Spotlight: Naomi Lee  
October, 2018

Naomi Lee joined Apple Hill this spring as our new Development Officer. She's shared with us a bit about her background and her first impressions of Apple Hill.

Naomi Lee's professional history goes back to her teaching days at the University of Utah where she earned a Master's degree in Linguistics and taught English as a second language. Over the years, she has been fortunate to teach hundreds of creative, clever, and hard-working students at universities, both domestically and abroad, community colleges and private schools, and thanks to her two decades in the classroom with students from all over the world, she says she has "expanded her world view exponentially."

In 2004 she made the shift to nonprofits and continued her formal education in fundraising. Her first position in an arts organization was in funds development at the Utah Film Center, an organization that screens films, hosts filmmakers, provides masterclasses, and facilitates panel discussions on both light-hearted and provocative, timely social justice issues. In 2008 she launched her own fundraising business, Wishbone Fundraising. Initially she worked as a consultant with two Salt Lake clients, Jewish Family Services and the Ronald McDonald House Charities, before broadening her support to other nonprofit clients in the Salt Lake Valley.

When her daughters graduated from high school and made their way into the wide world, Naomi moved back into the teaching arena and made her way into the wide world as well, taking a teaching position at a university in Gyeongsan, South Korea (and
dragging her partner--an independent graphic artist and illustrator--along on the adventure)! Naomi's students at the university came from broad backgrounds. In fact, one class was compromised wholly of firefighters! The following year, Naomi accepted a teaching position at a university near Kyoto, and continued the adventure, this time at Kansai Gaidai University.

After spending several rich and rewarding years abroad, Naomi and her partner returned to the States--to Portland, OR to be precise--where she reconnected with family. After just one year in Portland, they relocated to the northeast at the insistence of Naomi's twin sister, who works as a naturopathic doctor in Peterborough.

Looking for a place that feels like home, Naomi says, "I think I've finally found it!" She says that she misses being surrounded by the diversity of thought that came with teaching English as a second language but, she continues, "then I found Apple Hill. People here are open to seeing the world through various lenses, and I appreciate that."

The first Apple Hill concert she attended was performed in Bass Hall in Peterborough last spring. The Apple Hill String Quartet, Jazimina MacNeil, and guest artists performed Mike Kelley's piece Five Animal Stories for String Octet and Ashug. Naomi was captivated. She says, "I was enthralled by the way they used their instruments in unconventional ways--tapping, plucking. It was love at first listen." And the summer concerts that followed did not let her down. She says she hasn't always listened to much classical music, but the performances here draw her in. She loves the setting in the barn, saying, "It's intimate. You can see the emotion on the faces of the musicians. You can see the energy in their bodies and hands-it's a powerful way to experience music." Naomi is also enthusiastic about the professionalism at Apple Hill.
and the backing from the community. She says, "the community supports the organization with a view towards its longevity, and that's impressive."

Naomi reports that being at Apple Hill reminds her of the creative energy she wants in her life. She asserts, "It's easy to brush aside that creativity and just think about the logistics of life, but this work brings me back, even if I'm experiencing art by proxy. I want that in my life."