Dear Friends of BOLT,

We hope this newsletter finds you well as we head into this busy time of year! We would like to take this opportunity to update you on BOLT and our vision for the program.

First, we are pleased to report that the Fall 2009 trip was a smashing success. 36 Leaders set out into the White Mountains well prepared, and 126 BOLTers enjoyed a week of the best weather New Hampshire has to offer, while gaining new friends, new skills, and new experiences. As managers, we enjoyed being a part of the largest base camp crew in BOLT history and spending time with our director, Shelley Adriance, and our founder, Dean Rose. (We saw more bears — two — than we had medical evacuations — one — and if that’s not a good year we don’t know what is!)

One of our new major focus areas this year is the fall program. We are trying to strengthen the support for our BOLT leaders in keeping in touch with their groups, and to create new opportunities for leaders to further build their skills and prepare to train the next class in the Spring. This fall, BOLT hosted seven events — a mix of all-BOLT get-togethers, leader development workshops and smaller social events. We are excited by the feedback from the fall program and are looking to expand even more in the future.

There are a couple of recent changes to the managerial structure of BOLT. First, we have added a new position (funded by a generous alumna) called the Coordinator for Program Sustainability.

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Managers’ Introduction, Cont.

This position was created in order to help BOLT stay in contact with its alumni and maintain and improve fundraising efforts. In addition, we now have one manager (Jason Reeder) who will start in the spring and continue the following fall instead of the traditional fall-spring structure. We believe this new arrangement will ensure greater continuity in the program from year to year and enable us to better fulfill our mission.

We are looking forward to this spring and training the next leader class. We are currently receiving applications for leaders (more than 100 to date), and we continue to be amazed by the strength of the applicants and their diverse skills and experiences. We have an excellent group of past leaders who have committed to helping us with the spring trainings, which we are now calling Mentors.

In this newsletter, we are excited to present some leader alumni updates and hope you enjoy reading them. It is always great to hear from past BOLT leaders about their lives and about the impact BOLT made on them. We would love to hear from you: a life update, a thought about BOLT or a change in contact information. Please e-mail us at BOLTalum@gmail.com.

Thanks so much for your continued support!

The 2009 Academic Year Managers

Greetings to all BOLT Alumni,

I hope that this finds you well, warm and enjoying the company of family and friends during the holidays.

I am honored to contribute to this newsletter. The program continues to be strong. In August, I was lucky enough to help again with Base Camp and I was very impressed by the skills and dedication of the managers, leaders and mentors. As always, it is an impressive crew.

I think the biggest challenge for the program is the pressure on Shelley’s time. She is juggling many responsibilities in the Student Activities Office and her commitment to BOLT puts her way over the top in terms of work hours. Thanks to a couple of very generous alumni, they have an additional manager to work on outreach. This will be a huge boost to the program.

I continue to be healthy and enjoy my work in Continuing Education. The Leadership Institute has grown to include 350 high school students each year.

Sometimes I struggle to keep up with their enthusiasm and energy, but it continues to be a real joy and they inspire me.

You inspire me. I am so incredibly proud of all of you and the work that you are doing with your families, your communities and your organizations. In this newsletter we featured some news about a few alumni, but their stories are representative of many. Please stay in touch with the program. You are role models for the current students—they love to hear about you.

Always remember that what you did here, whether it was in 1988, in the 1990’s or more recently, mattered. You helped shape the experience of your peers and the program itself. Each cohort makes refinements and improvements. The legacy of the program is the legacy of your commitment, caring and contributions. Many thanks.

With great affection…I delight in hearing from you.

Dean Rose
Alumni Updates

Jesse Haines
leader 1995

I’m now working as the Head of Marketing for Google Display Media. What does that mean? I run a team that does business-to-business marketing focused on getting marketers and advertising agency to use Google’s display ad solutions which include YouTube, the Google Content Network, and Google TV Ads (i.e. non-search). I live in New York City and am 7 months pregnant! My husband Nick and I are expecting a baby boy in January and couldn’t be more excited.

BOLT, as they say in the MasterCard commercials, was “Priceless.” Being a part of the BOLT community throughout my college years gave me a true home at Brown. Leading the trips, serving on the steering committee and as the student manager, getting exposure to amazing mentors like Robin built my confidence in myself, gave me early training on how to manage and motivate teams and groups, handle interpersonal conflicts, and enhanced my problem solving skills—all of which are extremely applicable to the business world in which I now operate. When I think back on my Brown experience, the moments that stand out as some of my happiest times are sitting on the floor of Keeney in a steering committee meeting, huddling in Robin’s office plotting how many pounds of peanut butter to buy for a upcoming trip, or nestling on Robin’s couch surrounded by BOLTers talking and laughing at the holiday gathering. Today, I still use I-statements when dealing with my colleagues, am very mindful of group dynamics, which I think has made me a successful manager. When I feel myself getting caught up in all the New York materialism I remember how fulfilled and beautiful I felt when, sweaty and clad in fleece and a ratty pair of shorts, I mounted the summit of a peak in the White Mountains. I don’t get into nature nearly as much as I would like, but I am already planning the adventures that I am going to have with my son.

BOLT certainly inspired my appreciation of group work and the whole concept of “debriefing” and this passion has led me to find my calling in medicine — Psychiatry. I always thought Psychiatry was mostly just about dispensing medication, but was so surprised and happy to work in an addiction center that centered around group therapy and to work with counselors and psychiatrists who routinely guide people through their experiences to help them get to the root of their problems.

Kevin Jewell
leader 1995

As a freelance consultant, I use economic modeling and quantitative analysis to answer business and policy questions. What does that mean? Well, this month I’m helping an advocacy group for low-income Texans track the impact of the affordable housing funds in 2009 Recovery Act. Last month I helped dairy cooperatives in New Zealand create an international futures market for milk. (No, I didn’t get to go to New Zealand.) Next month... who knows?

BOLT gave me two very important things: A respect for group process and great friends. I sit on the board of a nonprofit transitional housing shelter here in Austin, and whenever we start our board meeting with check-in, I have a BOLT flashback. BOLT was where I was first introduced to the idea that the first item on an agenda might not be something up for debate. BOLT gave me important insights on working in small groups that I have used in business and life ever since.

Last summer I hiked Mt. Moosilake with Ryan Ma, whom I met as fellow participant in 1994. Last spring I caught up in DC with Nicole Hanrahan, my co-leader in 1995. The summer before that, I had dinner in Seattle with Fran Lo, a fellow leader in 1996. They are just a few of the great people that I met through BOLT with whom I still keep in touch. These friends had a huge impact on my lives in BOLT, and continue to do so now.

Nayla Khoury
leader 2005

BOLT still has such an important place in my heart, not only in terms of great memories and friends but also in the way I interact with the world. In medical school, unfortunately there is not a lot of emphasis on group dynamics or debriefing; nevertheless, we end up working in small groups all the time with many fabulous doctors who don’t know a whole lot about how to facilitate meaningful conversation. I have had a chance to facilitate group discussions in these small groups and definitely used my BOLT skill set to do so. Also, in the hospital every day, patient care centers on group work and where doctors always drop the ball in communicating effectively and being mindful of how they are interacting with their peers.

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David Flink
leader 2000

I run a national non-profit mentoring program that matches academically successful college and high school students with learning disabilities with young middle school and elementary school students struggling with their learning disabilities to give these younger students the skills they need to be successful as well as a message of hope.

BOLT not only gave me a true foundation for what it means to be an effective leader, it also provided me a community of individuals who both have a love for life and nature. The people I met during my time in BOLT have remained some of my closest friends to this day (including Robin!) and for this and so much more I am grateful.

Stephan Pollard
leader 1993

I work as a Wealth Management Advisor at Merrill Lynch Global Private Client. I spend my time with wealthy multi-generational families figuring out the best strategies to help manage their financial lives in order meet the needs of current and future generations.

BOLT helped me to always understand what resources (human intellectual capital and experience as well as physical “supplies”) you have at your disposal and when you do need to pull in outside support.

Jason Berv
leader 1991

Life here in Colorado is great. Watershed School, which I founded six years ago, continues to thrive. It serves a growing population of 6th to 12th graders with a research-based curriculum that involves students in their community and helps them to become engaged citizens and critical thinkers. We focus on the vexing issues of our time and invite students to become creative problem solvers and leaders. Our seniors’ performance on the College and Work Readiness Assessment is outstanding - better than 99% of college freshman at over 150 undergraduate institutions. Lots more details can be found at www.watershedschool.org.

BOLT influences my work in several ways:
- We begin the year with an extended wilderness orientation. I continue to be sold on the transformative power of the wilderness, especially when combined with thoughtful group process.
- Leadership is something that needs to be cultivated in schools and students each year with deliberateness and care. The lessons of leadership are perpetually rich; and the fortunes of the school rise and fall with the skill of leadership exhibited by our students.
- Being in this world not for myself but for the benefit of others is a deeply rewarding (although often taxing) path in life.
Our mother and father are also brother and sister. We are both siblings and spouses. Our parents, grandmother, siblings, and seven children all live in Providence, either on campus or nearby. You may ask how this is possible. The thing is, this is our BOLT family – Group B – and it has been going on for generations.

Here’s how it happened: Julia and Michael led Barbara and Sam in 2007, who led the two of us in 2008. We then led another group of seven (with our other wonderful co-leader) this year, two of whom we hope will lead group B in 2010. Our logbook hardly has any meaningful information in it anymore; our knowledge of the trail has become oral history.

Each year, we feel the accomplishment of reaching the top of Eagle Crag and spend a lazy afternoon sitting on the rocks of Blue Brook. Yet each year has its differences of course.

Whether it’s singing silly wake-up songs or reading bedtime stories; whether its watching a BOLTer lick beans out of a bucket or eating a pita with twenty different, not quite compatible ingredients, there’s always something memorable that just happens to come up. That’s just how things seem to happen on BOLT.

In training, we were taught how to form a supportive group dynamic and create an open space for our BOLTer to reflect on their freshman year and their expectations they have for their upcoming sophomore year. We thought that these kinds of conversations would have to be forced and unnatural, and entirely facilitated by us. But on the last night, something beautiful happened. While sitting around and enjoying our last bit of s’mores, some amazing conversations started all around the circle. Our BOLTer started sharing things that they said they didn’t feel comfortable discussing with friends at school – how things were going and how they were adjusting. An hour later, when it died down, everyone realized that they could have never had these conversations under other situations.

We realized that this was not something that we could have steered them to, but rather the result of a community where everyone felt comfortable confiding in one another, and in us. Now, we look forward to the next generation of Group B, and to hearing the wonderful and unique stories they have. They should make mommy and daddy proud (and grandma, and grandpa, and great granny…).

Evan Rolfe ’11 and Lauren Kent ’11
Leaders, Group B 2009
Some might say that consuming a full gallon bag of GORP in a day is too much. Group K would respectfully disagree. While other BOLT groups challenged themselves to finish all their food, by day four we were rationing tortillas.

It was a beautiful Thursday in early September in the Whites — not a cloud in the sky — and Group K had just settled in for a lunch after a long morning hike. Some BOLTers whipped out our allotted lunch sampling and everyone dug in to our tortillas, peanut butter and the other such BOLT phenomena as powdered hummus and dehydrated milk. Blood sugar was low and our spirits were a bit down as well.

The first debate surrounded two prized oranges that had gone missing between camp and lunch. Who possessed said oranges would be anyone’s guess, but the speculation abounded given the current circumstances. Eventually the group gave up and we resumed our orange-less lunch.

But as people finished up, our hungriest BOLTer still wanted more, so he volunteered to do his best LNT and finish up the re-hydrated hummus. “I’m going to just put some jelly on this. Oh yeah, that’s perfect,” he declared.

The group’s responses ranged from a hushed disgust to some giggles. The door had been opened to the experimentation that is often associated with BOLT cooking. As he stirred the jelly and hummus into a brown mush he was egged on by the rest of the group to raise the stakes.

The group watched in a mix of horror and wonder as he proceeded to add salsa, syrup, honey, peanut butter, dehydrated milk and lemonade mix. Once he was satisfied that he had used all available inputs for his concoction, he opened his mouth and dumped the contents of the bowl down the hatch. The crowd went wild, each feeling of intrigue and disgust heightened by the sight and the subsequent face the brewmaster made as he swallowed. As we packed up lunch, the laughter brought upon by the event made us light on our feet as we put on our packs and headed off towards our last campsite.

A lunch that could have put a damper on our otherwise fantastic week, turned out to be a highlight of our trip instead. Group K’s enthusiasm and appreciation of each other, no matter what the conditions, meant that a small branch in the path didn’t trip us up and instead we laughed until our stomachs hurt.

Rachel Katz ’10 and Jason Harris ’10.5 Leaders, Group K 2009
Hello from Providence! We hope this letter finds you well and in good health. Over the past few weeks leading into the holidays, I have been reminded of the many things that I am grateful for in my life. BOLT is one of these gifts. As I reach the middle of my fifth year with the program, it is hard to believe how fast the time has gone and yet how much we have accomplished together. For me, one of the greatest blessings within BOLT have been the people within it. My time with leaders, alums, parents and Robin Rose has been amazing. BOLT balances my tougher weeks at work with the things that I love the most — community, support, connection, mentorship, learning and great heart.

It has been so fun to hear from so many of you this fall! In the coming year, we hope to hear from you about how BOLT has had an impact on your lives. In these challenging financial times, everything is under review at Brown. It is important for us to be able to share your testimonies on the positive impact BOLT has had on student’s lives, at Brown and beyond.

Many alums have asked us to share how BOLT is doing during these financial times. I can share that our need for financial aid has increased from about $5,800 a year to $7,000. We offer financial aid to both our participants and new leaders. This past fall, we raised the participant fee from the $350 that it had been fixed at for a long time to $395. The increases over many years for the cost of buses, permits, food, fall program events, training expenses, etc. made the change necessary. The cost for leaders to earn their CPR & Wilderness First Aid certifications is $120, and half the leader class participates in a Wilderness First Responder (WFR) upgrade course which costs an additional $300. This level of training allows us to meet the accreditation and outdoor industry standard of having at least one WFR certified leader on each route.

We are fortunate to have an endowment that provides permanent funding to our program. Without it, we could not survive. The yield of the endowment helps to cover the deficit that exists in our operating budget. (Participant fees do not cover our costs fully.) Through the generosity of 243 parents and alums this year we received gifts to our endowment and the gifts account that total $12,116! We were able to direct $9,800 of this amount to our endowment, which increased its book value to $146,470. As of the end of the fiscal year (June ’09), the “market value” of our endowment is $164,149! The endowment secures permanent funding (an annual yield) for BOLT that is absolutely essential to the program. Thank you for your support!

We currently have two fundraising programs. The first is our 6th annual Phone-a-thon, which will be coming up from January 31 to February 2, 2010. Our current leaders will call leader alums, parents of current leaders and parents of our current BOLTer class. In the past few years, this effort has provided us with $6,000 in pledges. The phone-a-thon has been critical to our ability to offer financial aid!

We also host an annual Senior Potluck and Fundraiser with our graduating senior leaders. The goal for this program is to raise $1,000 from the class to support financial aid for leader certifications with a generous matching gift of $1,000 to the endowment offered by one of our wonderful alums.

Thank you for your friendship and your continued support! Please keep in touch. We love to hear from you!

Shelley Adriance
We always love to hear from you!

* If you’ve got a personal update, we’d be thrilled to include it in the next newsletter.

* If your contact information changes, please keep us posted.

* If you just want to say hi or have any reflections about BOLT, send them our way. The Managers and Leaders always get a kick out of it, and Shelley and Dean Rose certainly do too.

Email us: BOLtalum@gmail.com!
After a brief hiatus, BOLT’s semi-annual newsletter is back!

Inside you’ll find updates from other alums, stories and pictures from this year’s Fall trip in the Whites, letters from Dean Rose and Director Shelley Adriance, and more. Enjoy, and please stay in touch!