

Rock Point School

is a co-educational boarding and day high school located on 125 acres of wooded lakefront property in Burlington, Vermont. Rock Point is an alternative high school that focuses on educating the whole person. In our small classes and cohesive community, students form close relationships with teachers and peers and often grow in ways they never would have thought possible. Whether in the classroom, on the playing field, or out in the wider community, our mission is to help young people become their best selves.



Viewpoints

Rock Point School

Become your best self

One Rock Point Road, Burlington, Vermont 05408

www.rockpointschool.org

Spring 2013

Greetings from Point School! Inside this issue of Viewpoints students describe many diverse and exciting pursuits happening in our community. In the photo taken of me during the second quarter Honor Roll Carnival (see inside), I was learning how to juggle. I enjoy its representational quality of the many “balls in the air” at Rock Point School—we have engaging events happening all the time—in and out of the classroom—and we are having fun learning new things that take concentration, a sense of delight, and a willingness to get better through practicing. Amidst the amazing curriculum facilitated by the academic and dorm staff, we are also maintaining a dynamic admissions program and wonderful alumni connections.



Some of the balls in the air, in addition to our regular academic curriculum, include hands-on learning in our maple sugaring program, a service-learning trip to Nicaragua, opportunities for leadership in those programs and elsewhere, and many opportunities for students to be active and engaged after academic hours, which is the core of “Kate’s Challenge” in the dorm. These elements of our program, along with many others, are vehicles through which students learn and grow every day in fun and engaging ways. In addition to the day-to-day activities, we are continuing to enroll new, wonderful students who are transferring to Rock Point from other schools and programs. Our current students have created a culture of kindness, which is a welcoming environment for incoming students as they join our school community mid-stream. Many alumni are visiting this year to re-connect and share about their lives since they left Rock Point. It is great to see their faces and hear so many stories of education, work, and adventure.

I am grateful to the financial generosity of the alumni who have donated to the school this year. Donations are always gratefully welcomed, but whether or not you are able to give back to the school financially, I hope that you consider coming home to visit Rock Point. We love seeing you. Of course, this invitation is open to everyone in our Rock Point Community, not just alums. Whatever your connection to the school, or however many balls you have in the air in your own life, I hope you visit sometime soon!

Be well and stay in touch,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'C.J. Spirito'.

C.J. Spirito
Head of School

"Where's Elie?"

Alumni updates

John Farnsworth

John graduated from Rock Point in 2005, and went on to graduate from Johnson State College in 2011 with a BA in Liberal Arts. He is currently living in Amherst, Massachusetts where he has been working jobs as a landscaper, a respite care provider, and most recently, a paraprofessional in the local elementary school. Now he is considering returning to school for a masters in social work or human services. He says that, among other things, his time spent at Rock Point helped teach him how to find the fun in frustrating situations. He loves baking bread, hiking, and singing sea shanties.



Linda (Cyr) Goodell

Linda is living in Vermont and loving it. She and her husband, Tim, are “experiencing raising our five year old.” She says that raising a child is “like what Gus always said about teaching, that he was learning with us.” Linda has been working at a bank for the past five years, also really enjoying that. She stays in touch with Rock Point friends via Facebook, and gets together with them when she can.



Playing Varsity Basketball

by Carl B, grade 10

I came to Rock Point School from Connecticut this past summer and now am here for my sophomore year. I have always wanted to try out for a basketball team, and because Rock Point School doesn't have varsity sports, students here are allowed to play on the Burlington High School (BHS) teams. I was going to try out for junior varsity at BHS, but I was encouraged by the coach to try out for varsity. I was so excited when I made the team. I enjoy playing basketball and I am glad that I got to meet some cool people. Our season has been great so far despite some challenging times. We have won nine games and we have lost nine games. I've learned a lot of new plays and I've also learned new ways to improve my game. In order to be eligible to play basketball at BHS, I have to take a gym class there in addition to my schedule at Rock Point. It is hard to juggle my basketball schedule and Rock Point, but staff have helped me along the way, and it has become easier.

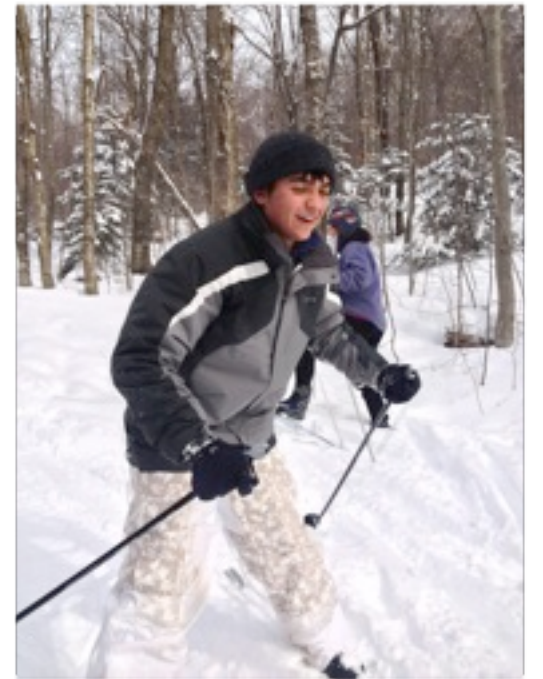


Nordic Skiing

by Kevin J, grade 10

One of the activities we are offered this winter season is Nordic skiing. Nordic skiing is also known as cross country skiing and it is a lot different than down hill skiing. In Nordic skiing you don't go on a chairlift at all; you don't need to, because the trails are mainly flat. The trail may go up and down occasionally but for the most part the trail is very subtle. You may think that it is difficult to get up these hills and keep speed on flat land, but it's not that difficult because the skis and the boots are lightweight and they allow your heel to leave the ski.

We do Nordic skiing at Bolton Valley in a class of about 25 kids. We are the oldest kids there but that is okay because we are a help to the other instructors. The class is free for schools and the people working are volunteers and are very good teachers. I am very happy that Rock Point offered this because I have never really heard of it or considered doing it but now I found that I enjoy it a lot. It is a fun way to get out and see beautiful things and to get in shape. We get to meet new people, and practice being social with others, especially little kids. I really enjoy this activity and I am getting a lot out of it. Thanks Rock Point!



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Staff Profiles

meet some of our great staff
by Langston R, Grade 9

Kyler Star has been working at Rock Point school as a title 1 math tutor since September of 2012. Kyler is also in charge of managing “Breakfast Club,” which helps students get organized for their classes. He has taught math at Champlain College, and he is a private math tutor outside of Rock Point School. From the lowest level math to the highest level, Kyler enjoys showing students the fun side of math. Kyler is from upstate New York and enjoys playing the popular trading card game, “Magic: The Gathering.” Besides helping students with math, Kyler likes to take students to local Magic tournaments and even host tournaments at the school. When I asked Kyler why he decided to teach math, he replied, “Because numbers rule the world!” Kyler also enjoys snow, star fruit, and the pop singer FUN. He also stays very hydrated.



Tony Snow is part of the Dorm program at Rock Point School, and has been working here since August of 2012. In the dorm program, Tony teaches sports, wellness, and runs the weekly boys’ floor meeting. Tony enjoys skiing, hiking, football, and playing with his dog, Karl. Recently we had our quarterly “Honor Roll Carnival,” an event in which students at RPS compete to earn tickets to get prizes. Tony used his psychic abilities to tell us our fortunes: some people would be greeted by aliens, while others would grow uni-brows and become famous wrestlers. When I asked Tony how it went, he replied with his typical huge smile, “It was great!” Tony also enjoys eating watermelon and listening to his favorite pop singer, Beyonce.



Honor Roll Carnival!



by Nate K, grade 9

To promote students getting good grades, Rock Point School has an “Honor Roll Carnival” at the end of each quarter. This tradition was started three years ago by the current Head of School, C.J. Spirito. Before that, there was the “Honor Roll Auction” facilitated by the former Head, John Rouleau. The carnival is for all students, not just Honor Roll students, but those on the Honor Roll have a head-start on winning prizes, because they get prize tickets at the outset based on their grades. All students can win additional tickets at the carnival by participating in games that range from chair races to mini-golf to Bananagrams. In addition to games, there are other activities such as learning to juggle and “psychic” readings by Tony. The prizes range from great to the strange. The prize I won this time, a superhero suit from the movie “The Incredibles” qualifies as a little of both. The carnival is both a great time for all students and an incentive to get on to honor roll.



A Historical Perspective

“Another great advantage of a small school which is here evident is the opportunity for individual instruction and a thorough understanding on the part of the teacher of each student’s difficulties and abilities. Emphasis is on sound learning rather than upon grades.”

Does this sound like a description of Rock Point School? Yes? Well it is...of sorts. These words are taken from a prospectus written in connection with Bishop Hopkins Hall, which was opened on the Rock Point property in the late 1880s as a diocesan school for girls. It was named after Bishop Hopkins, who first thought of the property of Rock Point for educational purposes when he bought it in 1841. That school closed, but over time Rock Point School, as we know it today, came into being in the same building that housed Bishop Hopkins Hall.



Much has changed since that prospectus was written, but the core values and advantages of our small school are the same. The current students may smile at the descriptions of the school uniforms and the highlight of the girls’ social life being a visit from a UVM professor, but the recounting of communal chores and the warmth of the family-like atmosphere remain very familiar to them.

And now, as earlier, Rock Point School continues to serve students whose abilities and gifts were not recognized clearly enough in other school settings. Though fashion and technology have changed a great deal over a-hundred-plus years, the school has not wavered in its goal to help students gain skills; see and value their own abilities; and recognize their inherent importance and their valuable contributions, not only to the school but to the broader human community as well.

Please consider a gift to Rock Point School to help this work started so many years ago continue to thrive today. Donations can be made online at www.rockpointschool.org or checks can be made payable to Rock Point School and sent to us at 1 Rock Point Road, Burlington, VT 05408. Thank you.

by John Rouleau, Headmaster Emeritus, Rock Point School, (1991 – 2011)

March Sweetness

by Stephyn O, grade 11

The sap is flowing and our Maple Sugaring educational program is underway again, expanded this year to include even more tours for pre-school and elementary groups. This is my third year being an educational ambassador for our sugaring program. In addition to tapping trees and collecting sap, I lead tours for groups of younger children to educate them about how maple syrup is made. I take them through a sugar bush, explaining how to identify a maple tree, and teach them how to drill a tap into the tree. I tell them the story of how maple syrup was discovered, collect some sap from one of our tapped trees, then take them to the evaporator where the sap is boiled down and explain that process. After the education of how maple syrup is made, we treat the group to ice cream with homemade syrup on it. In addition to the children, their teachers and parents are surprised at the forty gallons of sap that it takes to create one gallon of syrup. Sugaring is very weather dependent. With little snow, not enough nutrients get into the ground to create a good run of sap. Similarly, if it warms up too quickly, we don’t get much sap. For sap to run, cool nights and warmer days are required. The trees have nature’s version of an “internal thermometer.”



Volunteering

by Aaron S, grade 10

ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center is only a couple miles south of Rock Point School. It wasn't even weeks after starting the year here that someone recommended I apply to volunteer. Lake science, environmentalism, and education? Perfect! When I interviewed with ECHO for a role in the "E-Team," it was the first time I had been inside the building. E-Team is what I have come to describe as "structured volunteering." We're composed of about 13 Vermont sophomores, and all attend a weekly meeting and a weekend shift. As a teen volunteer crew, we train, coordinate, and learn together. Working with a wide age range, including young children, has been an interesting new experience. Everyone on the E-Team has discovered not only the real intricacies of the lake, but more about our own abilities. Some weekends, my bed can be awfully warm and the weather bitterly cold, but I work my way to ECHO and things seem to turn out pretty well. On an average weekend shift, our job is to station parts of the facility such as the saltwater touch tank, or the button-making machine. From owl pellets, to giant Jenga, to hundreds of pounds of non-Newtonian fluids, it's been quite an experience.

