LABLIFE
the magazine for alumni, parents, and friends of the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools

spring 2013
Dear Friends,

A few years ago, an alumnus from Denver told me that he had added to his résumé that he went to Lab. “The employer—-a Denver—-said to him, “There are only a couple of schools in America that justify putting your high school on your resume and that’s one of them.”

It is a reminder that the Laboratory Schools experience proves again and again to be transformative for our graduates and an experience that benefits them for life in so many ways.

That story, for me, is also reflective of what about Lab translates into an education, and a reputation, that supports our graduates beyond our campus: community and excellence.

We live in an increasingly competitive world, and with so many students (and families) of talent, intellect, and passion at Lab, it is refreshing that students talk about what a kind place this is. And it has been that way for generations. Alumni talk about finding a home here—not just friendship, but a community of like-minded learners who made them feel embraced. Current students talk about how supported they feel by their teachers and peers. It’s genuine and it’s unique. And that is why the idea of kindness has been included as part of our new mission statement.

On to excellence: it is in our everyday teaching but it goes beyond our campus. Our faculty participate in professional development activities and conferences, sharing our pedagogy and our narrative across the US and the world. And our alumni—take a “pride of ownership” in Lab. The employer—in Denver!—said to him, “There are only a couple of agents...”

Dozens of diligent alumni keep these connections going. The employer—in Denver!—said to him, “There are only a couple of agents...”

Although she calls herself “a total back-of-the-pack,” Shauna Anderson has never started a race she hasn’t finished. That determination spills into other areas of her life. “I sort of make these declarations that I’m going to do something, and it ends up happening,” she says, “Growing up in Indiana, three young ladies and I all made the declaration that we were going to engineering school. And we did it.” Although she had envisioned becoming an engineering professor, during graduate school Ms. Anderson realized her heart was in teaching and transferred to Harvard’s master of education program. Now in her sixth year at Lab, she is “appreciative that I get to do the job I love to do and travel and experience other cultures—that I have both the mindset and the ability to do it.”

She anticipates running races in Hawaii this June, Brazil in July, Iceland in August, and the New York Marathon this fall. “Since Ethiopia,” she says, “I’ve been to 30 countries. That’s what I do: I teach math and see the world.”

“Teach math and see the world.” Eight marathons, four half-marathons, and dozens of shorter races, in places from Paris to Zimbabwe. Those are U-High math teacher Shauna Anderson’s stats. She ran her first marathon while in graduate school at Harvard. Flipping through a magazine in October 1995, she saw an ad for a running group and signed up. Six months later she entered the lottery for the Boston Marathon, open to nonqualifiers that year in honor of its 100th anniversary. She didn’t get a number. But some friends from her running group did and Ms. Anderson accompanied them to registration. Waiting in line, she chatted with her neighbor, who offered her his number. “It was fate. He’d been injured and couldn’t run, and I just happened to be there,” she says. “So I got to run the Boston Marathon.”

After grad school, Ms. Anderson lived in Ethiopia, a volunteer teacher in a poor, rural area—a life-changing, eye-opening experience,” she says. “and where I got the travel bug.” Later she moved to Thailand, continuing to teach and run, and signed up for her second marathon in April 2003—during her spring break—in Paris. She has since completed six more, and she’s inspired her mother and sisters to run, too; “I never ran in high school,” Ms. Anderson says, “but now they tell me I’m motivating them.”

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Student Research Advances Science... and Gains Recognition

Danny Zhang, left, and Lane Gunderman in the halls

Senior Lane Gunderman and Danny Zhang earned accolades for their science research in this year’s Intel Science Talent Search—Lane moving on as a finalist and Danny as a semifinalist.

The Intel competition recognizes 300 students and their schools as national semifinalists each year to compete for $1.25 million in awards. From that pool, 40 finalists are invited to Washington, DC, to display their work, meet with notable scientists, and compete for the top award of $100,000.

Both of these students began their work as part of Lab’s Summer Link science research program, a unique partnership with the University of Chicago that allows U-High students to get a glimpse into the world of practicing scientists while working side-by-side with University faculty and graduate students and getting paid. There are also Summer Links partnerships with the Booth School, Law School, and Chicago businesses.

Lane, whose research stemmed from his Summer Link project with UChicago Associate Professor of Chemistry Greg Engel, says going to DC was exciting. “My favorite part of the trip was meeting the other finalists,” he says. He hopes those relationships last a lifetime.

For his project, Lane used computer simulations to investigate whether part of the Fenna-Matthews-Olson protein complex, involved in photosynthetic energy transfer, moved as a photon flowed through the system. In nature, this complex “exhibits near-perfect quantum efficiency,” he says, “and if we can understand the mechanics” that allow for such efficiency, scientists can create similarly efficient synthetic materials for, say, solar panels.

Danny’s project started in her Summer Link program in the laboratory of UChicago cancer researcher and Blum-Riese Distinguished Service Professor Janet Rowley, ’42, PhD’45, SF’46, MD’48. Danny proved that the protein LIN28 regulates the microRNA miR-150, “which in turn is a key regulator” involved in certain types of leukemia. “Thus,” she says, “I have found a potential therapeutic target.”

Much Ado about Shakespeare

For her fall-quarter English elective this year, “The Comedy of Love,” Darlene McCampbell continued her tradition of inviting UChicago guest speakers at quarter’s end. Shakespeare scholar and Phyllis Fay Horton Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus David Bevington, editor of the texts used by Ms. McCampbell’s students, addressed “Taming of the Shrew,” Edward Albee Distinguished Service Professor James Redfield, ’50, AB’54, PhD’61, a classics scholar with theater experience, discussed Much Ado About Nothing, and Court Theatre artistic director and Lab parent Charles Newell held a rehearsal-like workshop. The short scenes the students performed, Ms. McCampbell says, “opened up many questions that enlightened the text.”

She recalls giving a Shakespeare workshop in Stratford, England, years ago, and casually mentioning to a Turkish teacher that Mr. Bevington visits her class. The teacher “drooled with envy,” Ms. McCampbell says, and asked, “The real David Bevington? The scholar?”

Steps to Security

At Lab, even security is about learning. “The educational opportunity we have to offer is very significant,” says Fountain Walker, Lab’s new, and first-ever, director of security. From stepping by a preschool classroom for a fire-safety lesson to forming a safety committee for the Lab community, training is his top goal. A month into the job, he conducted 20 “SWOT” exercises—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—with different stakeholders, he says, “to maintain the open culture within the walls of the school but also provide layers of security.”

Formerly combined with facilities, security warrants its own director as Lab adds to its footprint this fall, opening Earl Shapiro Hall for nursery through second grade. To keep up with industry standards, the new building and future renovations “will be done with security in mind,” says Mr. Walker, who previously served as deputy chief of the UChicago Police Department’s Patrol Services Bureau.

That means modern access controls, smart architectural design, on-site security staff, and training to help staff assess threats, resolve conflicts, or find security or a counselor when necessary.

A “shape museum” helped second graders in Catie Gillespie’s class better understand geometry. Each child brought in a three-dimensional object and put it in the right category. Then during a “museum walk,” students wrote down observations for each group of shapes: “I noticed that the cylinders all have two faces” or, “I notice that the spheres don’t have a vertex.”

Foremost, Mr. Walker plans to educate parents, faculty, staff, and students on how to react in an emergency. “If the opportunity exists to instruct,” he says, “I will do so.”

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They’ve determined an optimal tank size, found a light wavelength in which the males and females recognize each other, and discovered they won’t mate below 26 degrees Celsius. “So it’s like June 21 at noon in Southern Georgia,” Mr. Jones says.

The next step, he says, “is convincing the female to deposit the eggs in a place where you can get them,” rather than in dark corners or plants around the lab, where he suspects the flies are hatching. The students have concocted structures out of straws and other materials, so far with little luck. When they succeed, they can deliver the eggs to Professor Schmidt-Ott for research, and they will have created the first laboratory protocol, or standard procedure, for this species. It’s a feat, Mr. Jones says, that “has enormous potential to be a new genetic model.”

Lab students get a lesson in emergency preparedness

Louis Paturet set the tone and now Lab students know how to be proactive in disaster strikes. Thanks to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Michelle McKee, assistant professor of pediatrics at Comer Children’s Hospital and director of emergency medical services and disaster preparedness, sixth-grade students received training on how to prepare for an emergency.

In early March, Lab parent Dr. McKee, who was in the Navy for several years, is an expert on delivering important information in digestible amounts. “I was part of a response force between the Navy and the Marines,” she says, “so I had to provide synopses and scale down how much information there was.”

The FEMA modules are part of a nationwide initiative for disaster preparedness planning, aiming to get children involved in family safety readiness. Instead of being fearful of events out of their hands, the kids learn to be empowered with practical ways they can help. The planning is a bit like a game: “Would you have the ability to make it three days without electricity?” “Can you show your mom how to conserve cell-phone power?”

“We’re staying away from terrorism, while focusing on events that are more plausible for our geographic location, like a snowstorm or a blackout,” says Dr. McKee.

“It’s basic things like knowing how much water the family has, that they have a battery-powered radio, or not having your phone on except at key times during a blackout. Children are ready for that. They’re very bright, very capable.” Illinois children tend to be well prepared, in general, for emergencies.

“When local emergency departments get accredited with the care that they’re able to provide children, children’s disaster preparedness is part of what they look for,” says Dr. McKee. “Our state’s doing a great job.”

Eventually, the FEMA readiness plans will be taught to other grade levels, Dr. McKee says. “We’re trying to make sure that disaster preparedness for children is part of everybody’s global plan. As long as you give people tools to be prepared, they’re able to handle what comes their way.”

“Luck Favors the Mind that is Prepared”

When it comes to swimming, starting young is important, says Joyce Grotthuss, a swimming and PE teacher at Lab for 22 years. “Our biggest goal is to get them comfortable in the water, so they feel safe and can evaluate a pool and their abilities.”

The classes build both confidence and skills. Beginners learn to put their faces in the water and blow bubbles, breathe to the side, flutter-kick across the pool with flipper and kickboards, float on their fronts and backs, and swim freestyle. In the deep end, students learn advanced skills: diving, backstroke, breaststroke, and sometimes flip turns.

“Get them comfortable, make it fun, and teach them the fundamentals,” Ms. Grotthuss says. “That’s what we’re all about.”

Jump In

About half the third graders go into the deep end. The others start in the shallow. Lab’s swimming curriculum begins in third grade, and for many students it’s their first experience with swimming, ever. (It’s also everyone’s first time using the locker rooms and changing clothes for gym like the older kids, something they will not start to do for daily gym class until fifth grade.)

How to be a Hero

The fifth grade humanities curriculum uses literature to teach children to identify the elements of a story and to develop their own values and intellectual standards along the way. Says Catherine Manning, fifth grade chair, “They are seeing characters grapple with universal themes in these books and stories—learning how to be brave or how to stick by a friend. They see that children can make a difference.” The fifth graders are also learning to use textual evidence to support and interpret a story in terms of character, setting, plot, conflict, theme, and point of view. Once in Middle School, they will use these skills as they advance to Honors discussions.

From the Syllabi


Jump In
in the halls

Emeritus
Retirements

Four departing teachers have dedicated a combined 126 years

Jan Bollig
When Jan Bollig retires in June, she’ll say goodbye to the sunny Blaine classroom where she taught for 24 of her 26 years at Lab. She’ll also leave behind 24 unusual artifacts, each decorated with photos of the students in as many first-grade classes: a blue wooden chair stuck with glow-in-the-dark stars; a painted hockey stick from the year the Blackhawks won the Stanley Cup; a beanstalk that climbs a heat pipe. Each object relates to something a class studied—horses, clocks, 9/11—and most of them sparkle with glitter. Laughing, Ms. Bollig says that’s one of the best things about teaching first grade: “Almost every project deserves glitter.” First graders have an eye for art and detail, she adds. They’re receptive and ask great questions. When she began teaching at Lab, she would show students how to search for answers in the library, consulting a dictionary or encyclopedia. Now they use a classroom computer or iPad. Ms. Bollig says the biggest change of all is the way students begin using their energy, “a fire in their eyes,” from the moment they arrive. “Every day I come to work, I’m reminded of my kids,” says Ms. Bollig, who came to Lab in 1985. That experience gave her perspective on what parents go through when they separate from their children. She also got energy and ideas from Reggio Children, a worldwide center for early-childhood education in Reggio Emilia, Italy, which she visited on four professional development trips.

“Let is such a part of the fabric of my life,” says nursery teacher Stacey P. Hamburg. Her sons, Adam Hamburg, ’96, and Michael Hamburg, ’99, were students in the room where Ms. Hamburg later taught. Their teachers, Vivian Faley, visiting faculty, mentioned Ms. Hamburg. “Every day I come to work, I’m reminded of my kids,” says Ms. Hamburg, who came to Lab in 1985. That experience gave her perspective on what parents go through when they separate from their children. She also got energy and ideas from Reggio Children, a worldwide center for early-childhood education in Reggio Emilia, Italy, which she visited on four professional development trips.

Bea Harris
After 40 years teaching home economics—28 at Lab—Bea Harris has seen triumphs and mishaps. There was the eighth-grade boy who made flaky croissants and years later went on to cooking school. There was also the student who put a cup of salt into the cake batter instead of a teaspoon—and the kid who ran cold water over a hot jar of freshly preserved grape jelly, which exploded.

“Everything becomes a lesson,” says Ms. Harris, whose daughters Chakka Reeves, ’01, and granddaughters Bianca Harris, ’08, and Jasmine Harris attended Lab. “In many cases, I learn as the students learn.” Shelves in Ms. Harris’s classroom are lined with 20 years of Bon Appétit and Gourmet magazines. When she didn’t know how to teach something, she took a class herself. That’s why seventh and eighth graders finish home ec knowing how to make good pancakes and biscuits, and also have experimented with sauté, cream puff, or raw cuisine.

Ms. Harris also teaches students to sew—making plush stuffed animals is a favorite seventh-grade project—and helped start a vegetable garden at Lab. In retirement she hopes to create a program to help inner-city public school students develop basic life skills. She joined the DeSable Museum Education Council and plans to take an Australian cruise and keep gardening.

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“‘I decided—city girl that I am—to get my MA in French lit, live in Chicago, and teach at Lab.’”

Lego sets allow the third graders in Gerold Hanck’s science class to construct machines with gears, axles, wheels, levers, screws, and wedges, and to see them work in combination as complex machines. The process fosters problem-solving and observation skills—when something doesn’t look like the design, or doesn’t work as it’s supposed to, the kids have to figure out why and fix it.
A visit to a UChicago lab shines light on scientific experimentation

Thanks to interactions with the class’s friendly pet rats, fourth-grader Ickes’s fourth-grade science students are accustomed to seeing rodents in the lab, but not ones with blue hair and glowing green eyes, ears, and tails. Photos of fluorescent mice were just some of the wonders the students witnessed in December when Ms. Ickes’s class visited the labs of Neeraj Bhasin, lecturer in the Biological Sciences Collegiate Division of the University and parent of two Lower Schoolers.

Fourth grade is a prime time to get students excited about science, explains Ms. Ickes. “We want them to feel that it’s something that they’re capable of, that it’s not something that’s big and scary and distant.” It’s also an ideal time for children to learn scientific habits of mind. “We want them to think about things like what kind of questions scientists ask, and how to test those questions, which went beyond those from undergraduates, who got too shy and take things for granted,” she says. The Lab students asked questions like, “Can you put GFP in a human?” “Can we clone it?” “Can we make it with blue hair?” “Can we make it shine in the dark?”

In preparation for the trip, says Ms. Ickes, “We went over appropriate lab behavior.” In the classroom, when the students are conducting an experiment and someone walks through and disturbs it, they must start over, so they knew to keep a respectful distance from the experiments in Ms. Bhasin’s lab. The students are now learning chemistry, studying the reaction of acids and bases in the laboratory that is the home kitchen. To put science into action, “We’ll all make pancakes,” says Ms. Ickes.

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A Fishy History Even Kids Understand

Percussion instruments line the front of Belfield 134, from bells on one side to timpani on the other. Eighth-grader Shaunak Puri stands near the middle to perform a snare-drum solo full of rat-a-tat-tat for the fourth graders before him. “You put on a practice pad,” says music teacher Brad Brickner, as Shaunak holds up the black rubber pad that shrills the sound, “because we like our friends and neighbors.”

“Fifth grade is about learning fundamentals,” Mr. Dean tells the fourth graders. “It’s a great journey every year to add an instrument to your arsenal and to learn how those sounds play off each other.”

For about an hour, the crew filmed the children holding the fossil and talking to each other. The footage will be cut down to “maybe three minutes in the finished documentary,” says Professor Shubin. “The kids learned the pain of the B-roll. They were all asking, ‘Why do we have to do this again?’”

Your Inner Fish will be broadcast in early 2014—soon away, Ms. Piane says, from a first-grade perspective. “But they’re excited they’re going to be on television someday.”

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Afterglow

in the halls

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Anna, a Latina aspiring actress, tries out for the role of Maria in The Sound of Music. She nails the part in auditions; she sings and emotes much better than the vapid, showboating mean girls who are portrayed as evil ogres who we don’t see amongst us, so it was deep thinking on Marissa’s part to write the director’s character differently.”

All of Ms. Budrys-Nakas’s eighth grade drama classes include an independent project. Students find or write the pieces outside of class. Sometimes they collaborate on the writing, sometimes one person writes a script, and students rehearse on their own, too. Then students workshop the pieces in class, explains Ms. Budrys- Nakas. “That may include revising the actual script, but it definitely includes working on the staging and receiving feedback from their peers.”

She teaches them theater building blocks, such as soliloquies, building scenes, and object work, but the students take on a majority of the work—they self-direct and appear in each others’ pieces. The students first tried independent writing in the fall, and the project was a hit, “I’m glad it’s not forced on them,” says Ms. Budrys-Nakas. “They like to explore what’s going on in school or the community.” She teaches them theater building blocks, such as soliloquies, building scenes, and object work, but the students take on a majority of the work—they self-direct and appear in each others’ pieces.

Says Ms. Budrys-Nakas, “It’s a great chance for them to do their own stuff.”

Kindergarteners flex their writing muscles with daily journal entries

In their kindergarten year, Christina Hayward’s students become writers. All year they build the skills they will continue to use in first grade—and for the rest of their lives.

One place they practice writing is in daily “dialog journals,” staple-bound books that represent a written conversation between teacher and student. Each day students write in the journals—they choose the topic and how much to write—and Ms. Hayward or her assistant teacher, Kristin Smith, pose questions for each child to respond to the next day. When will the bend fly? Who will help the knights escape? What will you use your invisibility cloak for? Through these dialogues, students learn to develop storylines, add detail, and make stories more interesting to readers.

“Exercising your muscles a little every day is good for you,” Ms. Hayward says, and the journals act as daily writing workouts. Over the year, students’ writing evolves. Journals from September feature more illustrations, and the writing sprang in brightly colored markers. Later they grew tidy; students write longer pieces—on lines, in pencil, with spaces between words—or right-hand pages, complemented by illustrations on the left.

Such organizational strategies are part of the year’s writing curriculum, which progresses from building students’ confidence in themselves and trust in the teachers, to putting their knowledge to use, to organizing writing and building stamina, to practicing conventions such as spelling sight words and ending sentences with periods.

Just as students’ ability to form letters and spell words improves with practice, so does their ability to form ideas. And wrote about an imagined trip to Austria and the Alps—the dialog journals encourage growth and self-expression. The combination, Ms. Hayward says, is the beauty of the daily process of writing. “Partly it’s baby steps, building up the skills you need to become a reader and writer. But the approach also values the child, showing that the child is powerful, is important, and that their teachers and classmates think their ideas have value. And that helps build the internal motivation to become thinkers and learners.”

In fact, she says, the individual research projects U-High seniors undertake might be considered a culmination of this kindergarten lesson: “At some point, a child learns that she has good ideas.”
Responsive Classrooms

The rules for Cailie Gillespie’s second-grade class are simple: Take care of yourself, others, and the classroom, and make sure everyone is involved. The rules hang by the door, signed by every student.

In fact, “welcoming” is a big part of what the responsive classroom is all about. “Children learn best when they’re safe, welcomed, and known,” Ms. Gillespie says. “When they feel significant and comfortable and cared for, they’re more willing to explore, take risks, and make mistakes—and to learn that mistakes are an important part of learning.”

After taking a weeklong course on the responsive classroom this past summer, as part of Lab’s professional development program, Ms. Gillespie interweaves aspects into her classroom and curriculum, using elements like personal greetings, posters, activities, and personal greetings, and teaching practices, like positive teacher language, guided discovery, and interactive modeling. Added together, these elements create an environment where students are actively involved in the learning process—and therefore learn more.

The responsive classroom approach has already shaped Ms. Gillespie’s teaching, Ms. Gillespie says, and she’s prepared to learn more. She plans to take a second workshop this summer and has inspired several colleagues to try it, too.

“Children learn best when they’re safe, welcomed, and known,” Ms. Gillespie says. “When they feel significant and comfortable and cared for, they’re more willing to explore, take risks, and make mistakes.”

Experiencing Education

Now available online

This newly updated history of the Laboratory Schools adds scores of new photos and new chapters covering the last 30 years, and includes timelines highlighting moments at Lab in the context of the University, Chicago, and the world.

Experiencing Education: 1896–2012 (written by William Harms with Catherine Brandle, ’83, and Kay Kirkpatrick, MAT’72, with a forward by Catharine Bell, PhD’07) builds on the 1967 history written by Lab teacher Ida DePoncelet. Available at the Blaine Paperback Bookstore and online through the UChicago Press, Amazon, and other online retailers.

Sports Highlights

Girls Basketball

The team finished with a fine 21–7 record (placing second in the ISL with a 6–1 record). The Maroons won the Mather Holiday Tournament, edging out Gordon Tech in the championship game, 50–43. Senior Sophia Gatter received ISL MVP and all-tournament team at the U-High Midway Classic and Mather Holiday Tournament. Sophomore Kendall Ralies was first team All-ISL and All-tournament at the U-High Midway Classic and Mather Holiday Tournament. Juniors Lydia Schleusner and Maud Jansen were second team all-ISL and honorable mention ISL, respectively.

Boys Basketball

The Maroons won the IHSA 2A Regional Championship for the second time in four years. The team finished with a 21–8 record (10–2 and second place in ISL). Junior Max Rothschild was elected to first team All-ISL and the all-tournament team at the Rosmokeville Classic. Seniors Michael Dowdy and Kyle Parker joined Max on the ISL team. Sophomore Jordan Moran was named All-ISL honorable mention.

Fencing

The varsity team landed four members on the Great Lakes High School Fencing Conference all-conference team: Seniors Charlie Green (second) and Nathaniel Green (eighth) medaled in epee; Junior Eliu Hill and sophomore Jennifer Chen were first and second in foil. Junior Harrison Mauve won the Midway Fencing Classic and competes for the United States epee team in international competition.

Recommended Reading

Computer Science Department Chair Karen Putman recommends Take Time for Paradise: Americans and their Games by A. Bartlett Giamatti

For the longest time I have been drawn to good books about sports. One of my favorites is a slim volume called Take Time for Paradise: Americans and their Games written by A. Bartlett Giamatti. Giamatti was a Renaissance scholar and president of Yale University before becoming the commissioner of Major League Baseball on April 1, 1989. He served a brief term, only six months as commissioner, until his death on September 1, 1989. This book was finished shortly before that.

In three chapters, Giamatti takes us through a series of reflections on the enduring influence that sports, games, and play have had on us as individuals and as societies throughout history, and why this continues to be relevant today. He raises questions about the relationship between work and leisure. He makes connections to the value of a liberal arts education. He points out that the Greek word for leisure is scholé. Is it any surprise that this happens to be the Greek word that gives us school? A quarter of a way through the book and I was officially hooked. How great is it to have picked a profession that lets me both work and play?

To some extent, I’ve always defined my role as a teacher as someone who helps children learn the rules of the game. How do you escape the need to be excel individual but also be part of the collective? How do you play well with others? How do you develop the skills you need to be good at a given activity? How and when do personal and public values intersect? As Giamatti addresses these questions in a philosophical and historical context, I’m hearing the language of the classroom. At one point, when he is describing the sports experience, he speaks of “the repeated interplay of energy and

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Order, of improvisation and obligation, of strategy and tactic.” These are just some of the contrasts that students of all ages confront, and teachers of all disciplines offer guidance so that children might find a good balance among them.

Before the book ends there is a lyrical and gentle math lesson about symmetry and threes and fours in baseball to send you on your way as you ponder the other ideas Giamatti presented.

Over the past 42 years I have watched the societal impact of technology on several generations of students and parents. The questions that Giamatti posed in Take Time for Paradise have great relevance still. We might be surprised by how we answer them today.
The Campaign Carries On

A conversation about the next phases of the Lab+ Campaign

with:
- Laboratory Schools Director David Magill
- Associate Director of Business David Stafford, and
- Lab Trustee Development Committee Chair, and parent Christopher J. McGowan

CM We have plenty to talk about for anyone who is interested in that: We can suggest some outstanding naming opportunities—the Arts Hall, the assembly hall, classrooms, and outdoor spaces. And for those who have asked, we honor requests for anonymity, of course. We’re striving for broad participation—it takes a

LAB+ INVESTING IN THE POWER OF LAB

We’re working hard to reach our $55 million goal by December 31 and have been very happy, and thankful, that so many parents and alumni have made the Schools a philanthropic priority.

five years ago, when parents and students were considering the need for an expanded home for the Schools, the opportunity to make the arts a priority was daunting. We set a goal of $20 million to build the Arts Hall, and have since raised over $25 million. We have been able to make the School a leader in arts education in Chicago, and to bring students and faculty together in new ways.

CM We’re working hard to reach our $55 million goal by December 31 and have been very happy, and thankful, that so many parents and alumni have made the Schools a philanthropic priority.

We expect that new library spaces will be ready July 2015. And, if all goes as planned, it will start construction of the Arts Hall in fall of this year. That means that by July 5 of this year, we will have moved into Earl Shapiro Hall.

Jeffrey Blaine has never—never—had spaces specifically designed for the arts. All of our spaces for the visual and performing arts are rooms converted for that purpose—lighting, acoustics, storage, etc., were afterthoughts.

The Arts Hall will include the University’s beautiful gothic library spaces—what was for decades the School of Education library will become the new High School library.

CM Access to the Stony Island site for Earl Shapiro Hall allowed us to preserve the important outdoor spaces we have—athletic fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, gardens. That’s pretty special and unique for an urban school.

Beyond the Arts Hall, we’re looking at techniques to push further than hammer those into the ground. And we will be doing work on Saturdays.

CM As a parent, I know how important it is to have answers to all of these questions and make sure we’re communicating with everyone who will be affected by this work, so there will be meetings with all of those who will be affected by the changes and construction.

CM I’ve been impressed (but not surprised) with how the faculty found teaching moments in the building of Earl Shapiro Hall, and I’m certain they’ll find similar opportunities as everything happens on the main campus.

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DS There are lots of moving parts: by July 5 of this year, we will have moved into Earl Shapiro Hall and moved the remaining Blaine classrooms into the west half of Blaine so that renovations can start on the east half. Over winter break Blaine west will move back into Blaine east and similar abatement and renovations will start on the west side of the building. We expect all of Blaine Hall to be finished by July 2014.

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DM It was a long time in the planning but once work began it’s moved briskly. Starting this June we pack up all nursery through second grade classrooms and move them to Earl Shapiro Hall. As has been true all along, each phase of this project is contingent upon approval by the University of Chicago Board of Trustees and we’re hoping—and planning for—formal approval at their June meeting so that activities on the Arts Hall can start. Today’s conversation will give our community a sense of how the work will unfold—our planning will pay off no matter when we start.

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Originally it was an Elizabethan fair for U-High featuring a Shakespeare performance, a Maypole dance, and guests outfitted in period costumes. Nearly four decades later, Lab’s longest-running annual tradition, Rites of May, has evolved into a school-wide, multicultural happening, celebrating the school’s global reach through a weekend of cultural, culinary, and carnival events organized by dozens of parent and student volunteers. The activities reflect the incredible cultural diversity of the Lab community, where families report speaking more than 50 languages at home.

Connections 2013

More than 700 alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends celebrated Lab at the annual Connections gala fundraiser, which raised more than $400,000.

Funds raised this year and last together will make possible two innovative outdoor spaces. The large playground west of Shapiro Hall will be named for Connections, and on main campus, the “Pebbles” play area will be redesigned as a cutting-edge outdoor classroom available to all divisions. In keeping with Connections tradition, a quarter of all proceeds will fund student aid.

Connections 2013 also allowed an additional contribution to the School—the purchase and installation of a sculpture by artist (and Lab parent) Garland Taylor. Inspired by a Lab field trip with his Lower-schooler to the Garfield Park Conservatory, Mr. Garland has created this beautiful tree-form sculpture by welding and repurposing discarded bits of steel.
It was well after midnight, but the lights in Kovler Gymnasium burned bright. Under the glow, a small band of Lab parents was transforming the gym into something magical: an art gallery. For weeks prior, teachers collected works by students of all ages. Kindergarteners sculpted self-portraits using wire. Older artists experimented with landscape painting. Others sketched familiar campus buildings in Pop Art style.

Now was the time to hang it all—more than 1,000 pieces. The next morning, the gym would reopen as the second annual LabArts Expo. Designed to showcase students’ creative talents, the two-day event would turn Kovler into a vibrant arts enclave, complete with music, dance, and theater performances.

The evolution happened, quite literally, overnight. As soon as school ended on Thursday, parent volunteers and Lab art teachers gathered in the gym to begin the facelift. For three hours they constructed a maze of recycled-wood gallery walls, made for the event by sculptor and Lab parent Garland Taylor. By 6:30 p.m., they moved on to displaying the art, pinning each piece by hand.

“Everyone worked really hard,” says parent volunteer Cynthia Heusing, who spearheaded the February event and led the original push to bring it to Lab last year. Historically, a student art “mini-exposition” had been part of...
Connections, Lab’s annual fundraising gala at Navy Pier. As the 2012 event’s co-chair, Ms. Heusing saw an opportunity to turn the showcase into a stand-alone gallery that could better highlight students’ talents—and Lab’s dynamic arts curriculum.

Connect to art

“At Connections we would hear people say, ‘I wish I had more time to spend with the art,’” recalls Ms. Heusing, who co-chaired the gala for a second time this March. Yet with an auction and socializing happening throughout the evening, the exhibition rarely got its due. “Plus, if you didn’t go to Connections, you didn’t necessarily see what Lab had to offer in terms of art,” points out Cheryl Rudbeck, this year’s Connections co-chair and a member of the Development Committee. There had to be a better solution.

Aside from the work displayed at Connections or posted on bulletin boards, the school had no arts festival or all-school exhibition. Nor was there a way to highlight how students’ talents develop from nursery school to high school studio-art courses. “I really wanted parents to have an opportunity to see the scope of Lab’s arts education,” Ms. Heusing says.

LabArts was born. The inaugural event was a hit, drawing curious parents and students from every division. This year’s exhibition attracted an even larger audience, with an estimated 400- some students and parents visiting over the two days.

Come together

The massive undertaking wouldn’t have been possible without Ms. Heusing and a dedicated team of parent volunteers. “With this sort of parent collaboration, there is nothing we can’t or won’t do to provide our students with the stage they deserve to let their hard work shine,” says Jason Lopez, Lab’s associate director for educational programs, who was part of the event’s six-month planning process. Partnering with art and music teachers, parent leaders such as Ms. Heusing and Jennifer Rhind curated a full program of visual arts and performance.

For teachers and administrators, such parent leaders are part of what makes Lab unique. “Their tireless support brings our community together through countless events and endeavors.”

Displaying student work from all grade levels, the event also illuminates the pedagogy behind Lab’s arts education. When parents see kindergartners’ all-portraits made of wire and read a teacher’s accompanying explanation, for example, they learn how the project helps children represent their personalities. And as they walk through the gallery, passing from Lower to Middle to High School art, they see how the work—and students’ thinking—evolves.

Ultimately, for LabArts volunteers, the event is about putting kids and their intellectual development in the spotlight. “I’m glad for the opportunity,” says Ms. Heusing, who has served as a Lab volunteer for years and whose husband, David Kistenbroker, serves on Lab’s Board of Directors. “A corporate events planner by trade and parent to a third and a fifth grader, she’s characteristically humble about her role leading LabArts and Connections.

“I was introduced to it by other people who had done it many times,” Ms. Heusing says. Besides, she adds with a laugh, “my kids are only going to be this age and want me around school for a little while longer, so that’s really the bottom line.”

Commit to the kids . . . and pedagogy

Lab’s art and music teachers appreciate the opportunity to share student work. “These parents have a commitment to the arts and to making sure the arts are seen,” says Fine Arts Department Chair Gina Alicea, who sat on the LabArts planning committee. “I’m so thankful for their dedication to making sure our students are showcased.”

Others are less reserved about Ms. Heusing’s leadership. “She’s amazing,” says Ms. Coe, co-president-elect of the Parents’ Association and a member of Lab’s Development Committee with Ms. Heusing. “She can multitask, get everything done, and never show signs of stress,” says Ms. Coe. “She’s a complete asset to this community.”

Cherish the community

Strengthening that community is what motivates many parents to give their time to Lab. “That’s really the goal of my volunteerism,” says Ms. Rhind, a longtime Development Committee member and coordinator of the Parents’ Association’s speaker series. “To bring people together, to celebrate the kids, to support them in their growth. It doesn’t ever feel like work.”

Ms. Rhind agrees. With a son in kindergarten and twin girls starting nursery school in the fall, she wants to stay close to the Lab family. “I want to be connected to the school,” says Ms. Rhind.

For teachers and administrators, such parent leaders are part of what makes Lab unique. “Their tireless support brings our community together through countless events and endeavors that showcase the talents of our students,” says Beth Winbroud, acting executive director of Alumni Relations and Development. “Without the work of these dedicated volunteers,” she confesses, “I think Lab would grind to a halt.”

To find out how you can volunteer at Lab, contact either the Parents’ Association, parentassoc@ucls.uchicago.edu, or the Office of Alumni Relations and Development, alumni@ucls.uchicago.edu.
When Nancy Aronson was hired to help develop a new mission statement for the Laboratory Schools, she quickly realized one thing.

“important to have a process that represented the spirit of the school,” explains Aronson, a consultant who works with educational institutions around the country.

Rather than assigning a committee of wordsmiths, Aronson and a team of faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and students embarked on something resembling a full-scale ethnography of Lab. Through interviews, illustration, storytelling, and discussion, the team worked to identify the values that most define the Schools and describe them in a “powerful, meaningful” way, explains fifth-grade teacher and Lab parent Stephanie Mitzenmacher.

This “very Lab way of approaching things,” as Ms. Mitzenmacher describes it, was not only effective but also surprisingly engaging for many of those involved in shaping the new statement.

“someone says, ‘We’re going to spend the next hour working on the mission statement,’ you think, ‘Oh God, looks like a good time for a bathroom break,’” jokes Ben Zimmer, ’03, a member of the Lab Alumni Association’s executive board. “But the way they structured the exercise actually made it a fun experience.”

Emphasizing process as well as product is true to Lab’s philosophy, according to parent Christie Henry. That lesson was driven home the day she helped with a cooking lesson in her son’s class. “Parents try to come in and create these great recipes. But once you have

by Susie Allen, AB’09

On a Mission

Creating Lab’s new mission statement connects threads throughout the school community

“University of Chicago Laboratory Schools Mission

“The Laboratory Schools are home to the youngest members of the University of Chicago’s academic community. We ignite and nurture an enduring spirit of scholarship, curiosity, creativity, and confidence. We value learning experientially, exhibiting kindness, and honoring diversity.”
Many members of the Lab community future careers in learning. In high school, kids were talking about specific things that were fun to learn, and fun to learn, the fourth graders were talking kindergartners were talking about how it was interview fellow students at all grade levels. “The skills she honed working for the Midway Junior Marissa Page used the journalism by almost anything arose in story after story. The idea that learning can be inspired the teacher asked. “And what is this thing that Lab teaches you to love to learn?” she says. “It’s more than a statement that makes its members think, “That feels like us.”

Finding commonality Ms. Aronson and Associate Director of Educational Programs Jason Lopez decided that Lab’s spirit of curiosity and discovery should guide the process. They convened meetings with teachers, alumni, and parents and asked them to talk about experiences and stories that captured the essence of Lab. Common themes emerged from the stories. “It was really interesting to see that regardless of how you’re connected to the school, everyone pulls the same things out,” Ms. Mitzenmacher says.

Ms. Aronson recalls one illustrative story told by a Lab teacher. She was watching a group of students return to their classroom after playing outside. One student stood dawdling and staring at the ground. Rather than disciplining him, the teacher crouched down to see what had caught his attention—an interesting-looking rock, it turned out. “Well, would you like to bring that in to the classroom?” the teacher asked.

The idea that learning can be inspired by almost anything arose in story after story. Junior Matthias Pape used the journalism skills she honed working for the Midway to interview fellow students at all grade levels. “The kindergartners were talking about how it was fun to learn, the fourth graders were talking about specific things that were fun to learn, and in high school, kids were talking about their future careers in learning.”

Many members of the Lab community spoke of the school’s kindness and respect for differences. One student, Ms. Aronson recalls, believed she would have been bullied at a school where intellectual achievement was valued less. Even at the nursery level, Ms. Henry says, children are encouraged to consider how their behavior might affect their peers.

“I think that Lab—especially for a place that’s filled with so many accomplished, ambitious students, teachers, and parents—there is a sort of mutual respect,” Ms. Zimmer says. “You’ve taught a lot of important, basic life skills. That’s something you don’t get at a lot of schools.”

After identifying these major themes—creativity, curiosity, kindness, diversity—a smaller group broke into pairs and wrote first drafts of the mission statement. To Ms. Mitzenmacher, it initially seemed impossible that they would be able to find a mission statement that spoke to the entire Lab community: “How on earth are we going to find something that’s meaningful to people who teach three-year-olds, and also meaningful to people who teach (students) about to head off to college?”

Yet through “constant dialogue and conversations that felt like it was moving toward something,” Ms. Mitzenmacher says, she group arrived at a consensus and gradually narrowed nine drafts down to one. Director David Magill presented the final draft to the Lab community for feedback, which was largely positive. “It felt like it was just magic,” Ms. Mitzenmacher says.

Why we stay engaged “Lab was a great school without working on a new mission statement,” Ms. Aronson says. But developing the new statement reminded the community “what’s at the heart of what makes education so terrific at Lab” and created a conversation that connected the threads of the school.

“Lab was a great school without working on a new mission statement,” Ms. Aronson says. But developing the new statement reminded the community “what’s at the heart of what makes education so terrific at Lab” and created a conversation that connected the threads of the school.
Carl Christ, ’40, SB’43, PhD’50, is a product of storied times at UChicago. He attended the Laboratory Schools and the Hutchins College, worked on the Manhattan Project, and earned degrees in the University’s legendary physics and economics departments. In economics, he found, he could use his interest in mathematics to address social problems. On the Johns Hopkins University faculty for much of his six-decade career, he’s been a leading figure in econometrics, the most mathematical branch of the field.

During his career, Professor Christ wrote one of the first econometrics textbooks, *Econometric Models and Methods* (Wiley, 1966) and published more than 100 articles in journals, books, and other publications. He’s served as board chair of the National Bureau of Economic Research, and served on the governing boards of the Econometric Society (where he is a fellow) and the American Economic Association. He’s also a fellow of the American Statistical Association.

It all started, he says, when he was in fifth grade and transferred from Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to what was then called the University Elementary School. Professor Christ grew up in Chicago’s Beverly Hills neighborhood on the Southwest Side. When CPS proved not a good fit for him, his parents enrolled him at Lab, where some of their friends sent their children.

Professor Christ’s first teacher was longtime faculty member Ida B. DePencier. “The thing I liked about her so much is that when she asked a question, she didn’t give you a clue if you were giving the right answer,” he says. “I thought that was wonderful preparation for life.” He remembered it throughout his teaching career at Johns Hopkins.

He also remembers biology teacher Orin Denton Frank, who had a summer home in the Indiana Dunes and took his students there. “He pointed out the many types of plants growing in the dunes area,” Professor Christ says, “from the beach grasses by the lake to the pine, poplar, beech, oak, and maple trees in the woods.”

Professor Christ’s introduction to physics took place at U-High. He took basic physics with Clifford Holley, who was the subject of a poem that appeared in the student newspaper (see sidebar). Then came a course taught by Selby Millmore Skinner, which was, says Professor Christ, “one of the survey courses that the University, at that time, was giving to freshmen.” U-High didn’t teach calculus then, but George
Professor Christ helped the push to make economics a more quantitative field, an advancement that aligned with developments in high-powered computing.

As the Midway sees it

One college deferral isn’t the end for this student

From U-HighMidway

One big day for the Arts

Out with the old, in with the new

Founded on new format and the opportunity to connect with the Schools and fellow classmates. Please contact your class representative or the Office of Alumni Relations to find out more.

...or the Office of Alumni Relations to find out more.

Professor Christ helped the push to make economics a more quantitative field, an advancement that aligned with developments in high-powered computing.

The days before had been harder than the days after. Dropout rates in class were reduced by a granting of an attitude shift that stemmed “just give me a decision already!”

The peer pressure that U-Highers applied, and we launched a cubicle-sized weighing instrument to find out who else belonged in our邦

Weounded over our anxiety, sharing every detail of our spirituality in the Hymn. Dr. M. Buntz’s “Heads to the Sky” (from “Deus, Transressor!” You

He encouraged several only five U-Highers applied, but I wasn’t frightened. They didn’t have to take any of us.

We were competing among scores with each other. We had finally completed our other applications, I’ve had several opportunities, the whole thing. My gut feeling gets stronger and stronger that I won’t get it Yale, at least, but that hopefully two or three other schools will come through for me. I’m out of college society forever, but I won’t it will evolve in June, when the decisions will fall. I hope it isn’t unanswerable to expect to get in somewhere, and begin to enjoy my time there. College is fun, or at least that’s what they say.

...or the Office of Alumni Relations to find out more.

In the last two years, the Class of 1940-49 has had the opportunity to...
Let us honor you as part of the Phoenix Society

Consider making a planned gift
Planned gifts come in many forms, from bequests to charitable trusts and gift annuities. You can even designate the Laboratory 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.

Let us honor you as part of the Phoenix Society
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.

Have you already included Lab in your estate plans? Please let us know so we can honor you in your lifetime and discuss your desired goal for your gift.

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

Earl Shapiro Hall Grand Opening Celebration
Saturday, September 28, 2013
Details to come for this community, family-friendly day of fun
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