

# DOMUS DOCTRINARUM

XV

UMMS Learning Communities Newsletter

COMMUNITY EDITION

# NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

*Thank you to all the authors for your meticulous effort to capture the sentiments of your Houses.*

*The theme of this Domus Doctrinarum is Community. The community captured in this biannual newsletter deserves the recognition of the entire LC leadership team including House Mentors, Chairs and Reps for your relentless work to build such community in beautifully unconventional ways.*

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# BLACKSTONE HOUSE

BY VINCENT LA

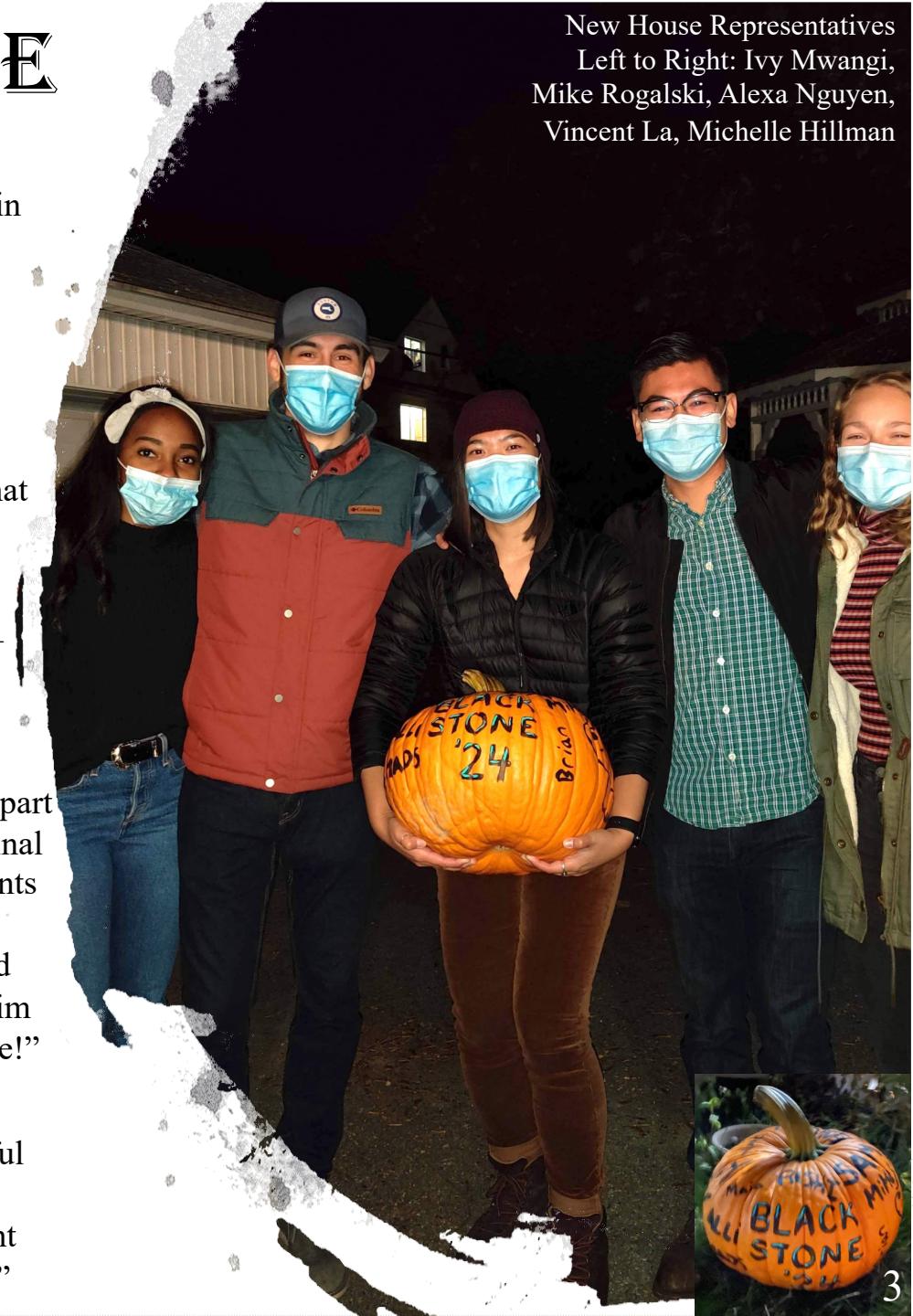
This fall, the Blackstone House has embraced *community* in so many different ways. Activities include participating in socially distant pumpkin carving, connecting with their Sidekicks in the Sidekicks OEE, and helping refugees and immigrants at the New Citizen Center!

Within their first months in the UMass community, Rishi Makkar and two new Blackstone House Representatives – Mike Rogalski and Alexa Nguyen – have chimed in on what community means to them and how they've embraced community:

“Community is such an important part of medical school – now more than ever,” Mike, a new house representative explains. “Even though COVID has made it harder to connect, I still feel like the Class of 2024 have been developing our community in our own way.” Mike is also part of the Sidekicks OEE, a program that establishes longitudinal connections between medical students with pediatric patients with life threatening conditions. He shares his experience: “Every month, I look forward to endless games of Uno and Crazy 8s with my pediatric buddy. When I hangout with him and his dad, we’re always laughing and having a good time!”

Rishi, a first year medical student as well, also shares experience in the Sidekicks Program. “It’s been a wonderful experience to get to know my buddy. I’ve learned how important it is to provide company and friendship in patient care. As a bonus, I’ve also learned how to play Minecraft!”

New House Representatives  
Left to Right: Ivy Mwangi, Mike Rogalski, Alexa Nguyen, Vincent La, Michelle Hillman



# BLACKSTONE HOUSE

BY VINCENT LA

Alexa, one of our newest house representatives, has also been active in the community with Blackstone's legacy project with the New Citizen Center, a Worcester public school for young adults who recently immigrated to the US and students with learning disabilities. "Our goal is to educate recent refugees and immigrants settled in Worcester about healthcare professions and navigating the healthcare system," she explains. "Collaborating with a teacher from NCC has been a great example of how UMass and its students get to know and serve our community. It's a nice step away from classes to do something meaningful."



## BLACKSTONE NEW CITIZEN CENTER LEGACY PROJECT

Left to Right: Mitin Nachu, Vincent La, Alexa Nguyen, Sri Nuvvula, Christian Pineda, Filia Van Dessel, Michelle Chang

# BRIGHTWOOD HOUSE

BY OMAR TAWAH AND SARAH HANSEN

The past few months have been nothing short of an adventure for the Brightwood House. Through the transition to remote learning, Brightwood students and faculty have stayed active and passionate about extracurricular involvements, building a strong sense of community and collaboration amidst the limitations of a COVID-19 world.

Approaching academics and building new friendships these past few months surely hasn't been easy - a number of events to safely bring together students, both online and in person, have been cancelled or rescheduled. Despite challenges, Brightwood students have continued to embody the PURCH principles by volunteering at a local community garden in Springfield, fostering an inclusive and openly reflective learning environment, and prioritizing empathy while supporting those around them.

While the virtual learning environment hasn't been without hiccups, the first years were fortunate enough to have 5 weeks of in-person anatomy lab. The privilege to learn about the human body was accompanied by a heightened awareness of the power that life holds, as well as plenty of unexpected opportunities to grow as team members and future physicians. Even though in person anatomy lab is currently on hold for the time being, they have continued to emphasize the importance of jokes, compassion, and self care, particularly in their infamous (and first to have been created of ALL class of 2024 houses) WhatsApp group chat.

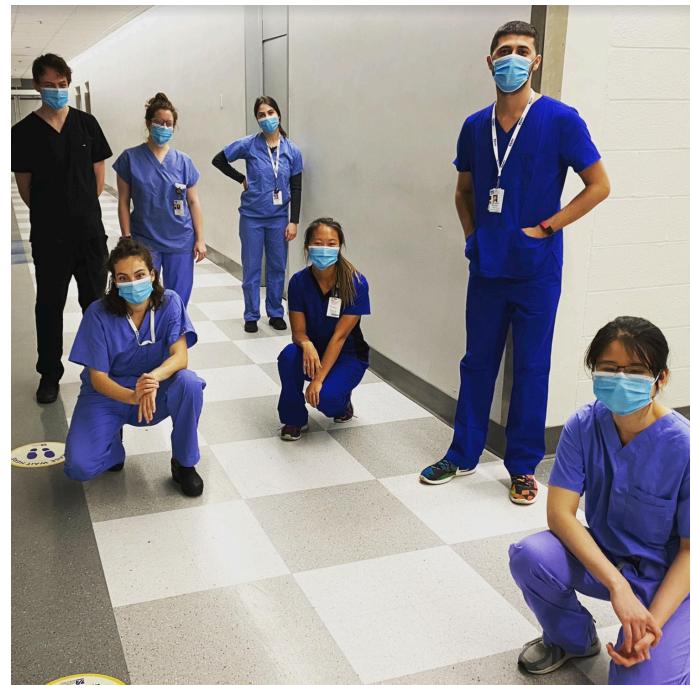


## QUOTES FROM PURCHIES

# BRIGHTWOOD HOUSE

“I find an amazing sense of community within PURCH and my anatomy group. There is always someone willing to listen after a particularly difficult day. I am astounded at my classmates ability to care for those they've only known for a short time.” -Kassandra Jean-Marie

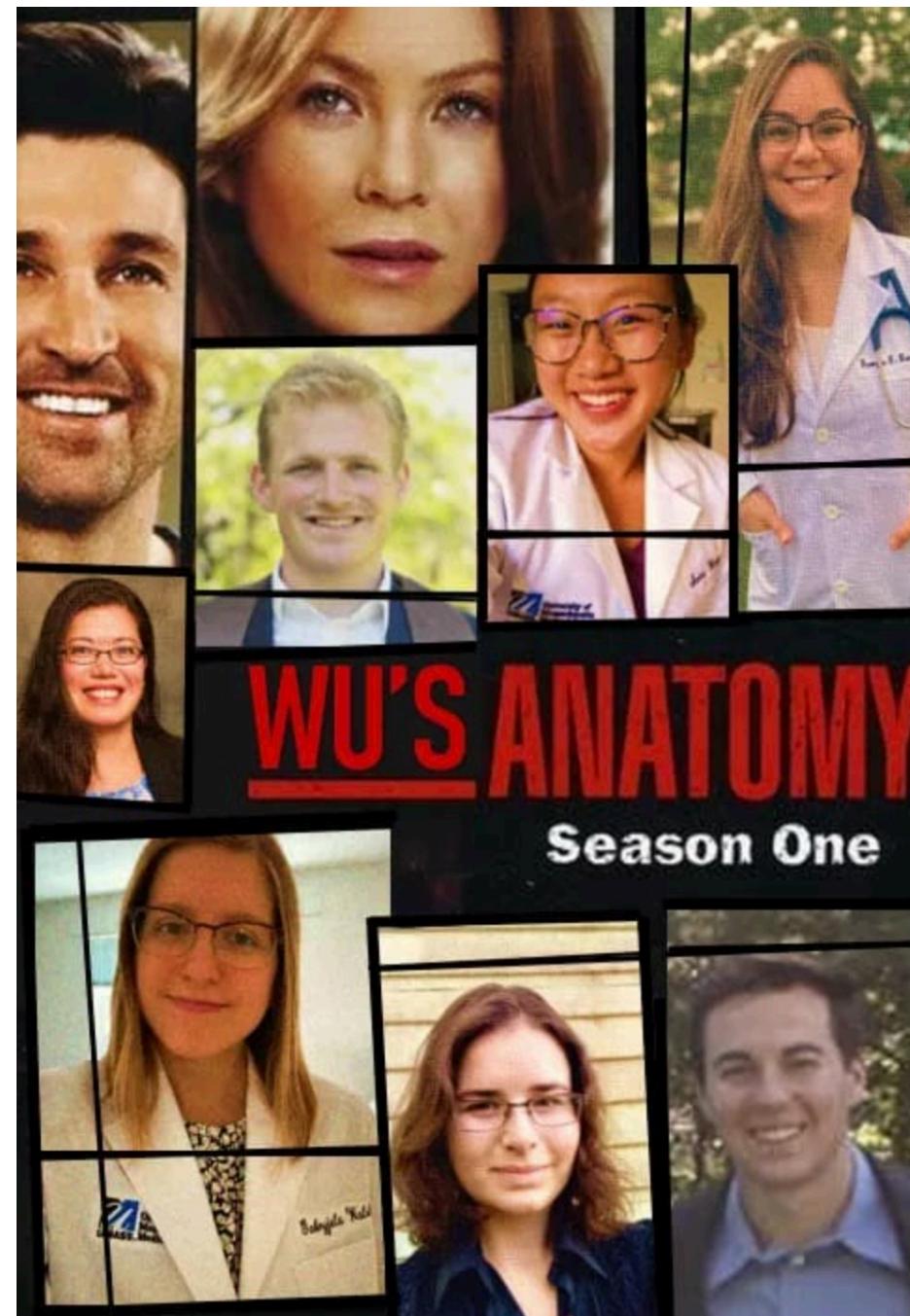
“Starting medical school in a pandemic is no joke, and it has definitely been lonely much of the time. However, people reaching out to check in how we're doing, virtual events of all types, all of the love and support of the second years and faculty... all of these things have made it clear that UMMS cares about community, even in the loneliest of times.” - Sara Wang



“3rd year can be very isolating, but it has been wonderful to be paired with fellow PURCH students on rotations!” - Megan Hansen

“My anatomy lab group has made me feel an amazing sense of community this year! We have so much fun working on school related assignments together and getting to know each other outside of class. Being an out of state student, I am so grateful to have a group of friends that feels like family already.” -Jordan Dudley

## QUOTES FROM PURCHIES



"I felt such a sense of community when I spent the day talking to and working with people from Gardening the Community. Being able to interact and engage with the people there with me made me feel such a sense of togetherness with my peers and the community." -Sarah Hansen



"I think every time we have our short debriefs on our PURCH days where we can talk about anything on our minds has brought a strong sense of community for me. It's really relieving and empowering to hear your classmates express the same feelings you've been having, whether it's excitement or stress. Even if someone hasn't had the same experience as myself for that week, I always feel supported and heard, which is one of the many reasons I think our PURCH cohort is so special." -Julia Small

# BURNCOAT HOUSE

BY COLIN BURNETT

*Burncoat House has spent these fall months reimagining, recreating, and reinvigorating its communities in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges presented, the Burncoat House is working harder than ever to ensure its owls are building and strengthening their communities with one another, with the whole UMMS team, and with the city of Worcester.*

The Burncoat owls began their year with a brand new batch of fledglings who carried the MOE-lympics crown home once again. Taking social distancing precautions and event modifications in stride, the MS1s began building their new communities as part of the Burncoat family.



# BURNCOAT HOUSE

BY COLIN BURNETT

Burncoat Owls at Legacy Project Marie's Mission



The owls have also ventured from the nest to celebrate relationships in the greater LC community. In September, Burncoat and Quinsigamond Houses co-hosted an apple picking outing to Honey Pot Hill orchards (which likely resulted in many McIntosh-based apple crisps). In November, the owls and squids also co-hosted a virtual specialty advisor night, with representation from over twenty-two physician experts from both Houses. In addition to Burncoat's regular Zoom yoga sessions, first-year capstone and curricula advice nights, and ongoing House Cup challenges, hybrid social events have kept the owl nest constantly buzzing with new communications and a revitalized sense of connection to our student peers and faculty.

Fortunately, Burncoat House's legacy project, Marie's Mission, has been another tremendous source of community building and support over the recent months. As a diaper outreach program dedicated to providing families with adequate resources for their infants and toddlers, Burncoat students have continued volunteering and distributing supplies. It has been particularly important this season, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, as volunteers distributed child-sized face masks and other personal protective equipment to Marie's Mission families. Through this organization, Burncoat students have felt a renewed bond with our fellow Worcesterians.

As UMMS has evolved in response to the pandemic, "it [has been] all too easy to feel isolated and to feel alone in the struggles of medical school. Having a community like Burncoat House has given [us] a support system to fall back on, fun events to look forward to, and a whole new set of friends to be made" (Deirbhile Martin, MS2). With the challenges of remote learning and social separation, Burncoat House has embraced the idea that "medical school and the life beyond it is truly a team sport" and that "now more than ever, we need to see the incredible community of people that are all around us" (Shannon West, MS2). The Burncoat House will continue recognizing and celebrating its communities as we transition to the winter months and continue remote learning – there is no challenge too great for these owls!

# KELLEY HOUSE

BY JENNA LAIDLEY

Kelley House started off the year strong at MOE, winning four MOE-lympic events with overwhelming support and enthusiasm on the sidelines, including a solidarity final minute plank. This momentum, as well as amazing motivational emails, propelled Kelley to win Minutes4Fitness, bringing the house closer together and perhaps one step closer to a repeat House Cup victory. In a continued effort to give back to the community, Kelley raised \$960 for cancer research and was the house with the second most donors. In addition, Kelley house was able to hop their way into fall through a virtual pumpkin carving event, giving individuals the chance to express some artistic creativity.

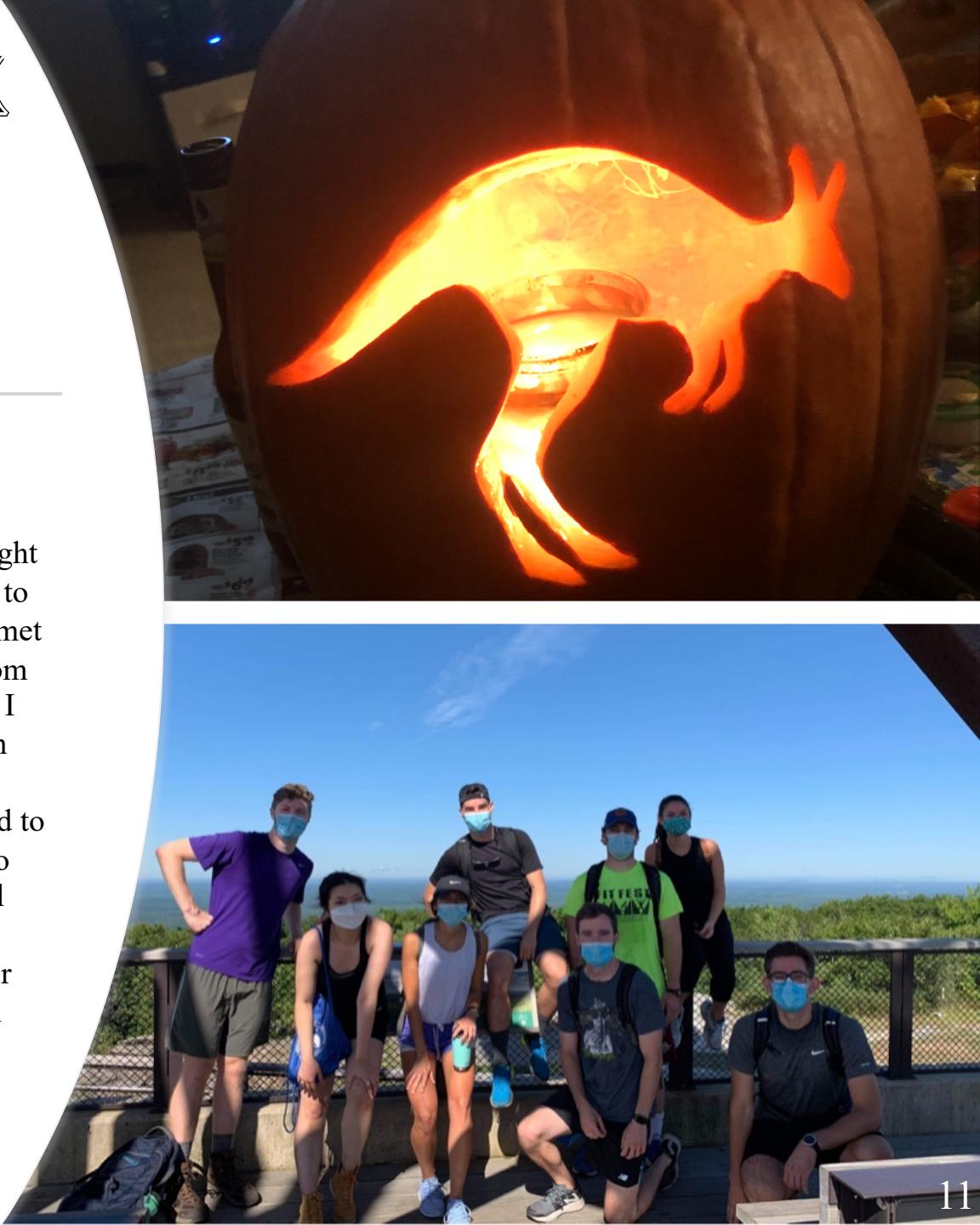
Despite the challenges of a partially remote start, Kelley House was able to form a strong community thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of the second years. In August they had several bonding events, such as Lawn Games at Green Hill Park which allowed the first years to get to know each other, as well as the upperclassman in attendance. In addition, the second years have hosted multiple advice nights for the first-year courses of BWCT, POHG, DSF and POP, answering questions and offering support and guidance as first years navigated the transition to school.



# KELLEY HOUSE

BY JENNA LAIDLEY

When asked about the sense of community at UMass, first year Austin Lachance said, “Everyone here is so friendly! Initially I thought it might be slightly exaggerated, as we all try to make friends, but every single person I have met here at UMass is truly amazing! I told my mom that ‘if things keep going like they have been I will probably enjoy medical school more than undergrad,’ and that says volumes about this community.” Kelley House is looking forward to hosting further events in the upcoming year to strengthen the community among the medical students in the house, as well as between the different learning communities. Stay tuned for updates on Kelley’s legacy project, Go Green With Kelley, in the upcoming months!



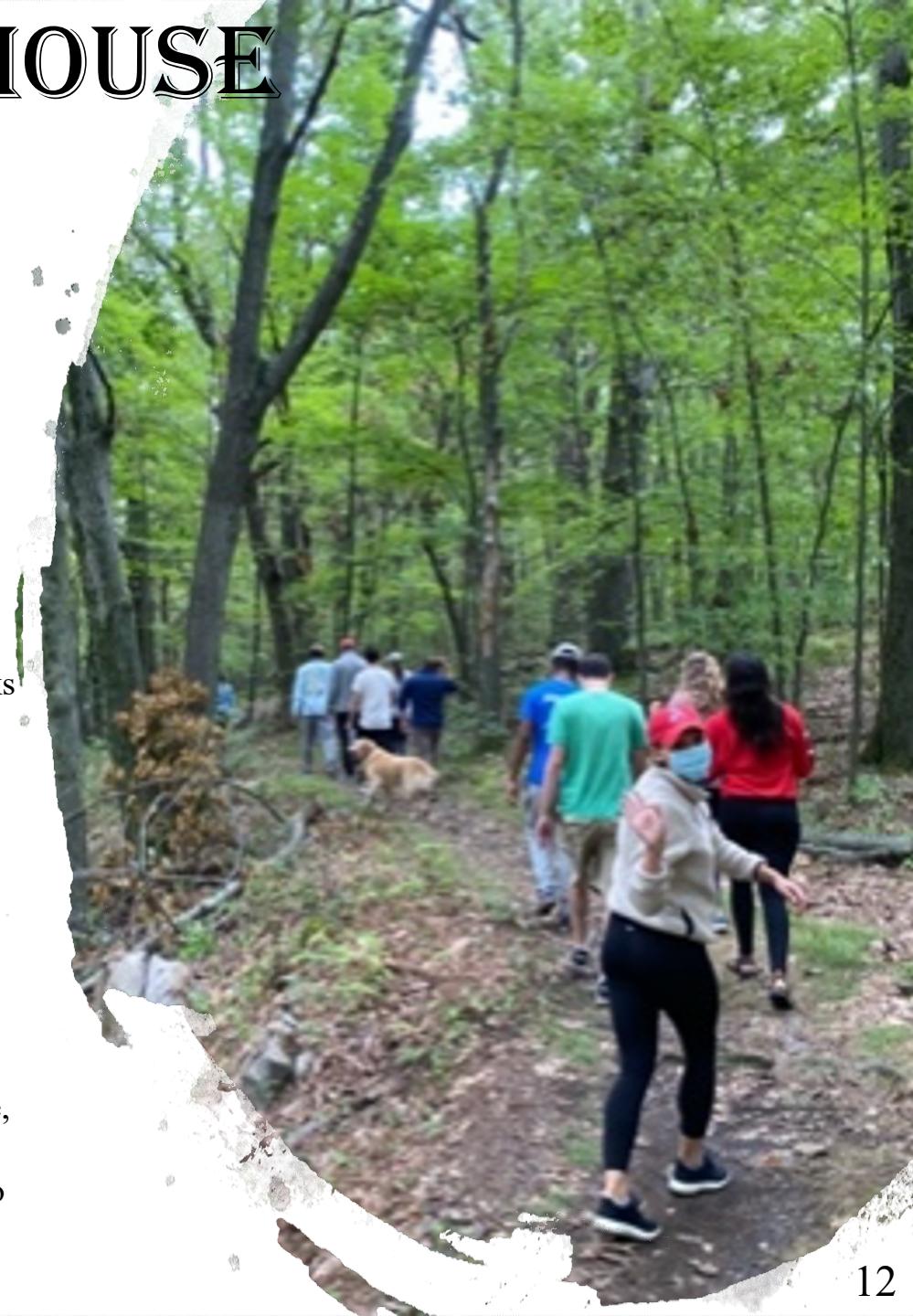
# QUINSIGAMOND HOUSE

BY OLIVIA LADD-LUTHRINGSHAUSER AND  
OLIVIA HANRON

Quinsigamond House has been working hard to ensure that they can spend some quality Squid time together while remaining dedicated to our community's safety guidelines! The first and second years kicked off the new year with a socially distanced picnic and lawn games in Green Hill Park. The Squids loved getting together for the first time and enjoying the warm summer air with some of the most famous Quinsig puppies (looking at you, Chief!).

The Quinsig House returned to Green Hill Park a few weeks later to participate in the UMass Cancer Walk and enjoy a bagel brunch together. The House was excited to take advantage of a beautiful day to simultaneously support the UMass community at large and explore a new corner of a city that is quickly becoming home to many of the first years.

As the leaves began to turn, the House continues their race against time to fit in as many outdoor events as possible. Quinsigamond and Burncoat joined ranks to co-host an apple picking event at scenic Honey Pot Orchards in Stowe, MA. Many Squids and Owls returned home with apples, cider donuts, and kettle corn in tow. It was especially fun to watch some of those apples turn into delicious pies, crisps, and crumbles! Next stop, Great British Bake Off!



# QUINSIGAMOND

BY OLIVIA LADD-LUTHRINGSHAUSER  
AND OLIVIA HANRON



More food and fun was had at Quinsig's very own "Taste of Worcester" event a few weeks later, where they once again congregated at Green Hill Park, this time to sample some favorite local dishes. Featured restaurants included Tomato Pie, Mezcal, Thai Time, and El Basha!

There is no denying that this year looks different from previous ones. Nevertheless, House-members are thankful for the many milestones they are still able to experience, such as the first years receiving their white coats and stethoscopes. Taking time to reflect on what this moment meant to first years was powerful and unifying as they enter an evolving medical field. The first year Squids have also been grateful for virtual advice nights with the knowledgeable second years as we shift between courses.

As winter draws nearer and safety guidelines become more stringent, Squids can continue to look forward to their Specialty Advisor Nights, co-hosted with Burncoat, and the annual Wrap for WRAP Legacy Project. Though House reps have to be creative by making traditionally in-person events virtual, Squids are excited to take on the challenge to keep Quinsigamond's spirit is as high as ever (House Cup standings can be misleading!). After all, maybe the real House Cup points are the friendships they make along the way.



# TATUCK HOUSE

BY ROHINI LOKE



This fall, Tatnuck came together for a variety of events to bring the house together and build community! The year began with a group tie-dye event of Tatnuck T-shirts, creating a festive foundation for house spirit. In September, Tatnuck members headed to Meadowbrook Orchards for a house wide event with attendance from students, mentors (shoutout to Dr. MacGinnis and Dr. Weisberg) and a few Tatnuck residents as well! During the “Minutes 4 Fitness” challenge and annual UMass Cancer Walk & Run, Tatnuck House came together to take study breaks, get a breath of fresh air and log exercise minutes together. After one of the walks, the group stopped by at Madulka’s to treat themselves to the last ice creams of the store’s season!

Tatnuck continued to take advantage of the lovely weather with our first annual “Golden Hour” picnic at Worcester’s Green Hill Park. To support local businesses during this pandemic, they picked up take-out from a variety of our favorite restaurants including El Basha, Mezcal, Rice Violet, and Meze Estiatorio. In true Halloween fashion, Tatnuck’s latest event was pumpkin carving! Student designs ranged from “Tat-WHAT? TATNUCK” pumpkins, to classic spooky faces, and to a showstopper “UMass Med” pumpkin that won Faculty Favorite in Blackstone House’s Carving Contest (by fellow house representative Nathan Yee)!



# TATNUCK HOUSE

BY ROHINI LOKE

Tatnuck first years are thankful to have gotten through BWCT, POHG and their first DSF and POP exams with the support of their second-year buddies, helpful advice nights and encouragement from both the peer and faculty mentors. Although this year has started off different than most, first year are thankful for what Tatnuck has given to them so far and look forward to what the rest of the year will bring. Tatnuck House is confident that through future virtual events, Tigers will continue to build upon the strong community that they have established over the past few months!

# TATNUCK HOUSE

## HOUSE CHAIR SPOTLIGHT: Kayla Daniell and Caroline Repetti

This year, Tatnuck House is proud to have Caroline Repetti and Kayla Daniell as house chairs. They lead Tatnuck with a fun, welcoming and positive energy that embodies the true Tatnuck Tiger spirit.

### **Q: What does the Tatnuck House Community mean to you?**

**Caroline:** The Tatnuck community has given me so much in terms of growing closer with my classmates and in developing mentoring relationships – both of these things have been especially meaningful over the past crazy year. I felt so much support amongst the Tatnuck community last spring despite not being able to see each other in person, and was blown away by how we felt this support grow as we came together as a house to welcome the Tatnuck Class of 2024 this fall. Similarly, I'm incredibly grateful to our Tatnuck LC mentors, who, despite the challenges this year has brought to both their clinical and academic duties, have remained just as approachable and supportive to us as ever.

**Kayla:** The Tatnuck community has been an incredible network of support for me academically and personally, especially with the social challenges of this year. It has been unbelievably rewarding to learn alongside this cohort of peers and to tap into our mentors for guidance.



# THANKS FOR READING!

Learn more about the LCs at: [www.umassmed.edu/learningcommunities](http://www.umassmed.edu/learningcommunities)

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