

# R F N I

May - 2020

Issue No: 352



**RETIREMENT**





*The following is an announcement from Francis Parker School announcing Bob Gillingham's retirement:*

Dear Parker Community,

They say that all good things must come to an end, but I always thought that the great ones would stay forever. Bob Gillingham – a.k.a. “Dr. G” – is undoubtedly one of Parker’s great ones, and we wish that his time at Parker would never end. And while Dr. G knew his retirement day would eventually come, he did not initially anticipate that it would come this year at this time. However, in the end, it was the call to care for his parents and the opportunity to spend his days alongside his lifelong partner and best friend, Listy, that would ultimately lead to his decision to bring 44 years of faithful dedication to a close.



Earlier this year, Bob confided in me that his plan would be to step away from this beloved community at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year, marking his 45th year at Parker and his 30th leading our Lower School. Recently, concerned about the growing health risks facing his mother and father who currently live out of town coupled with the reality of Listy’s decision to retire from a career in education at the conclusion of this school year, deep down Dr. G knew he needed to put his family first and join his wife in retirement.

Never before have I seen Dr. G struggle so much, wanting desperately to be able to do it all. In the end, the seven-time ironman realized he couldn’t, and he knew he would have to make the toughest choice of his life. And even though news of Dr. G’s retirement will spark a profound sense of sadness and loss in us all, we know that it is the right choice. It is a reminder of the depth of Dr. G’s character and his genuine goodness and love of others that has defined him throughout his entire career.

In his own words, Dr. G’s journey through Parker over the past four decades leading up to his decision to retire:



“Forty-four years ago, I was looking for something to do during the summer prior to my last semester in college. On a whim, I stopped by a recruiting fair on campus, applied for a summer camp job, and subsequently accepted a position as a counselor at Camp Marston in Julian. My training session was in April, and when I arrived at the camp dining hall (doubling as our training site), it was snowing heavily. Brushing off the snow as I looked for a place to sit, I spotted the woman who, little did I know, would gently lead me into the field of education, become my wife of 40 years, bless us with 3 wonderful children and 4 grandchildren, and be, unequivocally, the best and most important part of my life.



job, but the then Headmaster Doug Crone noted that I'd probably want to move on after a few years.

That I didn't has been another blessing in my life. I've been fortunate to teach at both the Lower and Middle Schools, and I've had the exceptional privilege of being the Head of the Lower School for the last 29 years. In that

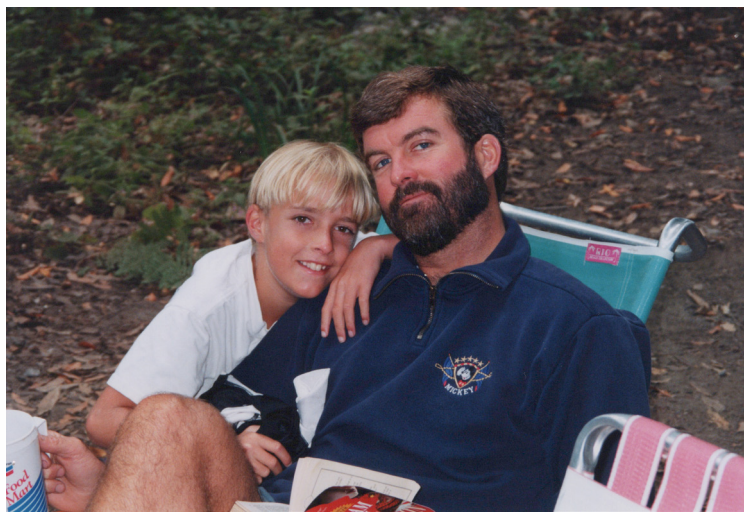


We continued working summer camps together, eventually reconnecting with Dave Glassey, who had once been my counselor at Marston, and who then hired us to work in his Summer Venture Camp in and around Mission Bay and Beach. During a water-certification course, he mentioned that Parker was looking for a fifth-grade teacher. I interviewed and was given the





time, I've been honored to work with so many amazing, dedicated people who have believed deeply in supporting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children. I've witnessed the school's growth from a small single-site campus to one of the most important JK-12 independent schools anywhere. I've observed the physical transformation of both campuses, including every building on the Linda Vista campus and the gorgeous northern addition to the Mission Hills site. I cherished my own children's journey through the school, a collective 47 years, and I'll always be thankful for its role in shaping them into the fine adults they've become. I'll be eternally grateful for being so fully-supported in my own growth as an educator, and I'm confident that, in our school community, Col. Francis Parker's vision is alive and well, thoroughly understood and thoughtfully governed.



It has truly been a lovely ride for us all; the thousands of students, parents, grandparents, faculty, trustees, and alumni Dr. G has taught, led, and inspired over the past four decades. To a person, we hold the deepest admiration and highest respect for Dr. G and the legacy he will leave at Parker.



Now wrapping up her own 40-year career as a much-beloved teacher and revered principal, my wife Listy is gently extending her hand to me again, excitedly pointing out the rest of the beautiful life we'll live together. And so, I'm leaving a place and community I will always love, and I thank all of you for being a part of it. It's been a lovely ride."

And while Dr. G's shoes are going to be tough to fill, in the fall and early winter of 2020, during the traditional timeframe for independent school leadership searches, we will initiate a national search - open to both internal and external candidates - to ultimately identify Parker's next Head of Lower School.

Fortunately, Parker is in the enviable position of having Dr. G's right-hand person, Heather Gray, available to step in at the end of this year and assume the role of Interim Head of Lower School for the 2020-2021 academic year.

In the words of Dr. G., "It is with great confidence and considerable pride that my wonderful Assistant Head of Lower School, Heather Gray, whom I hired 20 years ago, is able to step in as Interim Head of Lower School. She has served the school as a teacher, a math specialist, a curriculum coordinator, and most recently as my trusted sounding board and collaborator. She possesses the great trust and admiration of the faculty, and she has a deep commitment to and love of the school and community. She is exceptional, and her comprehensive understanding

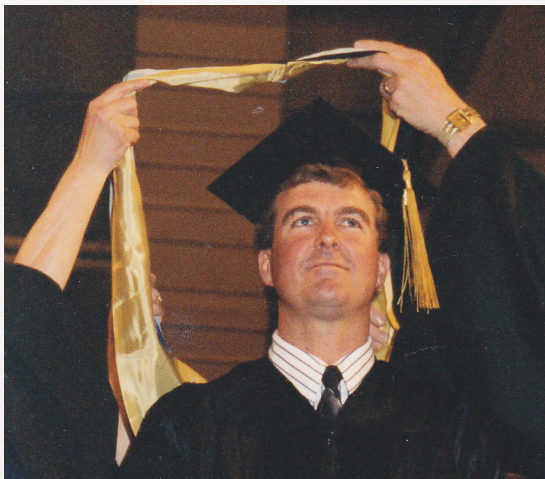


of the program, staff, and students will ensure a very smooth transition from this year to next in every respect.”

I will be working closely with Heather to determine who among our many talented faculty leaders will step up and support the work of the Lower School during the upcoming interim year, ensuring that the Parker educational experience for every student remains as strong as ever. In the meantime, please join me in thanking and welcoming Heather Gray into her new post. Without a doubt, she will carry on the tradition of outstanding leadership at the Lower School, advancing the work and the mission of Parker.

Once we are all able to gather together again on the Mission Hills Campus – hopefully sometime next fall – we look forward to properly and enthusiastically celebrating Dr. G. in the company of his family, his friends, and all of you. Coming up with a celebration commensurate with the impact Dr. G has had on our school – from his early days as a bus driver to his ingenious design of S.T.R.I.V.E. to the personal touch experienced each and every day with a handshake and greeting at the school gate – may not be possible, but we will certainly try! In the meantime, we are working to find a suitable way to honor Dr. G as we close out this academic year.

Congratulations, and thank you, Dr. G. We will miss you but know you will always be a part of the Parker family.







# To Go or Not to Go, That Was the Question.

By Listy Gillingham

All year, Bob and I have been discussing retirement. When I started at PHHS in 2012, I always knew that if it was too much work or I didn't like the change, starting from 2013 (when I turned 55) and on, I could always retire. 2013 came and went, and I stayed because I learned quickly that returning to a high school was the right career move for me as I loved the job and the people I worked with.

I then decided that 2020 sounded like a good time to retire and when people asked, it sounded far enough away; it had a nice ring to it (and I knew I would hit the magic marker of 62 where my pension would end up being close 95% of my salary (not a bad deal)) and it was easy to state with enthusiasm "2020 all the way!" Eight years later, and here we are, everyone asking me if I was really going to go, all year long. Bob and I both love our jobs, so all year we had the battle with each other on who would retire, should we retire, and when would we retire. It's a hard decision to make, because it's in some way making a statement on being done with something that defines you. And, I like working hard and being committed to a cause that I helped build over-time that I'd like to think was different in a positive way. Not only did I see through the physical change at Henry with fancy new buildings, new stadiums, new classrooms, new drinking foun-

tains, etc. I got to change the culture by making it warm and friendly and collaborative in nature, and in high school, that isn't easy.

So the decision to retire was something that moved up and down with the pros and cons as we progressed through the year. Bob and I went to Mexico right before the COVID pandemic happened and while there, we were convinced the life of travel and no worries was for us. But, as soon as we came back to reality and the schools began to close, we felt the calling to stay to help put the pieces back together again by getting the schools ready to reopen in the fall.



Now that we're into the COVID 19 for over a month, it's clear education the way we knew it was changing for good and the fear of not returning to a real school became more and more evident. For me, that was enough to say that





have done for our students, teachers, and school site. Although I am so sad, (and I'll admit a little worried too!), that you will not be our leader through this whole new Covid pandemic reality in the fall. I am so happy for you and that you will finally get a nice break from all of the hard work you have done for years and years with so much energy and enthusiasm.”

what I loved about the job, the people aspect of the work, was gone for now and in return, I spent a lot of time behind a computer solving problems at every level. That role doesn't make me sing. And, it was that reality that made me say it was time to give the reins to the next generation of educators to help put the pieces back together again in whatever format they needed to go until this crisis passes.



Telling my staff wasn't easy, but I'm glad I did it and I'm at peace with the decision. Leaving without a huge celebration is sad on one level, but ok on another. I have gotten a lot of letters and notes which really is nice and I'm sure will help push me out the door (smile).



Here's one example that made me feel good from a teacher who was there when I arrived, "Concerning your announcement to retire, my heart is so very sad to be losing you. In your time at Henry I've seen our campus and community transform into a truly beautiful thing and that was in large part due to your amazing leadership. Thank you so much for everything you





That message pretty much sums up my time at Henry and makes me feel ok to move on to being a grandma and having a good life as long as I can. I can't tell you what Bob will do because every day, it's been a yes and then a no. So, he'll have to write his own article. Same with Birdy, she announced her retirement and then took it back, but now she's back on the bandwagon with me. So I know I'll have at least one buddy and we'll join the crew of siblings who have all gone before us and shown us that it's really not so bad after all!





I love that Bob and I both understand that this single change is big for us and that we both are hesitant. That says a lot about our joint careers as we have gone to school events on both sides (go PHHS football and other sports, and Parker auctions/piano parties/yacht-riding events, etc.). We were never short of showing school spirit anywhere. But it was great life and we will both miss it to some degree. I want to thank Bob for being my buddy and support all through my 38 years in the district. He helped me through 6 career moves and made each one seem better than the next one. I have no regrets and only great things to say about being an educator, thanks to Bob's amazing support along the way.





# One principal OUT and another one comes IN!

H I G H T E C H M I D D L E



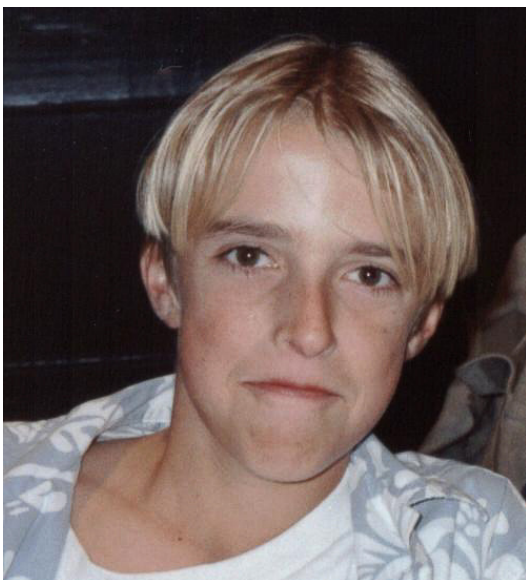
M E D I A A R T S



David Gillingham DP  
Dean of Student Affairs

By Listy Gillingham

One of my favorite memories from the Riel Family Newsletter was the way Dad would always call you and ask you for news about something. When I got my first administrative job, Dad was quite impressed and felt it was necessary to do a true interview with me. So he beckoned me to visit and we sat down in his dining room as he took notes on his pre-prepared questions that he asked with a glimmer of a smile and obvious pride as he put me on the hot seat! So with the announcement of MY retirement from being a principal for the SDUSD and at Patrick Henry, I'd like to announce the appointment of the Director of High Tech Middle Media Arts as none other, than my son, David Gillingham (well Bob's too but I'm writing the article) which means he's the newest principal in the house.



Question 1: What's your official new title?

I will be the Director of High Tech Middle Media Arts School which is comparable to a principal, but it also includes other responsibilities due to the nature of the High Tech High philosophy. My role is to support the Teaching and Learning while the Dean of High Tech Middle (my previous assignment) was to support the students and the school culture. And though those two roles do overlap, my focus moves more towards helping the teachers collaborate on curricular and academic expectations over time using the High Tech philosophy.



Question 2: Can you give me an example of how the High Tech philosophy might be different?

Yes, our curriculum is more dialogically-based that is inspired by the teacher's pedagogy. Teachers develop BIG projects by each grade level that is supported through the curriculum. An example would be if a student was asked to create a business, each subject area would tackle the development of a business model based on the content area they teach. So a math teacher would focus on how to create excel spreadsheets, how to read graphs, statistics, and linear equations while the English teacher would focus on how to be persuasive or integrate writing into the proposal. In the end, the students produce a product that is shared in a student-led exhibition. The Kinected Coaster project was the one of the last projects I created that is displayed on our website. Everyone had a part in making the coaster and explaining the learning process through creating their part of the overall design.

Question 3: What's the biggest change and challenge for you in moving from the Dean of Students to the Director position?



I will need to develop my instructional lens. I have spent a lot of time helping teachers with their classroom management, but now my focus is more on creating the right lesson that supports the learner to want to stay engaged with the classroom lesson.

Question 4: What's your first plan to establish that vision?

I'm going to build my professional development around a book study using Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students By Zaretta Hammond. I hope to help teachers shift the power

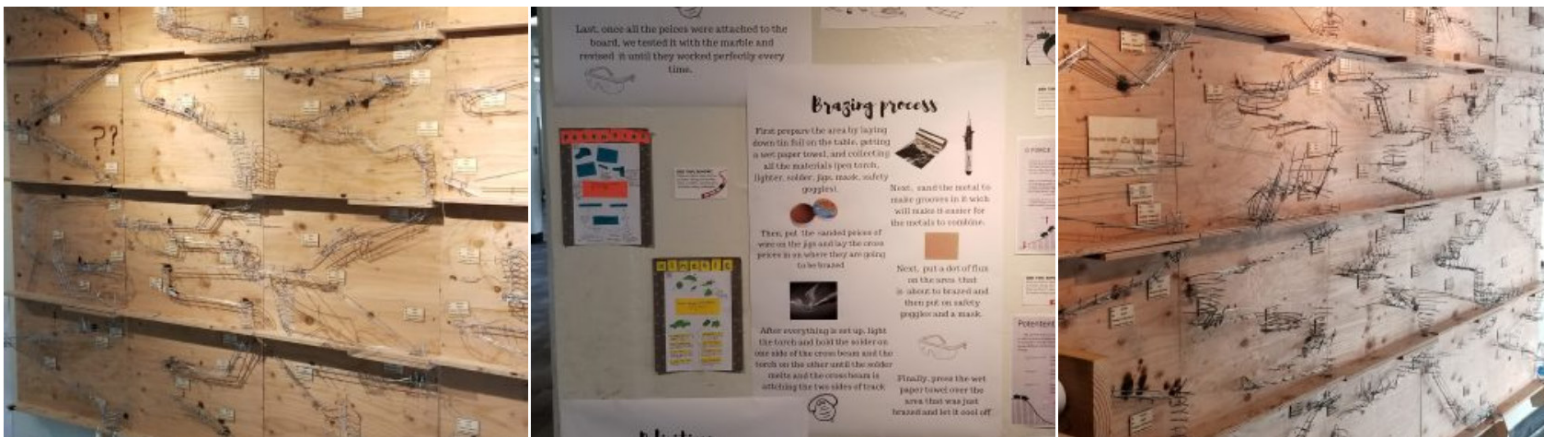
### Student Projects

## Kinected Coasters

**Author:** David Gillingham

**Grade:** 8th

**Subjects:** Engineering, Math, Physics







of classroom decisions to support their disadvantaged students by giving them a voice in the classroom expectations and structures. We teach students at a young age in the High Tech System to develop their leadership voice, but then new teachers come onboard and try using direct instruction methods that don't work well in the High Tech world.

Question 5: As the Dean of Students, you distinguished yourself by placing your office desk outside your office so you would be in the hallways and able to interact with students throughout the day. Are you still going to do that as the director or will you let your Dean carry that model on with the students?



I am definitely going to maintain a presence in the hallway by being a student-centered leader who knows their students because I will see them on a daily basis. As the Dean, I used restorative practices to help build trust and support for students when they got in trouble at school. As the Principal/Director, I hope to continue to participate with students who struggle to help build the rapport needed to help them find success within our school. I will also provide professional development to help teachers understand how this model can be effectively implemented by the teachers through circle discussions.

Question 6: How do you think your staff will react to this appointment?

I've already heard from many of the teachers and they are excited because they know I'm passionate about the school and I sincerely will be an advocate for change and for creating a schoolwide culture that extends from one classroom to another. I hope to use positive feedback tied to a transparent model where I can see first-hand what's happening in each of the classrooms and provide the necessary support as we go.





Question 7: What's your educational background that prepared you for this job?

I got my BA at National University and started working at Francis Parker lower school as a counselor in their after school program. From there, I move up to the Director of the After School program where I got to learn from the BEST principal (Dr. Gillingham) how to work with difficult parents who might expect more than the average based on the cost of the program. As the director, I had a budget to manage, staff to hire and supervise, and students to monitor. It's there where I learned that I eventually wanted to be a teacher.

I knew I needed to branch away from Parker, so when I saw the Director of Extended Studies job opening at High Tech Middle School in Pt. Loma, I applied and got the job. The role was similar but I had some teaching responsibilities in covering for an advisory class and I had to plan all lunch time and after school programs. While working at High Tech, I was offered the change to pick up my single subject math and science credentials through the High Tech High Credential and Graduate School of Education. I took the CSET tests to earn foundational credentials (for middle school) to teach math and science which led me to my next position as a true middle school teacher. I did that for a couple of years, and then when there was an administrative shift, so I decided to follow my teaching team to High Tech Elementary Media and Arts and try my hand at teaching 5th grade. That was a challenge, because I went from teaching two subjects, to all of them and I had much younger students to work with. I tried it for a year, and then was approached to move into the Dean of Students at High Tech Middle School Media Arts (which was on the same campus, but on the second story of the building). Meanwhile, I began to pursue my Masters and administrative credential as I knew I was destined to lead (my amazing parents sold their jobs in a very positive way). I completed my masters last year and will have my admin. credential by November 2020.

Question 8: Any closing thoughts on this new job?

I am excited for the challenge and can't wait to put all the ideas about teaching and learning into practice. I can't wait to use the collective intelligence of the teaching staff to mix with my work ethic and commitment to the school and build it into something special!





# Something Saved Then Found Again

By Ed Riel

Why do we decide what stays in a drawer and what gets trashed? A drawer, like a garage, is filled with ambivalence; to save or not to save. The top is filled with quick decisions until space is at end. With frustration we tackle the job of the cleanout where happy things are kept and then becomes the base of the new pile, and so on. At the near end of your life, a son might, as you are being moved to an assisted living place, might notice that below the pile of unused Christmas and thank-you cards and undonated too solicitations, as well as chances to win millions (back when a Million was Million) was a more personal and enduring layer of personal happiness. He might put it in an envelope for good keeping and store it away in his own garage and not think about it until a Mother's Day comes around with his mother gone. Here is something she saved



The Year was 1946 the month, the last of the year  
wedding vows were exchanged by two, who 40 years later stand here.

Those years with happiness, sadness and joys  
and the continued succession of 5 girls and 3 boys

That time gone so quickly, was prudently spent  
molding eight little monsters, into ladies and gents

Now most couples today, after taking the plunge  
Spend the next several years taking trips, having fun

But, Edith and Frank were different that day  
Richard was born in nine months and a day

Then just one year later came boy number 2  
Ed kept them busy with plenty to do

Margaret was next - a girl now at last  
the Riel household was filling up fast

Three kids seem enough, well, maybe for you  
Francie came along in ' 52

Then sick of the snow and hoping for the best  
Dad packed us all up and moved us out west

To San Diego we came, a place so pretty  
How lucky to end up in the Worlds' finest City

To celebrate the occasion of having arrived  
We soon welcomed Carol and then we were five

Bob came three years later to even the score  
3 boys and 3 girls, Oh please God, no more

But then luck was with us, who would have guessed  
that with not one, but two, we'd be blessed

Listy and Birdy, added to the load  
In a houseful of chaos on Lyndon Road.

Twelve years of babies, constantly growing  
kept you both running, coming and going

The things I remember, events of the the past  
are memories destined forever to last

Like who could forget that Sunday night hit  
Instead of dinner, we ate banana splits

And how many hours were spent until dark  
watching Richard and Ed at the little league park



The volleyball games, the plays and parades  
slumber parties, movies and games of charades

Than Mom and Dad took up golf as a game  
but probably salavation would have been a better name

How long will you be gone - 5 hours at least  
An Margaret and I have to watch these 4 beasts

Soon it was teen time with problems galore  
screaming and loud music behind every door

And if that's not enough to keep you alive  
Try teaching 8 kids and a wife how to drive

Then just when you think things could not get worse  
have your daughter's start dating, now that's lifes real curse

Be home by 10, why you've got to be nuts  
but a curfew it was, no ifs, ands or buts

And always you could bet, if troubles would abound  
It would definitely happen, when Dad's out of town

Ed's at the border and too young to get by  
So Mom says "How do I get there? North or South on I-5."

Kid's leaving home to college away  
Oh the bills Mom and Dad will soon have to pay

And than came the weddings - mine was the first of the crew  
Soon Margarets and Ed's, then Rich said I do

Then the summer of horrors for Dad to remember  
three daughters are married between June and September

Bob was the last to become two instead of one  
by 1983 the weddings were done

But by then it was started - grand kids would arrive  
Kevin than Michael, Jason, Chris, Nate make 5

Two more boys, Tim and Brett made it a total of seven  
then Jessica arrived our first girl sent from heaven

Then Craig, two days later, would hatch to our group  
with his cousin Michael becoming one of our troupe

Kristy and Megan and Curtis came three  
then Dustin and David the miracle child too.

Born as the smallest with the will to survive  
He beat all the odds and continues to thrive

Then Birdy had Scott and I followed with Bryce  
Katy was next filled with sugar and spice

But we're not finished, so keep on looking  
Listy and Bob still have one more cooking

And so here we sit, a family much blessed  
with health and with happiness, we'll weather the rest

We'd like to thank you for all coming here  
We think of you kindly, you're all very dear

To my Mom and my Dad who we honor today  
May the years you have spent continue to stay

To Monsignor we say thanks for all that you do  
St. Vincents played a part in all our lives too

We appreciate you being a part of this day  
May God bless you for us, we'd all like to say

So in closing I ask all of you here  
to join us in celebrating an occasion dear

To our Mom and our Dad we wish love and great cheer  
And at least, please God, another 40 years.

FRANCIE RIEL  
December 28, 1986  
St. Vincent de Paul  
San Diego, California



## Riel Egg Hunt

Well, there were a few entries into the contest and while no one was perfect, Kristy was just about there. Her guess of 56 was correct but... she did not follow the rules which stated TEXT the answer. Unfortunately, she emailed her answer in. So, instead of winning the grand prize of a trip around the world, she wins the runner up prize of \$20!!!! There were others that eventually got the right answer but only after a few wrong ones. Next month we will have another challenge/chance to win the grand prize...



# News from Annie

By Annie Mulholland

No new news here in La Mesa but I wanted to help contribute to the RFNL! Quarantine life is getting a little old but we definitely feel blessed for the time we have been given to be home with our baby Evie. Kevin has been home from work since March and will be working from home likely through most of the summer. I was on maternity leave for a while but officially am back to teaching as of May 1. I am so glad to be back at work even if it is virtual. I definitely missed my students and am feeling excited to be back with my team.

At home, we have been spending lots of time entertaining baby Evie but in reality she is always entertaining us. We also have been working on a million house projects that we have been putting off. We added an irrigation system to my garden beds and Kevin even built me a third one as a super early birthday present. We are loving eating food straight from the garden and are looking forward to a summer harvest.

I think we are all anxious in many ways, anxious about the situation and anxious to resume to reality, but we try to remember to be thankful for these days of slowing down, getting to go for family walks, lots of cooking and spending time in our yard and outdoors. We are incredibly lucky and blessed that even in the worst of situations we have so much to be grateful for. Sending love to all of you and yours!



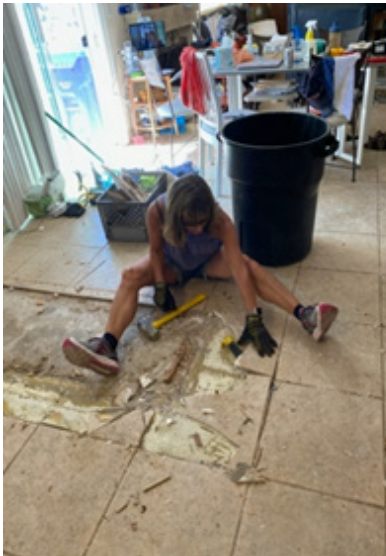


# Our, "Stuck in the House Project!" *By Carol Benesch*



Thanks to Bob and Listy's encouragement and Bob's experience, expertise, and long hours of muscular work, on May 2nd we began our much-needed kitchen remodel. All we had to do was demolish and discard 40-year old counters and cabinetry and blow out 2 walls (and a whole lot more) and fill a 3-ton dumpster to the brim before they hauled it away!! Listy and I sported our muscle's ripping out cabinets and breaking up tile while Jeff, Jason and Bob created new walls and helped with the some of the big stuff! We are moving right along, electricity, plumbing, gas lines, dry wall, can't wait to get to the new cabinets, counters and appliances. Our make-shift kitchen in the family room leaves much to be desired.

Special Thanks to Ed Riel Construction for his expert advice in moving walls around! And thanks to Ed and Bob, you'll all be happy to know that the kitchen survived its first 4.9 earthquake with nary a tremble.





# FAMILY SHORTS



## Boxin' out with Chaava!!

We figured you might not know much about our girl Chavva other than she kicks butt and takes names! Her workouts are lethal, but her story is incredible! Let's meet Chaava off the mat and here a little bit about what makes her so dang great!

"I was first introduced to Boxing while I was in college when meeting a few MMA fighters and began training with them and after a few years I began to fight competitively. Once I stopped competing, I continued to help train younger fighters as well as teaching group boxing/kickboxing classes for adults and children as well as becoming a personal trainer and training people privately.

Because of my love for sports I decided to focus my career on Functional and Sports specific training. I currently train athletes and "non-athletes" alike in Boxing/Kickboxing, Running, Cycling, Functional training and general strength and conditioning.

I've run countless races from 5k-Ultra Marathon distances and still continue to run, cycle and play soccer on a more recreational level. Needless to say, I am an endurance junky and love doing anything that pushes my body and mind to its limits! - Chaava

## Update from Megan

### Helping

Here's an update to some of the work I've been doing:

My day job is at the Allen Institute for Cell Science in Seattle, but since 2016 I've been also working in an increasingly official capacity in civic tech. This started as a volunteer web development project, that now has become a second job. I work as the lead developer for Town Hall Project (<https://townhallproject.com/>), a non-profit that tracks town halls the Members of Congress are holding so people can easily search to find out when and if their Reps and Senators are holding town halls (Older article about this work: <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/town-hall-is-where-multiple-people-can-engage-seattle-activists-work-to-hold-congress-accountable-to-voters/>).

Our main mission is to get constituents to speak to their representatives in person. However, with Covid-19, there are no in-person gatherings to publicize. We are promoting "Tele-Town Halls", but we also realized we had a bunch of resources and skills available and wanted to apply those to the current crisis. The result of that is <https://www.mutualaidhub.org/>. Mutual aid networks, which are volunteer led efforts to connect people who can help with people who need help, have popped up all over the place, and so we built a tool to enable people to find out if there is one in their area. A team of volunteers collects the data, I built the website and the database management tools, and I am working with a team of volunteer developers to add features and improve the site.

I feel super lucky to be connected to these amazing groups of people at Town Hall Project and the extended network of civically engaged people, because it means I often have something really tangible to do in the face of a crisis. I have found over and over again that the best way to combat feelings of being overwhelmed by the scope of a problem is to find an answer to "how can I help?", regardless of how small the thing you're doing is.

Hope everyone is safe and healthy! - Megan

