

PPAS Voice

Celebrating diversity, promoting unity

Farewell From a PPAS Lifer

By: Clara Young



It feels pretty surreal to be graduating PPAS. I have attended the school since I was in sixth grade and it has truly been a home to me. The relationships I have made have impacted me and turned me into the person I am today. Whether they were good or bad, short or lasting, they shaped me into the uniquely crafted artist that I am.

I remember the day I had my last winter concert in middle school. Our eighth grade eyes welled up when we realized that that night would be our last night performing on the PPAS stage together. I remember taking photos with my friends on snapchat and using the trendy rainbow barf filter that was going around at the time. I remember talking about how strange it was that I would be separated from some of my closest friends like it was yesterday.

But the thing with endings is that there are always new beginnings. When one door closes, another one opens. What no one told me is that the door didn't have to slam shut. I could leave a streak of light peeking through the cracked wooden pane if I wanted to.

The memories of frantically trying to study for the Earth Science regent while drinking my juice box or the two hour-long conversation I had with my best friend in the PPAS stairwell to make up after a fight we had would live on.

I know that it is a small world and the business is even smaller. At the same time, it feels like over the past four years I have created a little planet with my musical theatre class and now I'm traveling to an entirely different new one called NYU Tisch—one with different levels of oxygen, different rules, but I am still myself and still have my toolbox full of all the gifts of knowledge PPAS has given me.

The thing about change is that it challenges us to be the best version of ourselves. I know

that we have all experienced this during the pandemic. Change has forced us to open our eyes and our ears or even face a truth we had been hiding from for a long time. Change is inevitable and it is good. Just like how clay is meant to be molded and reshaped, we are meant to grow in new ways through the defining years of our lives.

I know that I will run into my classmates at an audition of some sort, and when I do, I will always have a funny memory to go along with each face. My one piece of advice to the underclassmen, as cheesy as it seems, is to enjoy every moment. Be a sponge that soaks up information in the form of experience. Be your best self when no one else is watching. Do it for you.

To Anyone Still Trying to Find Their Place at PPAS

By Lucian Zanes

It took me an exceptionally long amount of time to find my place at PPAS. The fact that I was entering the school junior year after everyone had already cultivated relationships, combined with my social anxiety, made it really difficult to find my people.

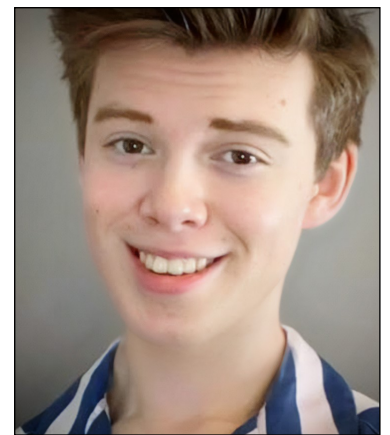
I spent the first few months of school eating lunch completely alone. I mastered the skill of dashing out of school quickly enough so that I could avoid all social interaction. I walked through the halls looking down at my phone, so that I could escape the potential of making eye contact with anyone.

On my first day of school, we

were given lockers. There was one singular locker that was isolated from the rest. It was on the opposite side of the building where the middle schoolers were. There were enough lockers for 15 people, but there were 16 of us. Someone was going to have to get the bad one.

As we were picking our lockers, and deciding who would get the bad one, I heard someone whisper "give it to the new kid". Of course, I ended up with the puny locker on the other side of the building. That was only the first of many days that I would feel completely isolated from the rest of my classmates.

Now this may sound like some kind of sob story- but that is not my goal here, because I did end up finding my people. I found a family. I found everything I needed to thrive. It just took a little bit of time. It just sorta happened one day. I can't even remember the first day that I ate lunch in the dance studio with Syd, Beth, and Amanda. It feels like there was never a time that I wasn't with them- eating lunch in the dance studio each day. I did a complete 180 degree flip. I am not the shy little dude who doesn't talk to anyone anymore. So to everyone who is still trying to figure out where they belong



in this high school arena- just trust that you will find what you are looking for. It's coming. The perfect group of people are waiting for you- the perfect friends. I promise you. It might just take some time.

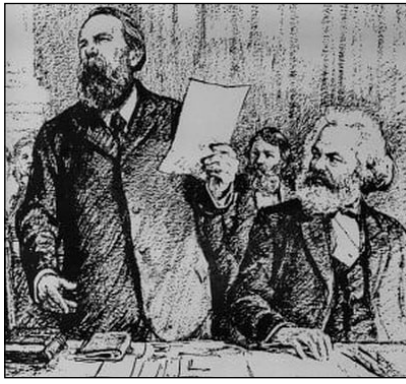
Cooperatives: The Alternative to the Standard Exploitative Business Model

By: Gregory Papadopoulos

We are often led to think that a hierarchical work environment breeds innovation through competition. The simple narrative of “climbing the corporate ladder” has always been encouraged by those at the top and displayed as this inspirational, driving force, giving employees a reason to work harder. But what if this competitive, “success but only at another’s expense” motto, really just maintains an unfair class divide in the workplace? I always hear this point that “humans are naturally greedy” or “humans are inherently selfish and competitive”, but if we look a bit deeper, past the pro-capitalist mindset, we see something rather...interesting. Throughout history, anthropologists and philosophers have deduced

that partnership has always yielded greater economic stability and societal innovation than rivalry. Humans are innately cooperative, but we live in a system implemented by the lords and nobles tracing back to the end of feudalism. Realizing that hierarchical business models are oppressive and exploitative is the first step to becoming more human.

[Cooperatives](#) are actually rather simple! The foundational idea is that the means of production and the profits of a company are transferred from the board of directors to the



er, one vote. If our government is run (somewhat) democratically, why shouldn’t our businesses? The capitalist will say, “what will motivate these workers to work? What is keeping them from leaving to a hierarchically run business which may potentially offer a greater salary?” A core difference between the capitalist business and the cooperative is that the workers

are not working for some board of directors they’ve never met, who are profiting exponentially on their backs. The workers work for themselves and each other. The beauty of the cooperative business is that the worker has a tangible purpose in the company. They’re not just another replaceable robot aimlessly working for some billionaire CEO who couldn’t care less about their well-being. Your colleagues work alongside you, not below or above. For any sort of structural change across all of the superficial divides in this country, we must start at the foot of this crisis. Class. Cooperatives have been around way longer than capitalism and they sure aren’t pipe dreams. [Support your local co-ops!](#)

Garcia Makes Late Push as Mayoral Primary Fight Enters Final Month

By: Ellis Rubin

In the first two Democratic mayoral debates, Kathryn Garcia took shelter as verbal warfare broke out around her. While almost every other candidate hurled attacks, Garcia refrained, calmly pointing out her lengthy city government experience and her endorsements by the New York Times and Daily News. The newspapers’ approval has recently boosted the long-time civil servant’s standing. In an April Spectrum News NY1/Ipsos poll, Garcia had garnered just 4%, landing in eighth place. One month and two seals of approval later, a PIX11 News/Emerson College poll placed Garcia at 21%, claiming first place.

Garcia’s emergence as a leading contender is of no doubt concern to early mayoral frontrunner Andrew Yang. The former presidential candidate had been heaping praise

on Garcia, even suggesting that she could be his deputy mayor. Yang, himself uninterested in settling for the deputy

mayor consolation prize, has turned from praising to panning Garcia. He has tied Garcia to Mayor Bill de Blasio, hoping the mayor’s unpopularity will drag Garcia down.

While Garcia has said she would not want de Blasio’s endorsement, she has nonetheless promoted her variety of work in his administration. She has reminded voters of how she “kept the city running” as its sanitation commissioner and has champi-



ery of 130 million meals. Garcia’s life in public service, however, extends back to the Bloomberg administration, where she worked her way up to Chief Operating Officer of the Department of Environmental Protection. She has used all this to justify her self-appointed title of New York City’s “crisis manager.”

Along with fellow frontrunners Yang and Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Garcia is considered a moder-

ated her role during the pandemic as the city’s food czar, a role that required her to organize the deliv-

ate. She supports increased subway policing, rejects requiring new housing developments to include affordable units, and defends charter schools. During the second debate, Garcia faced moderator scrutiny over stepping down from her positions in the middle of a pandemic. She framed the move as a protest resignation against budget cuts to the Department of Sanitation.

Garcia’s late surge in popularity follows a promising precedent. In his own crowded Democratic primary eight years ago, de Blasio stole the lead from then City Council Speaker Christine Quinn in the final month. Should Garcia prevail on primary day, June 22nd, she will have mounted a similar comeback, setting her up to become New York City’s first female mayor.

Creating Community Through Chaos: How PPAS Persevered

By: Rosabella Procario-Soler

Though students across the globe have had a rough time with online learning, things are beginning to look up. The NYCDOE has announced a full return of in-person learning for September. Now, just as they did before, students are going to learn how to adjust in a new school setting. Many see this as a fresh start filled with new opportunities, a chance to reconnect, or connect in real time, for the first time.

PPAS student Oscar Saltamacchia has not been to the school building since March 2019 and now says that “80% of the people in school,” are people he hasn’t met. This may come as a shock to some, but fellow students can agree it is difficult to connect through a screen. So when it was issued that everyone would be returning to the school building, students



were given a boost of motivation and excitement.

A big part of this year's student support system has been the host of clubs here at PPAS. These groups are for the most part student led, and whether they are discussing prevalent societal issues, or celebrating what it means to be ourselves, they keep the student body interested and uplifted. “The Self Esteem Rising club at PPAS has really given me a place to be open about my life and emotions in

a safe environment,” says Joellie Leopold. The Self Esteem Rising Club is just one of the wonderful student organizations offered at PPAS. It promotes self worth and encourages individuality in all. Joellie continued stating, “The club has also given me a way to create new friends that are not necessarily in my major or grade.”

This is a definite benefit, as seeing the same group of people is inevitable, especially when attending blended

learning. Classes this year have been as small as 2 students, which creates a rather limited network for teens. Therefore, student organizations give all pupils the chance to meet new people and connect with others in a way they haven’t before.

As everyone prepares for the coming school year, we can only hope that student participation remains this important. Building a stronger community can help us build communication skills and aid us in the lessons of leadership. With countless people to thank such as our teachers, school staff, and our classmates, we can all finally say we made it. This has been a school year unlike any other. But we have all shown great dedication and we have seen it through. Have a safe and splendid summer.

On the Water

Photography by :Serena Cheng



A Dream Come True (A Reflection on Leaving PPAS)

By: Alyssa Sosa

Getting into PPAS was one of my biggest dreams to get into. I had found love for performing at a young age. In my middle school, City School of the Arts, that love grew stronger after being a

off with such a powerful song that I heard loud and clear. I couldn't believe I was going to be a part of that, and that's when I knew I was in good hands. They really kept their word with the word

path where I'd end up doing this for my full career. Of course, I will always love performing. I still want to pursue that stage magic, but I have found out over these few months that my true call-

people start new chapters, and new paths in something we never expected. We can still hold onto our growth, memories, reflections, and what got us to where we are as a nice little reminder of



part of our school musicals. It's a world where I could escape into a whole new feeling. Performing has always brought me an experience that has always made me feel myself, happier, and so free. When researching for performing arts high schools to further pursue what I wanted to do, I found out about PPAS. There was something about the school that made me prefer it over every other PA school in the city. It seemed like an accepting community, a community that would lift so many up. I had heard so many memorable good stories from students who went there, and watched a lot of their performances. The performances were phenomenal.

I was completely shocked with the national chorale Spring performance I had gone to see with my mom when I found out I made it into the school. I was all the way in the back. They started

"professional" as said in the name! My time here has been great. I have met a lot of amazing teachers and students that I have gotten to know well. We had amazing events that I won't forget. I have learned so much. It was nothing I had experienced before.

Sadly, that was cut short for me and many others after less than a full school year. The pandemic hit us. I felt like the magic I felt was gone, I felt like I lost the connections I had, and I wasn't happy anymore. I began to question if this was even for me anymore.

The pandemic has given me so much time to reflect on me, what I want, who I am, and where I am going in life. My love for performing and PPAS remained strong of course, but something had changed. Almost all of my life, I thought I'd be on stage performing for a career. I thought I was heading in a

ing is to help children and teens in therapy. I feel more complete changing and saving lives for those who are in need of healing. I have felt that being a therapist and going to college to learn how to be the most authentic as a therapist is the way to do this. Struggling with mental health, trauma, abuse, disorders and so much more is a very real thing. Countless lives are in need.

I want to take that step and make that my career instead. It is also something that makes me happy. I know that is what is meant for me without a doubt, and I know that if I'm not doing that I am not complete. As helping others is what makes me feel happy knowing that I can watch many recover and have a happy life.

So this is why I will be leaving PPAS and starting a new school. If I start a new school I can be more in touch with what I want to pursue. In life,

how far we are coming. My point is that even though I will be leaving, I still won't forget the short, amazing experience I had here. I got to experience what makes me happy, something I will always love and hold close to my heart.

I'd like to thank my teachers for teaching me valuable lessons, memories and being people I could count on and comfortably go to: Mrs. Sale, Mrs. O'Brien, Mr. Truss, Mrs. Gindi, Ms. Richely, Mrs. Cho, Mr. Perlmutter, Mr. Sievert, Mrs. Martha, Mrs. Dave, Mr. Wright, Mr. Gatton, Mr. Devine, Mr. Telequen, Mrs. Gina, and Mrs. Cunningham. Finally, thank you PPAS for making a big change in my life, I have grown and matured a lot. My time here has been so much fun.

Good luck to the new students! (You're in for a fun, welcoming growth period.)



Opinion: Wuhan Lab Leak Theory Dismissed Way Too Fast

By: John Powers

Peter Dazsack is the only American that was on a “10-member team that the World Health Organization sent to China” who investigated the “origins of the virus” according to Kaiser Health News. This WHO team did not “gain access to databases” according to Kaiser Health News. When asked if Dazsack could test any of the animals for COVID-19, since he strongly denies the lab leak theory, he said that “the China team had done that” during a 60 Minutes interview. In fact, he acknowledged the absence of direct evidence that shows that animals were infected with COVID-19, responding “correct” to this assertion on the same 60 Minutes interview. Again, and again during this interview, Dazsack demonstrated that as the only American, he failed to represent the hardworking American taxpayers. Most egregiously, he defended only taking the word of those who worked at the lab when he investigated the lab leak theory, posing the question of “what else can we do”?

Dazsack, president of EcoHealth alliance, worked closely with the director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Shi Zhengli, which shows a strong and unethical conflict of interest. CNN reported that they both published research jointly in the past. EcoHealth alliance is also tied with grant funds from the NIH administered through the NIAID, the portion of the NIH Dr. Anthony Fauci leads. In fact, the NIAID gave a \$3.4 million grant to EcoHealth Alliance, funding research to study the risk of bat coronavirus emergence. EcoHealth alliance then gave this money to the Wuhan Institute of Virology

to conduct gain-of-function research. Even though Anthony Fauci and Shi Zhengli deny that gain-of-function research (GOF) was conducted, their lawyerly language does not hold up to scrutiny. For reference, GOF research uses techniques to “enhance some aspect of an organism’s functioning” according to Scientific American. Specifically, according to Scientific American, GOF can “create mutations to examine whether a pathogen becomes more contagious or lethal as a means of estimating future threats.” According to the New York Times, Shi Zhengli “argued that her experiments differed from gain-of-function work because she did not set out to make a virus more dangerous, but to understand how it might jump across species”. To many scientists, like that of Richard Ebright, this meets the definition of GOF. It certainly meets the definition of GOF by Scientific American as established above, as seeing how a virus may jump across species is examining “whether a pathogen becomes or more contagious”. Still, some, including scientists, may disagree. Even though there are naysayers, for good or for bad, this level of substantial discourse and differing opinions show that the prospect of the NIH possibly indirectly funding GOF is worthy of a greater conversation, not a complete ideological shut down.

So, to be clear, the president of EcoHealth alliance which funded the Wuhan Institute of Virology, investigated the Wuhan Institute of Virology and concluded that the lab leak theory was highly unlikely without any data from the lab nor testing of any animal.

Daszack asked “tough questions” and relied on the word of those in communist-controlled China. Essentially, everyone investigated themselves and found no wrongdoing. Clearly, the natural origin theory that was supported by this so-called investigation is not as solid as the scientific establishment makes it out to be. You don’t need to be a scientist yourself to use critical thinking and deduce that there are several factors that show this. While a weaker natural origin theory does not prove the lab leak theory, it certainly legitimizes it: the media spent a whole year criticizing the lab leak theory nonstop citing the lack of evidence, while also parading a theory that was deduced under a conflict of interest and lack of physical evidence. It is pure hypocrisy.

Science is the pursuit of more knowledge. It is not absolute. It can change. This nature of science is not applicable to the lab leak theory. Furthermore, the science did not radically change, and it was inappropriate for Dr. Fauci to call the lab leak theory a conspiracy theory, especially with new emails published by BuzzFeed through FOIA. One email shows that. Dr. Fauci had knowledge that Kristian Andersen and other scientists “all find [found] the genome inconsistent with expectations from evolutionary theory”, though Andersen acknowledged that things could eventually change. Yes, the science could change, but Andersen’s claim seemed to be an important one that Fauci should have publicly acknowledged. Instead, the American public was never made aware of this. Fauci could have correctly asserted that based on his cur-



Peter Dazsack
Source: EcoHealth Alliance

rent knowledge in the beginning of 2020, a natural origin theory seemed to be most plausible. However, it was reckless to flat out dismiss the lab leak theory as a conspiracy instead of acknowledging some circumstantial evidence that existed even before the new circumstantial evidence today.

Dr. Fauci is wrong, and the American public has a right to be mad, though Fauci disagrees. Authoritatively, Fauci stated during a CNN interview that “if you are trying to get at me as a public health official and a scientist, you’re really attacking not only Dr. Anthony Fauci, you are attacking science.” If science is letting grant money from the institution you lead get in the hands of labs conducting gain-of-function research in communist China, covering that up through lawyerly and elitist language, hiding circumstantial evidence to advance a political narrative, lying to the public on masks and herd immunity percentages, and then using science to silence opposing voices, then attacking this pseudoscience is something to behold.

*Note: For a more detailed and objective analysis of the facts I refer you to this [lengthy article in factcheck.org](https://www.factcheck.org/2020/04/10/who-team-investigation-into-the-origins-of-the-covid-19-virus/).
-Mr. Gatton*

PHOTOGRAPHY: A View From the Bridge

By: Lucy Kassel



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