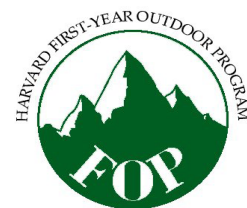


# The Fuzzy Cheesecake

## FOP's Annual Report & Community Newsletter



Vol 10: December MMXIII

www.harvardfop.com



## GREETINGS FROM STEERING COMMITTEE 2014

For just over a month, Steering Committee '14 has called the FOPpice home. As the last of the autumn leaves fall, flannels no longer cut it for warmth, and the daylight hours seem to disappear, FOP is just getting started. Steering Committee began our time together with the 'SC Odyssey' – a weekend in the mountains of New Hampshire spent reflecting on the past year and creating a vision for the year to come.

From conversations on and off the trail, we have chosen to commit to the values of Support, Transference, and Empowerment as we head into the year. *Support* plays a central role in FOP's philosophy and goals, and we hope to create space and structure to further emphasize it this year. We want the FOP Community to be a safe space for sharing our authentic selves and a space where leaders, trainees, and FOPpers can depend on FOP for support as they navigate through their Harvard years. We will emphasize *Transference* in order to encourage members of our community to carry the values they develop on the trail into their daily lives. We will *Empower* the FOP community by providing opportunities for leadership, reflection, and personal

growth throughout the year.

After weeks of thought and discussion, we have created the following mission statement, which we will use as a tool to remain grounded in our core values throughout the year and to never lose sight of why we do what we do:

*Steering Committee '14's mission is to craft and cultivate a community that supports and empowers FOPpers, leaders, and trainees as they discover and develop their authentic selves. We will create space and structure for the transference of these selves and the values they embody between the backcountry and the front-country.*

We are thrilled to share this year's edition of The Fuzzy Cheesecake with you all, as its content is a reflection of both our goals for the year and of the program's tremendous success last year. In it you will find a brief overview of the program, comments from FOPpers reflecting on their trips this August, an article by a current FOP leader (Hannah Borowsky) as well as a piece by an alum (Morgan Hite) concerning the challenge of 'transference,'

two letters from leader alumni (Ammar Joudeh & Era Aranow), a letter from our director (Coz Teplitz), a piece by the Dean of Freshman (Thomas Dingman), and a piece by the Director for Freshman Programming (Katie Steele) on the importance of reflection in FOP.

Whether you went on FOP, entrusted your child with us for a week in the woods, or were a member of the leader community, we would like to thank you for making this program what it is today. You are a member of the FOP family, and we hope to continue sharing with you in love for the outdoors, personal growth, and always, adventure.

*"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."*

- John Muir



- FOP Steering Committee '14:

Grace Aranow, Jordan Colman, Wren Droege, Jason Hirschhorn,  
Lili Pike, Susannah Savage, Chris White & Coz Teplitz



### IN THIS ISSUE:

SC '14 Welcome.....	1	From the Director - Coz Teplitz.....	6
About FOP.....	2	Enduring Success - Thomas Dingman.....	6
Reflections From our FOPpers.....	3	What Really Matters - Katie Steele .....	6
Being the Majestic Mountain in Harvard Yard - Hannah Borowsky.....	3	Lessons Lived - Era Aranow.....	7
FOP after FOP - Ammar Joudeh.....	4	FOP's 2013 Annual Report.....	7,8
Briefing for Entry into a More Harsh Environment - Morgan Hite.....	5	2012 - 2013 Donors.....	8

Printed using soy-based ink & recycled paper in order to reduce environmental impact

# About FOP

## THE WEEK:

3 States • 5 Nights Under the Stars • 39 Trips • 81 Leaders • 1 Director  
385 Freshmen • 4138 Tortillas • Countless Memories

## THE HISTORY

FOP was developed in 1979 by the Dean to provide students with a stronger support network upon entrance to college. FOP is the oldest and largest pre-orientation program for freshmen at Harvard. Every year, FOP sends approximately 20% of the incoming first-years on six-day backpacking, canoeing, and camping trips at the beginning of the school year. Since 1979, thousands of students have begun their Harvard experience by living with 8-12 peers in the backcountry, under the leadership of 2-3 trained upperclassmen leaders. FOP is one of only 46 AEE-Accredited Programs in North America, such as the National Outdoor Leadership School and Outward Bound.

## THE MISSION

*To provide group adventure-based experiences that promote the development of social support and self-awareness for first-year students and leadership development for members of the Harvard community.*



## THE VALUES

- Compassion
- Responsibility to community
- Care and responsibility to the environment
- The equality and intrinsic worth of all people regardless of gender, age, race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic or socio-economic background

## THE RESEARCH

- FOP is the most successful Harvard pre-orientation program in providing social support networks to first year students.<sup>1</sup>
- The first six weeks of college are highly significant in adjusting to college life.<sup>2</sup>
- Students indicate that involvement in a pre-orientation program significantly improved the introduction to Harvard.<sup>3</sup>
- College outdoor pre-orientation experiences are correlated with higher academic achievement throughout college.



## WHY WE FUNDRAISE

The First-Year Outdoor Program strives to provide financial aid and gear to anyone who needs it in an effort to minimize and ultimately to eliminate any financial barriers that might prevent students from participating in the program. **Your donation will go directly towards providing financial aid for a student.**

1. Bell, Brent J. (2006). "Wilderness Orientation: Exploring the Relationship Between College Preorientation Programs and Social Support." *Journal of Experiential Education*, 29(2), 145-167.
2. Baker, R.W., & Siryk, B. (1984). "Measuring adjustment to college." *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 31, 179-189
3. Report of the Freshman Orientation Advisory Committee. (June 2005). P. 7 & Appendix C.
4. Gass, M.A. (1987). "The Effects of a Wilderness Orientation Program on College Students." *Journal of Experiential Education*, 10(2), 30-33.



## FOPPERS REFLECTIONS

*FOPper Class of 2017*

"It isn't the hiking or outdoors that stands out the most about FOP, but rather the people and the deep, touching conversations and wrenching honesty that we experienced as a group in the woods. I learned so much about the depth of a person - specifically, of nine other random people that had been strangers to me just days before. I felt as if I'd been put with the nine most interesting people on campus. FOP made me realize just how much is in a person, and how rewarding it can be to touch more than just the surface in a relationship."

- Shannon Zhu

"I am capable of more than I thought I was. Every time we were climbing a peak, I'd be thinking about how difficult it was. I'd keep pushing to the top and suddenly we'd be there and I'd have no idea how I'd just managed that. The other component, and more important one to me, was the relationships we built. Our trip had the coolest people, who each brought something different to the table, and each was so easy to talk to and connect to. I love everyone in our group."

- Gloria Chen

"Camping out on the beach during a meteor shower was the highlight of my trip. I loved chatting with the other FOPers, where I could learn about their tremendously different backgrounds and yet still identify with them."

- Henry Cousins

"I remember the last night we were on FOP. It was probably 50 degrees and as the night fell, everyone began putting on more and more layers. That night was amazing. We had a massage line going on, laid down and watched shooting stars, shared with the group how much we appreciated each other, and ended the night snuggled together. At that point everyone was 100% genuine so it was just pure awesomeness spending FOP with them. It was nice to know that everyone was goofy and weird. We all belonged and completed each other."

- Christie Cheng

"I really appreciated the introspective aspect of FOP that forced me to consider how I view myself and how I interact with others. The trip challenged me both physically and emotionally, but I think that I returned with a greater understanding of the personal growth that comes from vulnerability. We truly had to rely on each other as a group for motivation and support,



and this gave us a greater sense of pride in the things that we achieved together while creating strong friendships. FOP has inspired me to form honest relationships and to seek out challenging situations in the future."

- Kelly McGee

"The trip was one of the best experiences I've ever had. It made me feel more comfortable walking through the gates back at school than I thought I ever could, and it gave me a group of friends who I consider my best. It's something I'm so, so thankful for, and something I would love to participate in again in years to come, to give other kids the same sense of belonging it gave me."

- Jacob Barton

"What stood out was how close we all were able to become over the duration of our trip and how much of a family I felt I had become a part of. I loved how societal norms were abandoned and how much more freely everyone was able to interact with each other away from civilization. Placed in such a different setting, we bonded over bodily functions, eating habits,



and personal interests - so much so that the social stereotypes of high school were left behind and there was no longer anything anyone was embarrassed to talk about. I also loved the outdoor experience in general. By the end, I felt like I had come out having

learned a lot about myself and my fellow FOPers. I learned that a lot of things are mind over matter, that positivity is a huge asset, and that you can become friends with almost anyone."

- Catherine Qin

### "BEING THE MAJESTIC MOUNTAIN IN HARVARD YARD"

*Harvard Crimson*

*Hannah M. Borowsky '15*

Two years ago, I left home to begin college

life; 36 hours later I found myself snuggled up against nine restless strangers under a tarp on the First-Year Outdoor Program. I was linked to these people only by our newbie status at Harvard and our random placement on this particular FOP trip; yet in only five days, we had become a family.

I have been on four subsequent trips with FOP—each unique and foundational to how I will remember my time in college. But no matter how hard I try, I am unable to replicate the magic of a FOP trip back on campus. As we all embark on a new year of school, I have been thinking: What is it about FOP that is so meaningful, and why do we confine this incredible intimacy and fulfillment to pre-orientation time?

William Cronon, an influential environmental historian, writes in an essay entitled "The Trouble with Wilderness" of our tendency to define wilderness narrowly: It is not here, but out there. Wilderness evokes pristine lands untouched by humankind, towering palisades, raging waterfalls, majestic mountains. For Cronon, the trouble is that an understanding of wilderness that precludes the settings of our day-to-day lives excludes us from appreciating and protecting the here and now.

A similar trouble exists within ourselves—a discrepancy between how we live and feel out in the woods and how we live and feel during the rest of our time at Harvard. When we go out into the woods with nine other strangers for companionship and nothing to do but hike, build tarps, and eat peanut butter, we become the most sublime versions of ourselves—our majestic mountain selves, so to speak. But back on campus, as work piles up, commitments accumulate, and we feel our selves being tugged in 10 million directions, we stop appreciating and protecting the majestic mountain versions of ourselves.

On FOP, each hike brings a conversation with someone new until we know every single person in the group. It takes place over only several days, but the "knowing" is real. It's

not the Annenberg trifecta—Name? Dorm? Hometown?—but rather, “Tell me about something that you love”; “When was the first time you felt like an adult?” and “What scares you about leaving home?” Relationships on trail have depth, whereas during the semester, all too often, it is width we are after. That’s

what networking is, after all—widening our circles. But in the woods, we invest.

On FOP, we take chances with our relationships, sharing things that we never thought we’d tell people who we met three days ago. And the people in whom we are confiding are people who we never thought would be our friends. Although these people are very different from ourselves, we are not afraid to ask them for help when we need it. Our strength comes from togetherness. And in togetherness, we are able to be completely present. A vibrating cell phone becomes a faint memory, an inbox brimming with unread messages a cruel illusion.

But back on campus, our aversion to vulnerability and burdensomeness prevents us from asking for help and deeply connecting with our amazing peers. The forces of the universe conspire against us being truly present. It is near impossible to focus all of our faculties on one person or task. We follow our G Cals around like robots. We arrive at a meeting only to begin thinking about the next one. We buy shoes online during lecture. We dine with iPhone-dazed blockmates.

Cronon is right. We can’t just think of the wilderness as something that is out there. It is right here, too. The spirit of FOP need not be squandered come September 1st. We can extend the mindset that is found so easily out in the woods into our lives all year on campus. If we commit to it and work thoughtfully to build supportive communities, our best, happiest selves can be cultivated and nurtured here at Harvard.

Today, the freedom of summer is still in our eyes, and the spirit of “Camp Harvard” is in the air. But as problem sets get tougher, paper due dates approach, and our planners become fuller and fuller, I am afraid we will forget about all of these things that make our time out in the woods on FOP the best part of college. But we don’t have to. So with intentionality, I challenge us all to work this year to throw our energy into relationships with new people, share pieces of our authentic selves with others, reach out to

people who are very different, ask for help, and strive to be completely present where we are.

***“Our strength comes from togetherness. And in togetherness, we are able to be completely present.”***

Whether you went on FOP or not, love the outdoors or hate them, will graduate this year or in four, we all can choose to be the majestic mountain in Harvard Yard.

## FOP AFTER FOP

Ammar Joudeh '13

There is little doubt that for almost every participant, FOP is an overwhelmingly positive experience. For 6 beautiful (if also rainy) days, it offers FOPpers the opportunity to experience breathtaking views, mindful solitude, endless songs, trail games and solitude, rich conversation, and perhaps most importantly, an escalating camaraderie among adventurers, culminating in the return to Harvard with a pocketful of good advice and a group of 7-9 friends who make the first venture into the chaos of Annenberg a little less daunting.

FOP is so good that coming back from FOP can be difficult. Leaders often speak of the difficulty of “re-entry” and the struggle to remain the “best self” that they feel they embody on their trips. The distractions and preoccupations of the front country seem depressingly banal, as FOPpers leave the mindfully constructed world their leaders have lovingly helped them craft and whip out their iPhones to text their parents about

laundry and catch up on the 1349 snap chats they missed. Leaders coming back to another semester at Harvard often contend with the magnetic pull toward over-commitment.

After my first few trips, I felt myself fighting the transition away from thinking deeply, communicating authentically, living simply but richly, and toward the distinctly Harvardian compulsion to shal- lowly juggle far too many experiences, classes, extracurriculars and social activities at once.

IF a FOP trip is so transitory, so

***“...an insulated and well-constructed environment that gives the freedom to think about and prepare for life out there.”***

to talk openly for hours about their deepest fears. Or you’re shivering and hungry because everyone swears the fuel bottles weren’t part of their group gear pile.

fragile, so self-contained within the brackets of the full-value contract and fuzzy cheese-cake, then how could leading FOP have been unquestionably the most important thing I, and many others, did in college?

The answer to that question, for me, is that FOP leader training, leading trips, and being part of the leader community provided a unique space in which to experiment with a fundamental set of tools for leadership of self, co-leading, and leading others—all of which translate into tools for tackling life a little more effectively:

1) Leading a small group in a challenging environment is great for learning about what I need from myself, from my environment, and from others in order to be the best version of myself—a version that is capable of helping others discover their best selves—a version that is both intentional in designing experiences and flexible in responding to adversity.

2) Co-leading is not about agreeing all the time but rather is about acting and speaking in anticipation of what a co-leader will think or do or say. When done well, co-leading a trip is the closest one can come to sharing someone else’s brain. It’s a beautiful opportunity that has benefitted all my relationships—professional and personal.

3) A well-constructed piece of feedback—positive or negative—is one of the most important gifts one can give or receive. There’s no better place to learn how (and when) to give good feedback than a cold and rainy night you’re co-leader cooks the most delicious couscous then gets your FOPpers

4) “Effectively and Kindly” are not mutually exclusive. FOP is not value-neutral. Neither is life. Whether in leader selection, cur-





-riculum development, or something as mundane as usage of the FOP list-serv, we think about how and why we do things as much we think about what we do. Both on trips and in the leader community, this leads to an environment in which values are taken seriously and debated frankly.

These are simple ideas—not many would disagree that thinking about self-care, effective communication, and feedback are good tools for living a productive and happy life—but it takes practice to really incorporate them into the way we live. The distractions of the “real” world sap the mental space we need to truly think about and experiment with these tools for effective living. At Harvard, especially, the focus can be much more on experience than reflection.

The power of FOP lies in stripping away the distractions to create a laboratory, a space for experimenting with and reflecting on strategies for leadership, self-care, communication, and teaching in the focused and challenging environment of the New England wilderness.

I found that this iterative process of experience followed by reflection crucial to learning from what I do, learning how to construct meaning and form value systems, and most importantly, building the confidence to take risks as I plot the course of my life. At its best, this is what all of college can be—an insulated and well-structured environment that gives the freedom to think about and prepare for life out there. FOP shows both FOPpers and leaders how college can be that way—laying the foundation for four years, which in turn lay the foundation for a lifetime, of intentional and rich experiences.

## BREIFING FOR ENTRY INTO A MORE HARSH ENVIRONMENT

*Reflections of an Adventure Educator*

*Morgan Hite '81*

### An Introduction

*This piece is certainly about what we loosely term “transference,” meaning how the lessons of a wilderness trip come home*

*with us. But it’s worth pointing out that the challenge is not “transference” but rather “retention;” that is, the lessons come home just fine, but they tend to get lost there almost at once. For me, wilderness travel and Outdoor Education were a counterbalance to the academic world. The big surprise at Harvard was that there were all these people who had a lot of knowledge, but didn’t seem to know how to be the person you’d want with you on an expedition. This is the bottom line: to know plenty, but also to be open, resourceful, easy to get along with, and, most of all, have a killer sense of humour.*

People always talk about what you can’t take home with you after a NOLS course. You can’t take home the backpack, or at least it has no place in your daily life. You can’t take home the rations, and if you did, your friends wouldn’t eat them. You can’t take home the mountains. We seem to have to get rid of all of our connections to this place and our experiences here. It’s frustrating and can be depressing.

This essay is about what you can take home, and what, if you work at it, can be more important than any of those things you have to leave behind. Together they comprise the set I call “mental hygiene,” as if we needed to take care of our minds the way we take care of our bodies.

1. Organization. The mountains are harsh, so you need to be organized. But that other world is much more complex, and even harsher in ways that aren’t always as tangible as cold, wind and rain. Being organized can help you weather its storms.

2. Thoroughness. Here it is easy to see the consequences of leaving things only half done. That other world has so many interruptions, distractions and stimuli that it is easy to leave things half done, until you find yourself buried under a pile of on-going projects with no direction.

3. Preparedness. Out here you’ve only had to be prepared for every eventuality of weather; but in that other world you have to be prepared for every eventuality - period. There are no rules, shit happens, and only the prepared are not caught off balance.

4. Take care of yourself, and do it more aggressively than you do it out here. The environmental hazards are even greater: crowding, noise, schedules. Take time to be alone and think. Never underestimate the healing power of being near beauty, be it a flower, music, a person, or just dinner well-prepared.

5. Stay in touch with basics. Continue to

cook your own food and consciously select the place where you sleep at night. Take care of your own minor injuries and those of your friends. Learn about how the complex vehicles and tools you use work. The other world is far more distracting and seeks to draw you away from the basics.

6. Keep taking risks with people. Your own aliveness is measured by the aliveness of your relationships with others. There are so many more people to choose from in that other world, and yet somehow we get less close. Remember that the dangers are still present; any time that you get in a car with someone you are entrusting that person with your life. Any reasons that seem to crop up not to get close examine very carefully.

7. Remember you can let go and do without seemingly critical things. Here it has been hot showers, forks and a roof. But anything can be done without; eventually for us all it is a person that we have to do without, and

---

***“The environmental hazards are even greater: crowding, noise, schedules. Never underestimate the healing power of being near beauty, be it a flower, music, a person, or just dinner well-prepared.”***

---

then especially it is important to remember that doing without does not rule out joy.

8. Persevere at difficult things. It may not be as concrete as a mountain or as immediately rewarding as cinnamon rolls, but the world is given to those who persevere. Often you won’t receive support for your perseverance because everyone else is too busy being confused.

9. Continue to learn to use new tools and techniques. Whether it is a computer or an ice cream maker, you know now that simply because you haven’t seen it before doesn’t mean you can’t soon be a pro. Remember that the only truly old people are the ones who’ve stopped who’ve stopped learning.

10. Take care of things. In that other world it’s easy to replace anything that wears out or breaks, and the endless supply suggests that individual objects have little value. Be what philosopher Wendell Berry calls “a true materialist.” Build things of quality, mend what you have and throw away as little as possible.

11. Live simply. There is no substitute for sanity.



These eleven things are the skills you've really learned out here, and they will serve you in good stead in any environment in the world. They are habits to live by. If anyone asks what your course was like, you can tell them. "We were organized, thorough and prepared. We took care of ourselves in basic ways. We entrusted people with our lives, learned to do without and persevered at difficult things. We learned to use new tools and we took care of what we had with us. We lived simply." And if they are perceptive, they will say, "You don't need the mountains to do that."

---

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Coz Teplitz*

In late October, while I sat waiting for a haircut in Harvard Square, a young man wearing a FOP T-shirt plopped onto the bench beside me. When I complimented him on his choice of attire, he glanced over at me - and his eyes widened in excitement. He lived in Matthews, he exclaimed, and recognized me from his time studying in the lounge in the basement. He had gone on FOP this year, and he gesticulated actively as he tried to convey how much he had enjoyed his trip. He told me how, as an international student with minimal outdoors experience, he had been apprehensive about FOP and about coming to Harvard. He had worried about being uncomfortable with the hiking, with the rain, and with fitting into a new culture. He praised his leaders for making him feel welcome, and he was pleased and proud of how close his group had remained after the trip. In fact, he said, he would be joining a fellow FOPper for Thanksgiving in Boston.

I consider it a great privilege that encounters like this are a regular part of my life. Each year, I hear breathless testimonials to the power of FOP. This year, though, the energy around the program seems especially palpable. We saw unprecedented interest from incoming students, leading to the greatest number of participants ever (385 FOPpers, a 32% increase over 2012). After working hard to accommodate many unanticipated students, it is extremely gratifying to see participant satisfaction remain at its high level - both anecdotally and in participant evaluations.

There is energy as well in the leader community. More and more leaders seem committed to the value of reflective activities. They are building such activities into their trips in creative ways, and are exploring ways to bring guided reflection to term-time endeavors. For instance, many leaders were involved with a new program launched by the Harvard Outing Club and the Freshman Dean's Office called the Wilderness Ongoing Orientation Program (WOOP). For several weekends in October, up-

perclassmen led groups of first-years on short hiking trips. The trips capitalized on the students' distance from campus to engage them in reflection about their Harvard experience so far and what they hoped it would be when they arrived on campus. Feedback thus far has been extremely positive.

I am delighted by leaders' continued interest in facilitating students' meaning-making. In my view, conversations around meaning lead to authentic connections - and authentic connections are the essence of the social support we try to build. Feeling authentically known encourages students to engage in the risks and growth we ask of them at Harvard, even if they have more questions around meaning than answers. So, as the year closes, I encourage all of us to remember the value of feeling truly known by the people around us. Let us all take a page from the energy of FOP this year to explore avenues - both trusted and trial - to build connections with the important people in our lives.

---

## ENDURING SUCCESS

*Thomas Dingman, Dean of Freshmen*

This summer, I picked up a new book entitled *Lastingness: The Art of Old Age* by Nicholas Delbanco, Harvard grad, faculty member at the University of Michigan, and Chair of the Fiction Panel for the National Book Awards. Delbanco, four years my senior, examines the lives of creative giants in the fields of visual art, literature, and music, hoping to discover why some artists' work diminishes with age, while others' reaches its peak. We get glimpses of the lives of people like Georgia O'Keefe, Claude Monet, John Updike, and Eubie Blake - all people creating in their "sunset years", "stubbornly refusing", as Delbanco explains, "to retire or to let well enough alone". Given our culture's fascination with youth, it is nice to see a book focused on the advancing years when, author Richard Ford remarks, "remaining supple-minded and even imaginative is a synaptical crashshoot." The take-aways for me, not entirely easy to come by, suggest that enduring success for artists depends on an instinct for originality, a passion to keep on-task, and, what Delbanco calls, "adaptive energy, not sheer repetition."

As I ponder the value of the First Year Outdoor Program, I see these same qualities being developed in our young people. Successful trips depend on an inventive spirit, a focus on what the group set out to do, and a capacity to shift gears depending on what the weather brings and the health of individual members. It

is heartening to see how intentional FOP continues to be and how much growth occurs in just one short week.

I have the pleasure of welcoming FOP each year as the freshmen line the steps of Widener on the first night and wait to be assigned to groups. Some folks look tremendously eager (a "bring it on" spirit is pronounced); others look truly terrified as if their choice to participate had been made in a moment of weakness. Then, a week later, I get to see everyone emerging from the wilderness - with the widest smiles on their faces and insistence that their group is clearly the best. It is a moment I cherish, a moment when I can clearly see how life-altering "adaptive energy" can be.

---

## WHAT REALLY MATTERS

*Katie Steele*

*Director for Freshman Programming  
FOP Training Trip Participant '08*

Momentous occasions often lead us to pause and reflect. We may stop and ask ourselves: why is this moment important to me? Or, what's significant about this step? In my opinion, as the Director for Freshman Programming at Harvard, starting college is one of those momentous occasions.

FOP trips, which precede the official opening of each academic year, are ideal opportunities for meaningful reflection and conversation about starting college and what this time will mean for us as individuals and as members of a new community. In the quiet of the woods and mountains, we find an environment that encourages us to linger. As we paddle or hike, time abounds for day dreaming and wondering. And, in the company of trusted peers, we can find the encouragement to be real with ourselves and each other.

Getting to that "realness" is the hardest part. But, if willing, we can wonder together about what college will really be like and why we wanted to be here in the first place. We can ask ourselves challenging questions like: what kind of a person am I? What kind of people do I want to spend my time with? What are my strengths and how will I contribute them? How will I be changed when freshman year is over? How will I be the same? Wondering about this together makes coming to college and Harvard in particular, a little less daunting. And, more importantly, helps us find our purpose now that we're here.

In the Freshman Dean's Office (FDO), we have noticed that many FOPpers tend to crave more of the kind of reflection that happens in the woods during FOP. As a result, many FOP-

-pers have gone on to participate in Reflecting on Your Life, a unique program offered every February by the FDO. Reflecting on Your Life creates a time and space for freshmen to come together to talk about both the big, existential life questions, as well as questions that may impact a Harvard experience in significant ways. We stop to ponder: what is important to me? What are my values? How might my values change while I am here? How am I living a life at Harvard that reflects what's important to me?

Whether back in the woods, over a lengthy meal in Annenberg with friends, or as part of Reflecting on Your Life, we can all make more of an effort to pause and reflect on what matters to us. It's one of the most meaningful parts of FOP that we can easily practice on our own and readily share with others.

## LESSONS LIVED

*Era Aranow '01*

*AEE Board Member '03-'05, Outward Bound Instructor '04 '05, Princeton Outdoor Action Interm Program Coordinator '12, SOLO Instructor '08-now, NOLS Course Leader '04-now*

September in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming is known for beautiful fall colors, superb fishing, and bugling elk. Summer had been stunning in the 9 weeks that I had been in the field - I had barely taken out my rain gear. It started snowing as we made camp and, as we approached the crest of the pass into the Cirque of the Towers the next day, the wind dropped and the snow intensified. Before the next 2 days were out, my 2 co-instructors, 12 students and I would have to weather more than an inch of snow fall per hour with only summer gear, rations, and fuel. It was most certainly a "less than ideal" situation. The necessary (and repeated) digging out of our tarps and runs to keep the trail between camp and kitchen from disappearing became exhausting. As the snow piled higher and students' moral fell lower, my co-instructors and I worked intensively to keep them warm.

In this pinch, my mind went back, as it often does, to lessons from FOP trips. Soon bouts of 'finger fencing' began and rousing renditions of 'Era's Song' (Ground Squirrel) warmed and entertained students thousands of miles away and years later in time. My FOP trip was my first time backpacking. The fopper experience, leader experience, and training trip leader experience changed my life trajectory and eventually led me to this moment deep in the Wyoming mountains.

From encouraging others, to problem solving by "doing what you can with what you have," to working within a budget, I use lessons learned through FOP on an almost daily basis. Many past leaders no longer lead wilderness trips and likely do not find themselves confronting the social obstacles of bringing a diverse group together to support each other for the next four years or the physical obstacles of a mountain peak or which way to turn at the trail junction. But when facing current obstacles be they work, family, or other, I invite us all to think back to orientation trips. Both in the backcountry and in the front, the lessons I learned as a FOP leader still serve me well.

1. **Help others feel welcomed.** Be compassionate. At some point, everyone is anxious about joining a new group. Be it at a party, or someone new to your work or community, I think back to my FOP experience and try to be the first to break the ice. While this may no longer involve a crazy costume and a call down skit, I remember Aloha Day and how my leaders began to help me feel much less anxious as they helped me integrate into the group.

2. **Get to know people quickly and make friends.** It isn't just pre-frosh who wonder if they will make friends who will understand and accept them. Almost every new move or job transition has left me nervously wondering "will people like me?" As I get more set in my ways and more cautious with age, I find it harder to open myself up and allow the vulnerability required when seeking close friends. Remember your closest college friendships and how quickly they formed. Regardless of past slights, I try not to be afraid to let other people in. Numerous FOP friendships remind me that the reward is worth much more than

the risk.

3. **Appreciate nature (or at least the details) of new surroundings.** I look up at the sky or skyline to break from my normal perspective. Be it hiking on-trail or enjoying the feel of the grass (or rug) between my toes, I consciously take time to use all of my senses and to observe more about the immediate world around me.

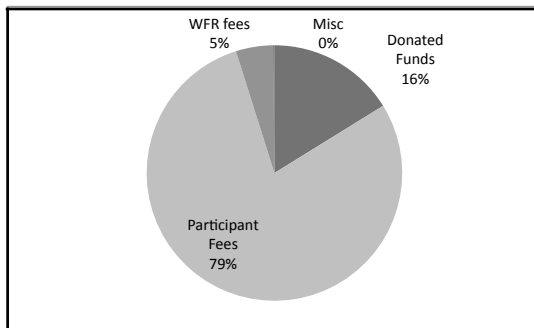
4. **It is possible to do the seemingly impossible.** Not shower for a week? Carry a 45 lb. pack up a mountainside? Paddle to shore in rising whitecaps? Make friends and adjust to life at Harvard? All of these seemed impossible to me at one point and I now do some of them for a living. I try to use my FOP experience to remind myself to turn life's current "I can't" into "I cans."

5. **Make time to reflect on who you are and who you want to be.** Continue to develop self-awareness. I try to remember that just because you've established a life pattern does not resign you to them for the rest of your life or even the rest of the year. Thought it may have seemed easier with the new surroundings and new acquaintances on a FOP trip, it is still possible to change.

6. **Be aware of your impact on others.** As I was taught as a FOP leader, I try to trust my leadership instincts while simultaneously seeking feedback. Being intentional with tone and inclusive with word choice, seeking to motivate and to inspire others to contribute positively to their community, and finding the intrinsic worth in each person and sharing it so others can see it too are goals I still aspire to.

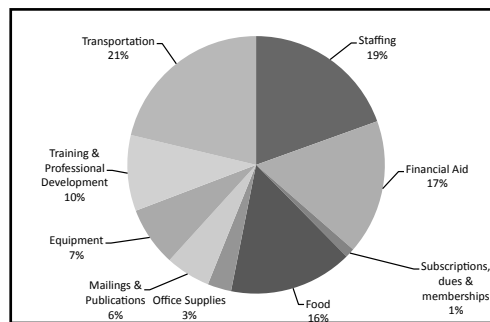
These lessons we can take from FOP continue to be imparted to generations of new FOPpers and leaders. Two years ago when I once again got the call to work pre-FOP, I embraced the opportunity as a way to continue to give back to a community that has taught me so much. While being present for some of the first moves in the FOP dance made me feel old, the inclusiveness of the community, continuing traditions, overwhelming enthusiasm, and focus on the freshman and leadership helped me feel right at home on the steps of Widener Library fifteen years after first joining the community. Thank you, FOP.

## Income



## FOP FINANCIALS FY13

## Expenses

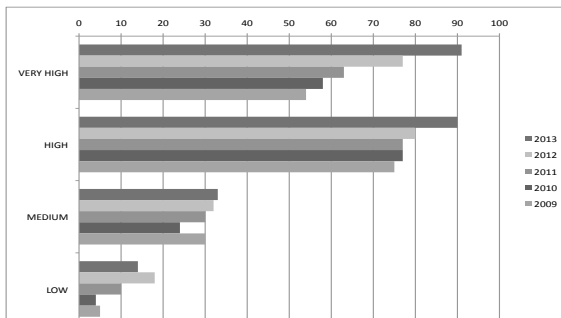


Fiscal year runs 7/01/2011- 6/30/2012

# THANK YOU

TO ALL OF OUR DONORS!

This year, a record **385 first-years** participated in FOP (that's a 32% increase from last year)!



# of FOPpers requesting FOP aid by assessed level of need, 2009-2013

There were more FOPpers than ever before on trips this year, a feat that would not have been possible without the generous support of our dedicated donors. This increase meant that we saw a continued trend of **increases in the number of FOPpers requesting aid and the relative need of those students.**

## We use 100% of donations to reduce the financial burden of FOP.

**We need your help** to keep making progress: your donation will help us to meet the need of the students who have asked for help from FOP.

## Supporters FY13 (7/1/2012-6/30/2013)

### FOP SUMMIT TEAM (\$500 AND UP)

Jo Ann & Walter Beh  
Virginia & Sean Day  
East Bay Community Foundation (on behalf of Evan Seevak & Sarah Pearson)  
June Gerken  
Amy Justice & Joseph King  
Kevin & Karla Vernick  
Ellen Korn & Robert Madoff  
Livingstone Foundation (on behalf of Alex & Kristin Livingstone)  
Barry & Karen Gordon Mills  
James Robo & Meredith Trim  
Peter & Molly Ross  
Paul & Sara Russell  
Roland & Debra Sauermann  
Naida S. Wharton

### FOP CLIMBERS (\$250-\$499)

Steven & Iris Borowsky  
Peter Chen & Ann Wagenhals  
Christopher Chesney  
David & Emily Cox  
Michael & Jill Epstein  
Cheryl Frank  
Mark & Elizabeth Hindal  
Kiyomi Lepore  
Adam Margolin  
Mary McCarthy  
George Newhouse  
Leanne & David Panno  
Jeannie Park & David Chan  
James & Helene Rosenthal  
James Shpall  
Jorge Suarez-Velez  
David Worley & Bernadette

Drankoski  
Charles & Claudia Wu

### FOP TRAILBLAZERS (\$100-\$249)

Sarah Auchincloss  
Katherine Bidwell  
Marian Saeman Bleeke  
Douglas Brettler & Martha Cabal  
Stephen Lawrence Buffo  
Acheson Callaghan  
Stanley & Edie Carter  
Joel & Jeannette Clinkenbeard  
Tim Conway & Susan Shallenberger  
Thomas Patrick Corcoran  
Renda & Matthew Cornick  
G. Rees & Karen Cosgrove  
Kenneth & Tracy Curran  
Leo D'Acerno & Lisa Byrns  
Pradip Das  
Stephen DeFeo  
Mark & Nila Eisenach  
Reade & Katherine Fahs  
Janice & Michael Flynn  
Jonathan & Sharon Franklin  
Marie-Jo Fremont & Brian Tucker  
Hollis & Rosemary French  
Mary Gavin  
General Electric Foundation  
Mr. Jonathan A. Glass  
B. Marjorie Gullick  
Guy & Lynn Gullick  
Jason Hirschhorn  
Deborah Johnson & Robert Thompson  
Alexander Justicz  
Lauren Claudia Kang

Susan Landesman  
David Latham  
Jeffrey Lepon  
Ellen Chaffin Levenson  
Ryan & Dennis Lindeborg  
JoAnne Doblecki Marks  
Maureen McCaw  
Mondanto Fund  
Jennifer Nan  
Amanda North  
John & Mary Nousek  
Lee Pelton  
Jonathan & Elaine Pelz  
Jerrilyn Ramsey  
Steven & Audrey Reny  
Laurence Rosenthal  
Jessica Ross  
Jeffrey Samet & Michelle Marram  
John Santoleri  
Miriam & Michael Schechter  
Michael & Leann Schied  
Kyung Won Seo  
Howard Stein & Jill Comins  
Coz Teplitz & Laura Ostapenko  
Elizabeth Ulmer & Jonathan Graham  
Alan Venook  
Michael Vhay  
Jane Waldfogel  
Michael Ward  
Lawrence Whitman  
Richard & Marie Wohns  
Claudia Wu  
Oswald, Jane & Jessie Wyatt  
Caro Yamamoto  
Theresa & Stephen Yarri  
Hsushi & Ting-Ling Wen  
Ana & James Yoder  
Zoran Zvonar & Milica Stojanovic

### FOP EXPLORERS (UP TO \$99)

Arther & Karen Augenstern  
Mary Elizabeth Barrett  
Friedrich & Linda Barth  
Mike Baur & Marianne Stanis  
James Belmont & Joyce Kinoshita  
Michael Blumenthal  
Marie Cerletty & Thomas Gigot  
Gina Jia Chang  
Peter & Jaqueline Changala  
Rabikar, Moitreyi & Ishan Chatterjee  
Yong Choe  
Aaron & Miriam Cohen  
Kate Cosgrove  
Annie DeAngelo  
Abigail Donaldson  
Emily Donaldson  
Jacqueline Durfee  
Mary & Michael Einkauf  
Michael Etzel  
Patricia & Angelo Federico  
Joan & Peter Feeny  
Liana Fixell  
Amanda Freedman  
Yuan Yuan Gao  
Rachel Garwin  
Eldon V. Greenberg  
Sherry & Michael Halperin  
Craig A. Harms  
Louise Hindal  
Ivan Horvath  
Kyle Johnson  
Joshua Kantrowitz  
Willard Kasoff  
Thomas Kiely  
Theodore & Marilyn Koenig  
Caroline Lowe  
Kristine Lowe

Ellen Malka  
Peter McCarthy  
Garth O. McCavana  
Neil Mehta  
James Murrett  
Douglas O'Malley  
Emily Orlins  
Jennifer & William Pennoyer  
Bernarda Perez  
Carl & Zelig Pforzheimer  
Claudio Phillips  
Maria Psomiades  
Caroline Quillian & John Stubbs  
Marlene V. Rehkamp  
Jason Rowley  
Anita Glazer Sadun  
Dinna Sambenito  
Luke Jennifer Stein  
Jennifer Stone & Jonathan Green  
Stephanie A. Stuart  
Megs Brooks Swift  
Ben Taxy  
Edward Traver  
Dave & Jennifer Wagner  
Karen & Gregory Wall  
Sarah & Gregory Wetstone  
Nancy Yue  
Bradley Zlotnick

### IN-KIND DONATIONS

Brent Bell  
Mary Ogburn  
Harvard Outing Club

### CORPORATE SUPPORT

Country Dance and Song Society  
Hi-Rise Bread Company  
Otto Pizza  
Tootsie Roll Industries

