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On the cover: Quinn and her staff Deborah adventure throughout
the Crotched Mountain campus.

Above: Congratulations to Team West Africa, the 2019 champion
of the Crotched Mountain World Cup (the annual staff vs. staff
soccer extravaganza)!
Hello Crotched Mountain friends and families.

It is with great excitement I write this—my very first letter from the Mountain! When I began my tenure as the President and CEO of Crotched Mountain School on October 21, it represented both an incredible professional opportunity for me, but also a new adventure for my family. We have lived an itinerant life, and they have put up with many uprooting of their lives and moving to some of the poorest countries on the planet. Now I have asked my wife Jackie and my children, Nicholas and Briana, for one last and final move to New Hampshire and Crotched Mountain.

Prior to my arrival in Greenfield, NH, I served Save the Children for 25 years. We lived in South America, Africa, South Asia, and the Pacific. We have seen desperate need around the world, but also the kindness of the human spirit and acts of incredible generosity. Most importantly, I have seen that with commitment and focus, we can all make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable—those from all around the world to Greenfield, New Hampshire!

As a native New Hampshirite, I jumped at the opportunity to come home and to support the mission of Crotched Mountain. I have been overwhelmed by the beauty of the campus, and the work that is being done daily across the different programs. In the patience and professionalism of the staff and the commitment by our students to overcome their many challenges, I have seen the very best of humanity. It is refreshing indeed.

And though it’s been just over a month since I moved into my new office, I can tell you this much: I’m feeling that Crotched Mountain magic every day. In fact, I felt it on day 1, when I toured the campus, talked to our incredible teachers and staff, and, most importantly, met our students. (I capped that whirlwind of day with a trip to Concord, NH to attend the New Hampshire Governor’s Arts Awards, where Crotched Mountain School was a recipient!) A hearty congratulations to the teachers, the Arts team, and the students who contributed to our success.

The theme of this edition of Horizons is “The Gift.” For our organization, the word “gift” means many things. It can refer to the student who wants to do something special for his classmates, or the company moved to give a donation to help young children with autism, or the mother, desperate to find stability and success for her small daughter.

And, of course, it means the generosity our donors and supporters have shown to the children, students, and adults Crotched Mountain serves.

Thank you. And thank you for welcoming me into this wonderful new world. There is only one word that can describe having the privilege of leading Crotched Mountain into the future.

It is, truly, a gift.

Sincerely,

Ned Olney
President and CEO
Crotched Mountain Foundation
China – 2013

It was 1998. Elizabeth Davis had just finished reading an article about the astonishing number of abandoned girls in China. She put down the paper and at that moment made a decision that would fundamentally alter her life. She was going to adopt one of these little girls. She was going to give one of the “lost daughters of China” a home.

She began the process. Actually, “process,” isn’t the right word. It doesn’t nearly capture the depth of detail, patience, and financial expenditure that was required to make the adoption possible.

In 2013, Elizabeth flew into Beijing Capital Airport, finally given the opportunity to meet the little girl she had been matched with. It had been such a long, arduous journey, but her destination—and her child—was just a few miles away.

From the airport, Elizabeth traveled to the orphanage where her child awaited. The anticipation was building. After years of negotiating red tape and navigating the serpentine labyrinth of international adoption services, she was quite literally on the doorstep of taking her daughter home—her precious daughter Carolyn.

Carolyn. That was her name. Even before they met, Elizabeth knew that was her name. Before she had left, Elizabeth’s friends and family threw her a baby shower and filled her house with gifts upon gifts, embroidered with the name “Carolyn.” Family and friends gave handmade fabric pieces to be sewn into a special quilt, a symbol of how much she was wanted.

And now it was time to meet her. The door opened and she walked in and her life changed forever.
NEW HAMPSHIRE – 2018
You walk through the halls of Crotched Mountain School and you hear some activity coming from a room off to the left. Of course, there’s always activity happening at Crotched Mountain School, but there’s something different about this small cacophony. For one, the noise is preceded by a flurry of debris flying through the doorway—some paper towels, latex gloves, the cardboard box that the latex gloves came in.

Following that typhoon of flotsam, two sweaty Crotched Mountain paraeducators give chase to a little girl, the apparent source of the mayhem. She’s of Asian descent, has thick strings of black hair strewn across her face. She darts this way and that like a 30-pound dragonfly.

The little girl—Quinn—had recently arrived at Crotched Mountain School. She brought with her a host of intense behavioral challenges and cognitive delays, all resulting from a traumatic background. Not much is known about Quinn’s earliest years, but this much is known about her now: the moment she set foot on campus she became one of the neediest, most challenging, most unique students to ever call Crotched Mountain home.

You catch up to Quinn and her two staff—yes, two staff—outside on the ballfield. As usual she’s motoring forward with Boeing-level propulsion. Her staff keep up like the pros they are. You sneak in a quick question:

“Do you keep track of your steps when you work with Quinn?” you ask.

Her staff laughs immediately. “Yes. 10,000 steps a day with her.”

10,000 steps in eight hours. The best you can do is shake your head and watch as this strange trio move on, headed towards who-knows-where, for who-knows-how-long, led by a tiny girl who, six years ago, endured God-knows-what.

China – 2013
The baby girl is presented to Elizabeth and her breath is caught in her throat. The child is over a year old but she was clad in the clothes of a three month-old. She was vanishingly tiny. Her skin was nearly translucent, the natural pigment sucked dry by malnourishment and juxtaposed with the sickly crimson of the scabies that covered her body from head to toe. Her lips were calloused and the back of her shaved head was flat, the result of lying prone in one position for untold hours a day.

The orphanage itself was overcrowded and underresourced; Elizabeth estimated that there were two nannies for every 80 children, the vast majority of whom were girls. The babies were fed with a mechanical nozzle system, similar to what you’d find on a livestock farm to feed pigs. The liquid that came from those metal tubes was superheated (the water had to be boiled to free of it pathogens). Thus the calloused lips.

How does an expectant mom react to this sight—the “gotcha moment” as other adoptive moms have described that first meeting—to the complete and drastic reorientation of what she had envisioned her new life with her new baby was going to look like? Was there anger? A sense of betrayal? A creeping dread of “What have I gotten myself into?”

For Elizabeth the emotional reaction was immediate and unfiltered:

“She was instantly my daughter. I just wanted her in my arms where I could protect her. She was a mess... but she was perfect.”
It’s an early afternoon in early 2019 and you find yourself in Quinn’s classroom. She has the entire place to herself, as the risk of her injuring another child is just too great. Quinn has no real concept of play and very little understanding of boundaries and appropriate interpersonal behavior. She is existing in a simple action-reaction loop, where negative, aggressive behaviors—either self-inflicted or inflicted-on-others—elicit some kind of human response and that’s all she’s got to work with.

Her clinical team consists of occupational and recreation therapists and speech/language pathologists as well as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and their goals are simple: help Quinn accomplish the most basic of tasks. Sitting still to eat. Drinking fluids. Keeping her body safe. Having fun in the pool.

These behavior strategies are built in conjunction with Quinn’s classroom teacher and implemented daily by her staff. For Quinn, progress is measured not through giant swaths of flashy accomplishments but rather in tiny victories, accumulated throughout the day. This is learning at the molecular level—but considering the path Quinn has had to travel, any and all positive momentum is worthy of a daily celebration.

Today, in her classroom, Quinn is embarking on one of those bite-sized successes. Literally bite-sized. She’s at the desk, sitting on her chair, munching on an ice chip. She hangs in there for a scant few minutes before her internal fusion reactor kicks in and she bounces off her seat. It’s a blink-and-you-missed-it achievement, but it still counts; when Quinn first arrived at Crotched Mountain she would not sit at the table even for a microsecond and refused all fluids. Sitting independently and eating ice chips? Big win.

When Elizabeth first heard her daughter had done this, she wept.
Vermont – 2017

The embroidered “Carolyn” items are long gone. The baby shower a distant memory. The quilt was never assembled.

When Elizabeth brought their new baby home a different name was chosen: “Quinn,” as it was phonetically similar to the catch-all Chinese word that the nannies had used in the orphanage. Whatever it took to make the transition easier for her little girl.

As Quinn grew and built up her strength, Elizabeth began to realize that something was not right with her cognitive functions. Eye contact wasn’t there and she was nowhere near striking distance of any pediatric development milestone. And because she had spent those precious formative years not being held or nurtured, she possessed a severe attachment disorder. In fact, the concept of being held close to another human was so foreign to Quinn, Elizabeth had to place several layers of pillows between her and her daughter until she got used to being held.

Eventually, Quinn’s cognitive challenges demanded a closer look. Following an MRI and a consultation with two neurologists, Elizabeth’s worst fears were confirmed: Quinn suffered from profound brain damage. The doctors estimated that over 90% of her brain was irreparably harmed and the source was an unknown traumatic event. She had been born with a normal, functioning brain, but something terrible and unspeakable had happened between her birth and when she was found abandoned on the side of the road.

“The neurologist told me that ‘no amount of love was going to fix her problems,’” Elizabeth recounted. “This little girl is a survivor—and we don’t even know what she survived.”

But even with a diagnosis in hand, there was little that Elizabeth could do for her daughter. Quinn’s behaviors grew more and more intense. She would spit at people, jump out of her crib to dash into the middle of the road, and break anything and everything around her (“Quinn did a great job of making me a minimalist when it came to interior decoration,” Elizabeth said).

And she never slept through the night. Quinn needed to be bottle-fed, no matter how big she got, and that meant Elizabeth was up every two hours, every single night, for four years.

“I didn’t sleep her entire childhood,” she says. “Everything was broken.”

The school did everything they could—changed up Quinn’s environment, deployed all the staffing resources they could spare. She couldn’t ride the bus because she spit on the other children. She couldn’t go the grocery store because she knocked over the displays and spit on everyone near her. Overhead lights and everyday noises (like those from a cash register) were very distressing to Quinn.

“There was no place where Quinn would feel comfortable,” Elizabeth said. “There was no place where she would be received. The world is just not ready for a kid like Quinnie.”

When the idea for an out-of-district residential placement surfaced, Elizabeth recoiled. I wasn’t going to abandon her, she told herself. I had rescued her!

But the situation was spiraling out of control and eventually, painfully, Elizabeth arrived at the understanding that what was best for Quinn was outside of her school, outside of her home. So she, her husband, and the school began to search. As she looked at the residential school options, she realized that no school could handle the volatile mix of Quinn’s behaviors and cognitive disabilities—save for one.

“I really liked Crotched Mountain,” she said. “I liked the close-knit community, that the school and residential staff were well-trained, and that no one was scared of her. They were open to her. My heart told me it was the right place.”
Quinn just celebrated her one-year anniversary of being a residential student at Crotched Mountain School. She still has two staff devoted to her. She still has her own classroom. She can still be a tiny typhoon. But she’s making progress.

She’s drinking from a glass. She can kick a soccer ball with pinpoint accuracy and will play catch with other children. She runs and plays in the sprawling backyard of her residence.

Those first few months, Elizabeth was terrified that Quinn would feel she’d been abandoned again. Though mom would come to visit every weekend, Quinn would act out, visibly upset. It appeared her fears were coming true; her daughter was feeling discarded. Even with Quinn safe at Crotched Mountain School, sleep still eluded Elizabeth, the bottle-feedings replaced by the waves of guilt that kept her up at night.

But like everything in the Quinn experience, progress came in small bursts, until, one day, Quinn saw mom on a weekend visit—and she smiled.

“She realized that she was in an okay place and that I wasn’t going anywhere,” Elizabeth said. “She knows that I will always come back.”

Today, you are walking past the aquatics center and happen to glance through the viewing windows. You see Quinn and her staff and a Recreation Therapist and they’re bobbing around in the pool. Before she came to Crotched Mountain School, the deepest Quinn would go was up to her ankles, petrified of the water. Now, as you watch, she tosses the ball at the basketball hoop, even making a couple of shots (inadvertently, perhaps, but the scores still count!). She’s clad in floaties and splashing about, up to her neck, laughing.

“She’s gone from abandoned on the side of the road to this amazing place with all these amazing people devoted to her,” Elizabeth says. “It’s what she deserves.”

And for Elizabeth, she finally gets what she deserves, five years later: peaceful, restful sleep.
There is just something about those little cheddar Goldfish, those crunchy, little crackers that seemingly all children deliriously crave. Those things are like kid-nip, a universal constant in childhood, and one of the all-time best incentives in the quiver of parenting for families from all walks of life.

And that’s why they’re just about the best reinforcer your friendly neighborhood Applied Behavior Analysis Therapist can ask for.

In the hive of learning and activity that is Crotched Mountain’s Ready Set Connect autism centers, you will find all manner of “reinforcer;” iPads playing videos, bubble machine cranking out gossamer orbs of soap, trains and action figures and Matchbox cars and stuffies, and, yes, little cheddar Goldfish.

These reinforcers act as powerful incentives that Ready Set Connect’s ABA Therapists can use to help the children work towards positive behaviors. This is the bread and butter of Applied Behavior Analysis—helping clients build the skills and acquire the positive behaviors that will decrease negative behaviors.

“Just about all behavior occurs because the person either gets something good or avoids something bad,” says Kayla Callahan, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst at the Clinic Supervisor at the Manchester Ready Set Connect center. “Challenging behaviors are more prevalent among children with developmental disabilities in part due to an inability to use communication to get what they want.”

As a child goes through his or her day at any of Crotched Mountain’s Ready Set Connect centers, Kayla and the ABA Therapists she oversees weave simple tasks into the play experience. These tasks are in support of specific clinical goals, which make up each child’s comprehensive behavior plan, developed by the BCBAs after an in-depth developmental assessment.

“At Ready Set Connect, we teach skills to replace challenging behaviors so the child is able to learn what to do, not just what to stop doing,” Kayla says. “We want to help increase the children’s academic, social, and self-help skills and improve their ability to focus on tasks, comply with tasks, and increase motivation to perform.”

And now we come to the Goldfish.

GOLDEN GENEROSITY

Earlier this year, representatives from Crotched Mountain attended a Young Professional gathering through the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The event: a “Shark Tank”–like pitch to local millennial movers and shakers for volunteerism and philanthropy. Ready Set Connect was one non-profit organization among several and the pitch was simple: our kids love those little Cheddar goldfish—who wants to step up and make a crunchy, delicious difference in the lives of children with autism?

Happily, there were representatives in the audience from FEEDNH, the charitable trust for Great NH Restaurants (T-BONES, CJ’s, Cactus Jack’s, and Copper Door). The call came in shortly after the event: FEEDNH would donate a year’s supply of Cheddar Goldfish—$1,000 worth!—to the three Ready Set Connect autism centers in Manchester, Concord, and Tilton, NH.

“Crotched Mountain’s Ready Set Connect program provides amazing autism services for their clients,” said Tanya Randolph, Ambassador of Philanthropy & Community Outreach for FEEDNH.org. “FEEDNH.org is proud to support a center that is in the forefront of providing group-based ABA therapy to allow their clients to thrive in the community.”

The first shipment happened in October with several cases dropped off in Manchester. Three more deliveries will happen over the next year at different centers.

“Each of these little cheddar Goldfish has the power to help a child with autism gain the skills to achieve maximum independence,” said David Johnson, Vice President of Marketing for Crotched Mountain Foundation. “We are grateful to our friends at FEEDNH.org for helping make this magic happen.”

Learn more about Ready Set Connect at readysetconnect.org.
Ryan wanted to go to the aquarium and he made that point abundantly clear. But the aquarium was not a viable option for a school field trip and Colleen, the Assistant Director of Education for Crotched Mountain School, made that abundantly clear to Ryan.

Now, in years past, this news may have been delivered with bated breath. Ryan wasn’t especially known to handle “no” with a particularly tempered reaction. A young man with a strong autism diagnosis and limited communication capability, Ryan would sometimes express his frustration with his inability to transmit his emotions with self-injurious or destructive behavior.

So receiving that negative answer to his aquarium request might have had some chaotic repercussions; but, thanks to the hard work from Ryan’s staff, teachers, clinicians, and, of course, Ryan, himself, those instances have significantly dropped in frequency.

In lieu of the aquarium, Colleen offered an alternative option. How about the zoo? The aquarium was certainly preferred—it was a favorite destination for Ryan and his dad and Ryan’s favorite animal was the penguin—but the zoo was cool. Giraffes. Lions. Zebras. Not bad.

Ryan thoughtfully considered it and decided that, yes, he was into the zoo idea. Matt Jones, his teacher, asked Ryan how’d he like to go: 1) by himself or 2) with his whole class. The answer was immediate: “Whole class.”

This trip was now special for two reasons. The first: it was a reward for Ryan’s good work during the transition to a new classroom with new classmates (something he had struggled with previously) and, second, it was a gift he was giving, of his own volition, to the people he shared so much of his life with.

Above: Ryan checks out the giraffe exhibit.
Well, there’s a third reason too: animals are awesome and few students at Crotched Mountain love animals as much as Ryan.

**A FIERCE DONATION**

What was the destination zoo for this Crotched Mountain safari? Ryan was into exotic animals and that meant the Franklin Zoo in Boston had to be the one. A quick call over to Franklin Zoo office, followed by the necessary donation request paperwork, led to 20 complimentary passes for staff and students.

Three vehicles departed Crotched Mountain School on October 21 to make the 2+ hour drive from Greenfield to Boston. The sky was clear and the temperature had inched up to the mid-40s, a welcome respite from the string of cold, raw, wet days that kicked off the week.

The convoy eventually made landfall and the party set off to take in the sights, the sounds, and, yes, the smells of the Franklin Park Zoo. Grazing Zebras! Prowling tigers! Roaring lions! A lounging gorilla! Anacondas! Kangaroos! Monkeys! Tropical birds! Peacocks!

For the next hour, the group filtered throughout the zoo, enjoying the bright sunshine and pleasantly balmy-for-late-October New England weather that appeared to have been tailor-made for the field trip.

And for Ryan, there was no doubt where he wanted to kick off the mini-safari: the lions.

**THE MANE ATTRACTION**

Ryan likes what he likes. And what he likes, more than almost anything else, is Disney’s animated classic *The Lion King*. Travis, a Crotched Mountain teacher who had worked with Ryan for years, estimates that he may have watched *The Lion King* with Ryan several thousand times.

“I can recite every song from that movie by heart,” he said.

The film was a great incentive for Ryan to work towards, and when he accomplished his tasks for the day, he could often be found taking in the movie at the Media Center. It was just the perfect mix of animals (which he loves) and a little bit of chaos (which he kind of loves too).

But today, it was time to see the real thing. Together, Ryan and his two favorite staff members and Stephanie, his Speech Therapist, made a beeline for the Franklin Zoo lion pen. Luckily, the lions were just as eager to take advantage of the weather as the visiting humans. They were out and about, bellowing their roars with the decibel level of an F-15. Ryan and company peered into the corral to take in the sights. He couldn’t take his eyes off them.

Just over an hour later, Ryan had seen it all and he and his classmates convened at their meeting spot. Staff exchanged stories and congratulated the students. Not a bad way to spend a school day. And just before the group departed the zoo to head back to New Hampshire, Ryan regarded the zebras one more time.

Then he left with his friends.

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Thank you to the Franklin Zoo for their generous donation to make this trip possible and thanks to you, our donors, for supporting the work of Crotched Mountain School. These trips are supported with donations to cover the significant staffing and travel costs.
The Power of Sustained Giving

As a monthly sustainer, you will enjoy the ease and convenience of a set, doable monthly gift as well as the joy that comes with making an ongoing significant impact on the lives of children and adults with unique challenges.

Through Crotched Mountain’s sustained giving program, a monthly (or quarterly) gift would be set up automatically from your checking account or credit card. What’s your monthly number?

It could be anything: $10, $15, $25, $30. Whatever works for you and your budget.

Become a Crotched Mountain monthly sustainer today! Sign up at crotchedmountain.org/donate using your checking account (recommended) or a credit card, or call 603-547-1488. It’s a fast, secure, and high-impact way to support the children of Crotched Mountain.

“So many of us think of how we can use our hard-earned dollars each month for maximum charitable impact,” says Kathy Waters, Director of Fundraising for Crotched Mountain Foundation. “This program will give you the satisfaction of knowing what your steadfast support provides Crotched Mountain. We count on your support!”

Tax-Smart Ways to Give

A quick phone call is all it takes to donate gifts of appreciated stocks or to make a qualified charitable distribution from your retirement account. Donating appreciated stocks held for more than a year directly to Crotched Mountain Foundation remains a great way to support children and adults with disabilities. And you avoid paying capital gains taxes. It’s easy to do! Simply contact your financial advisor or brokerage firm and provide the following information:

Deliver to: The Depository Trust Company
Participant Account: 2803
For credit to Crotched Mountain Foundation 6728029504

If you have a retirement account and are 70 ½ or older, you are required to take a minimum income distribution each year. This is taxable income for some. But, when you give a gift directly from your retirement account to Crotched Mountain Foundation, the IRS does not tax that portion as income. Simply call your financial advisor or retirement account administrator. Crotched Mountain Foundation’s identification number is 02-0222168.

Interested? Contact Doreen Baker, Donor Services Manager, 603-547-142 or Doreen.Baker@CrotchedMountain.org
Corks for a Cause Packs the House at Fry’s Fine Art

On November 8, at Fry’s Fine Art in Peterborough, NH, we welcomed a capacity crowd of Crotched Mountain friends, family members, and donors for the annual Corks for a Cause wine reception. The event featured food from the Waterhouse restaurant and music by Jose Lezcano. Special thanks to Stan Fry and Cy Gregg for supporting the reception and to the host committee: Ann and Chris Conway, Deb and Ray Cilley, Cheri and Stan Fry, Joyce and Cy Gregg, Leslie and Robin Kenney, Kirsten and Andy Peterson, Barbara Summers and Bill Goodwin, as well as Sara, Jesseca and Abe Timmons.

Littles Capital Campaign Almost Complete

You did it! In just a few short months, your generosity raised almost $500,000 in gifts and pledges toward a $558,000 goal. Classroom construction will begin late winter. As is typically the case, construction costs increased since our campaign began. Additional costs won’t be known for another month or so. To contain costs as much as possible, classroom location is now in an easy-to-renovate space.

You embarked with us on our first capital building campaign in almost two decades. This vital project for new classrooms will serve the most vulnerable children at Crotched Mountain School. Children ages 3 to 12 come to Crotched Mountain from a variety of referral sources—local school districts, parents and families, and New Hampshire’s Division of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Your gift ensures students will thrive in a spacious learning center designed to meet their unique needs.

Stay tuned for more updates as construction gets underway. You can still pledge your support today and help us reach the finish line. Contact Kevin Harte, 603-831-8424 or online at www.crotchedmountain.org/littles

Put this Date on Ice!

It’s almost time for the 10th Annual Boston Bruins Alumni Hockey Classic to benefit Crotched Mountain Accessible Recreation and Sports Programs. This event has it all: autographs from Bruins greats, raffle prizes, and fun for the whole family!

Saturday, February 29, 2020 at 5:00pm
St. Anselm College’s Sullivan Arena
Manchester, NH

Tickets go on sale January 2, 2020. Stay tuned to crotchedmountain.org/bruins for updates.
Sarah and Kurt Mailloux, parents of a former Ready Set Connect student, welcomed parents, community members, and business leaders to the grand opening celebration of Ready Set Connect’s new autism center in Tilton, NH. Guests enjoyed refreshments from Hart’s Turkey Farm and toured the new location. Learn more about Ready Set Connect at readysetconnect.org. Kurt Mailloux (pictured) shared his family’s Ready Set Connect experience at the event.
October 25, 2019. ConVal Regional High School vs. Milford. It’s Senior Night and Evan (front row, middle), a Crotched Mountain School student and the Team Manager for the ConVal Boys Varsity football team, is on the sidelines with his teammates for the last time. And even though it’s his final game, the impact he’s had on his coaches and teammates won’t soon be forgotten.

For the second year in a row, Crotched Mountain School received the annual pardoned turkey from New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu and the Executive Council. Last year, Brook the turkey was released to Crotched Mountain and this year Joanna the turkey joins her and the rest of the barnyard friends at the Farm School in Greenfield. Students, staff, and teachers traveled to the Concord State House to welcome Joanna to her new, gravy-free life.
Looking for a residential placement option?

Have you considered Crotched Mountain?

If you are in search of special education residential services for students in your district, we are here for you.

Crotched Mountain School offers a flexible learning environment where students build relationships, discover skills and talents, and attain their highest level of independence.

We currently have openings in all grades K-12. Please reach out any time to learn about all that we have to offer!

Call us at 603-547-1894 or visit crotchedmountain.org/admissions