



## Tufts Humanist Chaplaincy Alumni and Friends Newsletter



### Student Spotlight

Audrey McGlothlen, A22

#### Humanist Community at Tufts Vice President

*My name is Audrey and I am a junior studying biopsychology here at Tufts University. I have felt incredibly fulfilled since joining the Humanist Community at Tufts (HCAT). This semester in particular, HCAT gave me a sense of grounding and community when everything else felt disconnected. I adored our hikes, finding joy and spiritual revitalization among the trees and good company. Our weekly meetings were always thoughtful and inviting, and they provided space to breath at the end of each week. Finally, the winter solstice celebration really meant a lot to me, and I felt so grateful to be in the darkness, yet bask in the warm glow of candle light and friendship.*



Humanist Community at Tufts students on Pine Hill in the Middlesex Fells Reservation in Medford, October 2020

Hello friend,

I'm reminded in this historical moment of a Joy Harjo poem, where the Muscogee poet reminded us how crucial it is to remember on an uncertain journey that "there is no beginning and no end--you must make your own map." This has been a year of mapmaking, for many of the communities at Tufts and of course for many communities across the world facing uncertainty and enduring suffering. Grateful for all the privileges that being in a community like Tufts has afforded us and emboldened to carry those with a spirit of justice, we at the Tufts Humanist Chaplaincy have sought this semester to reimagine how we come together and see how that reimaging still might bring gifts.



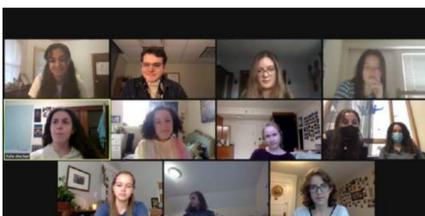
Humanist students gathering outdoors, September 2020



HCAT Secretary Nora Reavey-Gilbert at Panther Cave, September 2020

In July, Tufts University announced students would be offered the opportunity to return to campus if they agreed to participate in a series of safety protocols around testing, contact tracing, and isolation in the event of COVID-19 exposure. The University Chaplaincy additionally announced that all of our regular programming would be held virtually with special exceptions made to allow for safe ways for students to come together in person. A Humanist principle underlies these changes to campus life: that we all must take seriously the safety and good health of our most vulnerable community members in how we build community and organizations. On the hill, those community members include not only our students, staff, and faculty, but the residents of our host communities in Medford and Somerville, especially those at high risk.

At the Humanist Chaplaincy, we approached this move to regular gathering-over-distance as an opportunity. With students, we redesigned our regular weekly meetings so they'd be appropriate as virtual gatherings. Students continued to lead reflections on different topics and ideas, sometimes bringing a reading or piece of music to open the space othertimes an article for the discussion. Always, we began our time together with candelighting and closed with reflective breathing as has become custom for the community.



HCAT weekly virtual reflection meeting, September 2020



Humanist students hiking to the South Reservoir in Medford, October 2020

Recognizing both the hope for safe in-person connection and for new ways of connecting to the outdoors, we began a regular hiking program through the beautiful Middlesex Fells Reservation that lasted through the semester. Each week, between four and eight students came to together to hike to a different part of the Fells. These hikes offered something we realize has been endangered in the current moment--informal connection, those chances to talk at length with a new person without scheduling a separate time. They also offered insight into our world that continues to grow and change even now: as we hiked each week, we watched the colors of the leaves fade into magenta and yellow, and as they fell from the trees revealed how deep the woods of the reservation truly are.

We continued also our regular sponsorship of projects that live out our Humanist commitment to justice. For the fourth year in a row, we were lead sponsors of the Trans Day of Remembrance art project, recognizing in 2020 the more than forty seven lives lost to antitransgender violence in the United States this past year, most of the black and Latina transwomen. This year, the exhibit grew into a series of installations by trans and non-binary students at Tufts and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, hosted as a virtual exhibition and publicly available at [go.tufts.org/TDOR2020](http://go.tufts.org/TDOR2020).



2020 Trans Day of Remembrance Virtual Art Exhibit



Humanist Chaplain Walker Bristol, M.Div., A14

We gathered a final time this year last Friday in recognition of the Winter Solstice on December 21st, the darkest night of the year and a time for inward reflection and renewal. Wishing you peace and reflection in however you recognize the Solstice this year, with gratitude for the sciences and human dedication that have served us this year and hope for the year to come. Reminded again of Joy Harjo's lines:

"We were never perfect. Yet, the journey we make together is perfect on this earth who was once a star and made the same mistakes as humans."

Thank you so much for your continued support for our program and very best wishes into 2021.

Take care,

Walker



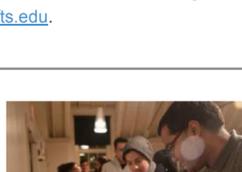
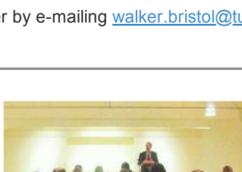
We are the only University-funded Humanist Chaplaincy in the United States, a model we are grateful for and believe in. Nonetheless, donations from alumni and friends have and continue to allow us to build our program even more, and support even more young nonreligious people in their journey while at Tufts. This semester alone, generous donations from our community funded our fall retreat, our

You can make a tax-deductable donation by clicking the button below:

[Give to the Tufts Humanist Chaplaincy](#)

Want to learn more about what Humanist life means at Tufts? Check out [our latest Humanist Chaplaincy Newsletter](#) that explores the history of Tufts' Humanist life and our ongoing programs.

As always, feel free to reach out to Humanist Chaplain Walker Bristol to meet, talk, or organize together by e-mailing [walker.bristol@tufts.edu](mailto:walker.bristol@tufts.edu).



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The Tufts University Chaplaincy is a dynamic hub supporting religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life for all members of the Tufts community. We provide pastoral care, support religious and philosophical communities, educate about spiritual and ethical issues in society and the world, and promote multifaith engagement.

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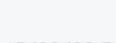


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