



# LabLife

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

Winter 2015/16

# LabLife

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FROM DIRECTOR ROBIN APPLEBY

## Happy 120th Birthday

“One hundred and twenty years is a remarkable legacy for any academic institution, and it feels especially exciting to celebrate this milestone at Lab right now.”

“In January, 1896, a new elementary school opened its doors in a house on 57th Street and embarked on one of the most important educational experiments of the new century to come.... 16 students gathered under the guidance of John Dewey, a professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago. Dewey’s intention was to challenge conventional conservative attitudes about childhood education and to discover ‘how a school could become a cooperative community.’”  
—Ida DePencier, *Experiencing Education*

One hundred and twenty years is a remarkable legacy for any academic institution, and it feels especially exciting to celebrate this milestone at Lab right now. Our alumni are spread far and wide. Labbies find and stay connected to one another describing a shared experience that bonds them, even if they graduated years apart. Today, the people who have stewarded this great institution over these many decades have helped bring us to a time when we are, collectively, making so much happen for our students.

Earlier this year, I wrote of the responsibility we have to help our students understand the times in which we live, both here and abroad. Across Lab, we are working to come together in a time when it would be easy to come apart. Students and adults are talking about how to better realize Lab’s historic commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is not easy work; often, it is work of the

heart as much as the mind. It can be unsettling but it is essential work that affirms our commitment to all members of our community.

With this sense of community and commitment to one another in mind, we have undertaken activities that are helping us make the best possible use of wonderful new facilities and our important relationship to the University of Chicago.

**On Campus**  
We have had a number of major events on campus this fall. Early October saw the official opening of Gordon Parks Arts Hall, which brought more than 1,000 members of our community to tour our wonderful new facility and enjoy a family festival.  
Lab alumni are a crucial part of today’s Lab experience,



## 1896–1909



**1896**  
John Dewey opens the Laboratory Schools in a house at 1328 E. 57th Street.



**1900**  
The Eastman Kodak Company produces the first Brownie camera. It sells for \$1.



**1909**  
W.E.B. DuBois, with the help of Jane Addams and John Dewey, forms the National Negro Committee to work for the end of racial prejudice.

**1903**  
University High opens as a merger of three schools, Dewey’s students from the Elementary School, the South Side Academy, and the Chicago Manual Training School. All students move to Blaine Hall, which also houses the School of Education.

## 1910s

**1910**  
The Parents’ Association provides \$600 to support the *University High Daily*, founded in 1907 and one of only two high school daily papers in the country at the time.

**1915**  
In a spirited football game U-High defeats Oak Park High School by a score of 30 to 20 under the leadership of Coach William Monilaw.



**1915**  
Oak Park student journalist Ernest Hemingway writes: “Playing stellar football and fighting every minute of the game, U-High’s football warriors earned a clear-cut victory.”

**1916**  
Norman Rockwell’s first cover appears on the *Saturday Evening Post*.

## 1920s

**1921**  
Rouge and lipstick are outlawed at University High School.



**1924**  
University High School’s last football team, which played during the 1924 season.

**1927**  
Henry Ford shocks American industrialists by introducing a 40-hour work week.



**1929**  
Sunny Gymnasium is dedicated, funded, in part, by Lab grandfather Bernard E. Sunny.

## 1930s



**1931**  
Freshmen learn Latin as a modern language and begin their instruction by using language in conversation rather than being drilled on grammar.

**1933**  
Twenty-two million people visit Chicago’s Century of Progress world’s fair.

**1935**  
Charles Judd points out that the new arrangement of moving Laboratory Schools’ students into the College reflected William Rainey Harper’s vision that the American education system be developed as “a continuous unit.”



**1938**  
The Nursery School becomes part of the Laboratory Schools.

## 1940s

**1943**  
The Laboratory Schools establish a policy of admitting students regardless of their racial backgrounds; four African American children are admitted to the Lower School.

**1945**  
The Schools have a total enrollment of 780.



**1947**  
Pan American Airways launches globe-circling air travel. The first world round-trip fare is \$1,700



**1949**  
Langston Hughes comes to the Laboratory Schools as poet-in-residence.

## 1950s

**1953**  
Youngsters use special glasses to read three-dimensional comics. Federal authorities are alarmed, however, that some comics, such as “Batman and Robin,” could promote juvenile delinquency. The industry responds by regulating itself.



**1954**  
Junior and senior years are added to the U-High program as the school returns to being a four-year institution.

**1958**  
The President of West Germany greets Lab students during a visit to Chicago.

**1958**  
U-High students take first post-war high school exchange trip to Germany.

and in mid-October, hundreds returned for Alumni Weekend. We are grateful for the six new class scholarships established over the past year and the active support of dedicated alumni volunteers.

Then in November, Lab hosted a 27-member visiting team from the Independent Schools Association of the Central States as part of our re-accreditation process. This is essentially a peer review process following preparation of our comprehensive self-study last year. The visiting team will produce a report of commendations and recommendations, which, along with our self-study, will contribute to Lab's strategic planning process.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
One of our strategic goals this year is the creation of a Diversity

Action Plan for the Schools. Under the leadership of the Schools' new coordinator for diversity, equity, and inclusion, Ken Garcia-Gonzales, Lab's long-standing Diversity Advisory Committee (made up of parents, faculty, staff, and students) is working to formulate more measurable strategic goals. It is important that our focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion remain shared work across our community if we are to be true to our mission and values as a community. Ken also represents Lab on the University's Diversity Leadership Council and works with the Parents' Association Diversity Committee.

**Planning for Growth**  
Careful preparations are underway for the growth that we will experience on campus next year when Judd Hall and U-High renovations are

complete. We will be able to offer additional seats in grades six and nine. (Interest in Lab has never been stronger—more than 1,000 people attended our Middle and High School Admissions Open Houses!) Know that this growth and the new High School programs it will allow will be phased across several years and managed with great care.

With 120 years comes much wisdom. We are privileged to have the experiences of so many dedicated educators supporting our next generation of learners.

Happy Birthday to Lab!

Sincerely yours,

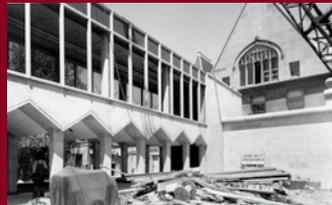
*Robin Appleby*  
Robin Appleby



100

Lab

## 1960s



**1960**  
University High School construction begins.

The Peace Symbol is brought to the US by a University of Chicago student who saw it used in Britain as an emblem to protest nuclear weapons.



**1967**  
Chicago is crippled by 26 inches of snow. In a historic first, the Laboratory Schools close both January 27 and 30.

**1968**  
May Project begins for seniors.

**1969**  
Rites of May is celebrated for the first time.

**1969**  
Enrollment at Lab reaches 1,600.

## 1970s

**1971**  
Teachers write in the Independent Schools Association of the Central States evaluation: "The force of John Dewey, who founded the school, continues to be felt—most strikingly evidenced in the value we attach to the democratic process and in our pragmatic approach to the educational process."

**1969**  
Ms Magazine is founded.



**1974**  
WLS disk jockey John "Records" Landecker presents Coach Sandy Patlak the WLS "Team of the Week" award in recognition of boys' basketball success at U-High.



**1977**  
After an investigation by the Midway, police crack down on bar owners in Hyde Park who have been serving alcohol to under-aged drinkers.

## 1980s

**1980**  
*Endless Love*, featuring Brooke Shields, films at Lab.



**1983**  
The University of Chicago School Mathematics Project uses the Laboratory Schools to test new curriculum. Teachers contribute to textbooks in what becomes the nation's largest university-based mathematics curriculum project.

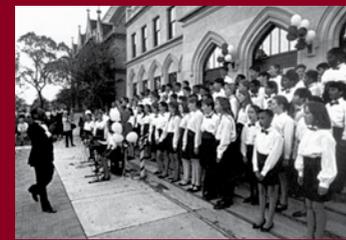


**1984**  
Field Hockey ends at Lab as a U-High girls' athletic competitive sport.

**1985**  
The first annual fund raises \$32,000 and Lab has its first benefit dinner, later to become the Connections gala.

**1989**  
Teacher Vivian Paley wins a MacArthur Foundation Genius Grant.

## 1990s



**1993**  
The new Middle School building opens, connecting Belfield and Blaine.

**1993**  
Twenty-two percent of households have a computer.



**1996**  
Lab celebrates its centennial on January 21, 1996, with 1,500 people gathered in Rockefeller Chapel.

**1999**  
Chicago hit with 21.6 inches of snow—the second worst storm in the city's history, and Lab stays open.

## 2000s

**2000**  
Kovler Gymnasium, a new soccer field, and a new playground open.

**2001**  
Apple introduces the iPod.

**2008**  
Two Lab alums win the MacArthur "genius" grant: Dr. Diane Meier, '69, and astrophysicist Andrea Ghez, '83.



**2008**  
Barack Obama, Democratic Senator and Lab parent, wins the presidential election.

**2010**  
U-High qualifies for the 3A Regional Boys' Basketball Championship.



The Chicago Blackhawks win the Stanley Cup.

**2011**  
Ground is broken for Earl Shapiro Hall.



## Recommended reading

Extended Day Director Colleen Coyle recommends *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys and the Dawn of a New America*, by Gilbert King



In his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys and the Dawn of a New America*, Gilbert King interweaves two compelling and interrelated stories. The first is the story of a criminal case in Florida focusing on four falsely accused black men known as the Groveland Boys. The second is Thurgood Marshall's painstakingly deliberate legal and public relations campaign leading up to his landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case, which found "that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place." The book moves back and forth between the two stories, with the Groveland case providing context and depth to the larger legal case being

mounted at the national level. The details of the Groveland Boys case are difficult to read and unbelievable in their brutality. The county sheriff, Willis McCall, employed ruthless tactics. When federal agents were brought in, he was able to use his power to cover much of it up. Justice was elusive. At the national level, Marshall had to make difficult choices about which cases to take and which to put aside. This left many deserving individuals without the support of his NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Though many cases were compelling and unjust, Marshall strategically chose cases he felt would ensure that the narrative at the national level would help change public opinion and ultimately achieve the legal precedent necessary to

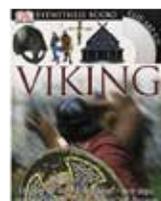
overturn Jim Crow laws. The book is a page-turner and reads much like a crime thriller. It is difficult to believe these things actually happened and this retelling feels particularly important given instances of police brutality in the news in Chicago and elsewhere. Like the Groveland Boys, these stories are ultimately undergirded by an incongruence of power. One hopes that these cases will also ultimately lead to systemic change.



**...Marshall strategically chose cases he felt would ensure that the narrative at the national level would help change public opinion and ultimately achieve the legal precedent necessary to overturn Jim Crow laws.**

## FROM THE SYLLABI

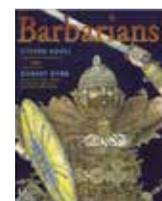
Vikings take a central role as part of the fifth-grade humanities curriculum. Teachers **Kristin Frank** and **Catherine Mannering** start with the Bayeux Tapestry and a general study of early British history. Then students examine the Viking influences on language, law, geography, literature, and the arts. Here are some of the texts that support their work:



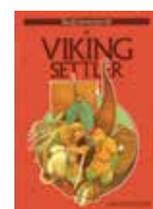
**Viking**  
Susan Margeson



**D'Aulaire's Norse Gods and Giants**  
Ingrid D'Aulaire



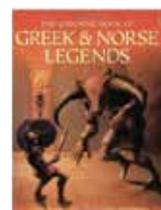
**Barbarians!**  
Steven Kroll



**The Viking Settler**  
Giovanni Caselli



**The Real Vikings: Craftsmen, Traders and Fearsome Raiders**  
Melvin Berger



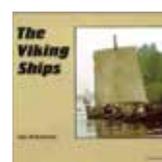
**The Usborne Book of Greek and Norse Legends**



**Favorite Norse Myths**  
Mary Pope Osborne



**Sea of Trolls**  
Nancy Farmer



**The Viking Ships**  
Ian Atkinson

# The making of a Lego Parks Hall



Kindergarten teacher **David Kaleta**, '95, is a Lego master who has amazed children and adults with the sophistication of his work. His piece, "Frog in Dissection," shared space with works by artists, scientists, and designers from around the

world as part of a show called "The Power of Making" that ran at London's Victoria & Albert Museum in 2011-12. This time he turned his sights to the new Gordon Parks Arts Hall and recreated it in miniature.

# This is art

An installation hits Blaine Hall



When a Rice Krispie treat shaped like an airplane landed in the Alumni Relations office its purpose wasn't quite clear. Was it a joke? Was it a treat? It was art.

The plane was one of many conceptual art projects taught by Lower School art teacher **Allison Beaulieu**. "I love conceptual art, and at Lab we get to teach what we're passionate about," she says. In pairs, third-graders came up with a message—something on their minds or that they felt passionate about. "They worked through how they could make that into something tangible," says Ms. Beaulieu who had kids study the works of artists like Damien Hirst.

But construction was only part of the project: "I had a big map of Blaine Hall. They had to tell me exactly where they wanted to install the pieces," says Ms. Beaulieu. The students wrote artist's statements (for the plane the statement read "Remembrance") and installed

the projects themselves. Aside from alerting faculty and notifying the cleaning crew that the projects were not trash, the art's appearance surprised the rest of the school. The young artists enjoyed seeing the contemplation, confusion, and delight from their community audience.

The project inspired a workshop Ms. Beaulieu presented at the Progressive Education Network conference on the topic of socially minded work. "I don't use those specific words with third-graders," she says, "but that's essentially what they're creating." Ms. Beaulieu shared her work at other professional development events, like the Museum of Contemporary Art's Curriculum Slam and the National Art Education Association conference. At such events, says Ms. Beaulieu, she can meet other people in the field and "give a little glimpse into what you do in your classroom."

# Lab Presents: Your Inner Fish

Professor Neil Shubin kicks off Lab's new lecture series



When asked how a child should prepare for a life as a paleontologist, Professor Neil Shubin suggested heading out to the backyard in the cold, sleeping in a tent, and digging in the dirt—for weeks and weeks. Alternatively, take full advantage of your local museum of natural history. Last week, Professor Shubin, a Lab parent and board member and the Robert R. Bensley Professor of Anatomy at the University of Chicago, gave a gleeful hour-long presentation on the work that led to his discovery of the "fishapod" fossil, a crucial link in the story of how life on earth transitioned from sea to land.



His talk, based upon his research and award-winning book and PBS series, both titled *Your Inner Fish*, inaugurated what will be the quarterly *Lab Presents* lecture series.

*Lab Presents* will highlight an ongoing series of speakers brought to the Gordon Parks Assembly Hall to benefit not just Lab but the greater UChicago community, including families at the UEI Charter Schools, with whom Lab is establishing a deepening partnership. The lecture series is designed to introduce Lab families, and Lab friends and partners across the University, to the extraordinary people who are a part of the Laboratory Schools.

Speaking to an audience equally divided between adults (teachers, parents, and others) and kids (Lower through High School), Prof. Shubin shared the "simple in concept, hard in execution," rules for finding fossils—look

for the right type of rocks, of the right age (in his case 365 million years old,) and that are accessible. Think open deserts or near the North Pole, which is in fact where he found Tiktaalik, named by his Inuit hosts, and which means "large freshwater fish."

For such a storied academic, Prof. Shubin demonstrated a light touch and an ability to connect with his audience such that even the youngest in the room felt comfortable raising their hands and asking questions.

After the 60-minute talk, adults and children alike swarmed tables manned by UChicago grad students who happily explained how to extract DNA from strawberries, helped kids handle fossil casts, and smiled as adults bustled into place for their turn to look through microscopes with child-like wonder.

# Words to live by

The Lower School agrees to be kind, thoughtful, and responsible—collaboratively



On the first day of school, Lower School teachers and staff wore t-shirts that read: KIND THOUGHTFUL RESPONSIBLE. The shirts served as a physical representation of a community agreement, says LS Principal **Sylvie Anglin**, that both students and staff would conduct themselves in line with Lab's shared values.

Last year, the Lower School focused on developing "simple and easy to understand language to share our expectations for living and working in the community," says Ms. Anglin. To implement the simpler code of conduct, teachers worked with students to help define what it means to be kind, thoughtful, and responsible people at Lab.

In a collaboration between fourth-grade teacher **Sandy Cortez** and fifth-grade teacher **Nicole Power**, students

compared and contrasted different types of community agreements: worker's agreements, contracts, even the Declaration of Independence. "We let them investigate meaningful questions about purpose and relevance," says Ms. Cortez.

Then student teams developed agreements for shared spaces, including the courtyard, Blaine Lobby, bathrooms. For example, students should obey the "rules of the road" in hallways by walking on the right side. "When we allow the students to take ownership and go through the process, there is a deeper appreciation of the new agreement," says Ms. Cortez. She hopes "they'll take personal responsibility."

In addition to learning to live Lab's values, the agreement is also intended to create an inclusive, safe environment,

**...being kind, thoughtful, and responsible is a constant process.**

Ms. Anglin says, "a place where you can take some risks, because learning is risky business, and know that the community is going to support that."

The agreement is important for adults, too—faculty and staff agree to hold themselves accountable and serve as role models. In doing so, they convey an important message, Ms. Anglin says, that being kind, thoughtful, and responsible is a constant process.

# The ground (and cement and gum and bugs) beneath their feet



It started simply enough. One student brought in one chunk of concrete. Then another student brought in a piece. And so on. This fall **Meredith Dodd's** nursery students became so fascinated with sidewalks on their daily perambulations that they brought them into the classroom—one craggy hunk at a time.

They collected broken bits around school and near their homes and studied them in class, cleaning them with brushes. “They really like to find different kinds of surfaces. Texture is important,” says Ms. Dodd. “Smooth, soft, bumpy, jagged, rough. One girl wanted to bring a really heavy piece home. It made her feel important.”

Using an Elmo microscope, Ms. Dodd projected the magnified images onto the classroom wall. “It looked like craters of the moon,” she

says. “It looked like a different world.” The students got excited when they discovered materials that weren’t part of the concrete—flat, blackened gum; moths; and lichen.

After working together as a class, the students divided into small groups—each assigned a single piece that was markedly different from the others—and created murals by tracing the projected images of their chunks onto butcher paper.

The project not only sharpened their observational skills but also strengthened their vocabularies and counting skills. The students carefully described the sidewalk’s appearance—its color and texture and sheen. (“The big thing is sparkles,” Ms. Dodd says.) They counted the different materials they found in a single chunk. “They relate it to cooking: these are the ingredients of the sidewalk.”

The students discussed connections outside the classroom. “Like recycling,” Ms. Dodd says. “There are glass pieces in the sidewalk. We use a thing once, and someone else uses it again.”

This idea supports one of Ms. Dodd’s larger pedagogical goals: teaching students about systems, how things are put together, and how to make something purposeful. “We’re studying these sidewalks that we walk on every day but that we might not pay attention to,” says Ms. Dodd. “They’re made out of all these little parts that, if we didn’t have them, we wouldn’t have a sidewalk. Same with the children—if a child isn’t in the classroom, it’s not the same. We look at what makes each student special, how that specialness creates the classroom, and how we’re all connected.”

**...teaching students about systems, how things are put together, and how to make something purposeful.**

# WINTER HIGHLIGHTS 2015/16



JACOB MEYER



ALEXIS PORTER, MAIA BOUSSEY, TAYLOR THOMPSON, ELIZABETH VAN HA

COLLEEN BAUMANN AND SAM MORIN



Maia Boussey, juniors **Alexis Porter** and **Taylor Thompson**, and sophomore **Elizabeth Van Ha** set the 200-yard medley relay record. The 400-yard freestyle relay record was set by Maia, Zoe, Elizabeth, and sophomore **Amber Huo**. The 200-yard freestyle record was set by Taylor, Zoe, Alexis, and Amber.

## BOYS SOCCER

In front of a huge homecoming crowd of fans, the team won the 1A IHSA Regional Championship with a convincing 2-0 win over Lisle on Jackman Field. The Maroons advanced to the Sectional Championship game where they lost in overtime to the eventual state champions. Winning first team ISL honors were seniors **Alex Foster** and **Max Rochester**. **Nick Audrain** won second team. Illinois High School Soccer Coaches Association All-Sectional honors went to Alex and Max.

## GIRLS SWIMMING

With five new school records, the team finished third in the IHSA Sectional meet. Junior **Zoe Rebollo Baum** set 500-yard freestyle and 100-yard backstroke records. Senior



PASCALE BOONSTRA, PHOEBE LINCOLN, MATTEO TORQUATI, COLLEEN BAUMANN, LILLIAN NEMETH

## GIRLS TENNIS

The girls tennis team won the ISL and the IHSA Sectional Championship. Freshman **Jenny Lewis** was named ISL Player-of-the-Year, and she also won IHSTCA All-State Honorable Mention honors for her top 32 finish at the IHSA State Championship. State qualifiers and All-Conference honors were won by seniors **Grace Anderson** and **Monica Lewis**, junior **Delnaz Patel**, sophomore **Florence Almeda**, and freshman **Jenny Lewis**. Junior **Amar Shabeeb** won All-Conference honors. **Dawuad Talib** was named ISL Coach-of-the-Year.

## VOLLEYBALL

The team finished their season with a 20-15 record, winning the IHSA 3A Regional Championship. The Maroons have won four Regional Championships over the past 10 years. Winning ISL All-Conference first team honors were juniors **Averie Miller**, **Anissa Sanders**, and **Tamara Shaw**. Senior **Elizabeth Chon** and junior **Alex Lundsgaarde** were named Honorable Mention.

## CROSS COUNTRY

Senior **Jacob Meyer** capped a great career finishing as Lab’s third All-State runner in 38 years. **Jacob** finished 21st in the State Championship race in Peoria with a fine time of 15:07 for the 3-mile course. He joins All-State runners **Peter Lortie, '78**, (who died in 1999) and two-time State runner **Peter Muller, '97**.

Both the girls and boys cross-country teams won the 2A IHSA Regional Championship. The girls team (seniors **Grace Cain**, **Lucy Kenig-Ziesler**, and **Genevieve Nemeth**, juniors **Alice Carlstrom**, **Elsa Erling**, and **Isabella Khan**, and freshman **Sally Carlstrom**) qualified to compete at the State Championship meet by finishing third in the U-High IHSA Sectional Championship race at Washington Park.

Individual honors: ISL All-Conference girls included senior **Grace Cain**, juniors **Elsa Erling** and **Isabella Khan**, and freshman **Sally Carlstrom**; boys included **Jacob Meyer** and

freshman **Abraham Zelchenko**. **Elsa** and **Jacob** also won IHSA All-Sectional honors.

## GOLF

Senior **Andrew Chizewer** and junior **Kyle Adlaka** finished in the top 10 at the IHSA Regional hosted at the Briar Ridge Country Club, qualifying for the IHSA Sectional tournament. The Maroons won our First Annual Maroons Golf Invitational earlier in October. Winning medals for the Maroons were **Andrew**, **Kyle**, sophomore **Jeremy Chizewer**, and junior **Nikki Menta**.

## SAILING

The U-High sailing team made its varsity debut this fall, competing in eight regattas and achieving a Midwest Interscholastic Sailing Association top 20 ranking. Senior **Phoebe Lincoln** and junior **Colleen Bauman** were lead sailors for the Maroons with Coach **Kurt Thomson**, out of the Columbia Yacht Club, at the helm of the Maroons program.

# Children lead Veterans Day assembly



**Dave Stafford**

Associate Director of Finance and Operations  
Airman First Class, Air Force

Meet Dave Stafford. He joined the military right after his father died and served from 1959–1963. He was an Air Force pilot. He was a cartographer, a map maker. He got to “fly around in a jet and evaluate other zack cartographers.”

# Loss and found



Nursery teacher Sarah Abella holds Chocolate Cuddle-wuddles



Feathers the hamster (named for his soft, wispy fur) went missing from Marie Randazzo's preschool classroom one morning in late September. “We looked in his cage and he was just gone,” she said. The students immediately mobilized, scouring every corner of the classroom in what became an impromptu bonding experience.

They found Feathers's hamster ball, but it was empty. The door had popped open. Theories abounded as to the roving rodent's whereabouts. Was he stolen? Did he escape? Some students drew pictures of Feathers to post around the building in case anyone had seen him.

The good news came at lunchtime, when a student in the neighboring classroom spotted the missing hamster under a sofa—a gleeful moment to mark the end of a scary morning.

The story of Oreo the rabbit, a fixture in Catie Gillespie's second-grade classroom for four years, has a more bittersweet ending. Ms. Gillespie noticed one morning in late October that Oreo wasn't moving. Hoping for the best, she sent the beloved six-year-old rabbit to the vet, but Oreo died soon after.

To help the children manage the emotions around loss, Lab counselor Kate Surmeier delivered the news to the students the next day, and read them a book about coping with the death of a pet. The rest of the day was consumed with mourning in a variety of forms, from crying to storytelling. Students collaborated on a

scrapbook commemorating Oreo's memory with photos, drawings, and a special letter.

“We told the students that Oreo lived a long, happy life, and that she was a lucky rabbit because so many children loved and cared for her,” Ms. Gillespie said. “It was a powerful moment in learning how to grieve for a death.”

Although Oreo will be missed, the class is enjoying the company of a new rabbit: Cookie.

“Her name was actually Oreo when we found her!” Ms. Gillespie said. The class decided to change the new rabbit's name to preserve the memory of their departed pet. But the coincidence suggests that maybe, just maybe, it was meant to be.

# Actions speak louder than words

Theatrical performances reinforce humanities curriculum



With American flags flanking the stage and the entire Lower School gathered in the Gordon Parks Assembly Hall, fourth graders from Nicole Power and Linda Weide's classes took turns in front of the microphone to share what they had learned about Veterans Day and to honor members of the Lab community who have served.

“The goal was to have students learn about veterans by interviewing them, including a conscientious objector. They formulated questions and then interviewed them in person or over the phone,” explains Ms. Power of the expansive civics lesson. Students transformed the interviews into posters that dotted hallways throughout the Historic Campus. In addition to researching the history of Veterans Day, students studied the protocols that the United States and other countries have around flags or moments

of silence, and “how one respectfully celebrates Veterans, who may themselves be conflicted by their own service.” They then put together the assembly, wrote their lines, and rehearsed.

On the day, student interviewers escorted the veterans in attendance, including several alumni, to their seats. Later, as students read their names aloud, the veterans stood to be recognized and honored by a standing ovation. Music teacher Francisco Dean played *Taps* in honor of those Lab community members who had died in service before the children processed the veterans out to a reception in the Rogers Lobby.

Says Ms. Power, “The kids stepped outside themselves to make the morning truly special for the veterans who were there. Tears flowed!”

In September, at an event featuring playwright Ayad Akhtar, U-High English teacher Christine Himmelfarb told him that she would be bringing Lab's tenth grade to see his Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Disgraced*, at the Goodman Theatre in October.

Delighted, Mr. Akhtar told Ms. Himmelfarb, “They are going to have so much to say about it.”

Until 2013–14, the tenth graders had read *Romeo and Juliet* for their drama study. That year, Ms. Himmelfarb and fellow teacher Colin Rennert-May wanted to conclude the unit with a live performance. The students read August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*, followed by a trip to see the play at Court Theatre. They have followed the live performance model ever since.

*Disgraced* tells the story of two couples: Amir, a Pakistani-

American lawyer, married to a white artist, and a Jewish art gallery owner who is married to an African American lawyer at the same firm as Amir. The play addresses race, ethnicity, assimilation, religion, and the personal and professional choices involved in a career.

Before the performance, students researched background topics in the play—the differences between Islamic and Renaissance art, the India-Pakistan partition—and wrote essays about aspects of their own heritage that play significant roles in their lives. Reading the play aloud, they discussed how they might deliver their character's lines or how they might move physically in character.

When the students saw the play, they compared their own interpretations of the roles with that of the actors. Some preferred “their” version, some

preferred the actors' version, and some acknowledged that both versions were equally valid. “It's an interesting way to see a play,” Ms. Himmelfarb says.

And Mr. Akhtar was right: the students had a lot to say about the play—for several days afterward. “It's what you always hope for as a teacher,” Ms. Himmelfarb says, “to get your students talking about things that really matter to them.”

U-High students weren't the only ones using live performances to deepen their understanding of literature, drama, and human nature. Lab's seventh graders, along with two-thirds of the sixth grade, went to the DuSable Museum to see *Anne and Emmett*, a one-act play about a fictional conversation between Anne Frank and Emmett Till. The playwright, Janet Langhart Cohen, spoke to the audience afterward.

# No more helicopter parents

Julie Lythcott-Haimés speaks to Lab community about how to raise adults



Julie Lythcott-Haimés, author of *How to Raise an Adult*, gave the inaugural Parents' Association lecture this October in Gordon Parks Arts Hall.

A former student dean at Stanford University, Ms. Lythcott-Haimés argues that over-parenting harms children, their parents, and society at large. As a *New York Times* review put it, her "bleak portrait may just be the *Black Hawk Down* of helicopter parenting."

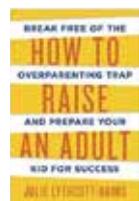
Ms. Lythcott-Haimés, who had been invited by the Parents'

Association, noted that she was scheduled to do ten readings in Chicago over five days. "Something about the message resonates," she said.

Her own children are 14 and 16. "Like you," she said, "I'm just trying to ensure my kids are healthy and successful."

At Stanford, where she was dean of freshmen from 2002–2012, she realized that over-parenting had created a generation of semi-adults. Each class of incoming freshmen was "more and more accomplished," she said, eliciting a knowing laugh from her audience. They had been to the right schools, taken the right classes, earned the right grades and awards, done the right activities: "Don't just join a club. Start a club. And don't forget community service." More laughter.

But the students were "far more interesting on paper than



to talk with in person," she said. They could say what they'd done, but not why. They were unwilling participants in what she calls "the checklisted childhood."

At the same time, every year brought more parents "who came with their kid to college and stayed," helping their children choose courses and activities, tracking their deadlines, even calling to wake them up. Ms. Lythcott-Haimés and other administrators giggled at first, but as the number of these parents grew, their amusement waned.

It's a trend not just at Stanford but among the upper middle class in general, Ms. Lythcott-Haimés said. She drew a connection to the

increasing rate of mental illness among children from affluent backgrounds. "We're trying to boost them up, but we are paradoxically tearing them down. Our job as parents is to put ourselves out of a job."

Interestingly, Ms. Lythcott-Haimés looked to the special needs community for guidance. Parents of special needs children "have to be deliberate about teaching skills," she said. There's a four-step method: Do it for them. Do it with them. Watch them do it. Finally, they do it completely on their own.

If we all used this method, she said, Stanford wouldn't be enrolling students who don't know how to put gas in the car. And parents wouldn't need books like the recently published *Getting to Thirty: A Parents' Guide*. (From the marketing blurb: "When will this new generation of

# Video pen pals

Working with Henry Harboe, '11, Lisa Harrison's second grade students are virtual pen pals



In 2014 a group of five students at Oberlin College, including Henry Harboe, '11, wanted to change the way students communicate across borders. But Mr. Harboe's team recognized "a lack of suitable technology in education," he says, "especially for the most underprivileged students around the world."

They founded the for-profit social enterprise LumenEd, building software and hardware to create global classroom networks. Currently raising seed funding from private investors, they've created the

Bright Orange Box—a battery-powered smart projector with a video camera and an Internet connection that provides educational content to classrooms.

Part of LumenEd's vision is its Pen Pal program. Last year Mr. Harboe recruited second-grade teacher Lisa Harrison, who taught him in 1999–2000, to be one of several teachers around the country to pilot the program. This year every second-grade class at Lab is participating.

LumenEd pairs up students in the United States and India—Ms. Harrison partners with third-graders in New Delhi—and each class creates three- to four-minute videos. The students generate ideas, like describing American Halloween and the Indian festival of Dussehra, and after each swap they discuss what they've learned. Teachers

communicate via an online dashboard.

"It's about global collaboration," says Ms. Harrison. "It's about making these connections and getting to know these classes." Mr. Harboe believes the program will have a "meaningful impact for students on both sides—both as an educational experience and as motivation to tackle the world's greatest issues."

Ms. Harrison hopes Lab will continue Pen Pals next year, and LumenEd plans to conduct pilots in Ghana, Haiti, and Senegal.

# Rhodes Scholar

Isaac Stanley-Becker, '12, wins prestigious scholarship



Among the 32 American students awarded a 2016 Rhodes Scholarship is **Isaac M. Stanley-Becker, '12**, who moved with his family to Washington, DC, after he attended Lab through his freshman year of high school. According to Yale University, where he is a senior majoring in history, "He is writing his senior essay on industrial transformation and civil disobedience in the port city of New London, Connecticut. Isaac is an award-winning journalist and a passionate historian of modern urban society. He served as Editor in Chief of the *Yale Daily News* and interned at the *Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Isaac also founded the Hillhouse High Journalism Project to teach journalism to New Haven public high school students."

At Oxford, he intends to complete an MPhil in economic and social history.

The award provides all expenses for two or three years of study at the University of Oxford in England to those students who best exemplify "academic achievement, integrity of character, a spirit of unselfishness, and leadership potential."

Mr. Stanley-Becker follows a path hewn by **Chesa Boudin, '99**, who also attended Yale and who received a Rhodes scholarship in 2003. At Oxford, Mr. Boudin earned two master's degrees, one in forced migration and the other in public policy in Latin America. He graduated from Yale Law School in 2011. Other Lab Rhodes Scholars include: **Ben Heineman, Jr., '61**; **Andrew Rosenheim, '74**; and Mr. Heineman's niece, **Jessica Heineman-Pieper, '88**.

Ajay Choprah, Asra Ahmed, Sarah Markovitz



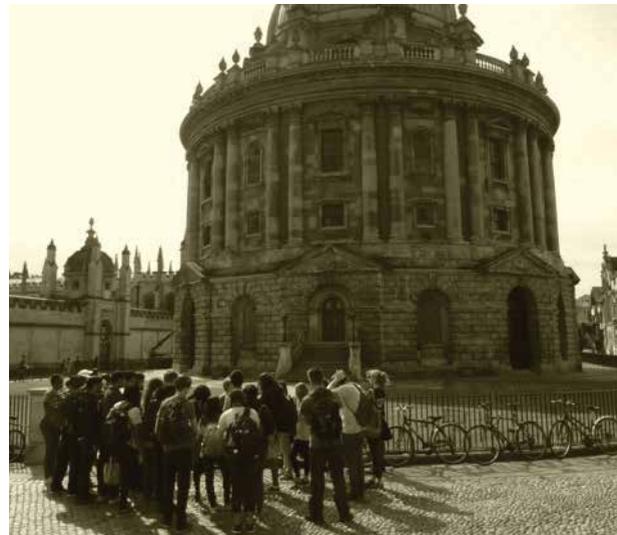
For two weeks this past August, juniors Sarah Markovitz and Ajay Choprah joined around 50 other students from around the world to discuss the definition of leadership, contemplate their social responsibilities, and meet leaders of organizations that develop programming for public good.

The Global Social Leaders course at England's Wellington College "really opened their eyes to the reality of kids their same age from around the world," says U-High Assistant Principal Asra Ahmed.

The opportunity came

about after Lab Director Robin Appleby traveled to Wellington last spring to represent Lab as part of the G20 Schools' annual conference, which brings together prestigious high schools from around the world. "When I go to these conferences, I try to bring back something concrete for the kids," says Ms. Appleby. In this case it was the Global Social Leaders course, a program Wellington hosts for 16- and 17-year-olds from different countries to exchange ideas and plan projects to make a positive impact in their local communities.

**"It's a chance for them to have a little window into what it's like to be 16 in Kenya or Delhi or Amman."**



The only catch was that the administrators had a very short time to find candidates who could go, says Ms. Ahmed, who ultimately chaperoned Sarah and Ajay. "They're in this beautiful dormitory setting with their peers from other countries. It's a chance for them to have a little window into what it's like to be 16 in Kenya or Delhi or Amman."

At the end of the two weeks, the students gave presentations about ideas they could take back to their home cities. Sarah focused on mental health issues and self esteem, while Ajay intended to put together a fundraiser for cancer awareness. Working with Ms. Ahmed, the two students are helping manage the application process to choose the two U-High sophomores who will head to England in August, along with Sarah, who will return as an adviser.

# Global Social Leaders

# Alumni awarded



Susan Landau Axelrod, '70

Distinguished Alumnus/  
Alumna Award

LAB'S HIGHEST HONOR CELEBRATES THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF EXCEPTIONAL ALUMNI WHOSE PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS, PERSONAL LIVES, PUBLIC OR CIVIC SERVICE, PHILANTHROPIC OR VOLUNTEER ENDEAVORS ENHANCE SOCIETY THROUGH DEDICATION AND MERITORIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS.



Debra Gitler, '98

Rising Star Professional  
Achievement Award

CELEBRATES ALUMNI WHO HAVE HAD AN IMPACT IN THEIR FIELD AND GRADUATED WITHIN THE LAST 30 YEARS.

Ms. Axelrod is founding chair of CURE (Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy). In the early 80s, Ms. Axelrod's daughter was diagnosed with epilepsy and in 1998 Ms. Axelrod, and others, frustrated by their inability to protect their children from the severe impact of uncontrollable seizures and intolerable side effects of epilepsy medications, joined forces to spearhead the search for a cure.

CURE has catalyzed the epilepsy research community to accelerate their efforts, and has become the largest private funder of epilepsy research globally. Ms. Axelrod travels broadly to raise awareness and funds to support the organization's cutting-edge research programs.

She has served on the NIH's National Advisory Neurological Disorders and

Stroke Council and as a consumer reviewer for the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program within the Department of Defense. In 2014, she was elected to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, where she advises the President of the United States and Secretary of Health and Human Services on a broad range of topics that impact people with intellectual disabilities.

Ms. Gitler is the founder/director of Contextos, an educational NGO established in El Salvador and the United States. Contextos' mission is to transform the educational experience so that students go beyond rote, mechanical learning to develop authentic literacy skills such as deep thinking, interpretation, analysis, and creativity.

She received her MEd from Harvard. Previously, she worked as the coordinator and lead author of El Salvador's national teacher training strategy in the area of literacy, and has taught in Honduras and the South Bronx. to see the play at Court Theatre. They have followed the live performance model ever since.

# Net gains

Seventh graders watch sustainability in action



How can teachers make concepts like sustainability, carbon footprint, and renewable energy less abstract? Bring students to watch them in action, as Arianna Lambie's seventh-grade home economics and sustainability class did on a November field trip to the Plant and to Testa Produce, both South Side businesses.

The Plant, a former meatpacking facility converted into a vertical farm, produces both tilapia and vegetables for consumers. Nitrates from the fish waste serve as fertilizer for the greens, peppers, and tomatoes growing in hydroponic beds, which clean the water so that it can be returned to the fish. The building also has a kitchen and sells baked goods.

The students were surprised that the neighborhood had once produced 80 percent of the meat consumed in the

United States, and they were surprised by the Plant's current iteration, Ms. Lambie says. "It really brought to life how we can radically change our way of thinking about what resources we have."

Next the class visited Testa Produce, a food supplier for local restaurants and other foodservice outlets housed in a state-of-the-art, LEED Platinum building with a wind turbine, solar panels, and a green roof. Students learned about Testa's work with local farms as well as its onsite efforts to reduce its carbon footprint and fossil-fuel use.

The field trip capped the quarter-long course, during which the class had discussed carbon emissions, net-zero buildings, and food sourcing.

# Culture shift

Lab and Lab families host dozens of international students every year



Every year, Lab hosts nearly 50 international students who come to stay with Lab families and bring a bit of the world to our hallways. Students from China, France, Germany, or a Spanish-speaking country come to Lab during the school year and during summers, Lab students may travel to the hometowns of our international guests.

The international students often take time to visit the Lower School classrooms where, says Diane Jackson, World Languages chair, the younger students are excited to meet "young, native speakers" of the languages they study. The exchange students especially enjoy celebrating holidays with younger American students—Valentine's Day, Halloween, or the German fall lantern festival, St. Martin's Day.

During their travels, the American students attend school with exchange partners, in addition to exploring their

temporary countries. For students who visit China, for instance, "the teachers really roll out the red carpet, organizing an array of sightseeing and cultural experiences within Beijing" says Diane Jackson. Lab's Chinese instructors also set up side trips to Shiyuan, Shanghai, and Hangzhou. "It's an amazing visit."

While certain trips are mainstays, the Spanish program rotates between Spain, Central America, or South America, and the language department is always looking to expand Lab students' global reach. French teachers, for instance, are considering an exchange program with Martinique. No matter where Lab students travel, Ms. Jackson says, "the most exciting part for us as language teachers is that these kids get an opportunity to use in real life what they've worked on so hard in the classroom."

# JOE: WRITER, ECOLOGIST, ARTIST

Off the grid, but far from quiet



For seventh-grade humanities teacher Joe Drogos, AM'06, the house just outside Bangor, Michigan, started out simply as a summer and weekend retreat from hectic city life. But in the four years that Mr. Drogos and his wife, Courtney Crawford, have owned the house and its surrounding 20 acres of land, it has become an ecological project, an informal art studio, an occasional larder, and a place to learn and play.

The house, for Mr. Drogos, continues a path he's been on since childhood. His father was a geology buff, and his family "always had a connection to the natural environment," supplementing walks around their Bridgeport neighborhood and throughout the city with fishing trips on Lake Calumet and hiking excursions in the Dan Ryan Woods and south suburban forest preserves. A writer

who penned a series of essays about Chicago landscapes for *MAKE: A Chicago Literary Magazine*, Mr. Drogos was drawn to the Bangor land because it encompasses several different ecosystems, including woodlands, open fields, and a former apple orchard.

Inspired by the essays of Robert Smithson, who built giant earthworks as a form of art, Mr. Drogos began clearing trails on the property, using controlled burns to eliminate invasive species and reseeding with native species. His brother, David, who works for the Nature Conservancy, advised him. Along the way, Mr. Drogos asked himself questions like, "Where is this trail going to go? What is this field going to look like in 30 or 40 years?"

"The idea," he says, "is to build a place that will look like a maintained, pristine environment a long time from now."

Mr. Drogos has kept an illustrated journal of the plants and animals he's found on the land, improvements he's made, and other lessons he and Ms. Crawford have learned. They know where and when to spot deer and owls. They make wine from the apples in the orchard, and they bring a few back to Lab to share with students. They gather edible wild mushrooms and strawberries. They found that bergamot, a fragrant herb, grew in the burned-over areas, and they wonder about making cologne with it.

And though he frequently uses the word "weird" to



describe his activities, they exemplify experiential learning. For example, he spent a snow day last year preparing a European mount of a deer skull he'd found on the land. This process involved boiling the skull gently for five or six hours before treating it with hair bleach. This fall he was finishing a total reconstruction of the deck around the house, which he learned to do mostly by trial and error, with a little help from some old how-to books he'd found at his parents' house. Using the lumber from the old deck, he built a sort of earthwork pyramid with different plants on each level.

In this isolated environment with no cell service, Internet, or television, where the nearest neighbor is about a half mile away and "you might have three cars drive by over the course of a day," Mr. Drogos is never bored. "Every day, you think, 'what are we going to do today?'"

In the four years that Mr. Drogos has owned the house and its surrounding 20 acres of land, it has become an ecological project, an informal art studio, an occasional larder, and a place to learn and play.



# ALUMNI WEEKEND 2015: CLASSES COME BACK AND GIVE BACK

Alumni heard from Lab Director Robin Appleby, in the new Assembly Hall in Gordon Parks Arts Hall



In mid-October more than 450 alumni and guests returned for Alumni Weekend, which included school tours, discussion groups, a reception with former faculty, an alumni awards breakfast, and an outdoor family-fun program.

"Alumni are as essential to Lab's future as they have been to its past," says Director Robin Appleby, noting that this year six classes—four of which celebrated five-year milestone reunions—established class scholarships.

Says Jeremiah Stevens, Lab's director of alumni relations, "Class scholarships work because they create a rallying point for a group of closely connected peers. United, they are making a real difference in the life of a current Labbie and future alum."

>>TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR CLASS SCHOLARSHIP OR HOW TO START ONE, PLEASE CONTACT JEREMIAH STEVENS AT 773-702-9988 OR JSTEVENS@UCLS.UCHICAGO.EDU.



Tesha McCord Poe, '90, Rebecca Koblick, '80, and Alice Murrell Sheridan Appen, '60, touring Earl Shapiro Hall



Faculty member Lucijia Ambrosini and a former student at the Faculty and Staff Reception



Richard Tarlov, '75, at the Welcome Lunch



Members of the class of 1985 reconnecting at the U-High Family Festival



Chase Chavin, '97, Grant Chavin, '97, and Stefanie Chavin at the U-High Family Festival



Alice Murrell Sheridan Appen, '60, Richard Appen, Shrunali Rai, '92, Raj Rai, Diane Kutzen Sigman, '65, Tai Duncan, '00, and Josh Levine, '02, at the Welcome Lunch



Jim Becker, '60, and Frank Meyer, '60, in the Rogers Lobby at Gordon Parks Arts Hall



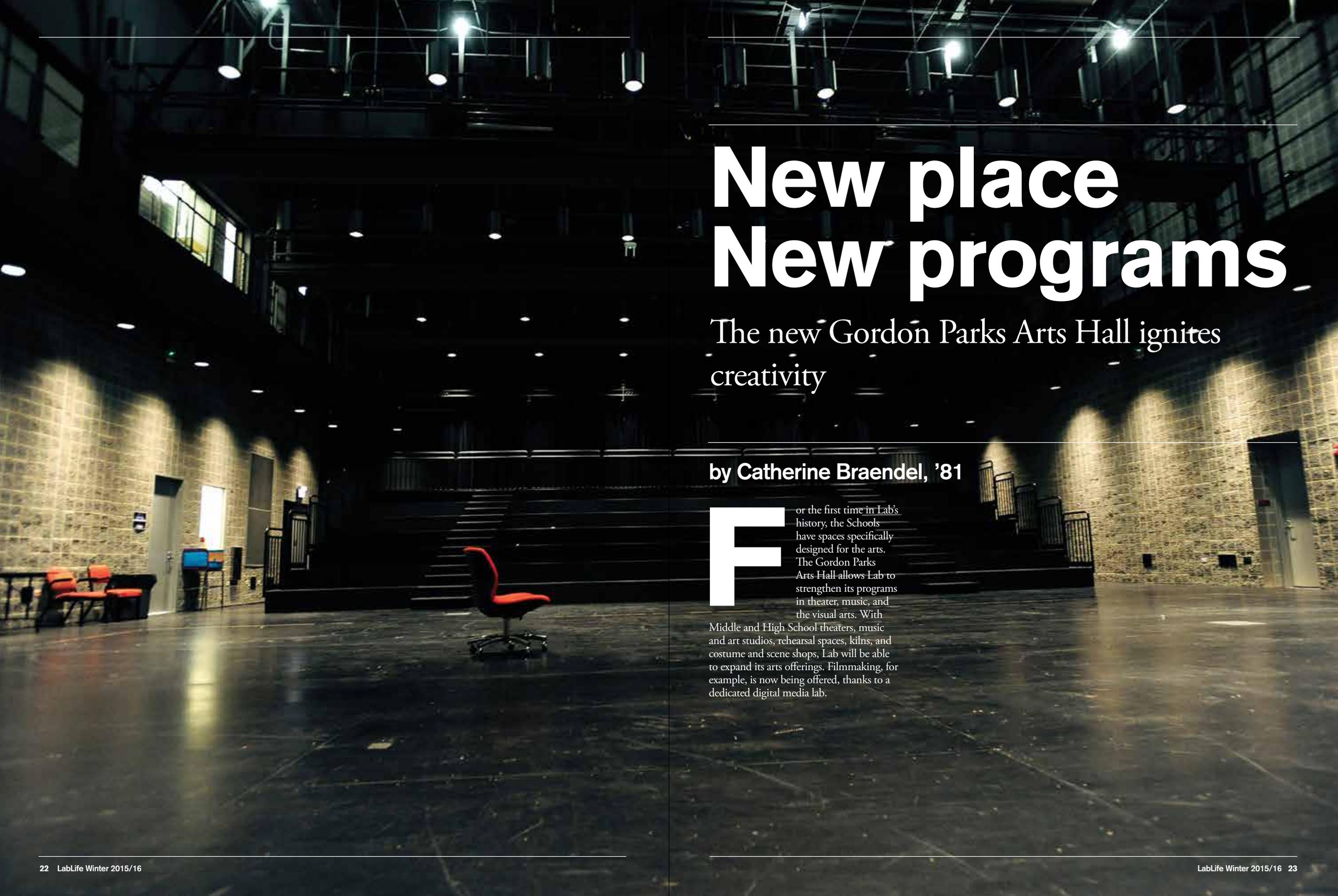
Former faculty member Dom Plane reconnected with alumni at the Faculty and Staff Reception



Members of the class of 1970 celebrating their classmate Susan Landau Axelrod, '70, at the Alumni Awards Breakfast



Parent volunteers provided tours of Earl Shapiro Hall for visiting alumni



# New place New programs

The new Gordon Parks Arts Hall ignites creativity

by Catherine Braendel, '81

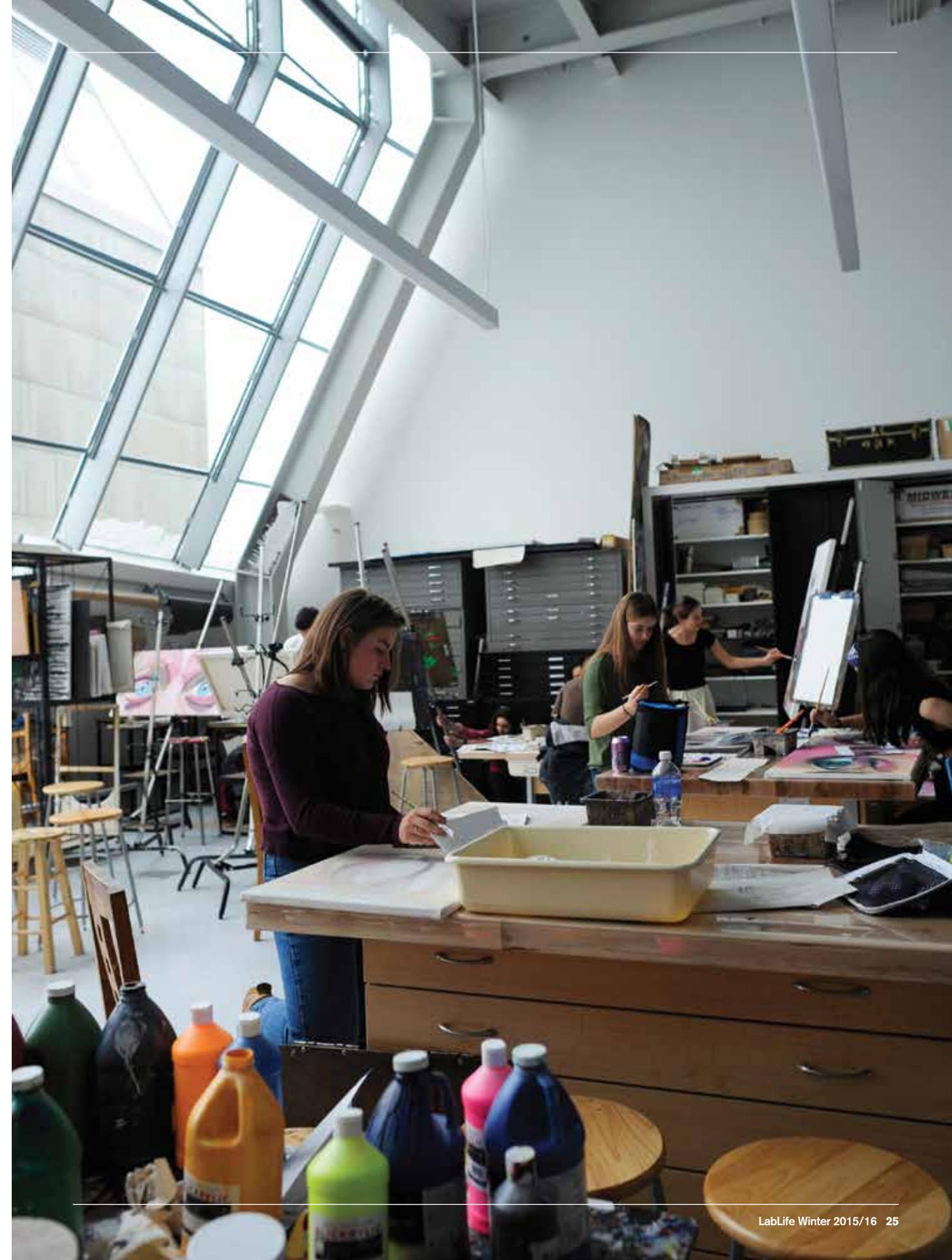
**F**or the first time in Lab's history, the Schools have spaces specifically designed for the arts. The Gordon Parks Arts Hall allows Lab to strengthen its programs in theater, music, and the visual arts. With Middle and High School theaters, music and art studios, rehearsal spaces, kilns, and costume and scene shops, Lab will be able to expand its arts offerings. Filmmaking, for example, is now being offered, thanks to a dedicated digital media lab.



Music is more than just notes on a page; it permeates everything that makes me who I am. The feeling I get when I make music with a group motivates me to strive for greatness. With access to the new space, we can work as an ensemble to better ourselves, unfettered by space or time constraints or meeting with our teacher.  
**—Max Kramer, U-Higher, drummer**

Our students are so excited about the space that we used it as the subject matter of our architectural drawings this fall in eighth grade art. They love the angles, the light, the shadows. These new spaces align with Lab's emphasis on "learning by doing," allowing students to experience the artistic process in greater complexity as they create their work.  
**—Art Department Chair Gina Alicea**

Music is a humanizing entity, which by breaking boundaries unifies us in a joined experience. The more technique I build, the more ways I have to express the music. The Hall will facilitate more productive rehearsals with updated technology and architecture.  
**—Will Kent, U-Higher, singer, trombonist**

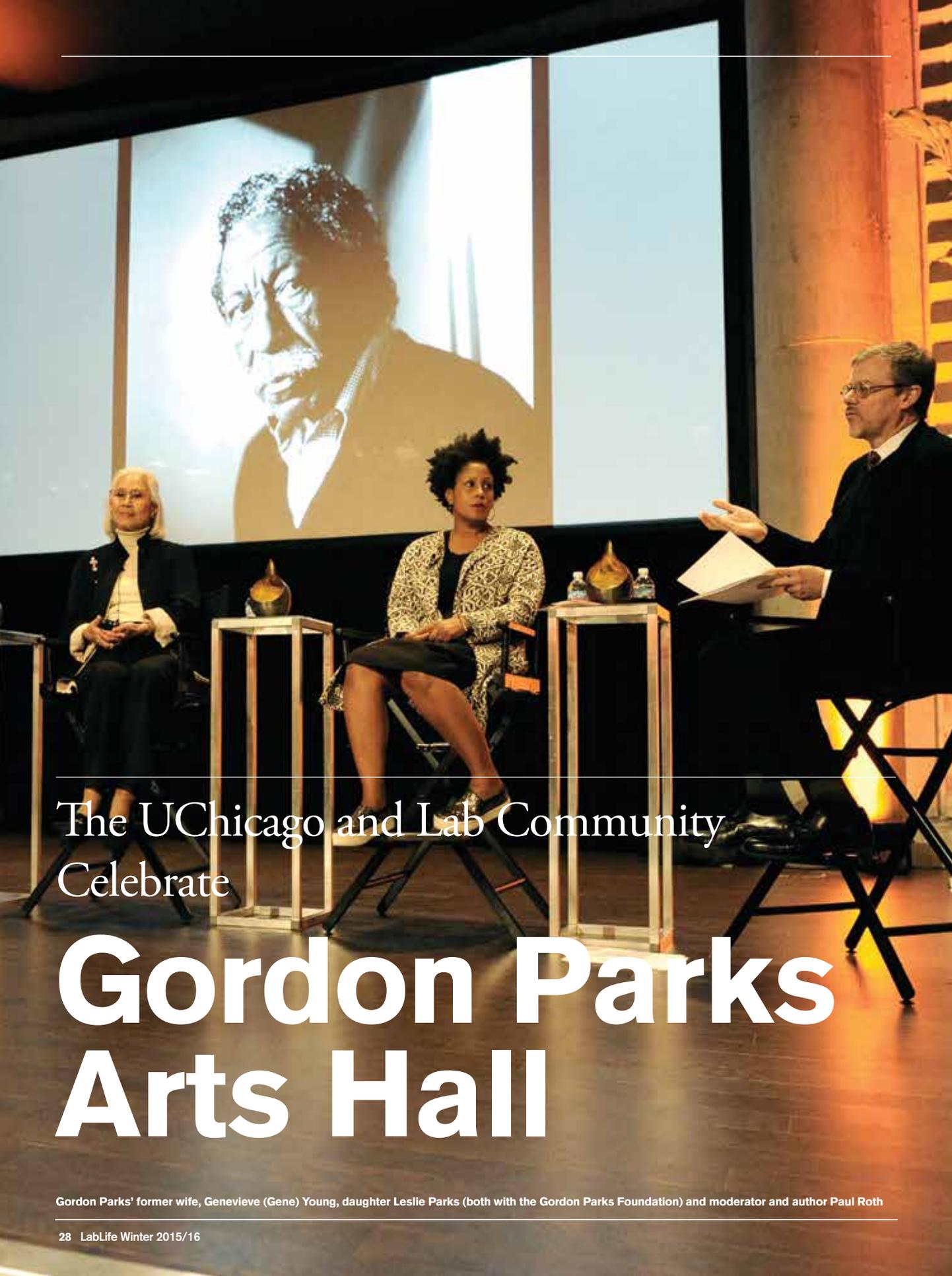




The Middle School drama studio is now a multi-functional space. We have a traditional black curtain, so we can unveil actors on a beautiful set and take the audience by surprise. We can also stage performances in less traditional ways using the whole studio space. That's exciting!  
**— Audre Baudrys-Nakas, Middle School drama teacher**

The scale invites us to work larger. The windows and soaring ceilings invite the outside in and inspire us to engage the outside in art making. Our building's namesake reminds us that we, as artists, have a role in shaping how the world is perceived and that we have something to say about what we see happening in the world. By creating such a space for

our young artists, we are telling them that we value what they do and want them to create and grow.  
**—Art teacher Sunny Neater**



The UChicago and Lab Community  
Celebrate

# Gordon Parks Arts Hall

Gordon Parks' former wife, Genevieve (Gene) Young, daughter Leslie Parks (both with the Gordon Parks Foundation) and moderator and author Paul Roth

**A**n October weekend of events celebrated the new artistic opportunities that the Gordon Parks Arts Hall is creating for Lab students, the philanthropy that made the project possible, and the inspiring legacy of the building's namesake, filmmaker Gordon Parks.

At the request of filmmaker George Lucas and financial executive Melody Hobson, his wife, the building is named in honor of Parks, the American photographer, writer, film director, musician, and social justice advocate.



"The Gordon Parks Arts Hall allows the Laboratory Schools to integrate the arts more deeply into its distinctive educational program and to re-conceptualize the role that the arts can play in this education," said UChicago President Robert J. Zimmer. "We are profoundly grateful to George and Melody for their support of this wonderful facility, which will serve generations of Lab students."

To celebrate the opening of the Gordon Parks Arts Hall, Ms. Hobson and Mr. Lucas convened a Friday evening panel of artists, including Francis Ford Coppola, Theaster Gates, Jeff Koons, Janelle Monáe, and Samuel L. Jackson. The panelists reflected on their artistic journeys, the importance of dedication, hard work, and encouragement to success, and the role of the arts in fostering connection and inclusion.

The celebration continued on Saturday with a street fair and open house for Lab families, faculty, staff, and alumni. The day included a panel discussion among representatives from the Parks Foundation and members of Parks' family, and a conversation between film industry leader **Sherry Lansing, '62**, and *New York Times* journalist and Lab parent **Monica Davey, '82**. Looking back on her experience at the Schools, Ms. Lansing remembered Lab as a tolerant and inclusive community that taught her the value of humanity.

An exhibit of some of Park's most iconic images, loaned to Lab by the Gordon Parks Foundation, served as the inaugural art exhibition in the Hall's Corvus Gallery. Said Lab Director **Robin Appleby**: "Gordon Parks overcame obstacles at every juncture. He set his sights on project after project, and through incredible self-determination, intelligence, and motivation, he became that truly rare Renaissance person whose artistic talents extended the cause of social justice."

"May his story and his passion infuse the work that will unfold under the roof that bears his name."



**TO CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THE GORDON PARKS ARTS HALL, MS. HOBSON AND MR. LUCAS CONVENED A FRIDAY EVENING PANEL OF ARTISTS, INCLUDING FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA, THEASTER GATES, JEFF KOONS, JANELLE MONÁE, AND SAMUEL L. JACKSON.**

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# Seaworthy

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Beach combing, whale watching, and fresh-caught tuna. U-High students take a working vacation at the Marine Biological Laboratory.

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by Sean Carr, AB'90



Something about this high school science lab seems ... different. The students—smart, resourceful, self-directed—are clearly Labbies. But there are

no test tubes or frogs in sight. Instead the students are gathered around a small squid, and in lieu of the standard biology lab implements, one student has rigged up a connection between the squid and his smartphone. As the Black Keys' "Lonely Boy" thrums from the phone's speakers, the squid's chromatophores—pigmented, light-emitting cells that aid in camouflage—flash red. When the flashing starts to fade, the student dials up the Black Eyed Peas' "Boom Boom Pow"—all low-end bass—and the red returns with a vengeance. Also worth noting: this lab is 1,000 miles east of Blaine Hall, in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

### Welcome to the Marine Biological Laboratory.

Late this past August, 12 U-High students—rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors—and two teachers, **Sharon Housinger** and **Daniel Calleri**, spent a week at the MBL. There they lived, ate, and breathed science—meeting researchers, catching and studying marine organisms, and inaugurating what many hope will become an annual Lab tradition.

When the University of Chicago and the MBL affiliated in July 2013, the benefits for UChicago's faculty and students were obvious: access to the unique organisms the lab collects and maintains, collaborations with MBL scientists, specialized training for graduate students, and even a new "quarter-by-the-sea" for undergraduates.

The advantages for the Laboratory Schools weren't as obvious, except to Mr. Calleri and Ms. Housinger. In the fall of 2014 the pair teamed with Lab Manager for University and Community Partnerships **Alexandra Wallace** to identify areas for collaborative program development between MBL and Laboratory School students of every age. Together they successfully submitted a proposal to the University's Office of the Executive Vice President and secured funding to support one year of pilot projects, including the very first summer field experience. In January 2015 they announced the trip and invited students to apply.

It was, says Ms. Housinger, "pretty rigorous screening on our part"—two essays and teacher recommendations, for a start—"to select kids whom we knew were both academically and personally able to handle a pretty intense experience without us having to push them or hold their hands."

**Owen Lasko**, now a junior, says, "Biology has always been my thing"; a ninth-grade class with Mr. Calleri took that interest to a new level. "It's kind of fascinating to see how everything is so vital to how the entire organism works, even if it's just a tiny cell in one part of your body." So he leapt at the chance to go to the MBL. Other students selected for the trip were more interested in physics or had a technological bent.

"We even took a student who's got more of an art interest," says Mr. Calleri, "but it's an art interest with a deep respect for biology."

That would be **Maeve Potter**. Her passion is filmmaking, but both of her parents are physicians, and her grandfather spent time at the MBL as a neurobiology

researcher. "If you walk into a room at my family reunion and say 'Dr. Potter,' everyone will turn their head," says Maeve, now a senior. She also notes that "some of the best and most inspiring teachers I've had in my time at Lab" have been in the sciences.

As an added bonus, her grandparents have a home in Woods Hole, where Maeve has spent part of each summer since she was little. So she volunteered her services as an informal tour guide. As it turned out, dinner at Maeve's grandparents' home was the Lab group's first stop in Woods Hole, even before they dropped off their bags in the MBL dorm. "We had a typical meal for us: seafood and Lebanese food," says



Maeve. "My grandma is Lebanese," she adds to clarify. They had caught the tuna earlier that day.

The students were up by 7 a.m. to shower and have breakfast and be at the dock by 8:30 to board the MBL's collecting vessel, the Gemma. For the next four hours, they dredged the bottom of the ocean, catching urchins, sea stars, sponges, crabs, and other creatures. After lunch they took their haul to the lab for study. That was the basic rhythm of their days: trip in the morning (two by boat), lab in the afternoon. Not that the students always obeyed the clock. "We would have to kick them out of the lab to go to dinner," says Ms. Housinger, "and then after dinner, when they had free time, they would frequently go back to the lab."

Other trips included visits to a salt marsh, where they piloted drones to help map the terrain; a whale-watching voyage to the tip of Cape Cod (a first even for Maeve); a walk to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; and—a highlight for students and teachers alike—a visit to Naushon Island, owned by the Forbes family. There's only one house on the island, and visitors must stay below the high-tide line. It's "basically wild, undisturbed beach," says Mr. Calleri, who guided the students through a "really exciting diversity of algae and seaweed." Dragging their nets on Nashuon, they caught baby puffers, mini sea bass, and pike fish—"flat sea horses," explains Owen. "Similar head structure, similar anatomy."

Another highpoint was MBL researcher Kristin Gribble's presentation on rotifers—microscopic marine organisms with similar DNA to humans. Ms. Gribble studies how diet and temperature affect rotifer lifespans, hoping to gain insights on human aging.

"She would say things, and you could see the light bulbs going off," says Mr. Calleri, snapping his fingers again. "That's every teacher's dream. They were leaping out of their seats practically."

"There were lots of points in the trip like that," says Ms. Housinger. "Yes, we're doing an experiment on rotifers, but why do people study these animals, and why do people study marine biology? It's because we care about these animals for themselves and we care about marine ecology, but also you can use them to answer other questions."

While each day at the MBL was highly structured, the work the students did flowed just as much from what interested them at any given moment. "We just got to explore," says Owen, "and Mr. Calleri

and Ms. Housinger would just go around and teach us whatever we were looking at, and they were also completely interested in what we were talking about and looking at."

"Throughout the trip, they really impressed me," Ms. Housinger says of the students. "They were asking the same kinds of questions that undergrad bio majors would be asking in upper-level science classes. They weren't acting like high school students. They were acting like serious biologists."

What happens at the MBL doesn't stay at the MBL. Back at Lab for another school year, many of the students who took the trip are pursuing independent study projects inspired by their time in Woods Hole. Two students have put together a salt-water tank to continue studying marine organisms. Another has gotten into microscopes, says Ms. Housinger, "so we set him loose with some of our old microscopes, and he's taken them apart and rewired them."

Inspired by the MBL's Ms. Gribble, Owen and two friends have set up their own rotifer experiment. Over the course of the school year, they will study the health effects—measured by movement speed, reproduction rate, and overall size—of different diets, with plans to publish their results in the spring.

"There's no way I would ever be doing that without the trip," Owen says. "I would never have taken the initiative or had the idea."

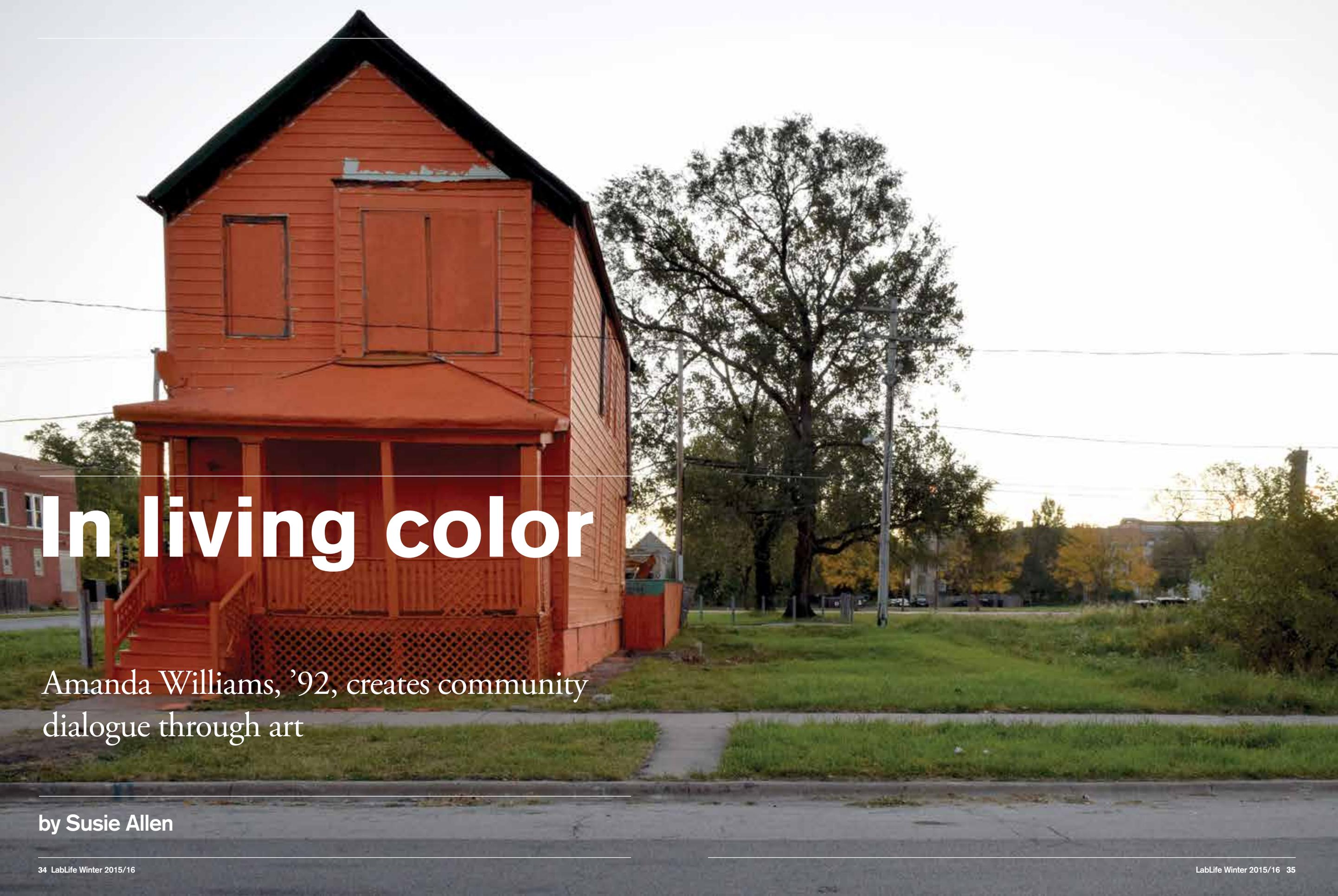
Maeve, too, has enjoyed some lasting benefits from her MBL experience. As part of a filmmaking class in the fall, she had to pilot a camera-mounted drone. "Having just a little bit of practice over the summer helped me a bunch," she says.



## THERE THEY LIVED, ATE, AND BREATHED SCIENCE—MEETING RESEARCHERS, CATCHING AND STUDYING MARINE ORGANISMS, AND INAUGURATING WHAT MANY HOPE WILL BECOME AN ANNUAL LAB TRADITION.

For his part, Owen thinks the trip should become an annual opportunity for students. "I couldn't imagine a better trip honestly," he says. "We all learned so much and we had a great group dynamic, and Ms. Housinger and Mr. Calleri were amazing. It just really worked on every level."

Ms. Housinger agrees. "They have this awesome education at Lab," she says. "They're really primed for an experience like this, and it's nice to be able to offer them something in high school that really is a kind of capstone."



# In living color

*Amanda Williams, '92, creates community dialogue through art*

**by Susie Allen**



**T**he walls of artist Amanda Williams's Bridgeport studio look like something between a design studio, a gallery, and the paint section of a Home Depot. Tacked up alongside miniature cardboard houses and various sketches and studies are color samples and paint swatches in bright pinks, yellows, reds, and oranges.

These are the remnants of *Color(ed) Theory*, a project that made Ms. Williams, '92, whose daughter is a Lab nursery-schooler, one of the most talked-about participants in the first Chicago

Architecture Biennial. Over 18 months, Ms. Williams quietly traveled around Englewood, painting abandoned houses set to be torn down by the city. She created a palette of vibrant hues extracted from buildings and products that were frequent fixtures in the South Side community of Auburn-Gresham: the bright red of Harold's Chicken Shack, the neon yellow of a currency exchange, the candy-like saturation of Pink Oil Moisturizer, the unmistakable orange of Flamin' Hot Cheetos.

*Color(ed) Theory* has inspired strong reactions, both positive and negative, from

viewers across the city. Speaking just a few weeks after painting the final house, Ms. Williams admits she was prepared for dialogue with and criticism from Englewood community residents, but she did not expect an onslaught of attention and acclaim from the contemporary art world.

"My initial intention was that the neighborhood was the audience—not even the whole city," she explains, "and definitely not the architectural community or the art world."

Although she is reluctant to be labeled an activist—she's quick to point out that there are community groups like the Anti-Eviction Campaign and Grow Greater Englewood working on the South Side every day, "and then me doing my odd art thing"—Ms. Williams says political and social questions were at the fore in the making of *Color(ed) Theory*. What is the psychological trauma of watching homes in your neighborhood fall into disrepair? How do we value space? How can a city let whole parts of itself fall into entropy? Are there small ways individuals can make a big impact upon their communities?

"Even though it was very public in terms of its physical expression, [*Color(ed) Theory*] was very private," says Ms. Williams. "It was me trying to make sense of my agency using paint, color, race, space as tools—just me questioning that out loud, very loudly."

### From architect to artist

Ms. Williams has made sense of the world through art for as long as she can remember. Growing up, she gravitated toward drawing; she grasped information more easily through images than words. Art classes were "an easy A," she recalls.

At Cornell University, she found a home for her visual talents in architecture. Her degree led her to the San Francisco Bay Area, where she worked for six-and-a-half years at firms including McCall Design Group and SMWM before deciding to pursue painting full time.

Although she knew it was the right decision, "that was one of the hardest days ever, when I had my business card that said 'Architect,' and then to have to rip those up and hand out a card that said 'Artist.'" People reacted quite differently to her new career. "The disdain for artists is second only to serial killers," Ms. Williams jokes.

In the 13 years she's been pursuing art full time, Ms. Williams has exhibited her

art throughout the country and locally, including shows at the Hyde Park Art Center, the National Museum of Mexican Art, and Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In addition to abstract painting, she has created work that, like *Color(ed) Theory*, explores questions of race and place. Her *Mapping* series consists of laser-cut maps superimposing the city grids of Paris and Englewood. Up close, the maps look a bit like lace.

Although she walked away from a traditional architecture career, that training continues to shape her work, with an emphasis on buildings and neighborhoods. She has also served as an Adjunct Professor of Architecture at the California College of the Arts and Illinois Institute of Technology.

Her architectural education also has shaped how she relates to an audience. As an architect, "you're trained to intake

information, assess what the person is, wants, or needs, translate and offer," Ms. Williams explains. "That's very different from the way artists imagine their role; contemporary art suggests that artists have the right to present their ideas however they see fit, the audience is often made to feel stupid if they can't understand why salt is being poured on the floor, or whatever."

### Bringing "different worlds" together

In picking the houses she planned to paint for *Color(ed) Theory*, Ms. Williams says she was drawn to "the iconic house shape": one-story buildings with gabled roofs, the way children draw houses. It was also important to find properties that were genuinely abandoned. If she drove by a property slated for demolition and saw frequent activity, she moved on.



She came to the first house in June 2014 with a skeleton crew of family and friends, with the goal of painting a new property every one or two months. Initial reactions from neighbors ranged from confusion (one man asked if she was creating a haunted house for Halloween) to gratitude that the crew mowed the lawns. Some neighbors felt embarrassed by the media attention that *Color(ed) Theory* brought to problems in Englewood. Others simply saw it as an eyesore.

## "COLOR(ED) THEORY WAS ME TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF MY AGENCY USING PAINT, COLOR, RACE, SPACE AS TOOLS—JUST ME QUESTIONING THAT OUT LOUD, VERY LOUDLY."

The colors themselves provoked strong reactions. For the final installment of the project, Flamin' Red Hots, Ms. Williams had some 70 people join her in painting a now-demolished house at 5703 S. Lafayette Avenue including former Lab classmates, **Monica Horton '91**, **Jennifer Wendell Benton '92**, and **O'Darie Weathers '92**. A group of local teens engaged in a spirited debate about whether the paint should match the bright orange hue of the bag or the rusty red of the snack itself. (Ms. Williams settled on orange, to distinguish it from the Harold's Chicken Shack Red house she had painted earlier.)

Ms. Williams was initially so focused on reaction to *Color(ed) Theory* from inside the community that she didn't realize how much outside attention the project would ultimately gain. A December 2014 article in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, as well as a grant from the 3Arts Foundation, were the start of a steady trickle of publicity and notice from the art and design world; being selected for the Chicago Architecture Biennial this past April put the project in an international spotlight. Since then,

Ms. Williams has spoken regularly about *Color(ed) Theory* to art and architecture audiences around the city.

Through *Color(ed) Theory*, Ms. Williams has intersected with many communities: architects and urban designers, residents and activists in Englewood, art patrons. Moving effortlessly between different worlds is a skill she has always been adept at, she says, growing up in Auburn-Gresham and attending Lab.

Ms. Williams and her brother, **Anthony Williams, '98**, attended Lab from kindergarten onward. To both of them, it was “very clear, very quickly” that their neighborhood and their school “were different worlds,” she says, “and that we operated differently in these different worlds—and that both of these worlds were important.”

Now that she's done painting houses for *Color(ed) Theory* Ms. Williams is busy in her studio plotting next steps. While she can't share specifics yet, she knows it will involve paint and what she describes as “a new color obsession—gold!”. It's daunting, she says, now with many more eyes and the weight of expectation on her. But public interest in her work has given her a platform, she says, an opportunity to create art that can generate meaningful conversation.

Later this year, she'll participate in a public art exhibition debuting in June, in Chicago called in the beginning, i left messages in the street. Calls to participate in other exhibitions and projects are coming in at a rate that is both a bit overwhelming and thrilling. As Ms. Williams puts it, “Never a dull moment.”



**THROUGH  
COLOR(ED)  
THEORY, MS.  
WILLIAMS HAS  
INTERSECTED  
WITH MANY  
COMMUNITIES:  
ARCHITECTS  
AND URBAN  
DESIGNERS,  
RESIDENTS AND  
ACTIVISTS IN  
ENGLEWOOD,  
ART PATRONS.**



THROWBACK

# 1908

University High began in 1903 when three schools merged: students from John Elementary School, the South Side Academy, and the Chicago Manual Training School. Today fab labs, tinker spaces, innovation labs, and makerspaces are some of the terms used to describe the modern gathering spaces where tools, projects, and people come together to conceptualize, create, build, and make

things with their hands. At Lab, N/K and Primary teachers participated in professional development related to the maker movement. An example of the resulting curriculum: first graders worked together, in Earl Shapiro Hall's developmentally-appropriate makerspace, to “construct something to help the farmer get the pumpkins from the field to the barn for curing.”



University of Chicago Photographic Archive, [apf4-01980], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

## In a word Allan Metcalf, '57



Forensic linguist Allan Metcalf, '57, doesn't hesitate to tell you his favorite word: "OK." It's simple, versatile, omnipresent, and has a fascinating history. "It's the world's greatest word," says Mr. Metcalf, an English professor at MacMurray College. "It's the only word I know of that has spread to so many other languages, and because of the way we use it, with gesture and inflection, someone who speaks a different language can understand."

The author of *OK: The Improbable Story of America's Greatest Word*, Mr. Metcalf has written seven books on American English, most recently *From Skedaddle to Selfie: Words of the Generations*, published by OUP in November.

For his latest effort, he asked students in his college English courses what "their" words are. They overwhelmingly claimed "awkward."

"That was a surprise," Mr. Metcalf says. "We've had that word around for a long time. It hadn't occurred to me they consider it one of their words." He adds, "Unexpected discoveries like this are bonuses. Each word has its own interesting story."

Even word sleuths like him face the challenge of figuring out how to communicate what they want to say, especially when it

involves tight deadlines. Since 2011 he has posted weekly to *Lingua Franca*—a blog of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*—on language topics from "Word of the Year" to bias-free language.

The latter is the tentative topic of his upcoming eighth book, focused on political correctness and whether unbiased language is even possible. Still wrestling with finding the right words himself, his answer is both yes and no, depending on the circumstances.

**Mr. Metcalf predicts which new words will become permanent. He's got his money on "selfie."**

Mr. Metcalf, who is executive secretary of the American Dialect Society, has for the past 14 years taken to predicting which new words will become permanent parts of our vocabulary. "Desk rage"? "Ground Zero"? He correctly made the call they would stick around. "Shoshkele," "she-eo," and "boomeritis"? Don't count on them. (He explains why in his 2002 book *Predicting New Words: The Secrets of Their Success*.)

"Certain characteristics of words make them more or less likely to last. Most important is that it's a word that doesn't look new," says Mr. Metcalf. "It should camouflage itself so that it looks like it already belongs."

Today he's got his money on "selfie."

## The accidental pianist

Paula Fan, '69

Pianist Paula Fan, '69, never planned to be a musician. Yet her first memory is of moving her fingers while listening to the radio and she came home from her Arkansas kindergarten to report that a woman who played piano for her class "wasn't very good."

"What I am is the result of Lab," says Ms. Fan, who attended Lab from second grade through her sophomore year in high school, when, in 1967, her family moved to Tucson. At Lab, she says, "I learned to think independently, was inspired by great teaching, and was encouraged to pursue original ideas."

Ms. Fan, who taught at the University of Arizona School of Music for 40 years and has been principal keyboard with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra for 31, thought she'd teach math. But her musical education at Lab left an indelible mark: exploring Humor in Music with Mr. Tirro, Minimalism and Musical Happenings with Mr. Hey, and falling in love with Mozart *Lieder* thanks to Mrs. Goetting.

Miserable at school after her family moved to Tucson, she auditioned to play for the choir; eventually, the choirmaster teamed up with her piano teacher, petitioning her to try majoring in music for one semester. "It's been a long semester!" jokes Ms. Fan.

In addition to her performances with the symphony, she tours every year and has performed across the world. She has recorded more than 20 albums and broadcast on BBC, NPR, Radio Television China, and other international stations. Her credits as a pianist-partner include teaming up with German-American violinist

Steven Moeckel, Welsh baritone Jeremy Huw Williams, and the late British clarinetist John Denman—whom she married in 1982.

In 1980 she joined members of Beijing's Philharmonic Orchestra for the first concert of Western chamber music since China's Cultural Revolution, and was the first accompanist-coach invited to perform and teach by the Chinese Ministry of Culture.

"I have been lucky enough to enjoy a good career, but I have never felt that a musician is totally what I am," says Ms. Fan, who also volunteers for Earthwatch and has a cat rescue 17 felines strong.

"One 'plays' an instrument, and that is the operative word for me. I played—and still play—for fun, although I approach what I do seriously," she says. "However, I can walk away and not play the instrument for months. It's probably a healthy thing."



## Changing the culture of youth sports

Tai Duncan, '00



Tai Duncan's career has been far from linear. The executive director of the Chicago chapter of Positive Coaching Alliance, a national youth sports nonprofit, Ms. Duncan, '00, is also a coach at Flow Basketball Academy. Previously she worked as an attorney for the City of Chicago and for John W. Rogers, Jr., '76, at Ariel Investments' office of the CEO.

"I think most people are a professional work in progress," said Ms. Duncan, who earned her coaching chops as Lab's head varsity girls' basketball coach from 2009–2014. "My career has looked more like a jungle gym than a ladder."

Growing up, she found the people who had the most interesting jobs also had a legal background in common, including David Feldman, her Middle School social studies teacher and basketball coach at Lab. "He showed me the value of a law degree outside of traditional practice," says Ms. Duncan.

While law is her professional backbone, she now dedicates herself to the mission of changing the culture of youth sports. By concentrating on character building as much as skills improvement, both Positive Coaching Alliance and Flow Basketball Academy work to turn the tide away from a focus purely on winning.

Instead they cultivate sports' potential to provide personal growth opportunities such as leadership, accountability, teamwork, and learning from mistakes.

"I still get together with some of the girls I coached at Lab," she says. "I love hearing that they think fondly of their time on the basketball team and have used so much of what they learned through sports to help them be successful in college and beyond."

In addition to volunteering on the board of directors of the Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation, BIG Baseball Academy, and the Lookingglass Theatre Company junior board, Ms. Duncan was on the planning committee to celebrate her 15th U-High reunion. She enjoyed supporting the school

**"If I can give back even a fraction of what I've received, I will have lived a good life."**

that has meant so much to her over the past 30 years, and she looks forward to cochairing Connections, Lab's annual gala fundraiser, in March.

"I've had some incredible experiences and continue to learn new things and be challenged every day," she says. "I hope to be remembered for helping others. If I can give back even a fraction of what I've received, I will have lived a good life."

## Jumping high—and bringing others with her

Jax Chaudhry, '07



When Jax Chaudhry, '07, was a student at Lab, she remembers seeing a University of Chicago student wearing a nerdy T-shirt that read: "I'm not an outlier, I just haven't found my distribution yet." Thanks to Rosa McCullagh's AP Statistics class, she understood it. And as an African American student from a low-income background and a single-parent home, it resonated more deeply.

"I was an outlier, but I found my distribution at Lab," says Ms. Chaudhry. "I want every student to have the ability to find their distribution, to find their space, and to contribute to society in the best way that they can."

Now the manager of matriculation and onboarding at Teach for America, the 26-year-old has devoted herself to building stronger and better educational pathways for under-resourced students.

After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, she had a one-year fellowship teaching at Chicago's Urban Prep Academy, an all-boy's school in Englewood. It was under their critical gaze that she realized making a serious impact would take more than 365 days. It would take a lifetime.

"I remember my students looking at me and having faces of, 'Well, you're only here for a year. You're just going to leave, like everybody else,'" she says. "That was the moment I knew there has to be dedication from

someone like me for there to be real change."

That commitment meant coming full circle. She became the executive and program assistant at High Jump, a Chicago academic enrichment program for middle school students who have exhibited academic potential and who are of limited economic means. (Lab has a partnership with High Jump and recently doubled the space it provides so that

**"I was an outlier, but I found my distribution at Lab."**

High Jump can host nearly 120 students in their program.) It was through Ms. Chaudhry's own childhood participation in High Jump, every Saturday for two years and for six weeks during the summer, that she learned about Lab. Visiting Lab as a prospective high school student marked the first time she felt welcomed by an inclusive environment.

Through Model United Nations and the encouragement of history teacher Earl Bell, she learned her past didn't have to dictate her future. When she thought she didn't do her best for the team, Mr. Bell reminded her she'd done all she could and it was time to prepare for the next event.

"He made it clear that you aren't defined by failure. *You* define you," she says. "In so many other spaces, I thought I was wearing it on my forehead that I was an inner-city kid that didn't come from wealth. Learning that you don't have to be defined by your circumstances or failure is why I do what I do."

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The Geraghty, Chicago

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by John Dewey in January  
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