

# The Fuzzy Cheesecake

FOP's Annual Report & Community Newsletter

Volume XV, December 2018



fop.fas.harvard.edu

"It's good to have an end to journey toward.  
but it is the journey that matters, in the end."  
– Ursula Le Guin

## ABOUT FOP

### THE WEEK:

6 States • 5 Nights Under the Stars • 46 Trips  
95 Leaders • 422 First-Years  
4920 Tortillas • Countless Memories

### 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.

## IN THIS VOLUME

Letter from Steering Committee.....	2
Annual Giving Report.....	2
From the Director — Coz Teplitz.....	3
"The Gift of Sturdy Ground" — Layla Kousari '19.....	3
"There is Something Special About FOP" — Dean Katie O'Dair.....	4
"What stands out about FOP" — 2018 FOP Participants.....	5
FY18 Donor List.....	6

## GREETINGS FROM STEERING COMMITTEE 2019



GABRIELLE FERNANDOPULLE, JON HAMILTON,  
BETH LARCOM, RICK LI, CONLAN OLSON, KALENA WANG,  
AND KIER ZIMMERMAN

# LETTER FROM STEERING COMMITTEE

Welcome to the Fuzzy Cheesecake, FOP's annual newsletter and report! We're excited to share a piece of FOP with you, wherever you may be. We would like to use this newsletter to update the huge family of FOP participant alumni, leader alumni, and friends about where FOP is right now and our plans and priorities moving forward.

The snow is swirling in the Yard and SC'19 has inhabited the FOPpice in the basement of Matthews Hall for several months now. We are working hard to develop a direction for FOP going forward. We continue to strive for a more inclusive program that allows anyone, regardless of background, experience, or identity to be a part of FOP. We recognize that pre-orientation programs, the outdoors, and Harvard are spaces where, all too often, not all are welcome. We are working towards having both a leader community and group of FOP participants that represent the demographics of the college as a whole, specifically focusing on increasing accessibility to those who may not have had the opportunity to experience something like FOP before. By letting our goal of creating a place of belonging inform our decisions about trainee selection, programming, and leadership development, we hope to continue making gains in this area.

The FOP mission statement contains two goals: the development of support and self-awareness for first years and leadership development for members of the Harvard community. This year, we would like to look



closely at the second goal. By engaging the leader community throughout the academic year in activities and group settings that encourage learning, personal growth, and supportive community for leaders, we hope to improve as a program that not only provides a transformative experience for first-years, but also valuable education and development for leaders.

In particular, we would like to ensure that we improve the ways that we support our leader trainees as they move through interpersonal and technical skills training, to training trips, and finally to leading their own FOP trips in the fall of 2019. By prioritizing a sense of belonging for trainees, we hope to improve the way the leader community supports those who are part of it, or are becoming

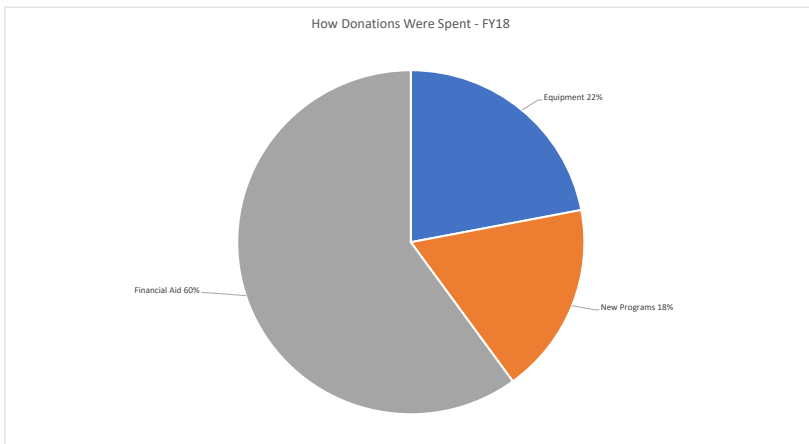
part of it.

It is an especially exciting time for us these days as we finalize the selection of this newest leader training class. Seeing so many new, amazing, and energetic perspectives reminds us why FOP is so important and the tremendous opportunity it has to change lives for the better. Providing the training experience to others is bringing back our memories as trainees, leaders, and SC members, and we feel like FOP is in a season of growth and development.

We are beginning to roll out our training curriculum this spring including workshops and collaborations with campus organizations such as the Women's Center, the Diversity Peer Educators, and the Bureau of Study Council. We think that these will help continue to make trips uniquely prepared to create safe, fun, and productive spaces for everyone who comes through FOP.

There is lots in store for the upcoming year, and we are beyond grateful for everything you do to continue spreading the FOP magic to generations of students to come. Wherever you are, in the world or in your journey, we hope this newsletter brings a small piece of that FOP love back to you. As always, please reach out with any ideas, thoughts, traditions, or experiences - we love hearing from you!

—Gabby, Jon, Beth, Rick, Conlan, Kal, and Kier



*Thanks to donors' generous support, this year we were able to purchase new loaner backpacks and run a second cabin-based trip.*



FROM THE DIRECTOR  
Coz Teplitz

Dear FOP Community:

2018 was the 40th year of FOP trips in the woods, and I see the signs of the program's history in many places. Shortly after FOP, we received a delightful letter from a FOPper alum who had run into a trip in the northern Presidentials in New Hampshire. She described how, when she returned home the next day, she looked at the photos from her FOP trip in 1991 in the Saddleback region of Maine. As she remembered the details of the trip, "the positive impact FOP had on me crystallized in a way it never had before...The beauty was breathtaking. I loved the hard physical work. And I had gotten very lucky with my FOP leaders and [my group]. We all got along very well, and so I had the comfort and bond of a social group when we arrived back at Harvard for orientation week and through a good part of freshman year."

These words could have been lifted from an evaluation from this year's FOPpers. It is clear the "recipe" that creates the value of FOP has remained constant over the 40 years of FOP trips: small groups of incoming students experiencing shared challenge in new settings. I am proud of that consistency, just as I am proud about our continued progress. Most notably, we have made steady strides toward making FOP accessible and approachable for as many students as possible. Thanks to the significant generosity of our community, for the last three years we have been able to "meet 100% of demonstrated need" - in other words, our financial aid matches that which the College offers to students. More FOPper receive financial from us than ever before, progress about which we should be justifiably proud.

We have also began to explore how we could deliver meaningful trips that might be appealing to a student for whom backpacking is too intimidating. For us, that has meant developing cabin-based programming, which we expanded to a second trip this year. Trips sleep inside but spend time together hiking and paddling together during the day. The work of developing our cabin-based programming has forced us to refine our beliefs about the core components of meaningful experiences and how we should prepare student leaders to facilitate those experiences.

We are also consistently serving more students than ever in our history, roughly 40% more students than a decade ago. That has also meant our leader community has expanded, meaning more students than ever are experi-

encing the leadership development that occurs when crafting and delivering a fun, welcoming, and reflective space for their first-years.

As I wonder about what lies ahead for the next 40 years of FOP, a few challenges are clear. Despite our work to remove barriers to participation, we know that students who hold some identities are choosing not to participate as much as other students. Continued progress will require we continue to closely examine our culture, our presentation, and perhaps even our programming. The success of our cabin trips has showed we can achieve our outcomes as long as we keep focused on the ingredients of our recipe. I believe it is our responsibility to keep experimenting with this recipe to ensure our programming stays relevant to as many students as possible.

Warm wishes,  
Coz



THE GIFT OF STURDY GROUND  
Layla Kousari '19, FOP Leader, SC '17

The first trip I led remains in my head as a swirl of bandanas, long conversations under tarps, blisters, and communion. Years after that trip, one of my FOPpers told me over lunch how indelible those moments were for her as a student feeling unsure about herself and coming to college. She told me how FOP had given her sturdy ground to stand on and a community to lean on during her first year at Harvard, and I felt her words echo those of many FOPpers before and after her. As a FOP leader, I have had the immense opportunity to experience all the magic that FOP has to offer. Beyond providing me with life-long friendships, FOP

has made me question the very way I interact with other people, view the world, and manage my life. The skills that I have gained during my time in FOP have bled into every aspect of my world, and none of this would be possible without the generous financial support I have received from the program.

As an outdoor pre-orientation program, FOP has the ability to provide students with a chance to disconnect from their surroundings and fully immerse themselves in the present. I am consistently humbled by the richness of the connections forged across all lines of differences in each small FOP group after just five days. I am reminded that one of the beauties of FOP is its ability to teach its participants how to be vulnerable, self-reflective, and open to new perspectives. These skills transcend the trips themselves and provide meaningful introductions to social education and group dynamics that students will ultimately continue to navigate as they begin at Harvard. As such, I firmly believe that by investing in a student's FOP trip you are investing in their entire college career.

When I was presented with the chance to attend a FOP trip before my freshman year I didn't take it. I felt that I could not afford the costs. It is only now, having become a FOP leader myself, that I fully appreciate all that I deprived myself of. The power behind every FOP trip and its ability to serve as a foundational introduction to Harvard, should not be sequestered to any one type of person or class of students at Harvard. Every student at Harvard has the right to choose FOP if they desire to. This is only possible, however, with the generous support of our community. I really hope that you choose to donate to FOP and as such choose to enrich the lives of students at Harvard College.



## THERE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT FOP

Katie O'Dair Ph.D., Harvard College Dean  
of Students

There is something special about FOP. Perhaps it is the way students who return from their experience have a different spring in their step; or how they talk about their experience as "life changing"; or the way FOP leaders – who commit countless hours to learn how to tie knots and keep everyone dry (among other things!) – return to give back to first-year students each year. Let me first say that I believe every incoming student should have the opportunity to participate in a pre-orientation experience as the sense of community, shared purpose, and focused time together reaps benefits that are long lasting. FOP gives students all of that and more. One of my first-year advisees this year was on FOP and they told me that it was one of the best experiences of their life. Of their life! Yet it is not magic that makes this experience for students, it is a combination of the planned and unplanned moments that create what so many students describe as one of the best of their Harvard College years.

FOP has the all the elements that contribute to this life-changing experience including risk, adventure, learning new things, meeting new people, challenge by choice, and fun. It is in these spaces where students learn about themselves, learn about others, and reflect on those experiences. The most

interesting parts of my conversations with students upon their return aren't typically about the hiking or canoeing, but about facing some unexpected challenge, like torrential rain the entire time, the realization that they should have broken in their new hiking boots, or more likely a conversation or interaction that made them stop to think about what they said or did. This self-awareness is such an important part of FOP, because when you join a community like Harvard College you will be living and learning with people who are different than you – who think differently, act differently, and respond differently. You can't get out of the canoe if things get tough (or you can, you will just get wet) – you must stay, engage, and work through it. The part about sticking with it when it gets tough is one of the most valuable parts of a FOP experience. Another student, upon their return, told me that the trip was harder and less fun than they anticipated – but the entire experience exceeded their expectations beyond measure. How can both be true? Real learning lies in the unexpected, in the challenge, in the expansion of your sense of who you are with yourself and others. I also see the tangible benefits that these relationships bring, as students arrive on campus with more confidence, with a set of new friends, and an experience that will stay with them throughout their life. Many FOPers weren't sure they could go for days without their phone, or sleep on the side of a mountain, or make friends. But year after year this is exactly what happens, and I

am grateful to the student leaders, advisors, and participants for their passion, dedication, and leadership in helping FOP thrive as a student-run program.

What a great way to start your Harvard College experience!



"WHAT STANDS OUT IN YOUR MIND ABOUT  
YOUR FOP  
EXPERIENCE?"

First-Year Outdoor Program Participants 2018

The beauty of FOP trips is that there is no way to capture every group dynamic, adventure, and laugh in a summary, so the best we can do is share as many stories as we can when we return. Here are a few reflections from this year's freshmen about their FOP experiences.

"I didn't realize how deeply and intimately I would get to know people on FOP. While one may meet more people on other pre-orientation trips, only FOP allows one to truly know people. That depth of relationship sets FOP apart."

"The people were amazing. I gained an appreciation for genuine human connection. In the real world, I am constantly bombarded by technology and a whirlwind of activities. But in the wilderness, I had none of that. Instead, all I had was 10 other people and the bare minimum of supplies needed to survive."

"I grew so comfortable around the people in my FOP group. I feel every group probably







says that they bonded especially well with their group, but I truly believe the bond our group formed would stand out. From the chants we made up as we trudged through the mud to the 5 hour conversation about our feelings, I grew so much as a teammate and person from the people I shared the entire week with."

"Incredible people, and our hilarious and lovable FOP leaders. They had such an unbelievable impact on me, and FOP made me truly excited to start at Harvard, since these were the type of people I would be meeting."

"I was completely astounded by the friendships and companions that I made while on this amazing adventure. There is no doubt in my mind that the greatest take-away of the trip were the relationships that developed so naturally and so kindly."

"Some of my favorite parts of FOP include singing on the trail, creating puns with chow, and actually learning how to set up camp myself. More than anything, I enjoyed the activities in the campsites every night as it was a way for us as a group to get

to know each other better and grow closer."

"It was really cool to live so intimately with a small group of kids and struggle together, succeed together, and share our personal thoughts and fears so openly."

"Everyone in my group was extremely different in terms of their upbringings, interests, and personalities. While different, they were all incredibly intelligent and interesting in their own right. In such a way, I believe it is very fitting that FOP was my introduction to the Harvard community, as this experience is a microcosm for the student body at large."



Liz Roux '19 and her FOP trip

#### POETRY FROM THE TRAIL Liz Roux '19

Let me embrace the wilderness.  
Let me see what I can see.  
Sweet views, crisp autumn hues,  
rocky slabs to catch my knees.  
Let me embrace the wilderness  
for my health, body, heart, and mind.  
All are strong enough - thank god and fate-  
so why not use them while I have time.  
Let me embrace the wilderness  
where the air is fresh and true.  
No warring states. no ignorant hate,  
just the fundamentals of me and you.  
Let us embrace the wilderness -  
raw, uncompromising, and hopefully  
pristine-  
for it is something much grander than  
us all  
and we are lucky for its company  
And perhaps if we embrace the wilderness  
and stop seeking things in life to blame  
we'll find that it offers so many selfless  
blessings.  
Perhaps we should do the same.

# FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF FOP — FY18

## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS!

### LEAD DONORS

Karen Gordon Mills & Barry Mills

### FOP SUMMIT TEAM (\$5000 AND UP)

Anonymous  
Barbara Alpert & Michael Kaufman  
Seevak Pearson Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation  
Charles & Claudia Wu

### FOP CLIMBERS (\$500-\$4999)

Anonymous  
Walter P. Beh & Jo Ann Beh  
Katherine M. Callaghan  
Lisa Cohen & Jeffrey Cohen  
Diane Siegel Danoff & Theodore M. Danoff  
Sarah S. Feldman & David S. Scharfstein  
Bryan D. Garsten & Anna Ackerman Garsten  
Patrick R. George  
Karen B. Green & Steven M. Markovitz  
Brenda H. Jarrell  
Joseph T. King Jr. & Amy C. Justice  
Pablo Lapuerta & Rachelle Bin  
Michael C. K. Maii  
Emily Felice Mandelstam & Paul A. Engelmayer  
Adam J. Margolin  
Michael T. Mollerus  
Rasmuson Foundation  
Eileen E. Reynolds & Daniel G. Deschler  
John Santoleri & Carol Santoleri  
Debra Sauermann & Roland Sauermann  
Amy Stark & Mark R. Tercek  
David T. Stern  
Susan Bagnoli Truman  
Eric Weiss

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

Tokunbo David Afolabi-Ajayi  
Maria Hoyt Cashin & Stephen Douglas Cashin  
Christopher P. Chesney  
Ryan Davies  
Michael P. Etzel  
Nicole Florance  
D. Cressler Heasley Jr.  
Elizabeth Lovell Dana Hindal & Mark H. Hindal  
David W. Latham  
Ann M. Lindgren & Kurt C. Schluntz  
Kathleen E. McDonough & Joseph P. Zolner  
Veronica H. Nutting  
Kevin P. O'Meara  
Mr. Robert Karl Sauermann  
Natasha A. Von Imhof  
Claudia Bowles Walter & Robert Blane Walter  
Daniel C. Watts  
Jennifer Ran Xiao  
Jonathan Samuel Yedidia & Ann M. Blair  
Peter Y. Youn  
Bradley A. Zlotnick

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

Anonymous  
Joan Hillebrand Alexander & Barton Alexander  
Michelle Elise Burch & Ronald Dominic Burch  
Caroline Josie Burke  
Acheson Hamilton Callaghan, Jr.  
Stanley Clay Carter & Edythe Louise Carter  
B. Jill Comins & Howard S. Stein  
Fun Fun Cong  
Anne E. DeAngelo  
Robert M. DeAngelo & Jan P. DeAngelo  
Michelle K. Jacobs DeLong  
Chris DeSisto  
Walter Doblecki & Mary Ellen Doblecki  
Elias I. Fanous  
Cara E. Ferrentino  
Louisa French

David Geist  
Jeffrey H. Gelles & Beth H. Gelles  
Eric D. Gill  
Eldon Van Cleef Greenberg  
Craig A. Harms  
Gary G. Heaton  
Bret David Henricks & Donna Marie Bhisitkul  
Jason Jeffay & Laurie A. Jeffay  
Jun Jiang  
Albert S. Jun  
Pauline T. Kim & K. Philip Lee  
Beth Anne King & Donald Gordon King  
William A. Lincoln, Jr.  
Claire M. Madden  
Jerome P. Maddock & Elizabeth J. Waterhouse  
Laura McGiffert Slover  
Neil K. Mehta & Riddhima Mehta  
Jennifer Nan  
Nathan Roswell Oalican  
Jeewon Park  
Christopher J. Perriello  
Michael R. Pontrelli  
Paul Howard Schwartz & Jennifer Ann Schwartz  
Ms. Marin T. Smith  
Jocelyn Jolly Stamat  
Kevin Struhl  
John D. Stubbs Jr. & Caroline Quilian Stubbs  
Randy Matthew Sweeney & Victoria M. Stanton  
Michael J. Tchou  
Coz Teplitz & Laura Ostapenko  
Wilhelmina Hildegard Ulbrich  
Ms. Tamara Lyn Underwood & Mr. James David Keeley  
Joseph G. Wall  
Alice W. Wang & Francis Wang  
Ann Paschal Weber & William James Weber  
Scott Wilkinson & Gorete Wilkinson  
David J. Worley & Bernadette M. Drankoski

### FOP SUPPORT TEAM (UP TO \$99)

Joan & Barton Alexander  
Anonymous  
Lillian C. Alexander  
Friedrich Barth & Linda F. Barth

Robert T. Baxter & Roberta Kellman Baxter  
Arthur E. Chin & Jennifer L. Weigel  
Elizabeth A. City  
Aaron R. Cohen & Miriam B. Cohen  
Abigail A. Donaldson  
Emily C. Donaldson  
Virginia C. Fahs  
Mr. Daniel J. Feinberg  
Azeb Gessesse  
David C. Grimm & Jeanie C. Grimm  
Andrew Wallace Hayes  
Louise Hindal  
Allyson V. Hobbs  
Fenghua Jin & Changchun Mao  
Layla K. Joudeh  
Joyce Kinoshita & James A. Belmont  
Theodore H. Koenig & Marilyn M. Koenig  
Susan Lindsey Lively & Scott A. Lively  
Angela Christine Lucioni & Renzo Pierino Lucioni  
William Palmer Pennoyer & Jennifer White Pennoyer  
Anita Glazer Sadun  
Yakov Sheynberg & Galina Sheynberg  
Michelle Ann Sirois  
Max E. Storto  
Dan W. Tevis & Deidre D. Wipke-Tevis  
Robert B. Thompson & Deborah B. Johnson  
Jean Thue  
Gary J. Toman & Mary C. Lane  
James Traver & Marguerite Conan  
Audrey M. Vernick  
Cynthia Vitone  
Gregory Wall  
Robert Webster, Jr. & Nancy Webster  
HaiBin Wechsler & Marius Wechsler  
Jean Morison Williams & Nicholas G. Grant  
John F. Willoughby  
Siobhan Zaniewski & Robert Zaniewski  
Rong Zeng & Jun Gao  
George Zisiadis