

Paula Myatt

Paula has a BBA from UW-Madison and a Masters in Student Affairs Administration from UW-La Crosse. She is now working as a Residence Life Coordinator at the University of Northern Iowa. She is an evaluator for Wisconsin, Minnesota and also the International program.

“Researching in FPS was definitely a benefit when I was writing research papers in college. I’ve also noticed that many people I went to school with got stuck doing things one way and found it difficult when forced to change their thought process or think outside the box. I never had that problem. FPS has remained a large part of my life, even post-graduation, since I evaluate at the state and international level. I’ve been lucky enough to meet some of the most amazing people!”



Andy and Kirsten Pethan

Andy went to Olin College of Engineering near Boston and is married to his former teammate, Kirsten (Dier). After 6 years of teaching, Andy took a job with the Boston-based Center for Curriculum Redesign, doing part-time curriculum and systems design. With the flexibility remote work allows, Andy and Kirsten moved with their 3 children to the Lake Atitlan region of Guatemala. Kirsten gained knowledge of geriatric medicine as a Hospitalist PA at Mayo Clinic to provide primary care to low-income elderly. She now volunteers part-time at a private hospital in Guatemala. Andy, by partnering with a group of U.S. engineers developing opensource medical products, was able to obtain a 3-D printer and produce PPEs for local workers. Previously while in Guatemala, he developed data monitoring systems for an environmental non-profit, allowing the NGO to complete a grant to obtain ongoing carbon credit funding.

“FPS taught us to be flexible and globally minded. We have the openness and confidence to seek, thrive in, and contribute to communities far different from our upbringing. We value highly that our children are global citizens, forming friendships, and learning in a culture differing from that of their birth. We are able to evaluate the world, communities and ourselves differently because of FPS knowledge and experiences”

Dan Jonovic

Dan is a graduate of UW Madison and currently works at Epic Systems in Verona, Wisconsin, as an Integration Engineer. He manages the implementation of interfaces used to exchange data between systems at healthcare organizations that are installing Epic's electronic medical records. He is a state evaluator and also serves on the board for Wisconsin Future Problem Solving.

"FPS helped me develop critical thinking skills in middle and high school that helped prepare me for engineering courses. The process also contributed towards my involvement in extracurricular activities at college."



David Buerger

David currently works as an Staff Council for the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. As staff counsel, he provides legal advice to the Commission and its staff, investigates alleged violations of campaign finance, lobbying, and ethics law, and represents the Commission in all legal matters. He is currently a Wisconsin evaluator and serves on the board of Wisconsin Future Problem Solving.

"FPS taught me a problem solving process that I still use today. Whether the problem is global warming or an aging voting system, the steps to address it are largely the same."

Michala Meyerhofer

Michala graduated in 2016 from the University of Wisconsin with a Bachelor of Science degree in English and Creative Writing. She currently works as a Product Marketing Specialist for Heritage Tile in Verona, Wisconsin, where she writes blogs, oversees social media, and writes much of the online content for the company. She continues to write in her free time as well.

"FPS taught me most importantly to be original! We live in a world where fitting in is so crucial to society, and all I ever wanted was to be different. FPS fosters creativity and personality, which are what people look for later on in life."



Danielle Breidung

Danielle received a B.A. in sociology and anthropology from Washington and Lee University, and an M.Ed. in International Higher Education from Loyola University (Chicago). She currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia, where she works as a donor and alumni engagement specialist for the Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty (SHECP).

"Participating in FPS continues to have a profound impact on my education, career, plans for the future, and interpersonal relationships. Most notably, I learned to see undesirable and/or unforeseen circumstances as solvable challenges rather than insurmountable problems. This mindset has encouraged me to pursue experiences that were outside of my comfort zone and to take on responsibilities that required me to quickly acquire additional skills. I am not afraid to try new things or to face setbacks, because I am confident in my ability to recognize and rationally organize challenges, identify the underlying problem(s), brainstorm and evaluate solutions, and ultimately develop a plan for addressing the issues at hand."



Evan Wolf

Evan has a PhD in Ecology from UC Davis. As a restoration ecologist, he identifies and repairs degraded wetland and river ecosystems. He and three colleagues started the Applied Ecohydrology Institute to provide expert ecosystem science and restoration design services to National Parks and other land managers. This work is essentially professional-level ecosystem Problem Solving. He collects broad and accurate physical and biological datasets used to identify and define problems, then creatively proposes, details, and evaluates a range of potential solutions to arrive at a preferred restoration action.

"During my entire K-12 tenure in the Madison School District, no other experience was more influential or beneficial to my ability to think broadly and creatively than FPS. At many points in my life, without actively thinking about it, I have taken what seemed like the obvious, simple and necessary step of evaluating situations by prioritizing problems and choosing from a range of potential solutions"

Emily Luhtala

Emily is currently studying Elementary Education and Spanish Education at UW-La Crosse, applying the problem solving skills she gained through FPS. She currently evaluates for the Wisconsin FPS Program.

"FPS has taught me critical thinking and problem solving skills. Being able to examine scenarios from innovative and futuristic perspectives is so valuable. These skills have aided in my academic success in high school and will serve me well as I go through college. I truly believe that joining FPS was the best decision I could have made back in 6th grade."



Nikki (Reich) Shenk

Nikki attended Carleton College as a psychology major/educational studies minor. After teaching English in Moscow for two years and pursuing creative arts, she became interested in floral design. In 2014, she and her husband she and her husband, Andy, moved to Cincinnati and launched a flower shop, Linger. In 2016, Nikki turned Linger into a hobby and pursued a career in marketing. She is now the Marketing Manager at NaviStone, an adtech startup. Their son, Henry, was born in 2018 and is growing up bilingual. They are planning to spend 6-months in Moscow before he turns 5.

"I met lifelong friends through FPS and my connection to Russia started with our CmPS project with Russian teammates. Most of all, I continue to think and act like an FPSer. When I was a student, we were talking about 2020 and beyond, and here we are living it. We truly are the future."

Hannah Creager

Hannah recently received her PhD from Emory University in microbiology. She is currently working at the Center for Disease Control, hoping to start a two-year fellowship in medical microbiology in July. Hannah serves on the board for Wisconsin Future Problem Solving.

"FPS not only nurtured my critical thinking and writing skills, but also connected me with a great group of peers during my middle and high school years.."



Reuben Henriques

Reuben completed his master's degree in 2020 at the Harvard School of Education. Prior to this, he taught middle and high school history for 6 years in the Boston Area. He is now working for the Massachusetts Department of Education supporting history teachers with curriculum and instruction. The current priority for the state is bringing a lot of the skills FPS values into history classes: ample reading and writing, student-driven inquiry and analysis, and civic action in pursuit of community change.

"FPS instilled in me a logical, analytical way of thinking about a topic. Using different categories to examine an issue as well as practicing thinking through short- and long-term effects of current trends is something that I have taken with me to any problem I'm faced with. Working with the same team for so many years -- and navigating a variety of strong and varying personalities -- taught me how to navigate team dynamics. Writing scenarios FPS gave me an appreciation about the iterative cycle of drafting and revising, and a recognition that this cycle could never be finished."

Tom Ostby

Tom is working in Geneva, Switzerland for a multinational trading house in agricultural commodities. He runs the global wheat and barley research and analysis, focusing on derivative trading opportunities.

"A large part of my work is indirectly related to problem solving. In essence, I crunch numbers comparing the amount of food available to the demand for food. As there are no perfect numbers in commodities, it is a constant problem solving game to work out the details and identify trading opportunities in the market."

