Dear Friends,

Having worked in schools for my entire career, for me the start of the New Year is really September. By January, my “new year’s plans” are already four months old. And so the winter break gives me a moment to pause and reflect upon how those plans are falling into place. At this time, two things seem most important to share with you:

After December’s tragic events in Connecticut, it was natural for our parents and employees to ask questions about safety at our own schools. I reassure all that the safety of our children is at the heart of all that we do. In addition to all security measures previously in place, we had already been well into a search for a full-time director of security, hired by the University's Police Department. This individual will begin his/her work with us shortly after the winter quarters begin and report to Lab’s Executive Director of Finance and Operations Christopher Jones and the chief of the University’s police department.

When this director is in place, we plan to convene a meeting with the entire Lab community to review our practices and procedures, as we continue to seek further improvements. We also know, also, that all new construction (including the Early Childhood Campus) and all of our planned renovations have made security a priority as part of the design. Decisions made by our architects and construction managers have been informed by consultation with national leaders in the industry.

In his book, Experience and Education, John Dewey wrote, “We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future.”

Our community—teachers, administrators, and parents—continues discussions around updating Lab’s mission statement. While not yet complete, the process has left me (and I hope others) very much in awe of the wonderful 125-year legacy we are lucky enough to steward. The words mentioned in these conversations reflect the depth and richness of the Lab experience: wonder, spirt, creativity, critical thinking, community, collaboration, joy, empathy, authenticity, responsibility, independence, optimism.

What impresses me most is that at Lab these are not just words, they are the beliefs and values that inform most everything we do at every grade-level. Who wouldn’t want to attend a school that embraces all these things and does so with the excellence we see at Lab?

In his book, Experience and Education (1958), Lab founder and philosopher John Dewey wrote, “We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future.” It is a humbling notion—to be mindful that this is not a simple task.

At this festive time of year, I cannot help but be thankful and remain committed to doing my best to extract that full meaning of each present experience.

May 2013 bring you and yours happiness and health.

David W. Magill, EdD
Director
Students and Faculty Make News

Seniors Amartya Das and Danny Zhang were honored as 2012 Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology semi-finalists. Both submitted research projects born of work they did during their Summer Link internships.

Amartya worked with mentor Jon Staley to study the mechanism by which the helicase Br2 unwinds the U4-U6 complex in the splicing of introns from mRNAs. Mutations in the Br2 gene have been shown to lead to Retinitis Pigmentosa, a degenerative eye disease. Amartya’s goal was to shed light on the connection between errors in Br2’s unwinding of the U4-U6 complex and how errors in splicing could lead to the disease.

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Last summer, the Chicago Tribune interviewed U-High science teacher David Derbes about his work and ongoing friendship with physicist Peter Higgs when CERN announced the discovery of a new particle, the Higgs boson. Mr. Derbes met the renowned physicist in 1975 at the University of Edinburgh. “Thus began an enduring friendship that prompted Derbes’ emotions to overflow when he watched his mentor weep as hundreds applauded [the] announcement that scientists had found near-unconvertible evidence the elusive Higgs boson particle bearing Peter Higgs’ name exists.

Digital Dewey

Among the newest acquisitions by the UChicago Library is The Dewey Lectures, a fully searchable, electronic edition of 15 sets of class lecture notes of Lab founder, philosopher, and educator John Dewey. Only seven of the 15 sets of this edition have appeared in print; the remaining eight are previously unpublished lectures from 1892–1903. Dewey taught at the University of Chicago from 1894–1904; thus, the majority of the lecture material reflects his time at the University.

The digital format will allow researchers to perform complex and in-depth searches not possible with print formats, hopefully leading to new insights into Dewey’s work.

Current Lab students, faculty, and staff can access these lectures at any time from their computers. Lab alumni can view them at Regenstein with a library card or a day pass.

New board members

Appointed by University of Chicago President Robert J. Zimmer, the following individuals have joined the Laboratory Schools’ Board of Directors:

Andrew G. Neal, ’78
A lawyer who served on the Lab board from 2002–11, Mr. Neal has a child in the Lower School, two in the High School, and two who have already graduated from U-High. He is a Lab+ Campaign co-chair, and performs other volunteer leadership roles at Lab.

Elizabeth A. Parker, AM’87
An civic and community volunteer, Ms. Parker has unchared Connections twice and held a variety of volunteer leadership roles at Lab. She has two children in the Lower School.

Jack R. Polsky
President, chief executive officer, and director of Harris Investors, Mr. Polsky has two children at Lab in Nursery/Kindergarten.

No shrinking violet: Nursery teacher Carrie Collin stopped a Chicago mounted police officer on the street and by the end of the conversation, a Midway Pleasant surprise had been planned for her students. Officers Ferrell and Keesman explained what it’s like to partner with their horses, Francis and Skip. Did you know horses get new shoes every six weeks, take showers, and get haircuts?
Learning to Make a Winning Argument

Freshman English curriculum lays foundation for literary analysis

Arguing might seem to come naturally to teenagers, but freshman English students are learning the proper way to make their case. To help, the five English I teachers have changed their curriculum to start the year with a six-week unit on argument before diving into major texts (first up: Of Mice and Men).

“What are the assumptions, rules, and beliefs that actually connect my evidence back to my claim?” For students (and some adults), “it’s hard to see how your argument might be flawed.”

“Hitting kids freshman year with both deep literary analysis and full papers that require synthesizing multiple reasons into a thesis was burying too many of them,” says English teacher Mark Krewatch. Now students first learn how to reason, using real-world scenarios, short stories, and plays. By tackling argument early, he says, “we’re able to identify problems in the logical-reasoning process before we delve into the literature.”

In one exercise, the teachers set up a murder scene. The students looked at the evidence and wrote short essays about the claim, the evidence, and the reasoning used to declare a verdict. “It’s a slippery concept,” Mr. Krewatch says. “What are the assumptions, rules, and beliefs that actually connect my evidence back to my claim?” For students (and some adults), “it’s hard to see how your argument might be flawed.”

The students spent two weeks analyzing the role of homework and whether it should be limited, studied inferences in children’s books such as Jeremy Dunn’s A Monster, and spent a few days on the play Trifles, the story of a small-town murder where the men search for obvious evidence to confirm their suspicions, while the women find the truth in seemingly extraneous details. “You don’t want to start with an argument and find the evidence to prove it,” Mr. Krewatch says. “You want to look at the text and build your arguments from the evidence there, so you have a sharp piece of writing.” So far it appears to be working: “We feel like we’ve developed a language the students understand, one that we didn’t have before.”

The curriculum change stemmed from meetings the department has held since Mr. Krewatch and Rachel Nielsen joined the faculty in 2010, and the work continued as part of Lab’s professional development program. The idea for an argument unit came from former department chair Carrie Koenen. “As a team,” Mr. Krewatch says, “we jumped on it.”

The group is working on other ideas, such as finding the proper place of grammar in English lessons, and working with school counselors to design a “boot camp” for rising freshmen who could benefit from “some warm-up going into the year,” Mr. Krewatch says. The boot camp started this past summer.

“As a group, we have done some neat stuff and really pushed each other,” Mr. Krewatch says. “No one feels like they have to do the exact same thing, but everyone feels they have a real investment in the team.”

Recommended Seeing

World Language teacher Vicki Schneider relies heavily on the arts as she teaches French, and urges us all to see as much as we read. She recommends—and encourages—Gustave Caillebotte’s Paris Street, Rainy Day.

Writing about Paris Street, Rainy Day in 400 words is like having to choose only one item from a laden holiday table. One logical entry into this magisterial feast of a painting is the act of walking in the context of 19th century Paris. La flânerie, best translated as strolling, is one of the leisure activities that industrialized 19th century Paris begat. People walked: in part due to new boulevards till by gas lamps (like the one providing the structural axis of the painting), in part due to a proliferation of new shops targeting a burgeoning middle class and the arrival of unmarried working women from the provinces, and finally thanks to the absence of trash, mud, feces, bits of food, scraps of rags, and hair (that rag picker would collect and sell to wigmakers).

In 19th century Paris, flânerie was much more than the English word stroll connotes. In the Grand Larousse du XIX siècle, there are as many definitions of the verb flâner as there are strollers in Caillebotte’s painting. Flânerie could be the springboard for urban renewal of Paris; this one-third included the color, the sordidness, and the exuberance that Charles Baudelaire and Victor Hugo celebrated.

While this painting cannot claim being emotional like those of Renoir, there is a certain flatness of feeling, like the 19th-century state of ennui that affected so many artists and writers of Caillebotte’s time. Paris Street, Rainy Day shows us the grandness of modern Paris, all the while evoking the wrecking ball rupture with the past. Paris Street, Rainy Day can be seen at the Art Institute. Ms. Schneider encourages you to see it—and take your children.

There are as many definitions of the verb flâner as there are strollers in Caillebotte’s painting.

inspiration, a way to pick up girls, a sly lens into the latest fashion trends, a source of urban ecstasy, or a magnificent way to waste one’s time (a kind of moving, outdoor Facebook). So, with all these different definitions of flânerie, why are the twenty-odd people, umbrellas in hand, somnambulating in different directions, barely interacting, let alone experiencing urban ecstasy? The answer comes as much from what’s missing in the painting as what’s shown. In 1877 this intersection was completely new: we don’t see its former inhabitants, their presence was erased when one-third of Paris’ population was displaced during Haussmann’s

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in the halls

Apple Scavenge

The drought couldn’t derail a longstanding Lab tradition

“I’ve been teaching at the Laboratory Schools for 32 years,” says Lower School teacher Spike Wilson, “and the second grade has always gone apple picking.” But what happens when there are no apples? Typically, during the first few weeks of school, says Mr. Wilson, second graders learn about the lifecycle of the apple tree, and in late September or early October, head out to Radke’s Orchards in Michigan City, IN, to pick apples. But last March’s unusually warm weather caused many trees to bloom early, and subsequent April frosts destroyed most of those blooms. Before school started, the Radke family emailed Lab’s five second-grade teachers with some bad news: they had only 10 percent of their usual crop. The orchard would be closed for apple picking, and the owners would try to sell the apples they had. They asked if Lab would consider heading down during the first week of school for a day of educational activities and an abbreviated version of the usual apple picking.

“The teachers got together the very first day of school, and we agreed that this was a really interesting proposition,” says Mr. Wilson, “and that we would go ahead

Lights, Camera, L’Action! 开演 ¡Acción! Action!

For third-graders at Lab, May means show time. After spring break, they prepare for plays memorizing lines, blocking, and rehearsing their parts. The plays, by the way, are not in English. As Lab, world language study begins in third grade. Students choose a language—Chinese, French, German, or Spanish—which they study 25 minutes a day, four days a week. The year culminates in theatrical performances for family members, faculty, and fellow students. “It’s a chance to use language in a communicative way,” says Diane Jackson, who has taught French in the Lower School for nearly 20 years. “It’s not just repetition or memorization; they’re telling a story.”

Those stories combine students’ interests with the year’s lessons about language and culture. The French play, for instance, is constructed as a group of kids watching TV and includes slapstick commercials for snails and stinky cheese (the students love to get a laugh). For many students, it is the first time they’ve acted or performed for an audience—another opportunity. Ms. Jackson points out, for growth. “Motivated, thrilled, extreme joy, excitement, elation,” Ms. Jackson says. “When they’re doing, they’re so happy—that’s really the word. They are happy.”

Students perform in German last spring.

From the Syllabi

Standing up for the freedom to read during Banned Books Week

“The Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary has got to be my favorite ‘Huh?!?!’ book,” says librarian Shirley Vul, of texts that have been simultaneously banned by some and celebrated by others. The concept of censorship and challenging books is introduced in the fifth-grade library curriculum during Banned Books Week, and later in the year Lisa Miller’s eighth graders read from the list of challenged books in conjunction with a censorship unit. A few years ago, Mark Holden’s The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, which made the banned list, was Lab’s all-school First Day Selection, and Libbies routinely read these challenged texts:
Let Me Tell You a Story

When librarians Irene Fahrenwald, Mary Ogilvie, and Lee McLain sit down kindergarteners and first and second graders to hear a story, they aren’t just there to pass the time. Lab’s storytelling program is a carefully developed curriculum designed to aid the development of the students’ minds—and entertain them as well.

Storytelling has a long history at Lab. The University’s first president, William Rainey Harper, recruited folktale collector Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen to tell stories there. For the current curriculum, the librarians have records of stories told every week at Lab since 1954. The storytelling centers on tales from the oral tradition, rather than literary tales, in part because the oral stories have been perfected over time, Ms. Fahrenwald says. “The psychological underpinnings, the beauty and rhythm of the language, the structure of stories—all these things have been honed over generations and generations of people retelling these oral traditions. You get these beautiful, gem-like stories.”

The children are active listeners. As they listen, they develop their imaginations and their ability to visualize—a boost for memory development. The students don’t have to decode written words as when reading, which makes it easier for the storytellers to present unfamiliar words. Then, after being exposed to some of the world’s best stories, the children can recognize a well-constructed story by the time they’re old enough to read with a critical eye.

The librarians almost never repeat stories to the same children as they grow from kindergarten through second grade. Ms. Fahrenwald says. Every week the students hear a new one from the librarians’ expansive mental library. (Just how many stories is that? “I have no idea,” laughs Ms. Fahrenwald.) New stories that don’t succeed with the students get the boot quickly.

From the children’s perspective, story time is a beloved half-hour. The librarians feel the same way. Even though it takes work to learn the stories and refine their delivery, Ms. Fahrenwald says, “it’s one of the most enjoyable things we do.

The librarians have records of stories told every week at Lab since 1954.
A Path to Less Stress

A group from Lab—adults and students—learns helpful strategies

It’s no secret that, like high-schoolers all over America, U-Highers feel pressure—to excel in school, to get into college, to navigate family expectations. So, after Penn pediatrics professor Ken Ginsburg, an expert on resilience, addressed parents and students last spring about reducing stress, it seemed natural to continue the conversation.

In November, a nine-person contingent of faculty, administrators, students, and parents attended a workshop hosted by Challenge Success, a Stanford-based organization responding to American students’ issues, at which Dr. Ginsburg spoke.

“Over the course of the workshop we talked frequently about sleep and time management,” says U-High Principal Scott Fech. “Adults know adolescents need sleep to be successful.—Dr. Ginsburg says nine hours—but students often take on too many responsibilities and have too much homework. “With nine hours of sleep and seven hours of school, then you need down time, family time, eating, homework,” says Mr. Fech. “We need to put realistic expectations on how much kids can get done in one day.”

Working with a coach, the group identified symptoms and root causes of stress at Lab. Then the group split up. The students—juniors Maud Jansen and Rahul Mehta—attended sessions such as “Student Views of Stress” and “Strategies for Coping.” The adults went to sessions like “Real Success: Coping with Life” or “A Healthy Approach to College Admissions.”

At day’s end, the Lab group reconvened to discuss what they’d learned and begin to formulate a plan.

The students were very insightful,” Mr. Fech says. “They’re focused more on the end than the journey. That’s something we need to help them regain. “It’s during the journey, Dr. Ginsburg teaches, that students learn resilience. As Mr. Fech puts it, “Kids learn from processes.” They will make mistakes, he says, and it’s important that “we support them and teach them to learn from those mistakes.”

The group planned to meet again “to brainstorm the ‘so what’ part of this,” Mr. Fech says. Whether that means evaluating homework or last year’s schedule change is hard to say. The workshop’s main message, he says, was that “we need to look at everything we are doing so we can support our students in all of their pursuits.”

in the halls

Happy Harvest

Woodlawn Nursery School backyard transforms into a fall festival

Bales of straw get stacked around the playground like oversized Legos, scarecrows stand sentry, and pumpkins large and small dot the area. A folk band visits, and students learn about music history as they dance and play. Inside, the children use an apple press, bought last year with help from the Parents’ Association, to make their own cider. Teachers spur learning and development by harnessing children’s curiosity and encouraging sensory exploration. Making scarecrows, for instance, exercises imagination, teamwork, and fine motor skills, and it teaches the parts of the body.

The festival’s emphasis on the natural world—as Ms. Dodd puts it, “turning our focus outdoors”—is part of a year-round mission. Each spring the students plant seeds in the community garden, learn about the growing cycle, and nurture the plants. In autumn, they harvest the fruits and vegetables, making them into treats such as the butternut-squash bread Ms. Dodd’s class shared at the festival.

Also from the garden: a pumpkin on the playground, the offspring of a proud second-year Nursery Schooler. Last year he and his parents contributed a pumpkin to the festival. When it decomposed, he saved the seeds and planted them in the garden.

His parents brought him to water it over the summer, and, with the teachers’ help, he grew three sizable orange gourds.

Two disappeared before the festival. He shrugged off the loss and presented the remaining pumpkin to his classmates, asking only that they save the seeds and plant them next year.

“His work ethic is amazing,” says Ms. Dodd. “It’s a way for Woodlawn Nursery School students to learn outside the box.”

Students manipulate leaves, feathers, bark, dried berries, and other natural materials to make multimedia pictures, leaf etchings, and even pigments. “We try to honor a child’s love of the season?—then build a curriculum around it,” says Ms. Dodd. “We look at it from a young child’s perspective—what do they love about the season?—then build a curriculum around that. We try to honor a child’s love of the changing of the seasons and bringing together communities because of the harvest. They love apples! How can we build that with a purpose? How can we use that to make the sensory systems come alive?”

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in the halls

Every Picture Tells a Story

And so can every student.

The black silhouettes hanging in MS274 give an idea not only of what Staci Garner’s eighth graders look like, but also how they present themselves, both on paper and before an audience. Each year the students trace a classmate’s silhouette onto newsprint. Then they take the silhouettes and fill the background with colors and images that represent who they are. In turn, students stand before the class to share their silhouettes and the stories they’ve chosen to tell.


“E is for excellent. L is for lovable. …

…the idea is to get to the ‘why,’”

Ms. Garner says. “Why do these images represent you?”

“Why do you like Football? Why do you like art? Why do you like this person?”

Guerilla Acts

Seventh graders commit random acts of kindness

Co-counselor Sylvia Aschliman receives a random act of kindness.

It’s 10:45 on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. To celebrate the holiday, the students are gone. Minutes later, the students half-running down the hall with excitement. They stop outside the language lab, where Colin Warren works as a technician integration specialist. Ms. Jackson snaps a quick photo. “Get in the position of attack. Look like you’re going to attack!” Then she ropes into and present webs with a magazine. Waver Times, and a cake. Mr. Warren, utterly surprises, starts laughing. “Thank you,” he says. “This is really, really generous.”

The second target, security guard Cynthia Boykin, is not there. So the attackers, carrying plates of cookies and a cake, move down to the basement and pupils to the MS274, the war room for Guerilla Acts of Random Kindness. The desks are covered with cakes and plates of cookies. On the board, Ms. Jackson has written “The Plan” with a list of four targets who will be hit during the 45-minute period. “I’m trying to get them to learn that rather than talent they are born with, is key to their success.”

Sports Highlights

Girls Swimming

Swimmers set two new school records. The 300-yard freestyle team of seniors Annette Cooper, Sarah Corrigan, Liz Keung-Zielke, Lisa Libes, and Elisabeth Slanda, was named ISL Coach-of-the-Year.

Boys Cross-Country

Freshman Jacob Mayer and Junior Max Volchenboum were named All-ISL, based on their top-ten finish in the conference meet. Jacob and Max also qualified to run in the IHSAA 2A State meet, with strong performances in the regional and sectional meets.

Boys Soccer

Junior Jonathan King was named first team All-ISL and earned honorable mention from the Illinois High School Coaches Association; and freshman Glick were named All-ISL second team; and the team was awarded the Mini Rys Sportsmanship Award for Illinois District I (there are 14 districts).

Lobbies Celebrate UChicago Athletics

Halle of Fame Inductees

Five former U-High basketball players attended the University of Chicago 2012 Athletics Hall of Fame Induction Dinner in October (as pictured). Bill Gray, ’43, PhB’48, MBA’50; John Davye, ’56, AB’61, JD’62; Mitchell Watkins, ’52, AB’60, MBA’65; laboratory Schools Chairman of the Board John W. Rogers, Jr., ’76; and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, ’82.

Among this year’s inductees were Tom Lisco, ’56, SB’61, MD’67, and the late Stanley Duncan, PhD’65, father of Arne, who accepted the award on his father’s behalf. Mr. Lisco, an outstanding swimmer in the 1950s, was unable to attend, so his brother-in-law, Hal Lieberman, ’60, AB’64, accepted on his behalf.

The Athletic Hall of Fame honors those men and women who have distinguished themselves (and the University) in the field of intercollegiate athletics, or who have contributed to the development of intercollegiate athletics at the University of Chicago.

Other U-Highers who went on to study and compete in athletics at the University, and who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame, include: Mr. Gray (basketball and baseball); Mr. Watkins (basketball and track); and Edward M. (“Ted”) Hayden, ’29, PhB’33, AB’54 (track and coaching); Don Hildebrand, ’70, AB’75, MAT’76 (track and cross-country); and Helen Strauss, ’80, AB’84, MD’90 (basketball and track).

Girls Tennis

Senior Laura Anderson won the ISL singles championship and was named ISL Player-of-the-Year. She qualified for the State Championship, finishing third in the Sectional tournament. The following players were named to the ISL All-Conference team: Patricia Almeda, Grace Anderson, Della Brown, Leah Halperingstra, Beverly Lau, Hannah Resnick, and Jan Xue.

Girls Volleyball

The Maroons advanced to the Elite Eight within IHSAA 2A competition, with regional and sectional championship wins. The sectional title win over Parker was U-High’s first sectional title this year. All-ISL honors were won by sophomore Ellen Miller first team, senior Maya Hansen second team, and junior Gabrielle Rosenbacher honorable mention.

LALIFE Winter 2012/13

LALIFE Winter 2012/13
Making a House a Home

Donna McFarlane’s classroom in Blaine 310 is uniquely hers—a round table in the middle of the room serves as her “desk” and a welcoming and busy command center. From here, she might work one-on-one with a second grade student, coach children working at tables to her left and her right, or field questions from the students on the rug in the reading area in front of her.

This room has been her home for 22 of her 28 years teaching at the Laboratory Schools, and she notes, “I’ve never lived in any house for nearly that long.”

As she contemplates the Nursery/Kindergarten and Primary School move into the new Earl Shapiro Hall on the Stony Island Early Childhood Campus (ECC), it is with both excitement and trepidation. Psychologists will tell you that along with birth and death, moving is right up there as one of life’s big stressors. And so it goes with classrooms, teachers, parents, and even students. Moving means exciting new beginnings tempered with nostalgia and even a bit of worry.

These conversations have been unfolding in the classrooms and as teachers take their students to visit the construction site. “For the older students the move is one of anticipation. It means that they will be older, which to a child means an awful lot of good things,” says Nursery teacher Meredith Dodd, who teaches both three- and four-year-olds. “For the adults, there is also anticipation. We wonder how the space of the classroom will feel once inhabited. How will it affect our teaching being in such a large school? How will the size of the classrooms feel compared to our current size? We anticipate bumps in the move, but overall we are looking forward to being together in one space as an N/K School faculty and Primary School faculty.”

“ar” they’re not just planning for now, but for 25 years from now. Everyone is excited about all that is new, but still, change is hard,” says Ms. Young. “I am totally confident that the teachers are going to use this amazing new space in wondrous ways.”

Planning for the new building has unfolded over years and has included most everyone from the Lab community—teachers, administrators, parents, students, and even educators and experts from across the country. Now, with the last of the glass exterior in place, attention has turned to the interior details.

This is a house to be inhabited. Teachers have worked together to choose the furniture lines they want to use for their divisions. N/K preferred natural wood tones; Primary, color.) Divisions. (N/K preferred natural lines they want to use for their furnishings. N/K classrooms will adjoin one another by way of a special shared space, preferred furnishings. N/K classrooms will adjoin one another by way of a special shared space, a significantly expanded Blaine Library.

“Teachers are working with designers to lay out their specific classroom and select their preferred furnishings. N/K classrooms will join one another by way of a special shared space, and teachers are discussing how they want to use that collaborative space—possibly for art rooms, large block play, or group projects. Says Principal Carla Young, “Teachers came up with this idea and it will be interesting to see how all the possibilities play out.” N/K teachers also drove the decision to ensure that every first floor classroom has direct access to outdoor space.

LAB+ INVESTING IN THE POWER OF LAB

by Catherine Braendel, ’81

What’s next? The 2013 Timeline

July

ECC construction completed. Moving units arrive to take N–2 classrooms to ECC.

Summer

Pending University approval: East side of Blaine Hall vacated, renovation begins: heating, cooling, sprinkler systems; wiring for electric, upgraded AC technology; new spaces for learning and counseling, two new art studios, a larger LS computer Lab, and a significantly expanded Blaine Library.

Winter

Blaine East completed. Classrooms open. Blaine West vacated, similar infrastructure work takes place but includes three new and two renovated science labs and five dedicated world language/multiple use classrooms—a first for the Lower School.

The library, a soaring centerpiece and the heart of the new building with expansive views, is in many ways an ode to the Schools’ University of Chicago connections—everyone obvious others are moving books and Chicago has committed to onsite libraries as a statement about the importance of research and inquiry. And so it goes with Lab: the ECC library will have room for 20,000 books and, for the first time, truly enough space to allow multiple classes and uses at any given time.

from the perspective of the architects, Valerio Dewalt Train and FGM Architects, the process has been one of enormous collaboration. Says lead architect Joe Valerio. “I think the result of this shared work is that Lab will have an early childhood education center as innovative as any in the United States.” Monies from Connections 2013 will be combined with those raised last year to fund “Green Spaces + Places” at Lab, including new areas of the ECC.
More than 160 alumni gathered in Chicago this fall to launch Lab’s new Alumni Association. Led by volunteer leaders from across the country—Chicago, New York City, Boston, Washington, DC, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Haven, and Nashville—the group is tasked with increasing outreach to the Lab and U-High alumni population.

Alumni who are interested in participating in the Alumni Association should contact Monica Barnes, 773-702-9988, mbarnes@ucls.uchicago.edu.

A winter winetasting event held in Ida Noyes Hall brought together nearly 200 people—parents and alumni—to thank and recognize members of the Dewey and DePencier Societies.

For information about the DePencier Society (recognizing alumni who give $1,000+ annually to Lab) or the Dewey Founders Society (for alumni, parents, friends who contribute $2,500+), contact the Office of Alumni Relations and Development at 773-702-0578.

In September, more than 70 Lab faculty, staff, administrators, and parents served as a welcoming committee to 126 new parents at what has become an annual event—the New Parent Reception—this year held at the University’s Gordon Center for Integrative Science.

Alumni Association Launch Party

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New Parents Reception

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UChicago astrophysicist, Stephan Meyer, ’70, explores the skies over Antarctica

Nature has christened Antarctica the coldest climate on Earth, a place where temperatures plummet to –100°F. Six months of the year, the sun beats down on the South Pole 24/7; then it disappears, plunging the continent into complete darkness for the rest of the year. The South Pole sits atop 9,000 feet of ice, which extends nearly two miles straight down.

There is no native human population, only scientists—such as astrophysicist Stephan Meyer ’70—who brave the chill by donning polar jackets and ski masks. Unlike Norwegian adventurer Roald Amundsen, who made the inaugural South Pole expedition in 1911, this University of Chicago researcher and his team come to explore not the ice-caked terrain, but rather the cosmos overhead.

This land of extremes is the ideal place to investigate some of the universe’s thorniest questions. How did the galaxies form? How fast is the universe expanding? What exactly is dark energy, the unidentified substance that makes up roughly 76 percent of the universe? (“We only call it dark energy because we don’t know what else to call it,” Professor Meyer says.)

Their laboratory is the South Pole Telescope, which measures 10 meters in diameter and can map large swaths of space with greater precision than any predecessor. Antarctic’s cool,
Background radiation. The prize citation

“Now it’s become a testable science.”

“In August 2012, Mr. Meyer received a "Dark energy seems to be expanding the universe, fighting against the gravity we have here," Professor Meyer says. "But getting the measure of how far it’s expanding and how fast it’s moving is tough. Because dark energy is thought to thwart the growth of clusters, charting their development allows researchers to home in on statistical models about how the universe works.

“When I started in this field 30 years ago, cosmologists were thought to be aloof," Professor Meyer says. "That’s actually the best time of day."
For a country so close to the United States, Cuba can seem worlds away. This past summer, 15 U-Highers had the opportunity to witness daily life in Cuba on a nine-day photography trip. The students began their journey in Havana, then traveled west to the lush, tobacco-growing region. Along the way they captured thousands of sights few Americans have seen.

Photography teacher Liese Ricketts, who led the trip alongside Spanish teacher Craig Reubelt, says travel is especially significant for photographers in search of a new perspective. “To just see what you haven’t seen, and feel like a small fish in a big world, is an important feeling,” she says. “Beginning to make yourself look in new ways induces awe.”

Mr. Reubelt, Ms. Ricketts, and the students were surprised to discover how open the country was and how receptive the Cuban people were to their American guests. “What impressed me most,” Mr. Reubelt says, “was the amount of freedom we had.”

In Havana, the students visited art galleries and landmarks, but also roamed the streets with their cameras and two Cuban photojournalists as guides. For Elizabeth Gelman, ’12, the unstructured time—“just the simple act of walking around”—was the highlight of the trip. “It was very easy to take pictures there—the people were so willing,” agrees Katherine Garvey, ’12. “It was refreshing to go to a place where they were so open, friendly, and welcoming.”

In the evenings the students reviewed their work with Ms. Ricketts, who pushed them to develop their point of view and photographic style. “Each student had a different kind of vision emerging,” she says. “They recognized that their style was coming out.”

The trip helped students develop their language skills as well. “Having firsthand experience with any Spanish-speaking country is the best way to learn about the language and the culture,” says Mr. Reubelt. “Immersion is the only way you’re ever going to get really fluent.”

“It was more than just the photography,” agrees Ms. Ricketts. “The experience was educational, in every sense of the word.”

For many Americans, classic American cars are emblematic of life in Cuba. “We find little bits of ourselves, little bits of our culture, in this other culture,” Ms. Ricketts says. For Elizabeth, “The cars were amazing and I loved every single one. It was like being in the ‘50s.” She was drawn to the color and fresh paint of this sleek red Chevy Bel Air on the streets of Havana, contrasted with the crumbling wall behind it. “It was just very representative of what I had seen,” she says. Throughout the trip Elizabeth focused on image composition. Says Ms. Ricketts: “She’s very clearly leading us where she wants us to go.”

See What You Haven’t Seen

U-Highers examine life in Cuba through a new lens

By Susie Allen

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\caption{Photo by Katherine Carves, ’12}
\end{figure}

Katherine found a new angle among Havana’s many balconies. “I was always looking up and taking photos from the ground up,” she says. Her images capture life in Cuba from “an artist’s perspective.” Exposure to Cuba’s infrequent sights improved Katherine’s photography in several ways: “Being there just made me think about color and composition, because everything was so different,” she says. Her portraiture also improved because so many people let her photograph them, something she finds challenging in Chicago. “They were so relaxed that we were there.”

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Photo by Elizabeth Gelman, ’12}
\end{figure}

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Senior Emma Polson was drawn to Havana’s eclectic architecture, which mirrors the country’s tumultuous history. In addition to newer buildings, elegant Baroque structures from the colonial period still stand, along with historic terra-cotta roofed apartments with wrought-iron balconies strung with clotheslines. “All the buildings were so colorful,” Emma says. “They were a little bit decrepit, but still really cheerful.”

The clothesline featured in this image, taken in the Vedado neighborhood, says Ms. Ricketts, “adds that element of color and life.”

While exploring Callejón de Hamel, an artists’ neighborhood, Leslie Kamel, ’12, noticed a crowd gathering. She went to see what the commotion was about and saw two women in colorful dresses dancing rapidly, with arms and legs flying. The joyful motion caught her attention. “I had never seen dancing like that before,” she says. “I wanted to capture that moment.”

For Ms. Ricketts, the image represents “so much of what we think Cuba is, what it was, and what we love about the nature of its culture—the color, the indomitable spirit of the people.”

“It’s one of those moments that only photography can take,” Ms. Ricketts says of this photo of a man in a Havana meat market. “It’s one of those decisive moments, when the wind a second before or a second after changes everything...and yet the photograph has made it permanent.” For senior Jason Deng, the man’s face obscured by smoke suggests the ways an addiction can “take you over,” he says. “It clouds your judgment.”

“When he began photography, he would get nervous taking portraits. But he enjoyed working with his Cuban subjects and relished the opportunity to talk to people he had never met before. “The people were really friendly,” he says. “They were quick to warm up.”

“To just see what you haven’t seen, and feel like a small fish in a big world, is an important feeling,” says photography teacher Liese Ricketts. “Beginning to make yourself look in new ways induces awe.”
May the Best Cardboard Cutout Win

Lower School students learn about elections by having one of their own—with real consequences

It’s lunchtime on October 3. The presidential election is little more than a month away. On a fourth-floor classroom of Blaine Hall, the students are working behind the scenes, writing essays, making slogans and posters, creating T-shirts, and preparing for a mock election. Ms. Power laughs. “I try to do that on purpose.”

The election for Lower School president is real, but the positions—and the candidates, cardboard cutouts named Toaster Brown and Raisin Jam—are not. Instead they are proxies for the students’ own dreams for the Lower School, as well as a lesson in American democracy.

Birth of a Notion

In 2004, Ms. Power and Lisa Sukenic first held a mock election in their classrooms—minoring the national one—to teach their students about the electoral process. In 2008, the project grew to six classrooms. This year, all 15 Lower School classrooms participated, and the election took on added meaning. With Blaine Hall and the Lower School classrooms set to be renovated next year, the faculty wanted to involve students in the planning process, adding some enhancements to the candidates’ platforms.

And since first and second grade have become the Primary School, the Lower School teachers and Principal Sylvie Anglin thought it would be interesting to explore the idea of a student council with the Lower School grades—third through fifth. The students’ votes would count as a referendum on how to apportion representation. One idea, the 3-2-1 system, would give more representation to the older grades. (and theoretically more responsible students) with three representatives from fifth grade, two from fourth, and one from third. The other idea, called 2-2-2, would allot each grade two representatives.

The election isn’t supposed to be binding, explains Ms. Anglin, but the results help guide the administration. “We’re supporting not just the idea, called 2-2-2, would allot each grade two representatives.

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The students had to defend their candidate in the electoral process. In 2008, the project grew to six classrooms. This year, all 15 Lower School classrooms participated, and the election took on added meaning. With Blaine Hall and the Lower School classrooms set to be renovated next year, the faculty wanted to involve students in the planning process, adding some enhancements to the candidates’ platforms.

The October Surprise

Although the election was driven by student desires, the process, from platform to campaigns to balloting, was guided by the teachers. So no one expected the three fifth graders, dissatisfied with their options, to “draft” a spoiler candidate named Meatball Marinara. With help from teacher Kevin Frank, Meatball’s entry into the race came complete with a cardboard cutout platform. Meatball’s entry a week before the election threatened to shake up the race, but the candidate only qualified as a write-in vote on the fifth-grade classes’ paper ballots and was absent from the electronic ballots used by the third- and fourth-graders.

Finally, election day was November 7. The result: Raisin by a landslide, with 205 votes to Toaster Brown’s 100 votes. Meatball Marinaro, struggling with the perennial third-party problem of ballot access, received 28. The students rallied in the courtyard to lend their voices to the election. “Raisin Jam will not lead you literally, but through Raisin Jam, you have made your voices heard,” conceded Toaster. “Though you may not have voted for me, I hear your voice!” said Raisin, before getting to issues of the day. “The principal and those who are creating our new spaces want to hear from us. Continue to give your ideas to your teachers. Help design the playground. Speak up about the environment. You are the change, and I am happy to represent your ideas today, tomorrow, and for as long as I am your principal. Thank you!”

Issues that Raisin supporters feel strongly about in this campaign

Election Selection reported a “scandal” for each candidate; bathroom-cleanness supporter Toaster was photographed apparently contributing to a messy bathroom, and law-and-order Raisin was seen climbing a tree, which is against Lab rules.

The students were given the opportunity to write questions for the candidates. The teachers integrated election topics into their lessons. Dee Beaton’s fourth graders read a series of fiction and nonfiction books about campaigns. Fifth-grade science teacher Jeff Maharry collected classroom polls to demonstrate graphing. The U-High sophomore who covered the campaign wrote a newspaper covering the campaign, and was absent from the electronic ballots used by the third- and fourth-graders.

Front: Jessica Palumbo, Lisa Sukenic
Back: Linda Wooten, Deborah Davis, Robyn Nichols

by Benjamin Recchie, AB’03

LABLIFE Winter 2012/13

28

LABLIFE Winter 2012/13

29
In Remembrance

amityshlaes@gmail.com.

thoughts (up to 500 words) to her at

history major, she became a librarian,

Retired teacher

retired from teaching in 1990, pursued

Lab career, Ms. Ravin moved into the

college and the medical school and

Alice Lyon, '79, “She was one of the

brilliant and creative individual. For

November 4 in Phoenix, AZ. He

Janine Lowell Ludwig, '50, AB'53

AB'44

St. Louis County Library for several

in 1975, was head of reference for the

Los Angeles as one of the few women

graduated from Loyola Law School

to classical.

fishing, camping, and hiking—always

the bounds of mental illness,” he loved

a woman fainted from claustrophobia.

just sat against the wall.

victories in Colorado and Virginia, where

all that was left was the victorious

community about larger issues that ex-

charity drive, collecting canned goods

quarter, Spectrum will sponsor its first

Beginning after Thanksgiving break

the Enso Yoga and Martial Arts Studio,

and smiling.

Elizabeth Warren’s acceptance speech.

For a moment, the screens shifted

upbeat music and video montages of the

screens came out to document the

final call had to come soon.

growing confidence; its importance had

When it shifted back, a few voices

stood out. This was the moment they had all been

waiting for. Waving the American flag that had been passed out. Now, all that was left was the victorious

President’s speech.

As the night dragged on, the only excitement came with Obama’s additional victories in Colorado and Virginia, where

supporters had crowded behind him. Supporters, most of whom spent the entire evening on their feet, kicked sleepy, and yawns

made it around the room. Some people just sat against the wall.

A woman in her 20s took a cast off her right wrist and passed it around for signatures. Others begged those with chargers for a few minutes to charge their phones. In the middle of the crowd, a woman fainted from claustrophobia.

One Midway editor climbed top of an electrical box for a better view.

Around midnight, Romney gave his brief concession speech, which was greeted alternatively by boos, and shouts of “Let him speak” or “Send him home”!

Finally, at about 12:30 a.m., the Obama

family arrived to center stage, waving

and smiling. This was the moment they had all been waiting for.
Lab’s annual gala fundraiser brings together the Lab community for an evening of dinner, dancing, and student performances including the U-High Jazz Band.

Once again, Connections celebrates “Green Spaces + Places.” Funds raised this year and last together will make possible two innovative outdoor spaces.

The west playground at the Early Childhood Campus will be named for Connections, and on the 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.

RSVP by February 15, get more information, or volunteer to help with this special event.

Call 773-702-0578 or email connections@ucls.uchicago.edu.