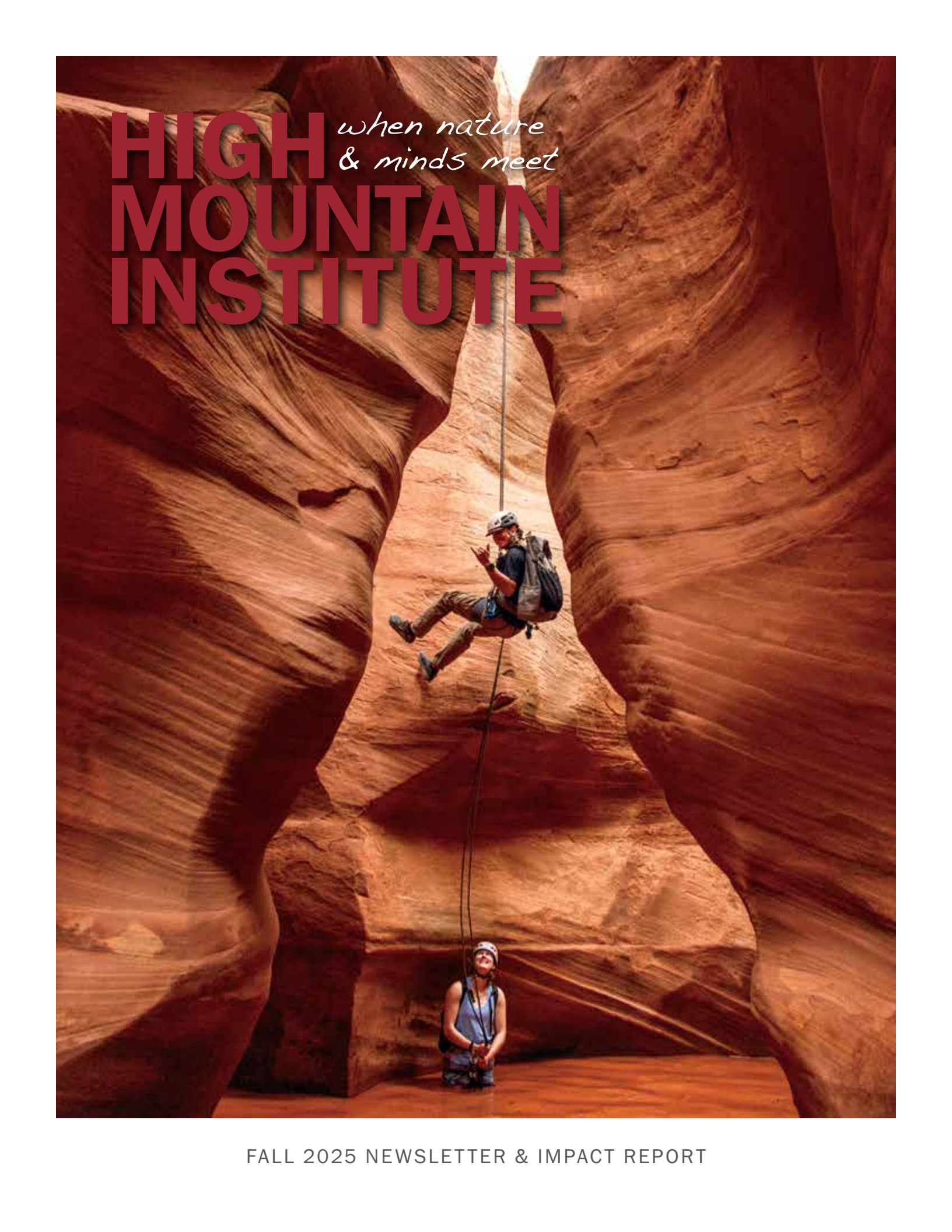


A full-page photograph of a slot canyon. The walls are smooth, undulating, and have a warm, reddish-brown hue. A person is rappelling down a rope in the center of the frame, wearing a helmet, a dark shirt, and a backpack. Another person is standing at the bottom of the canyon, looking up. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights on the rock surfaces.

HIGH MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE

*when nature
& minds meet*

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER & IMPACT REPORT



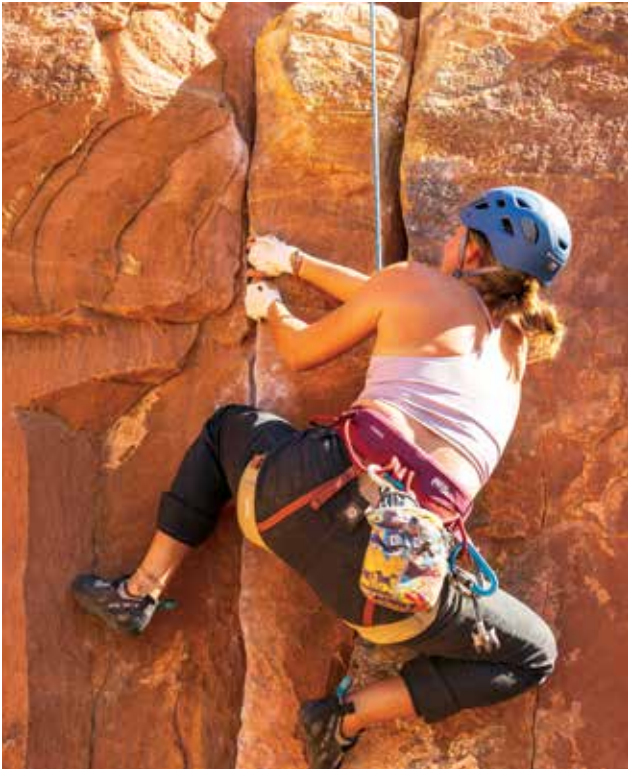
FRIENDSHIP

THROUGH OUR LENS



Scenes from Semester 55, Summer Term '25, and Fall '25 HMI Gap.

Cover: Fall '25 Gap Rock students rappel into Utah's Cowboy Canyon



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TO FOLLOW MORE OF HMI'S ADVENTURES,
FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Sam Critchlow

A striking irony of the current moment is that deep relationships to nature and community are needed now more than ever, just as these connections seem increasingly out of reach for many families.

Outdoor education providers and boarding schools alike are grappling with enrollment pressures and shifting family priorities. HMI is not immune to these challenges, and while our mission remains as vital as ever, the landscape in which we operate has changed.

Outdoor education providers have reported a “post-COVID slump” in demand, combined with a growing preference toward shorter programming. The National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) reported that last year’s total student expedition days was their lowest in 25 years, apart from 2020. Both NOLS and Outward Bound have recently had to close branches and reduce their workforces. In the summer camp industry, demand for shorter sessions has surged.

Independent boarding schools are facing similar headwinds. Last year, while many day schools grew, 63% of boarding schools reported decreased enrollment. Several of our peer semester schools have closed in recent years, most recently the Oxbow School in California. These data points signal a broader decline in demand for immersive and residential programs.

“In an era of mounting political, technological, and environmental uncertainty, our students gain resilience, adaptability, and confidence from the lessons hard-earned through wilderness expeditions and communal living.



HMI has felt these pressures firsthand. Our recent HMI Semester cohorts have settled closer to thirty students, compared to the fifty we welcomed as recently as three or four years ago. Some of this decline reflects changes at our sending schools: lowered caps on study-away participation, stricter tuition remission policies, and less enthusiastic support for semester programs. Some stems from broader cultural currents: heightened anxiety, a post-pandemic craving for comfort and belonging at home, and the rising pull of sports specialization and extracurricular demands.

Yet, even amid these challenges, HMI’s foundation is solid. We continue to attract students who have dreamed of HMI for years (often inspired by a sibling, teacher, or camp counselor), and who arrive eager to immerse themselves fully. Our endowment, currently valued at nearly \$13 million, and the generous ongoing support of donors in this community have allowed us to maintain our commitment to financial aid and diverse student cohorts. My fellow semester school heads and I believe we are at or nearing an “enrollment floor:” a stable baseline of students who reliably seek out semester-long experiences each year. Our top priority is reaching those students who could be convinced about the value of a semester away, but who face doubts or other barriers to enrollment.

Make no mistake: the value of what HMI offers is greater than ever. In an era of mounting political, technological, and environmental uncertainty, our students gain resilience, adaptability, and confidence from the lessons hard-earned through wilderness expeditions and communal living. These outcomes cannot be replicated in shorter bursts of programming, nor in virtual formats. As our alumni can attest, a four-month immersive program like the HMI Semester fosters a different type and depth of growth, one that cannot be gained through shorter programs, nor on the straight-and-narrow typical school trajectory.

While our commitment to our mission and core values does not waver, we are adapting our communications and outreach strategy to better convey the value of our programs. In the coming pages, you will hear from Director of Admissions Jill Gardiner about these changes, and how you can help us get the word out. Thank you for being part of this community, and helping to make HMI possible for the next generation of young people who seek to be inspired by the natural world.



HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT HMI?



By Jill Gardiner, Director of Admissions & Financial Aid, Semester '26 Alum (Spring '11)

Do you remember the moment you first heard about HMI? I was sitting in Hamden Hall Country Day School's auditorium, thumbing through my chemistry notes as I waited for the required presentation to be over so I could go back to studying. HMI cofounder Molly Barnes walked on stage and I looked up. By the time she got to her presentation slide showcasing quigloos, my notes were forgotten in my lap; by 7 pm, I was in the car, dragging my parents to a stranger's home an hour away so they could understand why I needed to go to school in Colorado. I still have the postcard Molly sent me afterwards sitting by my desk.

These days, in my role as HMI's recruiter-in-chief, I spend a great deal of time thinking about how to spark similar enthusiasm in today's 15-year olds. We know about 75% of our students find us in one of two ways: through school presentations and/or conversations with HMI alumni and families. The remaining students tend to find HMI on their own, such as through an internet search, social media post or ad, or even a ChatGPT query. My favorite recent story is a mom who found us when she was researching age-appropriate technology for adolescents and came across a video of one of our alumni describing his phone-free semester at HMI.

Alumni tend to remember the moment they found out about HMI fondly. **But here's the thing: one moment of connection is no longer enough.** In the attention economy, it feels increasingly difficult to hold a teenager's focus long enough to convey the value of an off-the-beaten-path, four-month program grounded in intentional academics, backpacking, and community-building. While we still have breakthrough cases like mine where one touchpoint transforms a disinterested student into an enthusiastic applicant, **it usually takes at least three touchpoints for a student to start seeing themselves at HMI. Can you be one of those touchpoints?**

Continued...

HMI'S CURRENT MARKETING STRATEGY:

SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS:

We recruit at about 110 schools each year and are partnering with an increasing number of schools to offer custom wilderness programming (e.g. spring break backpacking trips in Utah)

ADMISSIONS EVENTS:

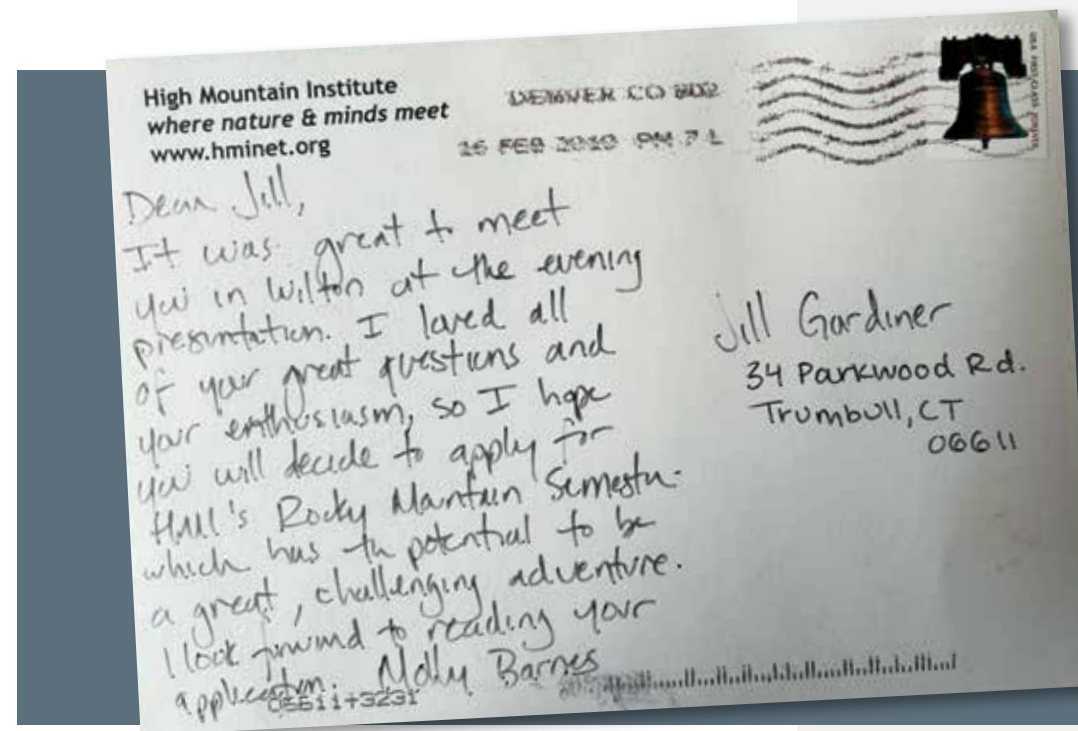
We offer a number of in-person and virtual admissions events each fall, creating friendly spaces for prospective families to learn about HMI

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT:

We are empowering alumni to (1) connect with each other and (2) find ways to authentically share their HMI experiences to different audiences

SHARING HMI ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

We prioritize creating high-quality digital content to communicate the magic of HMI that is (1) easily shareable and (2) competitive in digital spaces



“In the attention economy, it feels increasingly difficult to hold a teenager's focus long enough to convey the value of an off-the-beaten-path, four-month program grounded in intentional academics, backpacking, and community-building.

HOW YOU CAN HELP HMI ADMISSIONS

RECOMMEND HMI TO A TEENAGER:

Think about your network. Do you know any high school sophomores who would benefit from a semester at HMI, or seniors who should consider an HMI gap semester? Encourage them to attend one of our upcoming in-person or virtual admissions events! A personalized social media post or conversation at a family event can be especially impactful. **Keep in mind that more than a third of our students receive financial aid, and the average award covers more than 75% of tuition.**

ATTEND OR PROMOTE AN EVENING EVENT:

Between October and January, the admissions team partners with alumni families to host webinars and in-person events across the county. We'd love to have you join an in-person event to offer testimonials about HMI. Even if you can't attend an event, you can help us spread the word about online sessions and events in your area. **More details on the back page of this newsletter or hminet.org/infosessions**



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS:

Since private schools typically lose tuition revenue when a student comes to HMI, school leadership needs to understand the long-term benefits of the experience. **As alumni, parents, trustees, and community members, your advocacy with independent schools is crucial.** Please reach out to us if you are connected to an independent school, even if you think the school is an active HMI supporter. Leadership turnover and changing school priorities means we are constantly working to maintain strong ties to the approximately 95 independent schools we visit each year.

PUBLIC SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS:

In recent years, roughly 30% of HMI students have come from public schools. We are constantly working to increase this number and build relationships with new public schools. **If you work at a public school, serve on the PTA, or have connections with school leadership, please reach out to us and let's get the ball rolling!**

DONATE TO HMI:

Our financial aid budget derives from tuition revenue and donations. **Your support directly impacts our ability to get students to HMI, irrespective of other revenue.** Our financial aid awards cover more than just tuition; they can include free outdoor gear and airfare. **Donate today at hminet.org/give**

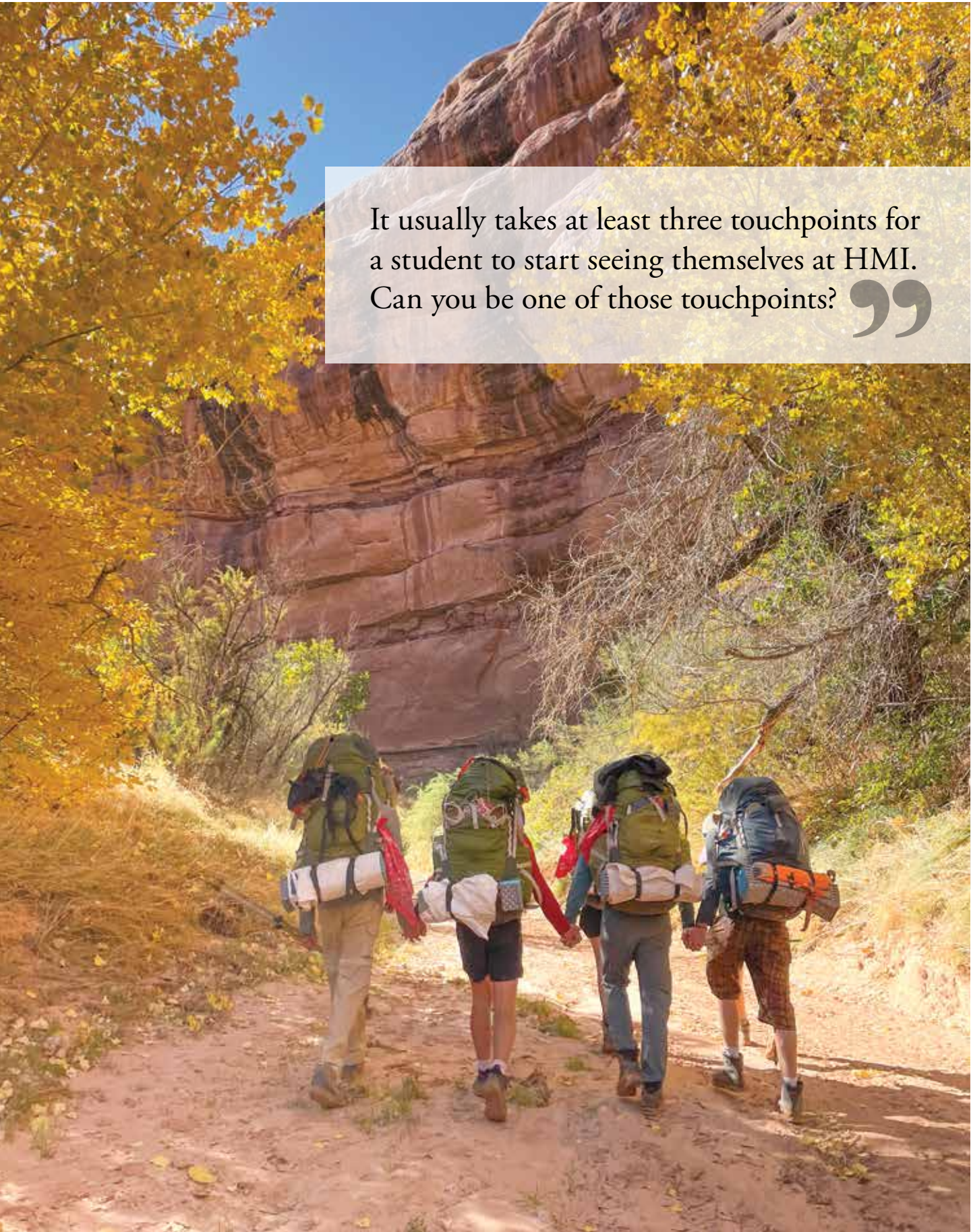
Thank you for helping us spread the word about this special place.

How to contact the admissions office:

By email: admissions@hminet.org
By phone: (719) 486-8200 ext. 1



It usually takes at least three touchpoints for a student to start seeing themselves at HMI. Can you be one of those touchpoints? ”





By Tessa Hicks
Semester 54 Student (Spring 2025)

SIMPLE IN MEANS, RICH IN ENDS

On the final day of each HMI program, every student shares a written “Full Circle” reflection. This Full Circle essay was shared by Tessa at the end of Semester 54.

The first day here, I noticed my bed was missing a bedside table. Everyone else either had a windowsill for their books or a dresser nearby, but I had neither. Thinking it must be a simple oversight, I walked over to Molly’s office, where I found Sergio.

“Do you know if I can get a bookshelf anywhere?” I asked. “Just something to put my book and journal down next to my bed—even a milk crate would work.”

Surely, this wouldn’t be a problem. But Sergio just smiled and said, “We live simple in means, rich in ends out here.”

I was baffled. If a milk crate isn’t simple in means, then what is? But now, I think I understand. Melting dirty ice into drinking water is simple. Picking out the big leaves, twigs, and the occasional bug. Smacking the drom against the hard rock to knock off stray pieces of ice—that’s simple.

I thought I knew simple. Using the foot pump on my mom’s sailboat to make the faucet run. Dropping iodine pills into my Nalgene bottle, filled from a running stream. Back then, I thought that was simple, but now I know—that was luxury.

On first exped, eating dried black beans for a snack was simple. Passing the bag around, laying a small handful in a crack in the rock. Saying, “This isn’t even that bad,”

and, “Why is it lowkey kinda good?” Simple is coming up with a new meal when you’re supposed to have pizza, but your cheese is green. Rolling out dough, coating it in cinnamon sugar, and frying it in the last of your butter—that’s simple in means.

Simple is celebrating the highlight of your day because you finally pooped, running back to camp screaming, “I did it!” and everyone clapping. Simple is asking what we should do in the cabin that night, and half an hour later, balancing nine cards between our toes. Simple is borrowing your friend’s jeans because you could only fit two pairs in your suitcase. Simple is scrounging in the recycling for the backing of your science poster. Simple is finding the funniest things dancing together, coming up with bribes for Raffi. Simple is waking up to Charlotte’s blaring recorder, since we don’t have an alarm clock.

Yes, as Sergio said, we do live simple in means out here. But do we live rich in ends?

Rich in ends is not needing a bedside table because you’re too busy laughing and snuggling with your cabin mates to read. Doing the splits and playing Codenames in the daybed while my book sits unopened in my duffel. Rich is the perfect crushed ice on second exped, once you realize you have to keep your bottle in your sleeping bag to keep it from freezing. Sharing dried mango in the Midd as hail blankets the outside world.

Rich is walking on solid ground after post-holing for ten days straight. Rich is dancing to “Coconut” on the porch while it snows, and again in the AB after study hall. Rich is singing “Ready For It” by Taylor Swift, in Spanish, in the snow, with tears streaming down your face. Rich is the first sip of exped lemonade, and finding water to “wade” in. Rich in ends is having the time to sit in silence with your friends, until one of us says, “Can I just say...?”

Going for walks with the sun on your face and the mountains at your back—that is rich in ends. Rich is the awkward crawl out of the quigloo, and not getting snow down your back. Hugging with all your puffy layers on, summiting Mount Zion, and skiing down with nothing but fields of white below you. Rich is a community where everyone dances at prom, where everyone has a seat at the table. Rich is calling my parents and hearing them say, “You look a lot happier here.” Rich is cleaning the Bus Barn with Charlotte, and sharing shower shoes when you left yours in the cabin. Rich is laughing so hard you pee your pants on a random Tuesday.

I used to think “simple in means, rich in ends” just meant living with basically nothing. But now I see: in exchange for living with less, you gain so much more. Out here, with these people, you build the strongest, most fulfilling relationships—the kind that make you realize you never needed a bedside table after all.

“ I thought I knew simple. Using the foot pump on my mom’s sailboat to make the faucet run. Dropping iodine pills into my Nalgene bottle, filled from a running stream. Back then, I thought that was simple, but now I know—that was luxury.





STUEN HALL

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Emily Weisenbach,
Sister of RMS VIII alum Matthew Stuen

The naming of HMI's Stuen Hall holds deep meaning for my family. My parents, Cynthia Stuen and Bill Weisenbach, married in 1978 and made the then-unusual choice to keep their own last names — a reflection of their shared belief in equality and individuality.



Matthew Stuen in RMS VIII (Spring '02)

My mom came from a family of all girls and my dad from a family of all boys, so when it came time to think about children, they created what they called a “cosmic lottery.” If their first child was a boy, he'd be a Stuen; if a girl, a Weisenbach. The next child would take the other name, regardless of gender.

I arrived first, in 1981, as Emily Weisenbach. My brother Matthew Stuen followed in 1985. We loved our different last names — it was a point of pride, and an early lesson in identity, respect, and fairness.

In 1995, I enrolled at The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, NY. Pam Clark, then Head of School, had made Masters a founding “Member School” of HMI. Four years later, Matthew followed me to Masters — and, in classic Matthew fashion,

applied to HMI's 2002 spring semester (RMS VIII) without telling anyone until after he'd been accepted.

Matthew's semester at HMI changed him. He loved the challenge, the beauty, and what HMI called “education with altitude.” It tested him physically, grounded him emotionally, and gave him a new sense of confidence and purpose.

In 2004, during his freshman year at Widener University, Matthew died suddenly from a massive seizure. He was 18. My parents and I knew the best way to honor him was to support the place that had meant so much to him — HMI. Friends and family donated in his memory, and over time, those gifts, along with ours, helped build Stuen Hall, replacing the yurt that once stood there. More than 35



of us came together on HMI's campus in June, 2010 to dedicate the new building and remember Matthew.

Inside Stuen Hall hangs a photo of Matthew with a quote from Lao Tzu: “He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty.” Matthew became mighty at HMI — and he continues to inspire us every day.

Now, two decades later, the spirit of love, legacy, and naming that began with my parents' “cosmic lottery” lives on. When Zack and I married and blended our families, we found ourselves surrounded by a constellation of names — Weisenbach, Kolstein, Burke, and Stuen — each carrying its own history and light.

Just as my parents used names to honor equality and connection, our family's names tell a story of remembrance and renewal. Our son, Wyatt Matthew Burke, carries my brother's name and spirit forward, and our daughters' names, Anabelle Weisenbach Burke and Jordyn Claire Kolstein, each tell their own story— together forming our beautiful, blended family. Even our dog, Kasha V. Stuen, reminds us daily that Matthew's presence endures in small, joyful ways. Though our children never met Matthew, they know him deeply — through stories, photos, humor, and the phrases that still echo through our home.

In many ways, Stuen Hall stands as the embodiment of my parents' “cosmic lottery” — a testament to how names can carry both equality and legacy, individuality and connection. The decision they made all those years ago to keep their own names was never just about identity; it was about honoring the idea that love can hold many names and still be one family. Through Matthew, and through the hall that bears his name, that belief continues to live on — reminding every student who passes through that who we are, and what we carry forward, matters.

When Zack and I were married last year, it felt only right to include HMI in our celebration — and our loved ones were thrilled to honor Matthew and this extraordinary place that continues to shape so many lives.

Since Stuen Hall's dedication in 2010, approximately 1,700 HMI students have passed through its doors. “Stuen” serves as HMI's primary community gathering space where student cohorts partake in Opening Circle, Full Circle, and other ceremonies.



Emily & Zack were married in October, 2024

**Thank you to the supporters
who donated to HMI in honor
of Emily & Zack's wedding and
in memory of Matthew Stuen:**

Penny Burke
Steven & Elizabeth Bush
William & Virginia Cressey
Mary J. Donahue
Frances Freedman
James & Diane Huning
Lora & Steve Juhl
Erin & Rich Laraway
Janet Lyden
Annette & Gerard Moussard
Cynthia Stuen & Bill Weisenbach
Diantha Thorpe
Linda Vincent & Tom Derr
Carrie & Brian Waltermire
Paul & Christy Weisenbach

GEAR DOESN'T MAKE THE ADVENTURE— YOU DO



HOW I TURNED AN **HMI TENT** INTO A HOMEMADE **BIKEPACKING SETUP**

By Keira Obert,
Marketing & Admissions Associate



I've always had a soft spot for a low-budget adventure, and bikepacking has long been at the top of my list. This spring, my friend Nico (Semester 54 Apprentice) and I were sitting in Leadville's City on a Hill Coffee Shop, dreaming up a biking trip to Washington's famous San Juan Islands. With free public ferries and affordable campsites, it seemed like the perfect budget adventure. But there was a major obstacle: I had no bikepacking gear, and my budget was, well, basically zero.

At HMI, I've learned a thing or two about being resourceful. My mind immediately went to the HMI Gear Room's "Free Bin," a treasure trove of broken, well-loved, and retired gear that's seen a lifetime of adventure. This bin is a goldmine for creative "upcyclers," a place where one person's trash is another's perfect project.

Digging through the Free Bin is an art form. You have to look past the torn jackets and snapped poles to see the potential. As I rummaged, I stumbled upon a patched-up Black Diamond Mega Mid, a well-loved HMI tent. That's when I found my solution. The tent's durable, waterproof material would be perfect for a set of bike bags. I was filled with a sense of purpose—I would build my own bikepacking setup from this retired tent.

The process of designing and sewing the bags was a journey in itself. With no patterns to follow, I measured my bike and created my own templates out of cardboard. The sewing machine I rented from the Lake County Library became intimately familiar with my subpar sewing skills as I worked to create a bag that would fit snugly inside my bike's triangle, and a dry bag for my bike rack.

There's something deeply satisfying about making something with your own two hands. As I worked, I felt a connection to the gear I was creating. This wasn't just a bag; it was a piece of my own ingenuity, a testament to what you can create when you're willing to be a little creative. Plus, I knew a piece of HMI was coming with me on this adventure, a tangible link to the community that had taught me to be resourceful.

Continued...

Upcycler: noun

a person who transforms discarded or waste materials into new products that are of greater value or quality than the original items





“ This trip was a powerful reminder of what I’ve learned at HMI: adventure isn’t about having the perfect gear or the nicest setup. It’s about a willingness to be creative, resourceful, and to embrace the spirit of getting outside no matter what.

WHAT IS BIKEPACKING?

Similar to HMI’s backpacking expeditions—where you carry everything you need to survive on your back—bikepacking is all about strapping your gear onto your bike and hitting the road (or trail). From weekend glamping getaways to cross-country adventures, bikepacking is a form of self-supported travel that’s been gaining popularity. While you can outfit your bike with high-end gear from REI, I’ve found it’s a lot more fun (and rewarding) to do-it-yourself.



When the time came for our trip, the bags held up perfectly. Nico and I spent our days riding through scenic roads, the smell of salt and pine filling the air. We watched the sun set over Mount Baker, whale watched in the bay, and sampled every ice cream shop the islands had to offer. My homemade gear even attracted the attention of curious travelers. I didn’t have the best or most expensive gear, but I had gear that was uniquely mine, a setup born from a dream and a well-loved tent from the free bin.

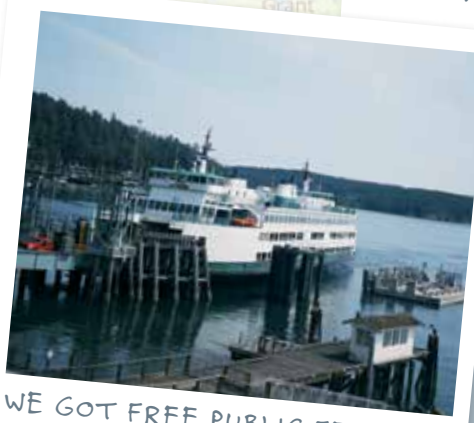
This trip was a powerful reminder of what I’ve learned at HMI: adventure isn’t about having the perfect gear or the nicest setup. It’s about a willingness to be creative, resourceful, and to embrace the spirit of getting outside no matter what. You don’t have to be an expert to get out there, and you certainly don’t need the nicest gear to have a meaningful experience. It’s also about the amazing company you get to share it with.

The experience also reinforced the value of sustainability. Reimagining old gear and giving it a new purpose not only saved me money but also gave a second life to something that would have otherwise been thrown away.

So, if you’re dreaming of an adventure but feel held back by a lack of gear or funds, I encourage you to be bold, creative, and a little scrappy. Dig through a free bin, ask your friends for old gear, and don’t be afraid to try making something with your own hands. As you head out on your own journeys, remember that a piece of HMI—the spirit of resourcefulness, creativity, and community—will always be with you, reminding you that the best adventures often start with an idea and a little bit of discarded fabric.



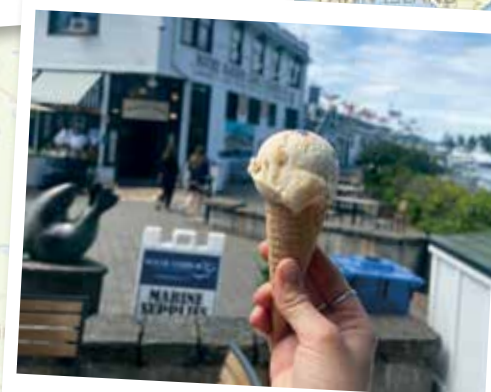
WE SAW PORPOISES AND SEALS FROM THIS CAMPSITE



WE GOT FREE PUBLIC FERRIES FROM SAN JUAN SAFARIS



NICO AND I SCORED MATCHING HELMETS (FOR FREE!)



SAMPLING ICE CREAM



WE MET ALPACAS AT KRYSTAL ACRES FARM





FROM THE DIRECTOR
OF DEVELOPMENT
Ray McGaughey

This fall marks a special milestone for me: it's been 20 years since my high school semester at HMI. When I think back on my life, I marvel at how this place has impacted me.

I grew up in New York City, and for me, Leadville, Colorado felt a little bit like planet Mars. HMI opened my eyes to how big the world is and helped me start to seek alternatives to the "beaten path." It also led me to fall in love with the American West.

As Sam described in his opening letter, HMI Semester sizes are currently hovering around 30 students as opposed to the 50 we regularly enrolled five and ten years ago. Since my student semester also had 30 students, these smaller, more intimate cohorts feel deeply familiar to me. While there are many advantages to smaller semester cohorts, one of the biggest drawbacks is the decrease in our financial aid budget, which is proportional to enrollment. This is where fundraising comes in! Thanks to the support of our alumni, families, and community members, we have not just maintained but increased the percentage of students receiving financial aid in a typical semester from 32% to nearly 40%. Last year, 630 donors helped us make this possible by collectively raising nearly \$1.4M for financial aid and other important causes. The median gift was just \$31.

While our fundraising numbers are impressive, I am especially proud of the work we have done to bring our growing alumni community together. HMI recently surpassed 2,000 HMI Semester alumni. With Gap and Summer Term graduates included, our total alumni body now exceeds 2,600. We are working to reconnect with our alumni and create more opportunities for them to get to know one another. After all, is there anything more fun than meeting someone else out in the world who shares a connection to HMI?

Although today's students weren't even born when I first walked these halls, I love how similar their experience is to mine. Students still give up their cell phones, chop wood, clean bathrooms (some days more thoroughly than others...), and backpack in the Rockies and canyons alongside their classroom teachers. They become close with people who are different from them while huddling under a tarp in a rainstorm or washing pots and pans in our kitchen. They start to understand that their high school is a bubble and that there's a whole wide world waiting for them once they graduate. From my vantage point as a committed alum, the HMI magic is as alive as ever. Thank you for believing in this place, and being part of our wonderful community.

Sincerely,

Ray McGaughey, Director of Development
Semester 15 Alum (Fall '05)
rmcgaughey@hminet.org | (719) 486-8200 x109

IMPACT REPORT



IN THE PAST YEAR,
THE HMI ALUMNI
OFFICE:

- ▶ **Brought back** alumni wilderness trips
- ▶ **Launched our first regional alumni chapter** in Denver, creating a model to expand to other cities next year
- ▶ **Improved Alpenglow**, the monthly alumni digital newsletter, by adding a job board and "recommended articles" section
- ▶ **Grew our HMI Alumni & Friends LinkedIn Group** to increase alumni networking

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

IN 2024-2025 HMI:



Recorded an operating revenue of **\$3.8M**



Allocated over **\$830,000** towards financial aid



Served **95** students across Semester, Gap, and Summer Term Programs, **37%** of whom received financial aid



Grew our endowment to **\$12.9M**

Raised nearly **\$1.4M** from **630** donors to support financial aid, faculty compensation, and campus improvements

THE HMI FUND & FINANCIAL AID



THE HMI FUND
MAKES OUR
FINANCIAL AID
PROGRAM POSSIBLE.

Tuition alone does not cover the full cost of bringing HMI to life. We depend on our donors to fund 15% of our operating budget each year. The HMI Fund is our annual fundraising effort to fill this budget gap. Donations to the HMI Fund support financial aid, faculty and staff compensation, and campus maintenance.

THIS PAST YEAR HMI:

- ▶ **Awarded financial aid to 35 students**, 37% of our participants
- ▶ **Provided free or discounted outdoor gear rental** to 17 students
- ▶ **Covered travel expenses** for 6 top financial aid recipients; **purchased hiking boots** 5 students
- ▶ **Awarded 3 full scholarships** to local Leadville students
- ▶ **Ran the free Lake County Backpacking Trip** for 6 local Leadville middle schoolers

For detailed and audited financial statements, please contact Ray McGaughey, Director of Development, at rmcgaughey@hminet.org.



THANK YOU, DONORS!

With sincere gratitude, we list the following donors who have supported HMI in Fiscal Year 2025 by making gifts to HMI. Through their generosity, support, and commitment to our school, we can continue to offer transformational experiences *when nature and minds meet.*

THANK
YOU



In an effort to more equitably acknowledge our supporters, we have eliminated giving tiers. We aim to emphasize the collective impact of all contributions, regardless of size.

THE MT. ELBERT CIRCLE ▲

Named for Mt. Elbert, the highest peak in Colorado, the Mt. Elbert Circle recognizes donors who have given consecutively for the last five years or more.

EVERGREEN DONORS 🌲

Evergreen Donors help support HMI all year long by making regular monthly donations.

This list reflects donations made to the High Mountain Institute between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025. We have made every effort to ensure that this list is complete and accurate. We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please contact Ray McGaughey, Director of Development, with any corrections at rmcgaughey@hminet.org.

SEMESTER 1

Leah Chubb-Silverman
Christina Davis ▲
Courtland Doyle
Alanna Gino
Bo Holleran
Matt Walker

FAMILIES

Frank & Louisa Deland
James Martin

SEMESTER 2

Chris Milton

SEMESTER 3

David Barahona ▲
Samantha Harlow ▲
Dana Malas

SEMESTER 4

Mariam Aylward
Louise Peppe ▲
Jess Stonberg
Katie Watts
FAMILIES
Douglas & Lydia Hart ▲
Robert & Susan Teich ▲

SEMESTER 5

Maggie Baratz
Matt Chandler
Yasmine Dumorné ▲
Jeremy Loeb
Reyn Whitman ▲

FAMILIES

Donald Chandler
Craig & Mary Kirsch
John Reynolds ▲

SEMESTER 6

Heather Shaughnessy
FAMILIES
David & Sharon White ▲

SEMESTER 7

Paper Buck
Rebecca D’Elia ▲ 🌲
Amanda Dooley

Jacqueline Hastings ▲
Whitney Leonard ▲
Erik Levy ▲
Sam Timberg ▲ 🌲
Jamie Van Pelt

FAMILIES

Jon & Alice Flint ▲

SEMESTER 8

Carly Ackerman
Andrew Bernstein ▲
Em Powers Ducharme ▲
Andrew Finn ▲ 🌲
Tim Hagist
Elizabeth Bagley LeMoine ▲
Daniel Lustick ▲ 🌲
Michelle May ▲

Ruth Poland

John Shubert ▲
Isaiah Thomas ▲

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Cynthia Stuen
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Liza Cohen
Bernadette Kenneally ▲
Carolyn Loeb
Jennifer McInnis
Zack Redlitz

SEMESTER 10

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P-H Weiner
Kyle Zaffin ▲

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Evergreen Donors commit to HMI with monthly donations. Last year Evergreen Donors donated over \$12,000 to support financial aid and teacher salaries.

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Jessica Jong ▲
Claire Moriarty

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Frank & Susan Ashburn ▲
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SEMESTER 13

Kassie Garfield
Eva Luderowski
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FAMILIES

James Clark & Nancy Walker
Mu Sinclair

SEMESTER 14

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Emily Gasperetti ▲
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Chris Offensend ▲▲

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Cakey Worthington ▲

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THANK YOU, KEITH!

Thank you to RMS 19 (Fall '07) alum Keith Snyder for generously matching all alumni donations to HMI last year!

Keith and 340 other alumni donated a record **\$183,826** to support HMI's financial aid program.

PARENT DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Natalia & Bobby Hernández

PARENTS OF ANDI HERNÁNDEZ, SEMESTER 48 (SPRING 2022)

What does HMI mean to your family?

HMI is deeply meaningful for our family because of what it offered our daughter, Andi. Andi learned and grew as a student, leader, and human being in ways that she would not have, had it not been for the experience she had at HMI. The totality of the HMI experience contributed to her growth and development, but specifically, the level of both independence and interdependence, the opportunity to prove to herself her ability to do hard things through expeditions, and the authenticity and strength of relationships she built with teachers and students alike all resulted in a lifelong positive impact on who Andi is.

As a family, we couldn't be more proud of her and grateful to HMI. Andi grew up going to the same school where we, her parents, worked and we are not the "out-doorsy" type of family. So, HMI offered her the chance to be "away from it all" in the best ways possible. The experience also taught us to be away from Andi and to trust that the school and she were well equipped to meet her needs as she took on new challenges with new people. For our family, HMI represents a turning point in how Andi saw herself and how we as parents saw her interacting with a broader, bolder world. It has been four years since Andi's HMI experience and she remains connected to many of the people she met there. More importantly, we see how HMI shaped who she is today and will be in the future.

Why do you choose to support HMI philanthropically?

As a family, we make the yearly choice to give to organizations we care about. HMI has remained at the top of our list not only for everything HMI offered Andi that I described above, but also because we believe that HMI is transformational for any student who has the opportunity to attend. We believe in HMI's mission and we hope that kids far and wide learn about it and that it remains a place where kids can grow and be challenged physically, emotionally, and academically for generations to come. Another way to answer this question is to say that HMI is where Andi chooses to make her donations! She is always so excited when semester 48 wins the giving challenges. Giving is one of those things that makes you feel good because you are contributing to something bigger than yourself. We are thrilled to contribute to HMI. We just wish we could give more!

What is Andi up to these days?

We are so proud of Andi! Andi spent her first two years of college at Colorado College and this year she is transferring to the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She is taking advantage of the benefits of being at two very different colleges and is thriving. She continues to look for challenges and opportunities to learn and grow.

SEMESTER 25

Mary Anne Bodnar
Melissa Giust
Natalie Margolin

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Nathan Schmidt
Zoe Stoenner

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Howard & Marcia Owens
Jeff & Jennifer Potter
Janet Slate ▲

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Sunshine Gardner ▲
Alex Garner ▲
Annie Preston ▲
Max Silverman

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Hannah Darrin

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Colleen Engel ▲
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Annie Moses

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& Jean O'Neill
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Liddy Renner ▲
Nate Tsimikas
Duncan Wheeler ▲

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Join the LinkedIn Group
High Mountain Institute Alumni & Friends



2024 SUMMIT CHALLENGE

Congratulations to Semester 48!

For winning the 2024 Summit Challenge with 60% class participation...for the third year in a row!

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SEMESTER 34

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Lorin DeMuth
Hannah Goldstein ▲
Westly Joseph ▲
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Seton Talty ▲

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Leah Granger ▲
Jesse Leener ▲
Miles de Loayza
Bo Lovett
Nick Schine
Patrick Stevenson

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Louis Galambos ▲
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Peter & Ashley Milliken ▲

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Sunshine Gardner ▲
Arthur Piantedosi ▲▲
Annie Preston ▲
Caroline Santinelli

SEMESTER 38

Nina Goodkin
Simon Kearns
Drew Manning
Everett Metchick ▲
Lucy Wasserstein

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Nicole & Douglas Metchick
Gary Page & Priscilla Schaefer
David & Krista Ross ▲
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Claire Sutton ▲▲

SEMESTER 39

Jessie Cali
George Downs
Lucie Green
Cali Johnston
Elizabeth Stites
Lia Trebilcock
Isabella Whelan

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Anne Pope ▲
JC & Charlotte Stites ▲
Jeffery Tannenbaum & Nisa Geller ▲
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Genevieve Chiu-Schaepe ▲
Rafi Donohoe
Olivia Garg
Claire Greenburger
Saskia Grisaru
Emma Harlow ▲
Oliver Johnston
Lia Kelly ▲▲
Zack Lechter
Anna Mackey
Alaina McGinnis
Ryan Mckinney

Raffi Najarian ▲
Cheney Ramos
Kate Sanchez
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Richard

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Wyatt Ellison

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Georgia Schwebel
Stuart Sopko

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SEMESTER 42

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Virginia Norfleet ▲
Sarah Jane O'Connor
Sophie Rockefeller ▲

Eliza Roy

Eli Webb

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Scott & Elizabeth Ullem ▲

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Gwen Field
Saya Kim-Suzuki ▲
Lenny Lorenz ▲▲
Charlotte Maffie

Ryan Sawyer

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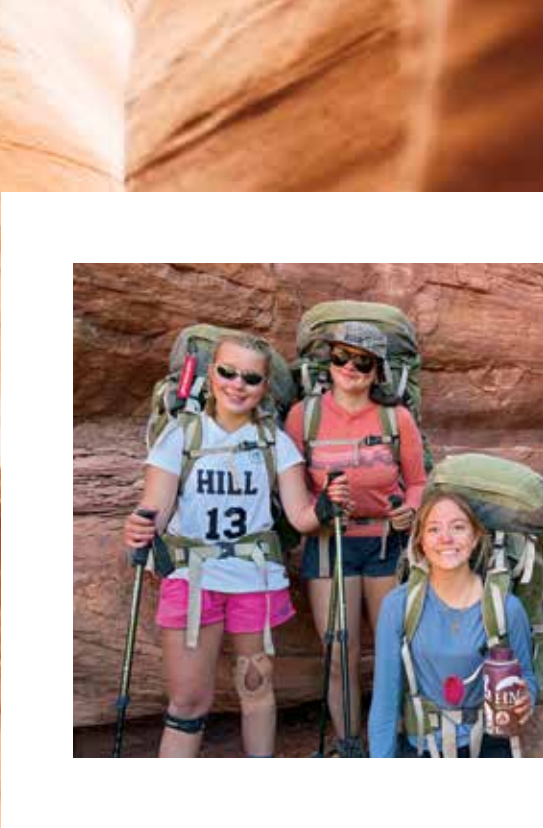
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Louisa McBride ▲

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Aden Katz
Ryley Olsen
KK Pohly
Ella Schweizer ▲
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Sophie Parr ▲▲
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Jack Moore
Maya Singh
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Matthews
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Rosie Binette
Lucy Cutler
Jack Davison
Nieve Fromhein
Cate Garretson
Sydney Goitia-Doran
Hugo Guckert
Sadie Hale
Charlie Harrison
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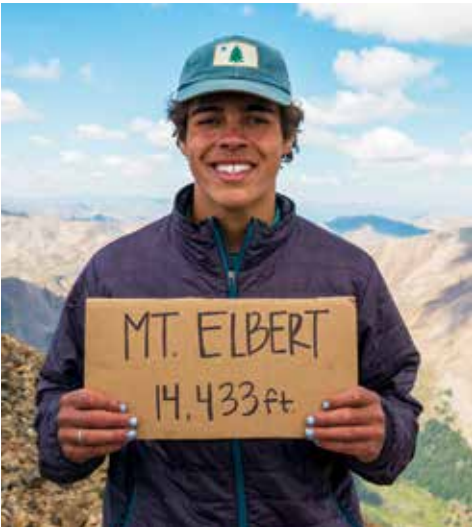


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& Abigail Lash
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HMI SUPPORTS THE LEADVILLE 100



The Leadville 100 Trail Run is one of the oldest and most challenging 100-mile races in the United States.

Founded in 1983 in the hopes of reviving Leadville’s faltering economy, the race now draws hundreds of intrepid ultrarunners and their supporters to our hometown every August. While many HMI faculty, staff, and alumni have completed this legendary achievement over the years, HMI has never before taken on a formal role in supporting the race and its runners. This past summer, HMI secured a spot as the host organization for one of the six aid stations and we put out the word to alumni and friends to join us as race volunteers.

HMI volunteers staffed the aid station for nearly 24 hours, from 6am on Saturday until 4am on Sunday. A number of alumni and families came from out of town and stayed in the HMI student cabins before or after their shifts. Thank you to the aid station volunteers and congratulations to the alumni and staff who competed in the race!

We hope to make this an annual tradition that gives our alumni community a fun and meaningful excuse to return to Leadville. So mark your calendars for next year: August 15-16, 2026!

► [Read the full recap at hminet.org/LT100](https://hminet.org/LT100)

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Charley & Jullie Smith
George Spyros
& Kachina Myers Spyros
David & Katrina Stainton
Elliot & Barbara Targum
Nathan & Amanda Vinhateiro
APPRENTICES
Lia Kelly ▲▲

GAP
Courtland Doyle
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Spencer Wolf ▲

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Jack Viergever
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Gita Carey & Seth Olsen
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Hananberger
Daisy Julian
Derek Kaesgen
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Tammy & Junji Matsumoto
Tom & Katrinka McCallum ▲
Diane Silvestri
Andrew & Jodi Wolk

THE LEADING EDGE AND HIGH PEAKS ADVENTURE

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Hannah Darrin
Melissa Giust
Paul Landsberg ▲
Julia Scott
Jackson Smith
Rebecca Smith
Taylor Strasburger ▲
Jack Viergever

FAMILIES
Michael & Lori Biard
Leo & Yuen Chun
Bryan & Leslie Diers
Josh & Marjorie Harris
Tom Strouse
& Lori Zukerman
Philip Scott
& Elizabeth O'Brien
Michael & Gail Short

DID YOU KNOW?



HMI partners with local nonprofits to offer a range of free outdoor programming each summer for local Leadville middle schoolers including the Lake County Backpacking Trip and the Rockies Rock Adventure Camp.

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& FRIENDS OF HMI

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Pamela Clarke ▲
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Matt Turnbull
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THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!



The following lists recognize some of the people who have contributed their time and talent to advance our school over the past year. Their spirit of service is inspiring!

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Alexa Adams <i>(Semester 28)</i>	Krain Chen <i>(Gap 2021)</i>	Daniel Learner <i>(Semester 21)</i>	Liza Scher <i>(Semester 36)</i>
Andrew Bernstein <i>(Semester 8)</i>	Lia Engelsted <i>(Semester 14)</i>	Carissa Look <i>(Semester 7)</i>	Keith Snyder <i>(Semester 19)</i>
Emily Blau <i>(Semester 21)</i>	Hannah Goldstein <i>(Semester 34)</i>	Colleen Orr Engel <i>(Semester 27)</i>	Sam Timberg <i>(Semester 7)</i>
Andy Casamento <i>(Semester 31)</i>	Lia Kelly <i>(Semester 40)</i>	Jordan Sanchez <i>(Semester 33)</i>	Rachel Whaley <i>(Semester 23)</i>
	Kelly Latterman <i>(Semester 21)</i>	Caroline Santinelli <i>(Semester 37)</i>	

Admissions Ambassadors

Russell, Debbie & Nikki Berger	Hannah Hill Coby Kramarsky	Jamie, Meredith, & Nelson Rice	Tom, Wendy, & Avery Thorpe
Mark Brennan, Sarah Rivkin, & Toby Rivkin Brennan	Jena Schwartz & Pearl Strong	Jeffrey Szilagyi, Alice Treves, & Mirabelle Treves	Daniel, Melanie, & Eli Weinrot

Alumni trips are open to HMI alumni, apprentices, former staff, and their friends and family.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

- ▶ March 5 - 8, 2026
Ski Touring & Joring
- ▶ July 2 - 5, 2026
Fireworks & 14er
- ▶ August 2 - 9, 2026
Backpacking & Burro Racing

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2025-26 ADMISSIONS EVENTS

Alumni families have graciously offered to host admissions events in the following regions. HMI alumni, families, and former staff—we hope you'll join an upcoming event near you.

PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!

To learn more and RSVP, visit

hminet.org/infosessions

UPCOMING DATES

Washington D.C.: 11/18/25

Boston, MA: 11/19/25

Sharon, VT: 12/2/25

Seattle, WA: 12/3/25

New York, NY : 12/4/25

Los Angeles, CA: 12/4/25

Berkeley, CA: 12/11/25

Brooklyn, NY : 1/7/26

