LISTEN TO THE POEM!

U-HIGH POETS STAND AND DELIVER

IN THE NAME OF MY COUNTRY

LAB GRADS FIND THEIR CALLING IN MILITARY CAREERS

IN THE HALLS: THE INAUGURAL LABARTS EXHIBITION

LAB NOTES: CLASS NOTES & ALUMNI NEWS
Dear Friends,

At least half of LabLife readers do not live in or around Chicago, so you might not be aware of how interesting it is to live in a city that will have hosted the NATO Summit on May 20–21—the city filled with representatives from the 28 member and 22 partner foreign countries participating in the Summit. This will have been the first time an American city other than Washington, DC, has hosted a NATO summit, so we decided to reschedule the rites of May across two separate weekends.

It was an unusual move, but when the world is visiting Chicago, it’s the least we can do.

As a gentleman of a certain age (who is typing on an iPad, using the internet, and therefore, has the world at my fingertips), I cannot express how drastically my view of the world has changed during my lifetime; a world economy has emerged influenced heavily by Asia; technology has changed our day-to-day lives; and global solutions are required to solve the problems of our planet.

But as an educator, I can surely tell you that I know we (and by that I mean not just American schools but here at Lab) may not be doing enough to prepare our students for how their lives will be influenced by the rest of the world. Certainly, Lab students (and faculty) have benefited from the cultural differences that are a natural part of the UChicago environment and being part of a major metropolis. Lab families speak a combined total of more than 53 languages in their homes, after all.) And absolutely, individual teachers are including a world perspective as part of their curriculum. But recognizing our need to prepare students to be global citizens is not a formal part of our school mission. Maybe it needs to be.

During the 2012-2013 school year, we will be examining our mission statement, one that has guided our efforts for more than a decade. It may be the perfect time to include a more global perspective in what defines a Lab education. I am impressed that many schools are placing global education and citizenship high on their agendas for improvement. We want U-High graduates to feel secure in their own community while recognizing their responsibilities as global citizens. How the Schools foster that should be born of an institution-wide conversation and mission-driven commitment.

I invite you to share your thoughts with me on what defines a global citizen. Please send an email to DirectorOffice@ucls.uchicago.edu.

David W. Magill, EdD
Director
Math in motion

Math is getting Middle and High School students out of their seats this year. Seventh- and eighth-graders interested in using motion detectors in class to learn how the behavior of a graphed line reflects movement. Ms. Blinstein first became interested in using motion detectors after seeing such an experiment in a math textbook, and soon designed a demonstration suitable for her seventh and eighth-grade algebra students. The young mathematicians attach the detectors—which are designed for educational use and use ultrasonic pulses to detect the students’ position and movement—directly to their graphing calculators. Ms. Aquino’s High School classes—Accelerated Advanced Algebra and Trigonometry, Accelerated Precalculus/Calculus A, and Precalculus—perform similar demonstrations by connecting their sensors to computers. By these means, students experience how motion can be represented graphically, which is “a fundamental concept of mathematics and science,” Ms. Blinstein says. In one laboratory demonstration, the students walk at a constant speed toward or away from a motion detector, then try to write an equation describing the resulting graph; this introduces them to the concept of linear functions and the slope-intercept form of an equation of a line. In another exercise, students learn about exponential functions by dropping a ball and using the detector to record its maximum height on each successive bounce. In the High School labs, students use the detectors to study piece-wise defined linear functions and to model periodic motion. Ms. Aquino says her students “think it is really cool to get the graph on the computer screen,” as opposed to measuring and plotting it manually. They appreciate it, Ms. Blinstein notes, “when the mathematics they are learning is connected to the real world.”

High seas on the Great Lakes

The wind firmly in his sails, a determined Lab student started a new flourishing athletics club. Growing up, senior Jacob Rosenbacher priz...
**In the loop**

A look at two of Lab’s looping classrooms

On a rainy spring morning, Marie Randazzo and Sandy Strong’s nursery classroom is a hive of happy, noisy, four-year-old activity. On the rug, two of the children are dancing to reggae music; nearby, the classroom rats, Jumpy and Serena, wander freely.

Despite the dancing, the rats have never been stopped. Because they are teaching four-year-olds this year, Ms. Randazzo and Ms. Strong feel comfortable letting the pets roam free; next year when they have three-year-olds, Ms. Randazzo, Jumpy and Serena will probably have to stay in their cages.

The Woodawn classroom is one of a number of looping classrooms at Lab. In a looping classroom, the teachers have the same children two years in a row. It’s an idea that’s common to both Reggio Emilia and Waldorf educational philosophies.

Since the ages of the students change every year, the classroom has to change too. Last year, when Ms. Randazzo and Ms. Strong’s students were three, their cubbies were labeled with both their photo and their name. This year, there is only a name, with the expectation that the four-year-olds have learned to recognize it.

Last year, at group time, the three-year-olds were given a picture (say, a dog) and found their assigned place on the rug by matching it to an identical picture. This year, the four-year-olds are given a number and have to find that. “Everything that we do is done with life in mind,” says Ms. Randazzo. “We’re not learning numbers just to learn them, but because they’re useful when we work and play.”

The block area last year was cleaned on a rainy spring morning, -113, Maureen Ellis and Delores Rita teach a looping nursery-to-kindergarten classroom. One major change to the four-to-five-year-old classroom, say Ms. Ellis and Ms. Rita, is that children don’t stay in the room all day, but have “specials”: art, music, gym, and library. Five-year-olds are also allowed to visit the library by themselves, not just with the class.

This year, the four-year-olds are experimenting with building things out of wood, using glue to hold the structures together. Next year, the classroom will include a woodworking table with hammers, saws, and drills.

The manipulatives area also changes, broadening from Duplo to include items like Legos, cubes, tangrams, and polyhedrons for the five-year-olds. And while this year’s classroom library features a range of picture books, next year there will be a range of leveled easy readers.

Ms. Ellis had one of the first looping classrooms at Lab, adopting this approach in the mid 90s. At Lab, teachers are given a lot of autonomy, she says, and some welcomed the opportunity to loop.

For Ms. Ellis, an advantage of a looping classroom is that at the beginning of the second year “both the kids and the teachers don’t have to start all over again. With young kids, the first few months are transitional.” In addition says Ms. Rita, “The sense of community is very strong in the second year.” Ms. Randazzo agrees: “Continuity is so important for a young child. It aids their total development and social development,” she says. “The children know others more deeply, instead of more widely. They develop very close connections.”

Since the ages of the students change every year, the classroom has to change too.
Louisville...and all that jazz!

If there’s a Latin feel to the music you hear U-High’s Jazz Ensemble playing this spring, blame it on a trip to Louisville.

More than 2,500 jazz lovers from 20 countries converged at the conference. A friendly atmosphere made it easy for students to pick up tips and techniques from peers, teachers, and guest artists. “It was an intensive four days of seeing what the rest of the jazz world is doing, and interacting with professionals and student players,” says Mr. Dean. He attended the event before but brought Lab musicians for the first time, hoping they’d be inspired to see the rewards that come from learning to play their instruments well. Mr. Dean teaches Jazz Combo, an advanced music course for ensemble members. The group performs regularly at school and community events under his direction. A trumpet and French horn player, he earned a master’s in jazz studies at Indiana University. He taught music in his native Texas, in Indiana, and in suburban Chicago before coming to Lab in 2010.

New board members

-appointed by UChicago President Robert J. Zimmer, the following individuals have joined the Laboratory Schools’ Board of Directors:

2011

David Kistenbroker Managing partner at the law firm Katten Muchin Rosenman, LLP, and a parent of two children at Lab.

David H. Song The Cynthia Chow Professor of Surgery, chief of plastic and reconstructive surgery, and vice-chairman, Department of Surgery, at the University of Chicago Hospitals, and a Lab parent of three young children.

2012


Sidney R. Dillard Partner at Loop Capital Markets, LLC. She has two children at Lab.

Austen Goolsbee The Robert P. Gwinn Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. He is a parent of three children at Lab.

Siddharth (Bobby) Mehta President and chief executive officer of Trans Union, LLC, and parent of a U-High student.

Chaka Patterson Of counsel at Skadden Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, and parent of two children at Lab.

Raghuram Rajan The Eric J. Gleacher Distinguished Service Professor, University of Chicago Booth School of Business. His child is a Lab middle schooler.

Inspiring Middle School athletes

NEW COACHES BRING TALENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENT TO LAB

Whether dribbling a basketball or thwarting opponents on the soccer field, many Middle Schoolers seize the opportunity to participate in Lab athletics. The Middle School program consists of 13 different teams—and says Lab athletics director David Ribbens—focuses on skill development and fun. Coaches work closely with their counterparts in the High School to develop poised athletes who are ready for higher levels of competition.

Arianna Lambie, track

Arianna Lambie, says Mr. Ribbens, “has an amazing track pedigree.” Ms. Lambie is in her first season as a track coach, and also taught Sandy Bixby’s science classes during Ms. Bixby’s stint as interim Middle School assistant principal. As an undergraduate at Stanford University, Ms. Lambie was part of the varsity cross-country and track team, distinguishing herself as one of the finest runners in that program’s history. Ms. Lambie earned 14 All-American awards, including eight top-three NCAA performances, and was a member of Stanford’s American record holding 4x1,500 meter relay team. She majored in earth sciences with a concentration in energy studies, completing BS and MS degrees. After graduating she spent two years competing professionally as part of Nike’s track and field team.

Jeff Sanders, basketball

Players on the eighth-grade boys basketball team look up to coach Jeff Sanders—figuratively and literally. A 6’9” former NBA player, Mr. Sanders has coached at Lab for two seasons. The players, says Mr. Ribbens with a chuckle, “come up to his waist.” Mr. Sanders played for Georgia Southern University from 1986 to 1989. The school retired his #42 jersey, an honor bestowed on only two players in its history, and inducted him into its athletic hall of fame. Mr. Sanders holds Georgia Southern’s single-season records for points scored, field goals made, and blocked shots, and after graduation embarked on a 15-year career as a professional basketball player. He spent five years in the NBA with the Chicago Bulls, Charlotte Hornets, and the Atlanta Hawks, two years in the Continental Basketball Association, and eight seasons playing for teams in Spain, Italy, and Turkey. Before arriving at Lab, Mr. Sanders coached the Amateur Athletic Union Derrick Rose All Stars. Mr. Sanders coached the Amateur Athletic Union Derrick Rose All Stars. 15-years and under team, and a minor league professional team called the Chicago Steam.

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Tracy Granzyk Wetzel, basketball

Tracy Granzyk Wetzel (daughter of High School English teacher Steve Granzyk) finished her first season as assistant basketball coach in February. Ms. Wetzel played for Marena West High School in Des Plaines under the guidance of prominent coach Derril Kipp; her team made it to the state tournament twice. She also played Division I basketball during her sophomore year at the University of Illinois at Chicago. After college, Ms. Wetzel earned a master’s in kinesiology and sports psychology. She studied burnout in swimming coaches at the U.S. Olympic Training Center, publishing several papers on the topic. Before coming to Lab, Ms. Wetzel worked in the health care industry as both a freelance sports journalist and a sports psychology consultant. Ms. Wetzel “puts her heart and soul into coaching,” says Mr. Ribbens. “And makes basketball a good experience for her players.”

Tracy Granzyk Wetzel, basketball
Spectrum, a student-run club at Lab, promotes discussion and activism on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues. The group—which welcomes LGBT and straight students—has 10-15 active members, including board members. They meet weekly, and their peers at schools around the country, Spectrum members have organized events to bring attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment, even though "there’s not really that big a bullying issue at Lab," says adviser and U-High science teacher David Derbes. In fact, high school students who come out as gay or lesbian often need as much support to face their families at home as they do to feel comfortable at school, says Spectrum president and senior Sara Weisbach.

When the club tackles serious issues, members also want to have fun: in March, they joined students from gay-straight alliances around the city at the Rainbow Ball, a dance they helped organize at the University’s Quadrangle Club. Mara plans to continue her own activism around LGBT issues at Bowdoin College, where she will enroll next fall. Even after she leaves Lab, she expects Spectrum will keep providing a safe place for U-High students to talk, relax, and be themselves. That kind of haven is important for everyone, says Mr. Derbes. "No matter how they are, no matter how they look, they have the right to be themselves. That kind of haven is absolutely needed."
THE RIGHT BOOKS CAN HELP CHILDREN NAVIGATE DIFFICULT TOPICS

Basketball court dedicated to John W. Rogers, Jr., ’76

In February, at Alumni Pack the Gym night, the upper Kiever basketball court was named in recognition of Lab parent, board chair, and alumnus John W. Rogers, Jr., ’76. The long awaited dedication honors Mr. Rogers’ contributions to the building of Kiever Gymnasium, which opened in 2000. Mr. Rogers is chairman and CEO of Ariel Investments, LLC, and friends from every area of Mr. Rogers’ life showed up: from co-workers to high school buddies to Ariel Academy students, some of whom are now U-Highers. In a surprise congratulatory video to Mr. Rogers, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, ’82, thanked Mr. Rogers for mentoring him from the time he was ten years old. Following the video, Mr. Rogers took the floor of the basketball court and explained to the crowd that his closest friends were all fellow Labbies. Then he paused and added, “Well...I have other friends, too.” And the hundreds of guests—many Lab alumni who fully appreciated the sentiment—burst into laughter.

FROM THE SYLLABI:

Lab librarians, in partnership with the Gisela and Leo Finder Collection, have developed the collection over the years. Inside each volume, a bookplate reads, “This collection of Holocaust texts from the Nazi Death Camps is dedicated to the memory of Leo, his mother, Gisela, and the 2 million Jewish children killed by the Nazis.”

Girls Basketball
Undefeated at home during regular season (and beating Clemente High on Senior night) varsity finished with a much improved season record of 15–5. Junior Sophia Gatton was selected ISL first team and HICA 2A honorable mention. She also advanced to the state finals in the three-point shooting contest. Freshman Kendall Rollins was selected for ISL second team, and lone-senior Brenda Benitez received honorable mention.

Fencing
In this fourth season of U-High varsity Great Lakes Fencing Conference competition, senior Duncan Holmes and junior Charlotte (Charlie) Green finished second in men’s saber and women’s épée, respectively. Sophomore Elle Hill took fourth in women’s foil. Sophomore Harrison MacRae won the second annual Midway Fencing Classic championship in men’s épée. Juniors Willa and Nathaniel Green (yes, the Greens are triplets) took third in women’s and men’s épée, respectively.

Boys Swimming
Junior David Tong finished second in the HICA Sectional meet in the 100-yard backstroke, missing the school record (57.11 set in 1996 by Erik Mikaitis, ’96) by .22 second. U-High Dean of Students Larry McFarlane continued to coach his 30th swim season at Lab, working with the JV team.

Lab athletic director named Director of the Year

The Illinois Athletic Director Association named Lab Athletic Director David Ribbens as the Division 1 (Chicago area) Athletic Director of the Year for schools in class 1A/2A. Says Mr. Ribbens, “I am honored and humbled and also thrilled for our U-High community—our students, coaches, and families—for making the athletic experience a valued part of their children’s education at Lab.”

Adding context to the peer-selected award, Athletics Coordinator Gail Poole explained, “It’s an indication of earned respect among Dave’s peers and recognition of the high standard set by Dave for the athletic program at Lab.”

Says Director David Magill, “Since Dave Ribbens became Lab’s athletic director in 2003, his peers have witnessed a transformation. We are very much a place where it is possible to be a good athlete and a good student.”

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Sports Highlights:

IHSA All-State honor
Senior Andrew Palmer was selected for the IHSA All-State Academic honorable mention team, marking the first time a U-High athlete has reached this level of honor in the past 10 years. Andrew is a four-year member of cross-country team and track and field teams.

Boys Basketball
Varsity finished the season with a 17–11 record. The season ended in a tough double overtime loss to 2A team in Illinois. Sophomore Max Rothschild and junior Michael Dowson made the all-tournament first team, and the Maroon’s lone senior, Louis Van Craen, was given an honorable mention.

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A stick is just a stick—except when it’s not
It was on a trip to Botany Pond during the first weeks of school that stick-mania took hold of the nursery schoolers taught by Maureen Campbell, Paige James, and Wendy Minor. The wagon they’d taken along for the walk was returned to the Woodlawn classroom loaded with sticks. “At Lab’s nursery school, teaching is guided by students’ interests—it’s a philosophy called emerging curriculum. So what happened next? During a morning meeting teachers asked the children, “What are other things we can do with sticks?” “We never would’ve thought of these

The children had already been working with wire and clay, and they began to make the intellectual and creative connections that resulted in “personal nests.”

How to survive thrive a fairy tale
Live theater is part of any Labbie’s Lower School career, but this year’s first-graders took their play-going experience and ran with it, becoming the first to stage original fairy tales. "Once upon a time" and "they lived happily ever after." For further research, many fairy and folk tales were read. The teachers shared photos of real nests and simply asked questions: “How is a nest made? How can we hold the sticks together? The children had already been working with wire and clay, and they began to make the intellectual and creative connections that resulted in “personal nests.”

Science teacher sings the blues
TEACHER’S DIVERSE KNOWLEDGE INFORMS THE CONVERSATION DURING MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVERSITY DAY
In Belfield 262, students watched intently as a visual history of blues music flashed before their eyes: a man in Mississippi flicking his fingers across a diddley bow; Muddy Waters singing in a nightclub; Led Zeppelin performing on stage. In between scenes, Middle School science teacher Mark Wagner placed the images in context, outlining how the blues began in the Mississippi Delta in the late 1800s and spread to different corners of the globe. The class was part of Lab’s third annual Middle School Diversity Day, and this year’s theme was SAILL: Support, Affirm, Include, Listen, and Learn. In February, students attended five faculty-conducted workshops, one on each topic. Mr. Wagner’s workshop addressed the Blues theme and he developed it specifically for Diversity Day. Assisting him with the presentation was Middle School science teacher Mark Wagner, whose brother, Lab alum Pierre Lacocque, ‘70, is a blues musician.

A stick is just a stick—except when it’s not
More than 750 guests (parents, faculty, staff, and alumni) attended this year's Connections gala at Navy Pier. The Connections committee, chaired by parents Cynthia Heusing and Anna Marks, worked with more than 100 parent, alumni, and student volunteers to run an evening of dining and dancing with both silent and live auctions.

Among the most "Lab" items auctioned off that evening were a personal LEGO lesson with Victoria & Albert Museum-featured teacher and LEGO master David Kaleta, '95 and an over-sized collage portrait, "Tribute to Steve Jobs," a tonal charcoal puzzle created as a shading exercise in Mirentxu Ganzarain's Studio Art class. Each U-Higher created a square, and the full image was revealed only when the squares were assembled as a whole.

As part of the Lab+ effort, proceeds—nearly $500,000—will help fund the creation of outdoor spaces at Lab that foster exploration and curiosity even as they encourage play or exercise or contemplation. And in keeping with Connections' tradition, one quarter of the proceeds will benefit student financial aid. See more photos online at http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/supportlab/connections/connections-2012-slideshow/index.aspx.
When will you put up the ice?

EARLY CHILDHOOD CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION IS HUMMING ALONG—JUST ASK A NURSERY-SCHOOLER

BY CATHERINE BRAENDEL ’81

It’s easy to forget how big and wide and marvelous the world can be. If you need a reminder, just take a walk with a three-year-old. Teacher Carrie Collin does it every week, and this year Lab’s Stony Island construction site has been a regular destination.

“Anytime we go for a walk, we come back and debrief as a group,” she says. Teachers prompt the children to reflect on what they saw and guide the children to posit and discuss answers to their own questions, thinking through cause and effect:

- Will the construction workers make our new toys? (Let’s bring all of our old toys!)
- How will the workers put in the windows (a.k.a., “the ice” to one marveling child)? (They’ll have to wear gloves.)
- Will they build our playgrounds before the inside of the building? (The cranes and big machines might run over our new play equipment.)
- “I saw lightning this morning. Will the workers be OK?” (Someone probably called them and told them to stay home.)

For young children (and even some adults), it’s hard to look at a photograph and fathom that a field of rubble will become a real building. But as the work has progressed, the shape of Earl Shapiro Hall is becoming more obvious. The children have had a chance to look at the actual blueprints. And the site is coming together rapidly because the engineers are bringing in concrete beams fully formed, so the building can be pieced together like a set of building blocks. When Ms. Collin drew a parallel to building with LEGO’s, the idea literally clicked for her kids. While the children must stop at the fence for safety reasons, a closer look reveals much: With the exception of some electrical work, the basement is complete (yeah, storage!) and the structure of the building is obvious now, particularly when viewed from the interior. The classroom spaces are clearly delineated, as is the interior courtyard. One can see the heat pipes running through the floors, the beams that separate each classroom, and the kitchen hookups in the shared spaces. And for the lucky few invited to climb on the roof, it becomes obvious just how extensive the third floor outdoor play space will be.

For Ms. Collin there is an important emotional aspect to this educational process: “It’s their school. They will be kindergarteners when they move to this building.” And visiting the site gives them ownership that will aid in that transition. She explains, “It provides them with a little more security.” Moving is widely recognized as being on the short-list of life’s main stress-inducers and happily, the children are developing an infectious enthusiasm. “To see the kids get excited— it helps me get excited,” says Ms. Collin. The construction workers have become used to seeing these little repeat visitors. And the children wave their goodbyes, saying, “Thank you for building our school.”
LISTEN TO THE POEM!

At the world's largest teen poetry festival (and in the classroom) U-High poets stand and deliver

BY ELIZABETH STATION

It's ten o'clock on a chilly Tuesday in February, and all over Chicago, hundreds of teenagers can feel the electricity they've created with their poetry. >>>
It’s ten o’clock on a chilly Tuesday in February, and all over Chicago, hundreds of teenagers can feel the feverish excitement they’ve created with their poetry. At an annual youth poetry festival known as Louder Than A Bomb (LTAB), young writers have gathered in venues around the city to perform their poems for each other. It’s a competition, or “slam,” where judges award scores to individual and team performances. But as encore Emily Taggert reminds the throng of throngs of fans who pack a Columbia College lounge, “The point is not the points, it’s the...”

“Poetry!” they shout in unison.

In the slam’s opening minutes, U-High junior Nora Engel-Hall steps up to the microphone. She is one of six poets on Inverse, the first team to represent Lab in the festival’s 12-year history. Her poem, “The Eternal,” conveys the love and empathy she feels for her grandmother, who is going blind. “Grandma,” the poem begins, “I love you.”

The audience listens, hushed, as Nora’s words draw them in. She has memorized her poem but at one point she falts, unable to remember a line. There’s a momentary silence and then, students around the room begin snapping their fingers in encouragement. Nora recovers and delivers the rest of the poem无缝, as an U-High team project.

One by one, teens take the stage and perform poems that are as diverse as the city itself. Nearly 90 teams are participating in the competition, mostly from public schools, but also from independent schools in Chicago, Latino boy who unshades a tirade about the abusive men in his life as a gospel sermon. U-High sophomore Emily Heur and junior Alexia Greene and Stefania Gomez offer intimate, emotional pieces about conflict and loss.

The room often falls quiet—but it grows charged when the judges award perfect tens to Alexia and a few other students. As hip-hop music blares and participants whoop in appreciation, Taggert reminds them to “applaud the poet but never the score.”

Every “bout” (or round) at LTAB concludes with group poems composed and performed by four members of each team. U-High senior Asha Randhawa and sophomore Leah Barber round up the mic to help Alexia and Emily deliver “Get Well Soon,” about a child visiting an elderly relative in the hospital. “A girl of eight sees death and is told to hug and kiss it,”...This is eternal forehead kiss goodbye and wanting your turn not to have the right words.

Yet Inverse does have the right words, when the poems are tallied, the Lab team comes out on top and advances to the next round. As the crowd awilds around the stage and the poets congratulates each other, it’s hard to say who is more stoked—the U-High students or their faculty sponsor, English teacher Steve Granzyk.

[2] A week before, at Lab, Ms. Granzyk is trying to coax poetry out of the juniors and seniors in her Film for Writers class. He shows them scenes from movies by Robert Altman and Akira Kurosawa, hoping that the powerful visual imagery will stimulate a creative response with words. “With writing, you need to kill all the voices in you that tell you’re not creative, you’re not imaginative—or somebody might look at it and think you’re a terrible person,” he says. Instead, students should find what writing guru Natalie Goldberg calls a “sweetheart” voice: “Maybe it’s your grandmother or grandfather, your best friend, your third-grade teacher—whoever you words of encouragement. And that’s the only voice you should respect.”

As Lab students move from grade school to high school they leave nursery rhymes aside. Analytical writing gets greater emphasis. Continuing to study poetry helps to rekindle them of the music and pleasure of the poem—“hearing it as well as eventually writing it,” says U-High teacher Barbara Wolf. Her sophomore English class includes a unit showing “the arc of poetry over the centuries. We start by looking at the formal requirements in early poetry and move into modernism and contemporary work.” Sophomores read Shakespeare’s sonnets before studying Romero and Juliet. In Carolyn Wallace’s Latin’s Monsters classes, juniors and seniors pair up with fifth-graders to write poems inspired by Rossouw (the younger excels in Young-Adult translation while their high school “buddies” tackle Seamus Heaney.

Students in Carrie Koenen’s introductory poetry class reflect on poems by different authors and create anthologies of their favorite works. Some agree with the criteria that Garrison Keillor proposed in Good Poems. “A really good poem is sticky and cuts through the static,” says Ms. Koenen, citing Keillor. “It makes you stop what you’re doing and listen.”

“Really good” means smaller canvas than short stories or novels, “poems really do focus you,” says Ms. Granzyk. He sees the growing poetry slam movement in Chicago and worldwide as a chance for a new generation to build on the rich oral and oral traditions. But people could write, they spoke their poems and stories aloud. “Right now, kids are really ripe for that,” he says. “They need to know they can turn their feelings into art.”

[3] The girls from Inverse practice after school, in an empty U-High classroom. Laughter, support, and poetry flow in equal measure as their coach, Nora Coomes, helps prepare them for their first LTAB bout. She tells them that Chicago poet Kevin Coval, the festival’s cofounder and artistic director, believes that slam poems should perform for three people. The first is yourself, she says. Ms. Coomes, because your words are worth sharing. The second is “that person in the audience who is going through the exact same emotion as you are and in not now alone.” The third person is collective. “You’re reading a poem for all the other poets who have been on that stage. By respecting that space and giving it your all, you’re respecting the memory of the poetry.”

Ms. Coomes, a first-year student at the University of Chicago, competed in poetry slams herself while in high school at Northside College Prep. She calls the experience “amazing and formative.” Coaching the U-High team has inspired her to switch from pre-med to an English major; she hopes eventually to teach in Chicago Public Schools.

“You can’t make a living being a poet,” she says, “but I think you can make a lot of changes by teaching other people to be poets and to use their voices.”

While Inverse has a coach and faculty sponsor, the team members are proud that they created and run it themselves. As sophomores, Stefania and Alexa started a spoken-word poetry club at Lab, last fall, the club organized a school competition where teachers and students selected the six-person team to compete at slams.

To sharpen their craft, the students have attended open mics and writing workshops run by Young Chicago Authors, which presents LTAB. “We come from different backgrounds than most of the people we meet at slams,” admits Alexa. “Making connections with a more diverse part of Chicago is a very good thing. By sharing the stage with other young poets, the Lab students have forged bonds with peers from schools on the South Side and around the city. At Stefania reflects after the competition is over, “We also earned a place within a community that respected us and that we respected.”

“With writing, you need to kill all the voices in you that tell you’re not creative, you’re not imaginative.”

Witnessing the event, it’s easy to see why writing and performance poetry is cathartic, and how the slams give teens a vehicle to express words and feelings that may be hard to share elsewhere. “We all have something to say and this is where we’re saying it,” explains Alexa. Lab’s academic, sports, and arts clubs, adds Emily, “but this is really a different experience from any other club.”

Nora says that creating spoken-word poems “is satisfying in a way that analytical writing isn’t—writing poetry is all about performance poetry and that’s partly the point.”

Lab is even more direct. “This is not Shakespeare’s poems; this is not Emily Dickinson’s poems; this is not Sylvia Plath,” she says. “The movement is happening right now—all around the country. The movement is us.”
BUCKING A NATIONAL TREND, GIRLS AT LAB HOLD EQUAL GROUND IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

BY JACQUELINE VON EDELBERG

Audit an hour of a U-High Advanced Placement or Advanced Topic Computer Science class and try to identify what’s unusual. The computers? Some new coding language? What if you know that in most upper-level high school computer courses only 20 percent of the class will be female? Look again. More than half of the U-Highers registered this year for these courses are girls, and already next year’s class registration is shaping up along the same balanced gender lines. It’s been that way for a couple of years now.

Across the country, there are efforts at universities, corporations, the Department of Commerce, and in other political circles to address the challenge of attracting women to the “STEM” fields—science, technology, engineering, and math—but a series of decisions, boosted by some attention-getting external recognition, have addressed that challenge and helped change the profile of the typical U-High student computer scientist.

While Lab has offered Advanced Placement courses in computer science for more than two decades, the classes only attracted a small group of students and disproportionately few girls. It is not for lack of role models—most of the CS faculty has been, and continues to be, female. In the early eighties, the Schools’ administration sent German teacher Karen Putman to learn computer programming at Stanford, one of the first courses for K–12 educators. Armed with her facility with languages, and a willingness to learn a new one or two, Ms. Putman turned out to be a natural choice. “I accepted syntax!” laughs the four-decade-plus Lab veteran.

Upon her return, Ms. Putman began to transform the school’s “open computer lab” setting into a program focused on building fundamental skills. Starting with sixth graders (and adding grades each year), she trained students to approach programming assignments in terms of real-world problem solving. Her goal, to “prepare students for a technology that doesn’t yet exist,” is just as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.

PUTTING WOMEN IN STEM FIELDS AND CS-THINKING INTO LIBERAL ARTS

According to the Department of Commerce, while women hold nearly half of all jobs in the US economy, they hold only 24 percent of STEM jobs. The reasons are complex but many agree that the gender split starts early.

In Ms. Putman’s Lower School classes at Lab, girls and boys were, and are, on equal academic footing, but by high school girls were forgoing CS electives.

A conversation began to take shape at Lab in the early 2000s about the possibility of creating a required CS class in the High School. In much the same way that art teaches a person to see the world through a different lens, teachers felt that understanding how a computer scientist solves problems might also broadly benefit students. Says High School Principal Mathews Horvat, “There are schools that have a CS requirement, but they are teaching mostly software. We didn’t want to teach that type of class. How does a computer scientist think? What tools does a computer scientist have at his or her disposal? Even today there are very few schools that have that as a requirement.”

High School CS teachers Marty Billingsley, ’77, and Baker Franke, in partnership with other CS faculty, helped champion the idea. But in making a CS course a requirement, the teachers understood that the curriculum must engage a broad array of students, most of whom would not see themselves as computer people, per se. Says Mr. Franke, “Our goal is not to turn out legions of computer scientists but to give students a view into how computing impacts or might be coupled with some other area of interest in order to create things and make new discoveries.”

With the advent of the half-credit requirement three years ago, says Mr. Horvat, “We were putting students in a situation where they could see that they have a natural talent that they might not have tapped into otherwise.”

Says Mr. Franke, “The required course has helped maintain the diversity of upper level courses. We’re now seeing interest from not only women, but across racial and socioeconomic strata as well. At the very least, the diversity in the upper level courses reflects the
FINDING THE COMMON HUMANITY IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Lab's CS faculty had been giving serious thought to why girls were registering for CS classes and how gender might be influencing student learning. In the lower grades, Ms. Putnam notes that “even from the earliest days there were conversations about making sure all students felt comfortable” and the gap between boys and girls was not as prominent in the Lower School, in part “because activities were always very open-ended and about building skills.” However, in the upper grades teachers saw more pronounced differences.

Middle School CS teacher Ruthie Hansen believes that all students learn best when “an academic discipline taps into their existing interests and affinities” and that girls are more likely to wrap programming projects into a compelling story. For example, one of her female students created a first-person game based on the bakery business. The player-baker must use pastry bags to dollop icing onto cakes rolling by on a conveyor belt. The programming is nearly identical to any other typically male first-person shooter game, but by adding a sympathetic main character and setting, and a problem to solve, the student created a very different experience.

Like Ms. Hansen, Ms. Billingsley, who teaches an eighth-grade class, believes that girls get excited by programming if the game tells a more creative story. She describes one female student who took the code behind a game in which Winnie the Pooh floats up attracting more girls to his classes because he ended gaming, so he never taught it. He suspects that department, was never personally interested in the theater department’s online presence. She was hired as a teaching assistant her sophomore year and began heading her own lab. She was hired as a teaching assistant her sophomore year and began heading her own lab. She was hired as a teaching assistant her sophomore year and began heading her own lab. She was hired as a teaching assistant her sophomore year and began heading her own lab.
Lab grads find their calling in military careers

Air Force Captain Sara Carrasco, '99

BY BROOKE O’NEILL, AM’04

IN THE NAME OF MY COUNTRY

Every afternoon, the teenager would dust the framed medal hanging on the library wall. Running a cloth across the glass, he read the inscription countless times, committing the soldier’s story to memory.

The Marine’s name was Lance Corporal Emilio A. De La Garza, Jr. A native of East Chicago, Indiana, he died fighting in Vietnam and posthumously received the nation’s highest recognition, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for bravery. His family donated the medal to the nearby public library, where it left an indelible impression on one local boy.

“He gave his life for his country,” says Lt. Col. Samuel Carrasco, ’91, who cleaned the medal as part of his after-school job. “I can still almost recite his citation verbatim.”

Meanwhile, a few older friends joined the Marines.

“I really developed a deep respect for what they did,” says Lt. Col. Carrasco, who commuted to Lab every day from East Chicago on the South Shore line. “My after-school world revolved a lot around my neighborhood,” he says. “I saw what a positive impact the military had on peoples’ lives.”

Lt. Col. Carrasco had found his calling. Now an infantry officer and Bronze Star recipient, he joined the Marine Corps in 1993 while a student at Emory University and has since been stationed around the world, including three separate combat deployments in Iraq between 2003 and 2006. Among Lab alumni, military careers like his are few and far between. “It wasn’t the path least traveled,” says Lt. Col. Carrasco with a laugh. “It was the path not traveled.” The few who do choose it get there in different ways, but all have one thing in common: a desire to serve their country.

STANDING UP TO SERVE

Air Force Captain Robert Willoughby, ’91, grew up wanting to emulate his father, a flight surgeon with the Air Force Reserve. “As a kid, I would often travel with him when he would go for duty around the country,” recalls Capt. Willoughby. “I had nothing but respect and admiration for the fine people I met.”

As his senior year approached, Capt. Willoughby contemplated “if and how I would serve in the armed forces.” After two scouting visits to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, he applied and was accepted. Yet it wasn’t until his junior year, after majoring in biology and considering a medical career, that he decided “once and for all on flying.”

“I felt strongly about serving my country and believed—and still do—that the military was the best avenue for me to do so,” says Capt. Willoughby. Today he’s at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas, where he’s an instructor pilot for the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program.

Air Force Major Michelle Mafia Tarkowski, ’94, also weighed going straight from Lab into a military service academy, but opted for Air Force Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (AFROTC) instead. “I knew that paying for college was going to be a challenge, and that joining the military was a great option to help pay for it,” says Maj. Tarkowski, who didn’t think seriously about the armed forces until late in high school.

“I didn’t have a set vision of what I wanted to do, but I knew I wanted to be a leader in whatever career path I took,” she says. Thanks to an Air Force scholarship, she enrolled at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

“From my first day of AFROTC, I knew I had made the right decision and that I wanted to be an officer in the Air Force,” she recalls. She graduated in 1998 and has been in active military duty ever since, holding assignments such as working for the Pentagon’s Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services, and being stationed in Germany, Texas, and Alabama.

These days, Maj. Tarkowski is a Force Support Officer at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, where she works closely with State National Guard units, the Joint Staff, FEMA, and the Secret Service to oversee personnel for events in North America where armed forces support is requested, such as hurricanes or national security incidents.

“I never second-guessed myself or thought that I wanted to do anything else,” says Maj. Tarkowski of her military path. “I still feel that way to this day.”

SHARING A PURPOSE—AND A SACRIFICE

Navy Captain Craig Haynes, ’81, shares the sentiment. He originally wanted to be a commercial pilot and joined the Navy to learn to fly, but after a series of unexpected developments—failing the required eye test, for one—found his way into Naval intelligence, where he’s worked for nearly 25 years.

“There’s a great unity of purpose in what we do,” says Capt. Haynes, who has risen up the ranks, serving in Operation Desert Springs, he applied and was accepted. Yet it wasn’t until his junior year, after majoring in biology and considering a medical career, that he decided “once and for all on flying.”

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STORM, in Afghanistan (as part of the elite Joint Staff), and recently in Guantanamo Bay, as a Joint Task Force officer. During her career, her responsibilities have included providing intelligence to strike groups on where to sail and where threats exist, helping Navy SEALs for missions, and supervising teams of intelligence officers.

“I can walk into any military base in the world,” he says, “and feel like those individuals have the same kind of mission I do, that same commitment to serving.”

It’s something that pleads with Lt. Col. Carrasco to the Marines—and, more recently, Lafah in Afghanistan. Capt. Carrasco practiced law at an Atlanta civil litigation firm before becoming a JAG. “Knowing the experiences and sacrifices my brother has made in the military was a big factor,” she says. Since joining four years ago, she has served at Air Force Bases in Germany and Las Vegas, practicing criminal, civil, and operational law. “In one day,” she says, “I could be running the base legal tax center, drafting a few wills, and prepping a court-martial.” It’s a diverse mix that would be hard to replicate in the civilian workplace, where attorneys are typically more specialized.

Of course, a military career also brings plenty of challenges: uprooting every few years, long separations from family, and putting one’s life in harm’s way. “Service members recognize that they may make the ultimate sacrifice defending our country,” says Capt. Carrasco.

It’s something everyone must face, says her brother, who lost friends and men during his time in Iraq. “But,” he adds, “I also understand that there are no victims in the military. We all elect of our own accord to serve our country in the capacity that we do. That gives me a sense of service.”

In his seven years as a pilot, Capt. Willoughby has experienced no greater than flying in combat zones. “Seeing the excitement on their faces,” he says, “as well as the happiness of their loved ones when they get off the aircraft is one of the best feelings I’ve had on the job.”

THINKING LIKE A LABBIE

Reflecting on their military paths, the Carrascos and others credit Lab for pointing them in the right direction early on. “One similarity between the military and Lab School life is that everyone tries to overachieve—and the teachers don’t settle for mediocrity,” says Lt. Col. Carrasco, remembering how physics teacher David Dobcs helped him excel in class, even though “I was bad at math.”

Along with high standards, says longtime Lab teacher Joyce Carrasco (Sam and Sara’s mother), the school gives students “the freedom to make some very open choices,” including career options that aren’t the most common among their peers. But did that focus on freethinking conflict with the military’s highly structured environment later on?

Hardly, says Maj. Tarkowski. “There’s a misconception that there’s no place for individuality in the military,” she says. “In reality there’s a diverse cross-section of backgrounds and opinions. ‘Lab’s emphasis on individuality and standing up for what I think is right,’” says Maj. Tarkowski, “is something that pleads with me from the Midway.”

U-Highers attending US Service Academies

In her 15 years as a U-High college counselor, Patty Kostace has seen only a handful of U-Highers apply for, and ultimately matriculate at, a US Service Academy. In addition to Air Force Captain Robert Willoughby, ’01, who attended the Air Force Academy, Maj. Fitzpatrick, ’09, and David Cheung, ’11, are both at West Point right now.

In an interview with the U-Highly, Mr. Fitzpatrick says, “It’s a rigorous institution, and certainly isn’t for everyone, but the challenge of making it through is part of the allure of the place, and I can’t see myself anywhere else.”

While the academies are cost-free, students must commit to a minimum eight years of service, five in active duty, at potentially any location in the world. And the application process is unlike other higher ed institutions. Says Ms. Kostace, “Not only does entrance demand a rigorous academic record, applicants are required to take a phy. ed., exam and a health exam. There are many preexisting conditions—some quite common—that would disqualify a student from service. And applicants need a nomination from their US senator or congressman.”

U-Highers see it as an opportunity to contribute to the military.
James Orr, '61, SM'75, PhD'82, has funded a charitable gift annuity to benefit financial aid at Lab. Dr. Orr is a practicing physician in pathology at Resurrection Health Care in Chicago. This is one of Dr. Orr’s first annuities to any institution. And he makes a great pear pie, which is already the talk of U-High's Alumni Relations and Development Office.

“Lab is the best institution I have ever been a part of. The faculty was solid, but even more important, the students were the most inquisitive, thoughtful, and analytical group of people I have ever encountered in my life. An annuity is a reasonable way to make an investment in the school. It is my way of paying them back. It’s simply something I owe.”

What is a planned gift?
Planned gifts come in many forms, from bequests to charitable trusts and gift annuities. You can even designate the Schools as a beneficiary for a retirement plan. Some options provide income to you and your family; others may have significant tax benefits; and all of them ensure future support for the Schools.

For many individuals, a bequest may be a way to make a gift that they couldn’t afford during their lifetime. For others, a bequest to Lab might be the culmination of years of charitable giving. Made with cash, securities, real estate, or a retirement plan, a charitable bequest is fully deductible for estate tax purposes.

Phoenix Society for planned gifts and endowments
Alumni who include Lab in their estate or who make life income arrangements are honored as members of the University’s Phoenix Society, which comes with special recognitions and invitations to events.

Please contact:
Heather McClean, '93
Director of Gift Planning
Phone 773-834-2117
Email hmcclean@uchicago.edu

Dr. Orr’s recipe can be found online at: http://ucls.uchicago.edu/data/files/gallery/ContentGallery/PearPie.pdf

Like us on Facebook and join the conversation: www.facebook.com/laboratoryschools

Join us on LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=63030

WHY I MADE A PLANNED GIFT TO LAB (AND SHARED MY PEAR PIE RECIPE TO BOOT)

::: have you already included Lab in your estate plans? ::::