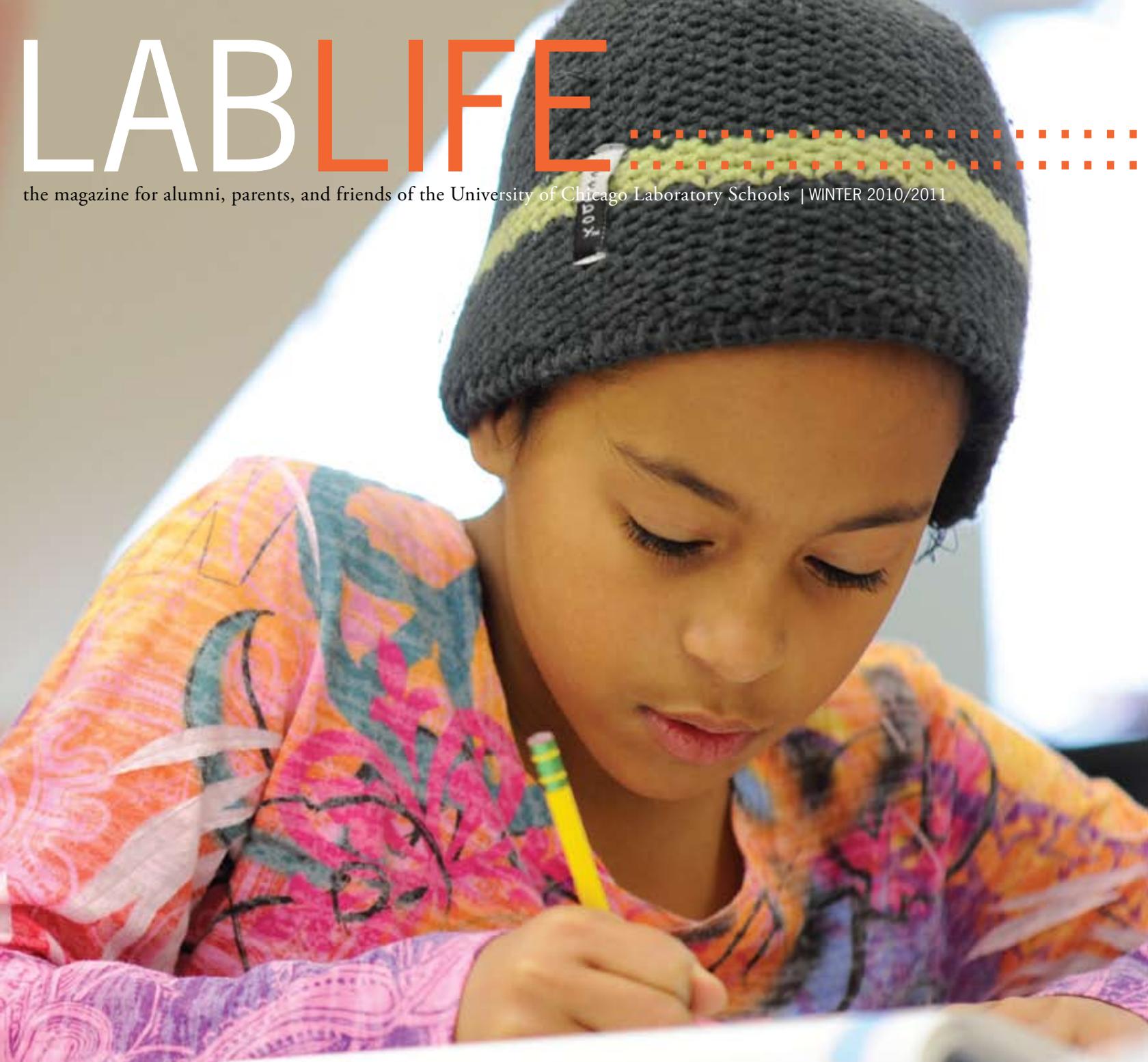


# LAB LIFE

the magazine for alumni, parents, and friends of the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools | WINTER 2010/2011



## WRITING: LIFE'S NECESSARY ART:

ALUMNI WRITERS RETURN TO LEAD U-HIGH'S FIRST DAY

## GOOD CITIZENS, RICH LIVES: A Q&A

WITH UCHICAGO PROFESSOR MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

IN THE HALLS: LAB FACULTY AND STAFF GO TO THE (SHOW) DOGS

LAB NOTES: CLASS NOTES & ALUMNI NEWS

from the director

LabLife, published three times a year, is written for the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools' community of alumni, parents, faculty, and staff.

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Dear Friends,

In an earlier stage of life, I wouldn't have believed that a decade would go so quickly. Yet here we are, Y2K an amusing, old-fashioned concept and my tenure at Lab no longer a novelty. In recent years, with the outstanding partnership of parents and alumni and enormous effort by teachers and staff, much has happened under the guise of Lab+.

We have recently decided to act on an idea germinated when the University and Schools decided it was requisite to build the new Early Childhood Campus. Expanding to the Stony Island site will allow Lab to accommodate growth in demand from both the University and the broader community while maintaining the diversity—in all of its forms—that has been the hallmark of a Lab education. With University approval, the Schools have increased the Lab+ Campaign goal to \$55 million. This increase will help

us realize the transformative improvements to academic programming and facilities that have been decades in the making. Having never undertaken a fundraising effort of any real magnitude, the Schools could not have anticipated the enormous generosity of our community. Already, families, alumni, and friends have raised more than \$38 million toward this goal.

While we celebrate the progress we are making on new spaces, we remain vigilantly focused on the human side of this effort: making sure that we have the best teachers, the most eager and talented students, and the fullest and most pedagogically-sound program of study. These are the cornerstones of a truly great education.

So why care about physical plant at all?

- > It bears repeating that increasing our space will allow the Schools to maintain the socio-economic and racial diversity that has been the hallmark of a Lab education.
- > The best teaching does not require the most shining new facilities, but optimal facilities help attract the best teachers and make great teaching and learning easier.
- > New early childhood and arts spaces will be built to programmatic need, rather than force-fitting programs into rooms that happen to be open. (Right now, not a single art class takes place in a room designed for that purpose.)
- > Our historic campus will keep its gothic charm, but offer enhanced safety, security, and accessibility.
- > Lab's commitment to building community will be reflected in new spaces designed for gatherings both small and large—a whole division will be able to meet for the first time without canceling gym classes!

Never say never (Y3K, anyone?), but it is unlikely that a facilities project of this magnitude will occur again at Lab. Lab+ is truly our once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to design the future of our Schools in a holistic way that will touch every learner from age three to 17. I hope you will all take the time in 2011 to stay in touch with what we are doing and participate in whatever way is meaningful for you.

David W. Magill, EdD  
Director

While the importance of writing received major emphasis at U-High's First Day program, students who move through Lab's Lower and Middle Schools spend years preparing for the efforts they'll put forth as teens. Even as pre-writers, the act of dictating an imagined tale can help children become familiar with "story grammar," the patterns found in stories.

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For sports heroes, look no further than U-High teams.

During the week, **Anne Catterson, Brenda Coffield, and Ken James** guide Lab students through art projects, physical education activities, and the ins and outs of everyday student life. On the weekends, everything goes to the dogs—all three have beloved pooches that participate in American Kennel Club (AKC) competitions.

Ms. Catterson, an art teacher in the Middle and High Schools, has shown flat-coated retrievers since 1991. Her current dogs, Maude and Kin, enter three types of events: conformation, where dogs are evaluated in terms of AKC breed standards; competitive obedience, where they respond to commands; and field competitions, where they complete hunting exercises like retrieving dead game.

Ms. Coffield, who teaches physical education in the Lower and High Schools, also began showing dogs in the '90s, but didn't get heavily involved in the show-dog scene until she acquired border terriers Rory and Lil last year. The terriers are co-owned by Ms. Coffield, their breeder Margaret Henning, and emeritus Lab teacher **Judy Keane**. Rory and Lil participate in conformation as well as performance events such as Earthdog, which requires them to climb into foxholes and demonstrate other instinctive skills.

Mr. James's pug, Lincoln, competes solely in conformation, or the "beauty pageant" component of dog shows. "I turned 50 in 2001," says Mr. James, Lab's director of student services, explaining why he began showing. "I thought, OK, I now have to do something that is totally pointless except to me."

The three are often asked if the fierce competition depicted in the 2000

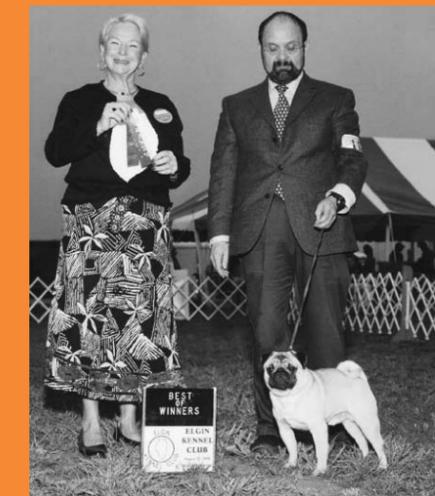
movie *Best in Show* is accurate. All are quick to admit that it is. Ms. Catterson recalls hearing a fellow dog-show participant say, "You can tell me that my kid needs braces, but don't tell me that my dog doesn't have a perfect bite." It's easy for owners to become consumed by their dogs' success, they agree, and the competitions can be tainted by politics. Judges who favor a particular dog handler might "look the other way on a point here or point there," Ms. Catterson says.

The intense atmosphere can get them rattled, but they strive to keep their cool. Nerves "go right down the



But overall it's just a dog-gone good time. "Watching Rory and Lil tear off and head down into an underground tunnel," says Ms. Coffield, "you know that they're having the best time of their lives. Their tails are wagging, they're woofing, they're ready to go."

Lab faculty and staff go to the (show) dogs.



leash to the dog," says Ms. Coffield. All three have meltdown moments they've never forgotten. Lincoln once fidgeted so much on the conformation table that a sharp-tongued judge loudly reprimanded Mr. James. Kin's grandfather leapt out of his ring to retrieve another dog's dumbbell. Lil broke free and pranced into the wrong ring for evaluation.

## Form, function, fun

Inspired by the horizontal lines of Frank Lloyd Wright and the undulating curves of Antonio Gaudí, fourth-graders are becoming designer/architects themselves. Lower School art teacher **Gina Alicea** is leading the way, inspired by a professional development trip to Spain this past summer.

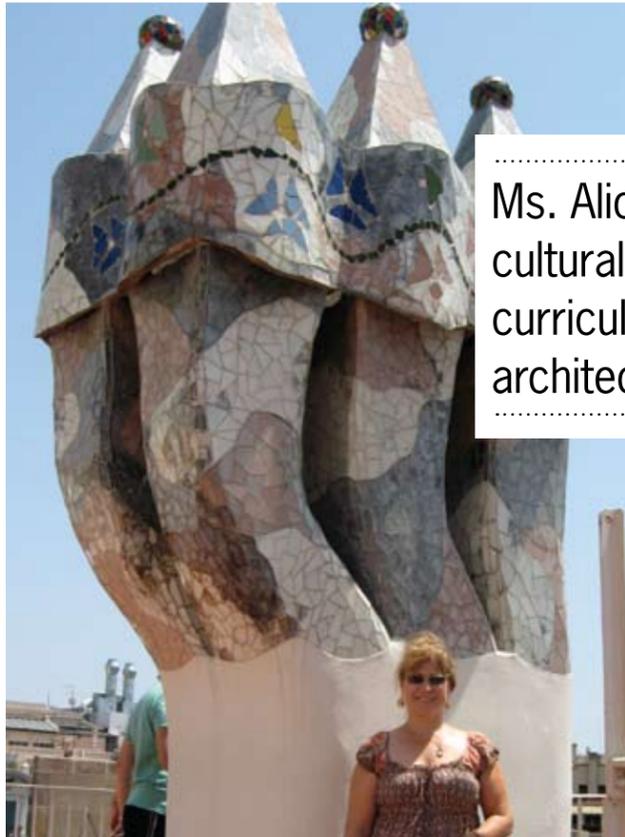
Now in her fourth year at Lab, Ms. Alicea, a practicing artist, spent a month doing an artist's residency outside Barcelona. She also visited museums and cultural sites to develop new curriculum ideas based on Gaudí's architecture. "I'd never seen it, and I teach an architecture unit every spring to the fourth grade," she says.

Visiting Casa Batlló, a home that Gaudí remodeled with Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* in mind, Ms. Alicea had a revelation. "The whole thing is curvilinear, and there are seashell shapes; everything just spins and turns and it's completely the opposite of [Wright's] Robie House."

"I took so many pictures that my camera died," she laughs. "I was so excited that when I got back I wrote up a new architecture unit to study and compare the Robie House with Casa Batlló." The homes were finished in 1910 and 1906, respectively.



Last fall, Ms. Alicea's fourth-graders created model chairs based on their studies of furniture designed by Gaudí, Wright, and other famous architects. To spark students'



Ms. Alicea visited museums and cultural sites to develop new curriculum ideas based on Gaudí's architecture.

imaginations, Lab parent Richard Wright invited them to his Chicago auction house, which specializes in modern design. On the field trip, they learned about the form and function of chairs, held a mock auction, and examined originals by Frank Gehry and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. "They're never going to see a chair the same way again," says Ms. Alicea. And this spring Ms. Alicea's students will design and build models of their own houses.

By analyzing everyday objects like chairs and houses, students learn the basic principles of design. Through exposure to the work of creative artists and architects, they learn "to think outside of the box, beyond what they know," says Ms. Alicea. "It's exciting in the classroom right now."

## Tribune heralds music teacher Tomeka Reid as "luminous"

In the September 10 issue of the *Chicago Tribune*, music critic Howard Reich gushed about Lower and Middle School music teacher and cellist **Tomeka Reid**, who performed with her trio at the Museum of Contemporary Art's Tuesdays on the Terrace series. "Chicago has a knack for producing distinctive voices in jazz," Mr. Reich wrote, "and one of the most promising belongs to cellist Tomeka Reid."

The performance was a rare chance to hear Ms. Reid, described as "a remarkably versatile player," perform

jazz standards. During Duke Ellington's "In a Sentimental Mood," wrote Mr. Reich, "the same long, luxuriant phrases that Reid often lavishes on music of the South Side avant-garde emerged to seductive effect in a jazz classic. Better still, Reid wasted no time reinventing the famous theme, embellishing it, substituting key notes, crafting alternate melody lines."



Mr. Reich's only quibble was in some respects a compliment: "Reid happens to be a demure presence, declining to assert herself away from her cello," he wrote. "A few spoken phrases would help listeners understand that they're witnessing the emergence of a potentially major figure."

## Students write text booklets for Tanzania



Students in Tanzania face many challenges: dodging lions on the playground, crossing rivers to get to school, and trying to learn without the aid of textbooks, says Lab Middle School science teacher **Debra Kogelman**. In many Tanzanian schools, teachers must conduct lessons with nothing more than a blackboard and some chalk. So, last spring, Ms. Kogelman rallied her two eighth-grade science classes to create earth-science booklets to distribute in Tanzanian schools.

The project was born of Ms. Kogelman's work with Mwangaza

Education for Partnership, an organization that fosters collaboration between secondary teachers in Tanzania and the United States and is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in both countries. After Ms. Kogelman heard about Mwangaza through her church in 2006, she volunteered on a three-year project to send surplus American textbooks to Tanzanian Lutheran schools. (Although Ms. Kogelman has never been to Tanzania, she is currently applying to Mwangaza's program, through which U.S. teachers visit Tanzania for two weeks to train teachers.)

While working on the textbook project, Ms. Kogelman knew there simply weren't enough textbooks for each student to have his or her own. She thought, "What if we made booklets in class that Tanzanian teachers could copy and give to their students?"

To kick off the project, Ms. Kogelman invited a Partnership board member to speak to her classes about life in Tanzania and the "insurmountable things that the students deal with to get an education."

Inspired, the Lab students used Microsoft Word's brochure template to make booklets based on their research into volcanoes, plate tectonics, and rivers. The booklets are intended for Tanzanian high-schoolers, but since Tanzanians don't learn English until the eighth grade—their native language is Swahili—the vocabulary had to be relatively simple. Ms. Kogelman also encouraged students to include examples from Africa and lots of illuminating pictures. Ms. Kogelman is currently in the final stages of editing the brochures before sending them to Africa.

"Teachers in Tanzania have cried when they received a single piece of paper to teach from. So I can only imagine what the impact of this will be," she says.



## U-High to change class schedule for first time in nearly five decades

Next year, Lab will implement a new schedule in the High School. Developed by the faculty and approved by a majority vote, it will be the first significant change to the schedule in at least 46 years—as long as anyone on the faculty can remember.

The U-High faculty had already been discussing how to update the schedule when **Matthew Horvat** joined the High School as principal in 2006. Although the current U-High schedule has been in place for many years, the teachers agree it isn't perfect. There are concerns that the amount of instructional time in most subjects—180 minutes a week per class—is less than what comparable independent schools provide, and teachers have long believed that their work in the classroom would be greatly enhanced by additional contact time. Further, there's no dedicated time for coming together as a community; to accommodate an assembly a class period simply has to be canceled.

The teachers developed a plan that lengthens the school day slightly and provides time for each class to have one extra-long period—75 minutes—each week, with 45-minute periods each of the other three sessions a week. With the long period, total weekly class time is extended to 210 minutes. The new schedule will also include a dedicated period during students' midmorning break that can be used for assemblies.

### Current schedule

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
8:00 - 8:50		A 45'	A 45'	A 45'	A 45'
9:00 - 9:05	15'	15'	15'	15'	15'
9:05 - 9:50	B 45'	I 45'	B 45'	B 45'	B 45'
9:55 - 10:40	C 45'	C 45'	I 45'	C 45'	C 45'
10:45 - 11:30	D 45'	D 45'	D 45'	I 45'	D 45'
11:35 - 12:20	E 45'	E 45'	E 45'	E 45'	I 45'
12:20 - 1:00	Lunch 45'	Lunch 45'	Lunch 45'	Lunch 90'	Lunch 45'
1:00 - 1:45	F 45'	F 45'	F 45'		F 45'
1:50 - 2:30	G 45'	H 45'	G 45'	G 45'	G 45'
2:35 - 3:25	H 45'		H 45'	H 45'	

Each course:  
180 min/wk; 6,156 min/yr

While some parents may be apprehensive about the change, Mr. Horvat thinks that they'll like the new schedule as they become more familiar with it. As for students, he notes that they're surprisingly resistant to change. Current students may grumble, but, he says, "In three or four years if I say, 'We're going back to the old schedule,' students will say, 'What are you doing? You can't go back!'"

Scheduling at Lab is much more complex than at similar high schools, says Mr. Horvat. U-High shares art and phys ed facilities and some teachers with the Middle and Lower Schools, making scheduling a tricky affair. But he sees light at the end of the tunnel: U-High scheduling will become much easier when proposed new classroom facilities are built as part of the Schools' planned construction project.

More information and answers to frequently asked questions are online: <http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/schools/high-school>.

### Proposed schedule

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
8:00	A 45'	C 45'	A 45'	B 45'	C 45'
8:45					
8:50	C 75'	B 75'	B 45'	A 75'	A 45'
9:35			C 45'		B 45'
9:40	30'	30'		50'	
10:25			30'		
10:35	D 45'	D 45'			D 45'
11:20			D 75'	E 75'	
11:25	E 45'	E 45'			E 45'
12:10					
12:10	Lunch 45'				
12:55					
12:55	G 75'	H 75'	H 45'	G 45'	F 45'
1:40					
1:45					
2:30			G 45'	F 45'	
2:35	H 45'	F 45'	F 45'	H 45'	
3:20					G 45'

Each course:  
210 min/wk; 7,182 min/yr (+17%)

## Don't drop the pickles...and other lessons in business

**Summer Link expands beyond science**  
Last year, U-High expanded its Summer Link internship program beyond science labs and into the world of business. Over the summer, 11 students, all rising sophomores or juniors, worked with UChicago professors, including Nobel laureate **James Heckman** and *Freakonomics* author—and father of four Lab students—**Steven Levitt**.

Summer Link, a partnership between the University and the Laboratory Schools, began officially in 2008–09 placing U-Highers in research jobs in Department of Biological and Physical Sciences labs. U-High history teachers **Chris Janus** and **Andrea Martonffy** organized the new business portion of the Summer Link program, working with a half dozen University professors, several of whom are Lab parents. The program included weekly seminars at which a University faculty sponsor presented research to the entire group.

Junior **Nathan Eckstein** was one of six students working with economics professor John Romalis. The interns

spent most of their time at stores throughout the city, where they scanned products and recorded their countries of origin. The painstakingly collected data will be used, according to Professor Romalis, to understand "the impact of rising imports on the cost of living of households with different income levels—for example, poor households versus rich households."

The interns (like all Summer Link students) had agreed to work for minimum wage but—as one would expect from an economics professor—Professor Romalis offered a per-scan bonus and an accuracy bonus. "It was a really effective incentive," says Nathan. For Nathan, the internship provided an unintended education: "I went to places I'd never been to, like Pilsen and Bridgeport," he says. And he "got a cultural education" as well, for example, noticing the very limited selection available to a shopper at a Family Dollar store, compared with the enormous selection of things like jams and jellies at the much more upscale Treasure

As one would expect from an economics professor—Professor Romalis offered a per-scan bonus and an accuracy bonus.

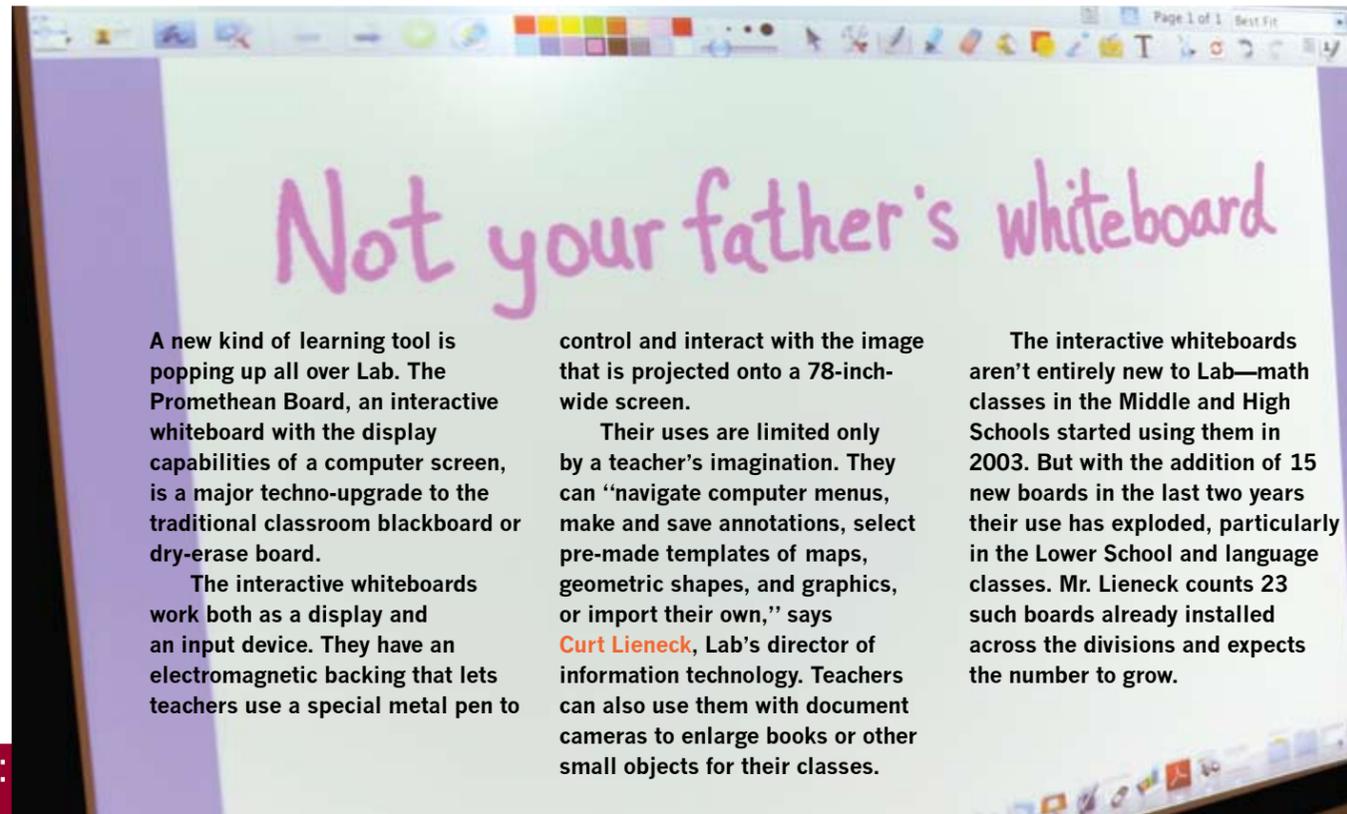
Island in Hyde Park.

He and his partners also honed their diplomatic and technical skills. The most stressful aspect of the job was not the inevitable discussion with a store manager who was ready to kick them out, but scanning breakable items: "I dropped a jar of pickles once," Nathan says. And replacing batteries in the decade-old bar code scanners proved a bit nightmarish—installed incorrectly, the data was destroyed.

Professor Levitt's interns, juniors **Kristine Wald** and **Molly Petchenik**, worked on a variety of projects—poker, soccer, and pollution. For the poker research—done for Professor Levitt's consulting firm, The Greater Good—Kristine and Molly looked at customers' reactions to an Internet poker site. They analyzed comments and then graphed the data to show which features were popular or unpopular.

They also did research on countries that had won the World Cup, which ended up in Professor Levitt's *New York Times* blog in June. While South American teams win often, they are low in the FIFA rankings of best teams, showing a possible "European bias in how teams are ranked," Professor Levitt wrote.

"We weren't treated like high-schoolers," says Molly. "We were treated like actual researchers. He really wanted us to find out things on our own. We got a feel for doing research and not just being students in a classroom."



A new kind of learning tool is popping up all over Lab. The Promethean Board, an interactive whiteboard with the display capabilities of a computer screen, is a major techno-upgrade to the traditional classroom blackboard or dry-erase board.

The interactive whiteboards work both as a display and an input device. They have an electromagnetic backing that lets teachers use a special metal pen to

control and interact with the image that is projected onto a 78-inch-wide screen.

Their uses are limited only by a teacher's imagination. They can "navigate computer menus, make and save annotations, select pre-made templates of maps, geometric shapes, and graphics, or import their own," says **Curt Lieneck**, Lab's director of information technology. Teachers can also use them with document cameras to enlarge books or other small objects for their classes.

The interactive whiteboards aren't entirely new to Lab—math classes in the Middle and High Schools started using them in 2003. But with the addition of 15 new boards in the last two years their use has exploded, particularly in the Lower School and language classes. Mr. Lieneck counts 23 such boards already installed across the divisions and expects the number to grow.

## Tuscan sun produces beautiful music

For a lover of music, it's not always easy to keep your patience, or your optimism, while a beginning violin student scratches out the soundtrack to a horror movie.

But for students to learn, a teacher has to establish a "non-judgmental environment," says **Rozalyn Torto**. "Students are not going to be instantly successful. You have to accept that you're going to make some really weird noises with the strings at first."

That was just one of the lessons Ms. Torto learned at the 2009 International Music Retreat, held every August in a medieval castle in Tuscany. The week-long retreat for violinists and violists is led by music pedagogy experts Mimi Zweig (her most famous student is Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell) and Jeannette Koekkoek, both of Indiana University, Bloomington. A professional development award from Lab covered the cost of tuition and part of Ms. Torto's airfare.

Ms. Torto and the other 11 participants—music teachers

from Canada, Hungary, Spain, and Switzerland, among other countries—spent mornings in a pedagogy class. They also had the chance to watch Ms. Zweig teach, as she worked with two sisters from France, ages nine and 11.

In the afternoons, Ms. Torto, herself a violist, worked with Ms. Koekkoek on her own musical practice. "It was a full-circle experience," she says. At the end of the six-day program, participants gave a performance in the castle's vineyard.

The workshop has "given me more clarity," says Ms. Torto, and it has encouraged her to rethink her teaching, including her requirements for practicing. Before, Ms. Torto would assign a certain number of minutes of practice per day. Now, she assigns specific tasks that students have to complete during practice—plucking a note a certain number of times, for example, then adding the bow. "I've had a really good response to that," she says. "The students feel like they've accomplished

more, rather than just having played for an ambiguous number of minutes."

Another key piece of the pedagogical approach that emphasizes information also shifted Ms. Torto's approach. "If someone isn't playing well, that doesn't mean that student is a bad violinist. They just need more information."

"It helped to take away my bias," Ms. Torto says, and it builds on some advice she had received during her first year of teaching from Department Chair Katy Sinclair: "Teach the kids first, and music second."



.....  
 Teach the kids first, and music second.  
 .....

## Williams Award winners reinvest in their teaching

In September, Middle School librarian **Cynthia Oakes** became the 12th winner of the Schools' Mary V. Williams Award for Excellence in Teaching, which includes a \$5,000 honorarium for professional development. "I haven't used it yet," says Ms. Oakes. With characteristic enthusiasm, she adds, "I'm still trying to comprehend that I even received it!"

**Mary Williams**, a Lower and Middle School teacher, died unexpectedly in March 2000. "I had so many great teachers at Lab, but she was my favorite," says **Dan Rudolph, '74**, who endowed the award.

As a sixth-grader in 1968, Mr. Rudolph was in Ms. Williams' very first class at Lab. "She was tough, but we knew she loved us," says Mr. Rudolph, who kept in touch with Ms. Williams after graduating and often visited her when he was in Hyde Park. "It was a thrill for me to be able to remember her in his way." The award recognizes a faculty member who shares the spirit of Ms. Williams' pedagogy, including a teaching style that speaks to the whole child, respect for students' individual qualities, and a sense of humor.

She plans to use the rest to complete a book project that she began in 2008 when she took a year off from teaching. The book (working title: *A Year Off for Art*) will include interviews with French and American museum visitors as well as her musings about the experience of viewing art.

"I'm a better teacher if I can remain a student myself," says Ms. Schneider, who teaches units on film, Surrealism, and Impressionism as part of her French classes.

Lower School teacher **Lisa Sukenic** devotes significant class time to helping



.....  
 "I'm a better teacher if I can remain a student myself."  
 .....

The winners of the Williams Award have used the honorarium for a diverse range of professional development activities. Most famously, **Blue Balliett**, the first winner in 2000, took time off to work on a children's novel, which became the best-selling *Chasing Vermeer* (2004).

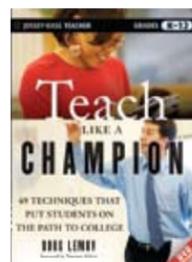
French teacher **Vicki Schneider**, honored in 2005, budgeted so well that she still has not exhausted her award money. She used some of it for a trip to Morocco: "There's so much about Francophone Morocco in the textbooks," she says, "but none of the French teachers had ever been there."

her young students develop their own creative writing voices, and her 2008 Williams award activities support that. She attended writer's workshops at the Interlochen School for the Arts and the Georgia O'Keefe Ghost Ranch. The award also helped Ms. Sukenic earn a creative writing certificate in poetry at the University's Graham School.

Ms. Schneider captures the essence of the award when she says, "If I energize my own creativity, it increases the creative energy that I have in class."

## Recommended reading

**Science Department Chair David Derbes recommends *Teach Like A Champion*, by Doug Lemov**



Last March *The New York Times Magazine* published "How to Build a Better Teacher," featuring Doug Lemov, a former teacher

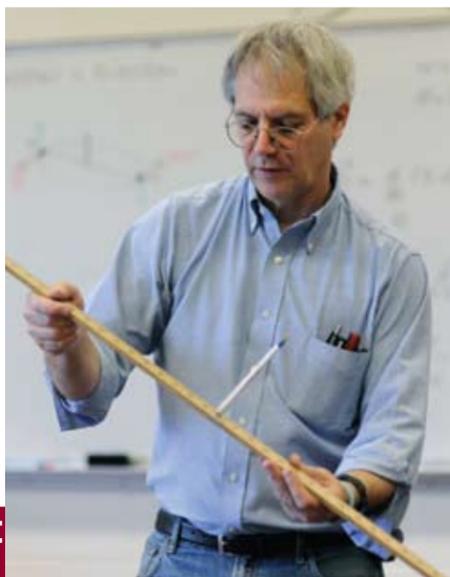
and principal who'd spent several years traveling around the country videotaping classes. As a consultant, Mr. Lemov was trying to find out why some teachers succeed while others fail, even in the same schools, and often with the same students. The best teachers could successfully cover a year and a half of material in a single year; the worst might manage only a third of that. Why?

Mr. Lemov hasn't figured it all out, but he has found a set of tactics that many of the best teachers use. I mentioned the article to my daughter, **Catherine Derbes, '05**, then in her first year of a Teach For America tour in New Orleans, and she said, "Oh, everyone in TFA uses Lemov's stuff; we have his taxonomy." I was a little envious; I wanted to read his work, but at the time it was not available. Now it is. *Teach Like A Champion* is an economical and very practical set of teaching techniques. Rather than a philosophical treatment of best practices or an abstract discussion of what ideal teaching is supposed to be, Mr. Lemov's book resembles a drill sergeant's instruction manual for raw teaching recruits, a do-it-yourself Parris Island for those behind the big desk for the first time. Designed primarily for teachers in

schools whose students do not all go to college, some of Mr. Lemov's 49 techniques are not well matched to Lab's population. But even old timers will find many ideas they ought to consider making part of their own practices—as I am trying to do.

Parents might also find some useful tips in the book: for encouraging and developing good work habits and attitudes; on building character and trust; and particularly for helping a child learn to read with deeper comprehension (the last 50 pages of the book focus on reading). Originally an English teacher, Mr. Lemov believes passionately that all teachers should help their students become better readers, and he provides tips on reading aloud, as well as examples of questions to ask while doing so.

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## Students sign “National Letters of Intent” to attend Northwestern

At a November reception held in Kovler Gymnasium, before a crowd of friends, family, coaches, and fans, seniors **Michael Turner** and **Tina Umanskiy** each signed a “National Letter of Intent” to attend Northwestern University. Michael plans to be a part of the men’s basketball program. Tina will join the women’s fencing team. Michael and Tina join a select group of Lab alums recruited to participate on a NCAA Division 1 varsity team, including current Lab Board Chair **John W. Rogers, Jr., ’76**, **Arnie Duncan, ’82**, current Lab teacher **Chris Harper, ’92**, and, most recently, **Alexis Jenkins, ’08**, and **Zeke Upshaw, ’08**.

Mike (6’8”) was named first team All-Conference in 2009–10. He averaged a team high of 18.6 points, 8.9 rebounds, and 2.2 blocks per game last year. In the regional championship game, he led the Maroons to the title with 24 points, 11 rebounds, and 5 blocks.

Tina came to Lab in her junior year and went on to win her first high school first place medal at the Maine West H.S. Open. She also earned the 2009–10 Coaches Award and was named All-Conference at the Great Lakes Fencing Open. Nationally, Tina placed ninth at the 2009 Division 3 North American Cup.



### Other sports highlights:

**Cross-Country**  
Seniors **Thomas Aquino** and **Robert Meyer** and sophomore **Sarah Curci** qualified for state. Sarah was named ISL Runner-of-the-Year. The girls team won the ISL Championship and the boys won their fourth consecutive regional championship.

**Golf**  
Junior **Akila Raoul** made school history when she became U-High’s first female golfer to advance to sectionals. She shot a 94 to advance to the Homewood-Flossmoor Coyote Run Sectional. Senior **Jack Burns** qualified to the state finals. And U-High sent a full team of six girls to compete in the AA Regional tournament.

**Girls Tennis**  
The sectional championship doubles team of sophomore **Laura Anderson**/senior **Rachel Sylora** and the sectional finalist team of **Leslie Sibener**/Brianna **Solola** (both juniors) qualified for state. The Maroons won the ISL Championship for the second straight year, and sophomore **Laura Anderson** was selected ISL Player of the Year.

**Girls Volleyball**  
The team won the 3A Regional Championship—only the second regional championship in school history.



Parents should realize that choking under pressure has little to do with intelligence but relates instead to how the brain works, says Ms. Beilock. “Students in stressful testing situations often start worrying—about the outcome, about what others might think of them, about what happens if they don’t perform well,” she explains. “These worries essentially zap the cognitive resources, the brain power, that they could otherwise use

Whether they’re belting out a solo, attempting a penalty kick in soccer, or sweating through the SAT, Lab students strive to do their best. Yet sometimes even high-achieving students perform poorly when it matters most, says **Sian Beilock**, the author of *Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To* (2010). The trick is learning to manage stressful situations so you can “show what you know.”

Ms. Beilock is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Chicago and an expert in cognitive science. At the Laboratory Schools, she’s done research on how test anxiety affects student performance and whether small-scale interventions can help. She is also studying the ways that teachers convey their knowledge and how these affect student learning.

“Lab is a place that gives students an amazing educational environment, but with those opportunities come pressures to succeed,” says Ms. Beilock. Students who adapt to the pressure are better prepared for future challenges, including college. But those who fail due to stress or worry can find their confidence undermined, leading to missed opportunities and fewer choices down the road.

to reason and think successfully through the test.”

Anyone can choke, even stellar students. “When we talk about choking or bombing the test, we’re not talking about someone who doesn’t have a mastery of the material and isn’t performing well. We’re talking about kids who know the material but get into that testing situation and just aren’t able to pull it out,” she says.

Ms. Beilock’s research goes well beyond young students. Her work has explored why top athletes, actors, or musicians botch a crucial performance, and what one can learn from the related brain science. In essence, her work shows that by paying too much attention to detail and attempting to control physical movements that are normally “unconscious,” players can freeze or make basic mistakes, even in front of a supportive crowd. Ms. Beilock calls this “paralysis by analysis.”

The good news for kids and parents is that choking, while common, isn’t inevitable. The same tips and tricks that help adults perform their best in high-stakes situations work well for high-school students, says Ms. Beilock: “By knowing the science behind why choking happens, you can find the right technique to improve your performance.”

## HERE ARE A FEW STRATEGIES TO ENSURE SUCCESS UNDER PRESSURE IN ACADEMIC SETTINGS, ADAPTED FROM MS. BEILOCK’S BOOK.

> **Reaffirm your self-worth.** Before a big test or presentation, spend a few minutes writing about your many interests and activities. Draw a map or diagram of everything that makes you a multifaceted individual (one test score doesn’t define you!) to help take some of the pressure off.

> **Write and/or meditate about your worries.** Before a test, write about your anxieties to help banish them. Train your brain, through meditation, to harness all your cognitive horsepower for the task at hand.

> **Think differently.** Think about yourself in ways that highlight your propensity for success. Remind yourself that you have the tools to succeed. If you get sweaty palms and your heart races under pressure, interpret these signs positively (“I am amped for the test!”) rather than negatively (“I am freaking out!”).

> **Pause, outsource, organize.** Walking away for a few minutes from a challenging problem can help you find the most appropriate solution. Write down the intermediate steps of a problem rather than trying to hold everything in your head. Before a test, come up with a meaningful way to organize information to take the burden off your “working memory,” or cognitive horsepower.

> **Remember the Obama effect.** Thinking about examples of people who defy common stereotypes about race, sex, and ability can help to boost the performance of people in stereotyped social groups.

> **Practice under pressure.** Studying under the same conditions that you’ll be tested under—in a timed situation with no study aids, for example—can help you get used to what you’ll experience on test day.

Techniques for improving sports and stage performance vary, and are also discussed in her book, *Choke*.

# DANGER AND DARWIN

Author and former Lab teacher Blue Balliett returns, sharing tales and inspiration

Two pony-tailed sixth-graders sat on the edge of their seats, waiting for the October assembly with best-selling novelist **Blue Balliett** to begin. The last time Ms. Balliett (who taught third and fourth grade at Lab for more than a decade) spoke in Judd Hall, “she told us the steps that go into writing a story,” recalled the taller of the two.

“Yes,” her friend chimed in. “You think, you imagine, then you get to express it.”

Ms. Balliett’s most recent mystery, *The Danger Box*, published only in September, is about a 12-year-old, sight-impaired boy in Three Oaks, Michigan, who discovers a stolen notebook that originally belonged

a third of the students raised their hands.

She wasn’t surprised. “Younger schoolchildren have total confidence to go great places. But as they get older, it’s hard to hold onto,” says the longtime Hyde Park resident. “The spontaneity gets lost. Between the demands of school and the pressure to be conventional, there’s not a lot of room for dreamy thinking.”

Case in point, the 11-year-old boy who sat up front during Ms. Balliett’s presentation. He said he had started several novels, including one he titled *The Unknown World*, about a cowboy who rides into the city on a cloud. But he always stopped. “I just get away from it,” he said.

That’s why, when schoolchildren ask for writing tips, Ms. Balliett offers this advice: “Be patient with yourself. Don’t give up when it doesn’t work right in the

beginning. It’s not something you do once and then you’re done. It takes lots of rewriting.”

To illustrate the point, she likes to show a photo of herself at work in her laundry room, sprawled on a bed next to a pile of unfolded clothes. She calls it “a picture of mess and the writing process.”

“Part of the problem is that in school you are supposed to be neat,” says Ms. Balliett. “But writing is messy. I wish when I was younger, someone had talked to me about mess.”

What did her family talk about during her childhood in New York City? Books. Both of Ms. Balliett’s parents were writers. Her father, Whitney Balliett, was the *New Yorker’s* jazz critic for nearly 50 years. Her mother, Elizabeth Platt, authored a book on daycare and another about the Head Start program.

Ms. Balliett published poetry in her twenties and, while living on Nantucket Island, two collections of ghost stories. But she didn’t become a full-time writer until her late forties. “It took

years to find my voice and get rid of all the constructs,” she says. “It was being a teacher around all these kid brains that liberated me as a writer.”



Although Ms. Balliett wants her novels to be fun reads, she tries to fill them with what she calls “adult-size ideas.” In *Chasing Vermeer*, which she originally wrote for a third-grade class she was teaching, she poses the question, “How do you look at art?” In *The Danger Box*, she wants to inspire readers to have faith in their own powers and the confidence to listen to their own ideas.

“Adults underestimate just what powerful thinkers kids are,” says Ms. Balliett. “I want kids to know that their voices are valuable.”

# inthehalls



*The Examination*  
Malcolm Bosse



*Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths*  
Bernard Evslin



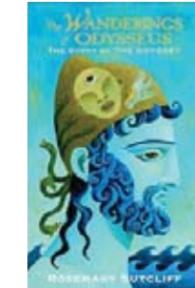
*Chinese Folktales*  
edited by Yin-Lien C. Chin, et. al.



*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*  
Mildred Taylor



*Black Ships before Troy*  
Rosemary Sutcliff



*Wanderings of Odysseus*  
Rosemary Sutcliff

## FROM THE SYLLABI:..... What sixth-graders are reading

Sixth grade humanities starts with geography and ends with Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic period. Some of the literature is chosen specifically because it can be viewed through the lens of an historical theme. But across all texts, teachers use the Shared Inquiry approach to help students learn to think critically and use details to support their ideas. Sixth-graders are examining their reading assignments much as one would any short story or novel—exploring issues of plot, character, setting, and theme. Some will even read and perform simplified versions of Greek plays like *Orestes*.

## Touch screen time: iPads in the classroom

This year, Lab has become part of an experiment in educational technology: integrating Apple iPad tablet computers into the classroom. Lab isn’t the first to do so—thousands of schools worldwide are doing so as well, says **Curt Lieneck**, Lab’s director of information technology. But because the computers weren’t designed with schools in mind, teachers and students alike are learning as they go.

At the forefront of Lab’s experiment are **Kathy Piane’s** first-graders and the second-graders in **Lisa Harrison’s** class. The two teachers came up with the concept of piloting the iPads in the classroom together with Mr. Lieneck. Each teacher has six iPads for 24 students; one class can borrow the other’s computers for some activities, providing enough for every student working in pairs.

The teachers are using the iPads to teach a number of different subjects, but foremost among those is math. Explains Ms. Piane, “When playing math games on the iPad, I can be certain that students are

practicing accurately, since errors are corrected as they play. This is very difficult to do with traditional paper-and-pencil practice in a whole-class setting.” Students have also used the computers to browse the web for class research projects and play the educational computer game *Oregon Trail*.

The students have proven to be eager iPad users. “They frequently choose to play [the math games] during their ‘free choice’ time even though they have many options,” Ms. Piane says. Ms. Harrison’s students even teach each other how to use new programs. “I often turn the teaching over to them after we’ve had an introduction,” she says. “The children know we’re all learning about the iPads together—teachers and students—and that they’re a part of this process.”

Adapting the iPads for educational use hasn’t been glitch-free. Both teachers cite the lack of apps that assist with beginning reading skills, along with the limited stock of apps appropriate for grade schoolers. (“Educators are not always the ones



developing the apps,” notes Ms. Harrison.) Mr. Lieneck wishes there were more applications that could project a signal from the iPad to the classroom’s audio-visual installations, but foresees a bright future. “Early feedback suggests these devices could assume an important role in integrating technology into the classroom,” he says. “It’s much more than just another ‘edutainment’ device. It removes the clutter between the child and the content so they can engage it personally and directly.”

When Ms. Balliett asked how many wanted to be writers, nearly a third of the students raised their hands.



to Charles Darwin. And while neither girl had yet to read the newest tome, they had both raced through her previous young adult novels: *Chasing Vermeer*, *The Wright 3*, and *The Calder Game*.

And just like Ms. Balliett, who knew she wanted to be an author when she was eight, the two Middle Schoolers had been scribbling stories since they were little. “I would love to be a writer,” says one of the girls. “Me too,” the other agrees.

They weren’t alone. When Ms. Balliett asked her youthful audience how many wanted to be writers, nearly

# FIFTH ANNUAL DEWEY/DEPENCIER WINE TASTING EVENT



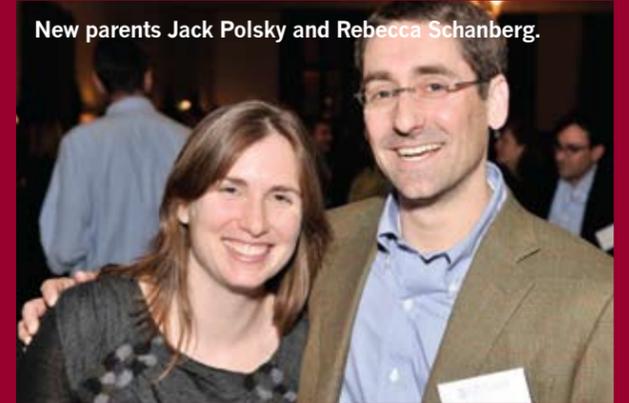
Tarlan Hedayati, '92, and Ataman Shah.



With a tasting of nine different wines selected and organized by parent Dan Sachs, proprietor of Chicago's Bin 36, a wine store and restaurant, more than 150 parents and alumni had a chance to mix and see architectural models of Lab's new Arts Wing and the Early Childhood Campus to be built on Stony Island Avenue.

The Dewey Founder's Society recognizes alumni, parents, and friends whose cumulative annual gifts to Lab total \$2,500 or more. The DePencier Society recognizes alumni who have contributed \$1,000 or more to the Schools.

New parents Jack Polsky and Rebecca Schanberg.



Savitri Fedson, '87, Maria Kalifa, and Mark Kalifa.



Middle School Principal Amani Reed, Connections 2011 Committee member Sandy Wang, and Lab board member Chris McGowan.

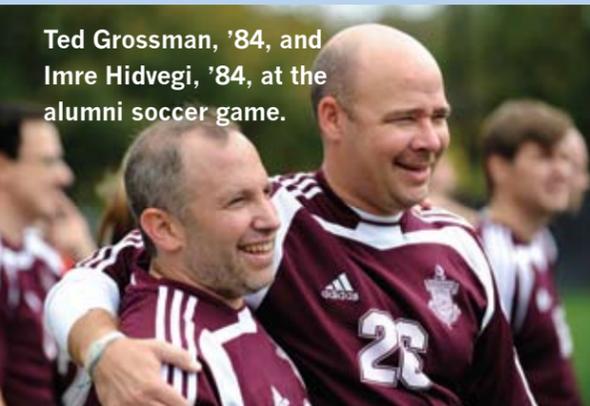


New parents Nguyen Nguyen, Brandi Sandner, and Doug Sandner.



## FOOD, SOCCER, FRIENDSHIP, AND ART DRAW ALUMNI

Ted Grossman, '84, and Imre Hidvegi, '84, at the alumni soccer game.



Floyd Landis, '43, in New York.



Alumni on the Road—New York hosts Felix Baker, '87, and Julian Baker, '84.



Alumni on the Road—New York and four Chicago-based events brought scores of alumni (and teachers) together this fall. Hosts Felix Baker, '87, and Julian Baker, '84, welcomed more than 60 people to Felix's Manhattan home—among them, graduates from the classes of 1943 to 2006. Back in Chicago, with help from the Alumni Leadership Committee, Labbies faced off against Parker alumni on the soccer field, and more than 60 gathered at the Packer Schopf Gallery to celebrate the work of Louise LeBourgeois, '81.

See more photos of these and other alumni events on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/laboratoryschools](http://www.facebook.com/laboratoryschools).

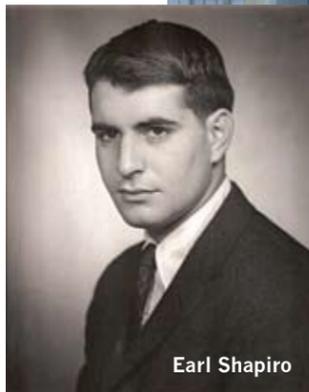
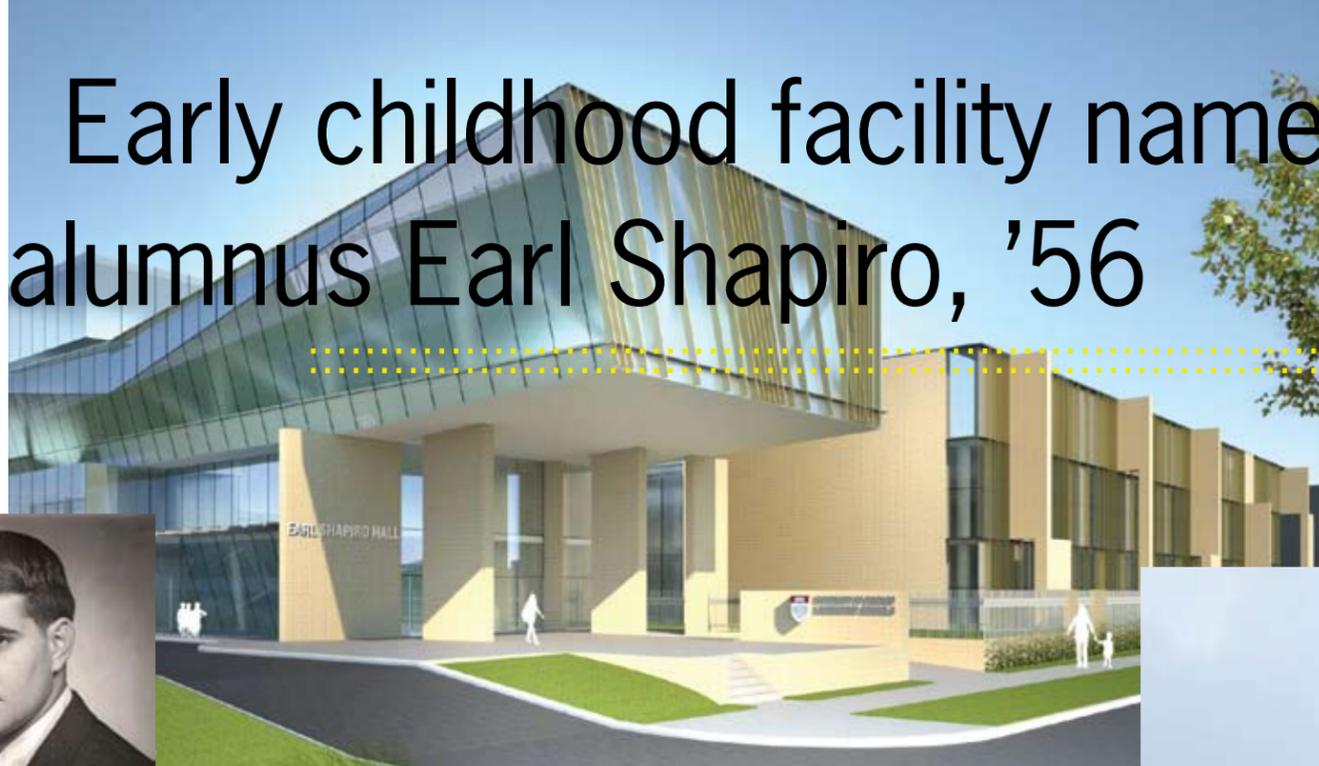
Louise LeBourgeois, '81, and Elizabeth Evans, '81, in Chicago.



Carl Schuenemann, '80, Sandra Scamardi, Lynn Sasamoto, '79, and Sidney Lee, '80, in Chicago.



# Early childhood facility named for alumnus Earl Shapiro, '56



Earl Shapiro



Brenda Shapiro (seated) is joined by sons Benjamin and Matthew, '84, and Benjamin's wife, Dawn.

IN JANUARY, THE LABORATORY SCHOOLS AND the University announced the naming of Earl Shapiro Hall on the planned Early Childhood Campus to be built on Stony Island Avenue. Named in honor of the late Earl Shapiro, '56, the landmark addition to the Laboratory Schools will be designed specifically for children from nursery through second grade. Among other benefits, the state-of-the-art facility will allow students outdoor access from classrooms, indoor spaces suited for a range of simultaneous activities, and thought-provoking settings that enhance the flexible interactions at the heart of the schools' educational philosophy.

Earl Shapiro Hall is a key component of the Schools' Lab+ Campaign, an initiative that will help maintain the diversity so central to the Lab community while allowing for transformative improvements to every aspect of the Schools' programs and campus.

"This is a rare opportunity for an institution like the Laboratory Schools to tailor its facilities to its nationally recognized educational program," says University President Robert J. Zimmer. "The Shapiros have been leaders in seeing that potential and seizing that opportunity. It is fitting that Earl Shapiro's memory will be associated for generations to come with this important center of learning."

In 2008 the Shapiro family—Earl's wife, Brenda, and their children Matthew, '84, Benjamin, X'86, MBA'94, and Alexandra, X'90—gave a \$10 million gift to the Schools, citing the unique combination of talented and diverse students, outstanding teachers, and a focus on critical learning. Earl Shapiro died shortly after the family gave the gift in his honor.

"Our father would be very pleased with

this building and the entire Lab+ project, as organizations thrive only if there is constant reinvestment," says Matthew. "This building represents a reinvestment in not only the Schools but the University, Hyde Park, and the city of Chicago, all of which the Shapiro family holds dear. Associating our father's name with one of the finest educational institutions in the country is befitting of the man that he was."

Matthew explains that in both business and philanthropy, the family has held to values that were a part of their Lab educations—honesty, the importance of education, and the focus on giving back to the institutions that are important to you.

Designed by Joe Valerio of Valerio Dewalt Train and FGM Architects as the architect-of-record, Earl Shapiro Hall has been planned to optimize the Reggio Emilia approach to learning, an educational model that shares some of the ideas of Lab founder John Dewey. In that approach, the learning environment is meant to be another teacher, stimulating natural curiosity and providing room for independent action.

Construction of the Early Childhood Campus is scheduled to begin next fall, with completion projected for the summer of 2013.

The expansion will allow the schools to continue to maintain a diverse student body at a time of unprecedented demand both within the University community and among families from the neighborhood and across the city. Mr. Magill notes that as Lab becomes one of the largest independent schools in the nation, it will also have the scale to invest in more specialized programs for students.



## Markovitz Challenge rings in a new year

THE GROUND IS FROZEN—IT IS WINTER IN Chicago after all—but the landscape at Lab's parcel of land on Stony Island Avenue is changing. Much has already unfolded under the guise of the Lab+ Campaign: Blaine Hall has a new slate roof—no small thing. University management crews have overseen abatement work to ensure that the Stony Island site, in advance of demolition, is safe and poses no health or hazard concerns. (As with any century-old building, there has been asbestos removal, and a medical site always needs special attention.) Demolition at the site is in the offing, and all hope to see the official start of construction this fall.

Now, helping move things along is a generous commitment by another Lab family. Ling Z. Markovitz and Michael C. Markovitz, AM'73, PhD'75, have made a gift of \$1 million to Lab—a significant gift that will be further leveraged as a one-to-one match for most donations made to the Schools before June 30, 2011.

Lab Director David Magill sees their commitment as just one of the elements that will allow the Schools to meet the goal of having 100 percent of families participating in the Campaign: "Michael and Ling's contribution will be an important means of encouraging many other families to step forward to participate at whatever level they can. Listening to them tell their story, one can see a family that has been won over by the unique experience that is Lab. We hope all will follow suit."

The Markovitzes' daughter, Sarah Qing, is now a sixth grader. But when they enrolled her at Lab as a nursery-schooler, the classroom experience came as a bit of a shock to these parents, who'd had very different educational experiences.

Mrs. Markovitz is the product of much more formal schools in Shanghai, and Mr. Markovitz grew up in one of New York City's strict parochial schools. But in daughter Sarah Qing's class "there was so much playing," says Mr. Markovitz. "We thought: if this wasn't Lab and the University of Chicago they wouldn't be able to get away with this."

It didn't take the Markovitzes long to see the benefits of Lab's Dewey and Reggio-based approach to early childhood education. "We saw that fostering a curiosity and love of learning in the children was an important part of the social development the school encouraged," says Mrs. Markovitz. "Our daughter loved going to school. And she was developing into a studious, conscientious, diligent, and motivated learner. We're sure not everyone has the same experience we've had, but we've met and spoken with enough parents to be able to say that our experience isn't unusual."



With their investment in the Schools, the Markovitzes feel they are spreading their excitement and their steadfast belief in the goals of the Lab+ Campaign. "An improved environment, arts, and early childhood facilities—these are important missions," says Mrs. Markovitz.

"And because many hands make light the load," adds her husband, "we have set up our gift as a match to encourage others to join with us in developing this school we all care about so deeply."

To find out more about how your gift can be matched as part of the Markovitz challenge, please contact Beth Wittbrodt in the Office of Alumni Relations and Development, 773-702-2844, [bwittbr@ucls.uchicago.edu](mailto:bwittbr@ucls.uchicago.edu).

# writing: life's necessary art

ALUMNI WRITERS RETURN TO LEAD U-HIGH'S FIRST DAY.....

BY BROOKE O'NEILL, AM'04 Catching up with friends, braving new classes, and tackling the "What I Did This Summer" essay have long been staples of the American teenager's first day of school. But analyzing newspaper clips with an award-winning investigative reporter? Discussing the supernatural horror flick *Carrie* with a professional screenwriter?>>>



left to right: Carlo Rotella, '82; Margo Jefferson, '64; David Kovacs, '69; Kate Grossman, '88; Lily Koppel, '99; Adam Simon, '80.

*The New York Times* and nonfiction writer Lily Koppel, '99; corporate screenwriter David Kovacs, '69; essayist and *Boston Globe* columnist Carlo Rotella, '82; and horror writer and filmmaker Adam Simon, '80.

"When they were at Lab, they probably didn't know where their life would lead," said English Department Chair Carrie Koenen to the U-High student body as she introduced the panel. "Now they're accomplished pros."

While First Day is a longstanding Lab tradition—last year's program required students to read the best-selling novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*—this past fall was the first time alumni came to speak and lead student workshops.

"We really liked the idea of bringing back Lab alumni who chose writing careers," says Ms. Koenen, who started organizing the event last spring. The hope, she says, was that

Catching up with friends, braving new classes, and tackling the "What I Did This Summer" essay have long been staples of the American teenager's first day of school. But analyzing newspaper clips with an award-winning investigative reporter? Discussing the supernatural horror flick *Carrie* with a professional screenwriter?

These are things that happen only at Lab. On Tuesday, September 7, nearly 500 U-High students kicked off the 2010–11 school year with a unique First Day curriculum. Titled "Writing: Life's Necessary Art," the daylong event featured a panel discussion and 20 workshops covering genres

the field of writing?" she asked the student audience. Roughly a dozen timid hands went up.

"Well, almost every area you can think of involves writing skills," said Ms. Fama, citing everything from corporate memos to job applications to submissions to an academic journal in math or science.

Over the next hour, she and the other panelists gave students a peek into some of those fields—and reassured those who hadn't raised their hands.

"I hated writing when I was in high school," admitted Mr. Simon, whose screenwriting credits include the 2009 psychological thriller *The Haunting in Connecticut*.

What he did enjoy was telling stories. "You can't tell stories if you can't write," said Mr. Simon, who once got in trouble for

MY FRIENDS ARE SO TIRED OF HEARING HOW IMPORTANT LAB WAS TO MY EDUCATION," MR. SIMON JOKED.



Front, left to right: Beth Fama, '82, AB'85, MBA'91, PhD'96; Margo Jefferson, '64; David Kovacs, '69; Carlo Rotella, '82.

Back, left to right: David Jackson, '76; Kate Grossman, '88; Lily Koppel, '99; Adam Simon, '80.



ranging from arts criticism to corporate communications to narrative nonfiction. Headlining the program were eight career writers, all of them U-High alumni.

The line-up included young adult novelist Beth Fama, '82, AB'85, MBA'91, PhD'96; *Chicago Sun-Times* deputy editor Kate Grossman, '88; Pulitzer Prize-winning *Chicago Tribune* journalist David Jackson, '76; Pulitzer Prize-winning theater critic Margo Jefferson, '64;

"by spending time with these professionals, students might get a better sense of why writing is important beyond just passing an English class or writing a history paper."

### THE FEAR OF WRITING

First Day kicked off in International House's Assembly Hall, where novelist and panel moderator Beth Fama took a quick poll.

"How many of you want to go into



sharing the plot of *The Exorcist* with his fifth-grade classmates. "Lab called my parents and told them it was causing nightmares," he said with a laugh.

*Sun-Times* editor Kate Grossman shared Mr. Simon's teenage antipathy toward writing. "I thought it was excruciating," she said. "I got over it." Since then, Ms. Grossman has won a Studs Terkel Media Award for her profiles of Chicago community residents.

Such confessions, says Ms. Koenen, help students realize that writing is a challenging, often love-hate endeavor, even for experts:

"It's reassuring to hear that you might be a professional writer and still have writer's block, or you might look at the paper and not know where to start."

### THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

Alumni writers expounded further on their expertise during hour-long workshops that followed the panel. Each U-High student attended one of 20 sessions led by a guest writer, Lab teacher, or other member of the Lab community. Students were matched to their interests based on a survey each took in the spring.

The selection format, says Ms. Koenen, reflected a broader Lab philosophy. "It's about empowering students to make educational choices, to think about what they want to study."

In U-High 103, Mr. Rotella's group debated the moral ambiguity of writing about violence. In his essay collection *Cut Time: An Education at the Fights*, a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, he describes bloody bouts and the lessons they impart. "I'm implicated in the hurt business," he told the class.

As a boxing writer, Mr. Rotella explained, his word choice determines whether brutality in the ring comes across as meaningful or meaningless.

To illustrate the point, he gave students two battle scene excerpts: one from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, another from Joe Abercrombie's *The First Law* trilogy. Comparing the former's world of good versus evil with the latter's portrayal of violence as

something "bitter and pointless," said Mr. Rotella, it quickly became clear how much power the writer wields through his or her language.

Meanwhile, over in Judd 126, Mr. Simon grilled students on why people enjoy horror films. "Why would you want to have this unpleasant experience?" he asked the group of roughly 50 students.

"The rush," responded one boy. "You just feel so awake all of a sudden."

"The suspense," chimed in a girl seated next to him.

Playing off those answers, Mr. Simon encouraged students to think about how today's horror films provide us a catharsis, just like Sophocles' *Oedipus* did in its day.

"That show was the biggest hit in Athens," he said. "It's a transforming experience."

### THE PLACE WHERE IT STARTED

Horror movies and *Oedipus* weren't the only transformations discussed at First Day. For many of the alumni, the event was an opportunity to revisit a place that significantly shaped who they are today.

"My friends and colleagues are so tired of hearing how important Lab was to my education," Mr. Simon joked.

Mr. Rotella added to the sentiment, describing Lab as an environment where



students were encouraged to embrace their passions—whatever they were. To his point, cultural critic Ms. Jefferson talked about finding her obsession in theater, as did corporate writer Mr. Kovacs.

"You were respected just for being into something," said Mr. Rotella. "No one policed your enthusiasm."

As part of the Lab community, said reporter Mr. Jackson, "you'll know years later how treasured you are here."

"The panelists reaffirmed what our students always hear: this place is going to stay with you forever," says Ms. Koenen. "You're always going to feel like a Labbie."

BY ELIZABETH STATION

In her 2010 book, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Martha C. Nussbaum argues that the foundation of citizenship—and national success—rests on the arts and humanities. Yet around the world, as schools and governments anxiously focus on education for economic growth, the humanities are losing ground. Ms. Nussbaum, the Ernst Freund distinguished service professor of law and ethics in the Philosophy Department, Law School, and Divinity

history, knowing at least the rudiments of the major world religions. It also means knowing something about the different groups in one's own country—the ethnic and racial minorities, the way that women have contributed to the history of the country—having a kind of variegated understanding of the complexities of the world we're in. As children get to high school, they also should be learning some economics. They should learn the structure of the global economy and how it influences us all.

Third, and woven through it all, is the empathetic imagination: learning how to put yourself into the position of someone who is different, to see how that person sees the world. On every issue in a pluralistic society, understanding how the world looks from that other's point of view is the first step in having an adequate debate. That's fostered by lots of different parts of school: the pedagogy and membership of the classroom, and, of course, the curriculum.

There are essential avenues of communication and understanding for everyone. And they bring people together across lines of class, race, and economic advantage in a kind of discourse of the imagination that's a crucial part of what it is not just to be a good citizen but to have a rich life. I mean, the rest of your whole life is going to be working at your job, and so now is when you get to develop the things that make life a whole.

With regard to citizenship, no one can just say, "Oh, well, I'm going to go get a job and let citizenship be taken care of by other people." We're all citizens of somewhere.

Parents should also realize that what businesses are looking for is people who have liberal education, who are flexible, and who are imaginative. Our economy is very rapidly changing and it's just obvious that if you have technical skills, those might be yesterday's technical skills by the time you've got them. But if you have a trained imagination and a good logical mind, that's going to be with you everywhere.

The truth is, I think the decent education of children ought to start local. I talk a lot about the Indian educator Rabindranath Tagore in my book. I think one of the things he did right was not even allow children to learn English until they were fourteen years old, because he wanted their education to have roots in the local community. He wanted them to read things from their linguistic tradition, and rightly so. Any prescription of a single text would have that problem.

Now, some place along the line, it's not a bad idea to read Plato's *Apology* and get the idea of what Socrates was about and why he led the examined life. Maybe in high school, everyone should read that. But to cultivate the imagination, I don't think there's a single book or musical work.

because obviously, they're very pressed for time in this fast-moving world. Here's one thing President Obama has said right: read to your child a certain number of hours a day. But I would also add, you could imagine singing with your child or putting on a play with your child.

I used to dragoon my parents into putting on plays, and I think I was the instigator, and I'm still a kind of instigator of plays here at the University. I get my colleagues to take roles in Shakespeare. But if the child isn't doing it, the parent can do it. Just do something expressive and artistic. And if you're reading, don't just always read to the child; have the child read to you. My daughter read *Crime and Punishment* aloud to me.

How old was she then?

She was about sixteen. Often, at the end of the day after lecturing, my voice was tired, so I said, "All right, now you can read to me." Reading can be shared and it can be theatrical, and it can involve different people taking different roles—and it's much more fun that way.



Martha C. Nussbaum

# GOOD CITIZENS, RICH LIVES

School of the University of Chicago, has long defended liberal education at the university level. In a recent interview with *LabLife*, she spoke about the importance of the humanities for children of every age.

How does putting the humanities at the center of K-12 education make children better citizens of their countries and of the world?

I don't suggest demoting the sciences, which have a lot in common with the humanities. Both teach rigorous argument; they teach imagination. But there are three things that I think the arts and humanities contribute, and the first is the old Socratic ability to lead the examined life; to really think rigorously about issues; to examine the things that tradition and peer culture have brought your way and ask, "Is this really what I want to stand for?" and to do that with a grasp of rigor in argument and a sense of the structure of an intellectual position.

The skills of reasoning are, in a way, based in our innate human equipment, but they need to be taught like everything else, including language. Starting very early, children can learn to distinguish a bad argument from a good argument. And that makes them much more responsible as citizens.

Second, we need to be citizens of the whole world, not just citizens of a narrow place. This means knowing a lot of world

Your book highlights the connection that John Dewey made between democratic citizenship and Socratic education. What do you think independent schools do best when it comes to promoting Dewey's ideas?

Schools like Lab get children to learn by doing, and to be active rather than passive. Rather than just sitting at a desk, they get them involved in a kind of integrated learning. One of Dewey's classic things was that children would weave some cloth, but then in the process, they would get to know, where does that material come from? What's the labor of the people who created that?

That kind of highly ramified and curious questioning about projects that you're undertaking is something these schools do very well. Lab already does introduce children into the rudiments of different religions and different global cultures in a way that's very nice. And I'm less sure of this, but probably such schools teach critical thinking and argumentative skills in a progressive way, and they all use the arts.

What is your response to a parent who says, "What my kid really needs in this globalized, competitive economy are the technical, scientific, and professional skills to get a job. Playing and painting and dancing are fine, but they're superfluous"?

What opinion do you have of the Obama administration's education policy?

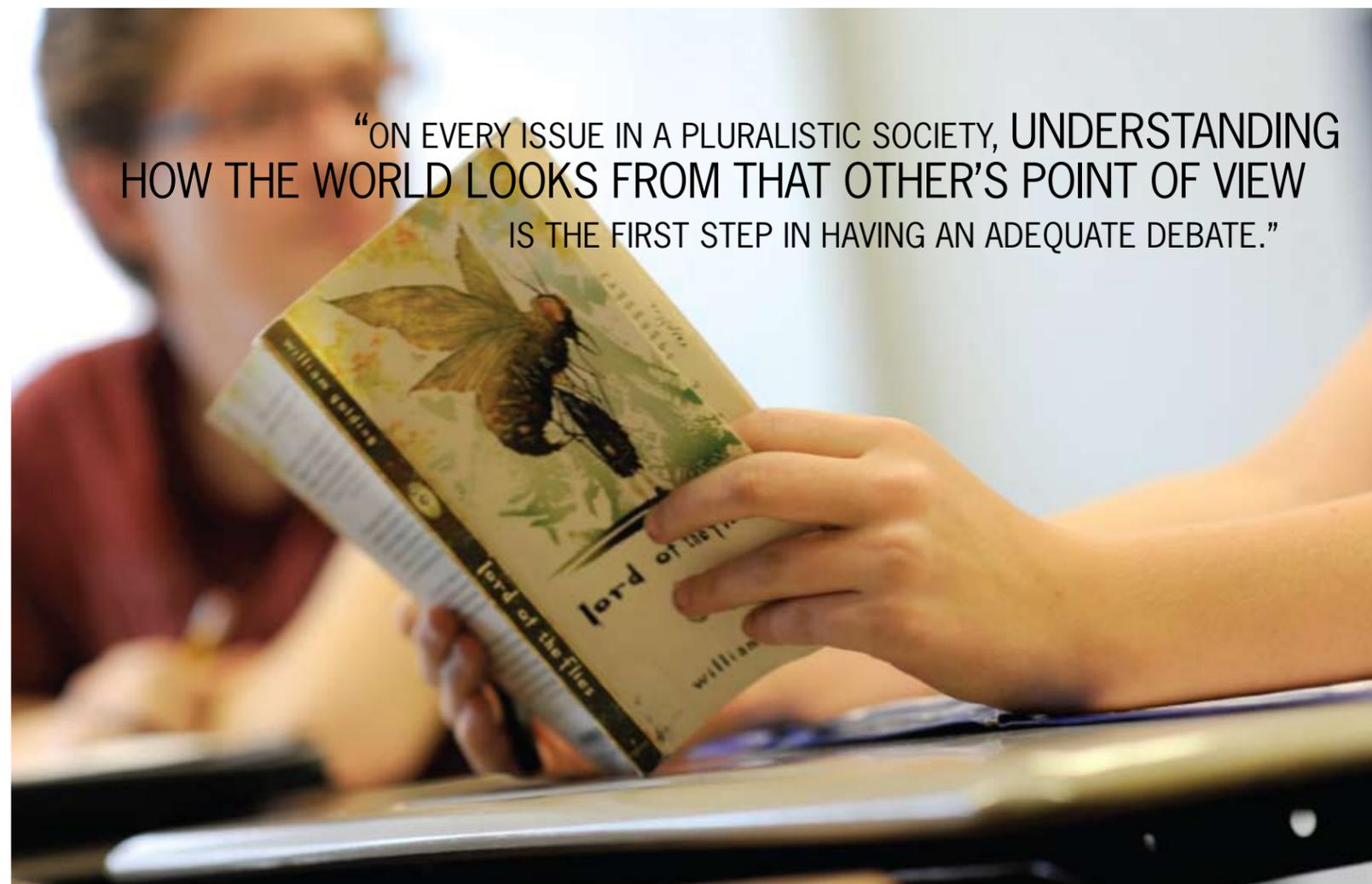
I'm sure President Obama, having studied at Occidental College and Columbia University, has a lot of thoughts about what a well-rounded education for citizenship would be. What I find distressing is that he doesn't put those thoughts out in his speeches.

When he speaks about education, it's always about national growth. It's also about equality of access, which is important. But beyond that, he doesn't have any curricular thoughts, and he always is praising Singapore in ways that seem to me really quite unfortunate. Some countries that are viewed as highly successful in education—like China, Singapore, and India—are really downgrading the humanities or lopping them off pretty completely.

If President Obama were to look abroad, he might well look to Finland, which actually has the test results on things that he cares about—the reading skills and the math skills—but they also have managed to do this compatibly with having a lot of play, a lot of arts, and so on.

If you could pick one book for every child in the world to read, what might it be and why?

"ON EVERY ISSUE IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY, UNDERSTANDING HOW THE WORLD LOOKS FROM THAT OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW IS THE FIRST STEP IN HAVING AN ADEQUATE DEBATE."





Izaak Wirszup, PhD'55



Pera Wirszup

# COUNTLESS LIVES ENHANCED THROUGH LEARNING—AND LAB.....

BY WILLIAM HARMS

Eight U-High graduates (mostly Lab lifers), three current Lab students, several University of Chicago degree holders, and four generations connected by marriage and birth and death:

This is the story of a very extended Lab family. It is a story that spans seven decades of relatives whose lives are interwoven with the history of the Laboratory Schools. And most importantly, it is the story of a family that values education as one of life's most precious gifts.

"The only thing they can't take away from you is your education." This family proverb has been an inspiration for the Wirszup-Tatar-Rosenbacher families, who share a commitment to education with their relatives in the Grossman-Kimball clan.

"I remember saying it when Izaak had his last birthday," says Pera Wirszup, the family matriarch and widow of the famed University of Chicago professor Izaak Wirszup, PhD'55, who died in 2008 at the age of 93. Mr. Wirszup was a founder of the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project, which went on to become the nation's largest university-based mathematics curriculum program for K-12 students and includes the *Everyday Mathematics* texts used by Lab Lower- and Middle-Schoolers.

The Wirszups had good reason to value education. Izaak Wirszup spent World War II in concentration camps. As survivors of the Holocaust, Pera and Izaak were left at the end of the war having lost everything: their relatives, their spouses, Izaak's child, and all their material wealth. Everything, that is, but their education.

After the war, they returned to their hometown, Wilno (now Vilnius), Lithuania, which for centuries had been the home of a strong Jewish community. There Pera and Izaak, childhood acquaintances, re-connected and married. Izaak did advanced graduate work in mathematics and was a lecturer at the State Technical Institute—an education that would make it possible for the family to start a new life in the United States.

## CREATING A NEW LIFE IN CHICAGO

After they married in Wilno, Pera and Izaak moved to Paris with Pera's daughter, Marina D.W. Tatar, '54, AB'59. But their stay in France was short-term: in 1949 Antoni Zygmund, a professor of Izaak's from Wilno who had become a professor at the University of Chicago, invited Izaak to join him at the University. It was a request the couple couldn't turn down; they left for the United States that year.

Pera had already committed enormous energy to educating her daughter. Because they spent much of the war trying to avoid detection, Marina's school enrollment was spotty. As a result, Pera became her teacher, reading Russian poetry to her little girl until Marina learned to read it herself. (Pera went on to teach Russian at the University for 28 years—while also working for Michigan Avenue fashion retailer Peck & Peck.)

Says Marina of her studies with her mother, "All of sudden, the words became



Arne Tatar



Marina Tatar, '54, AB'59

Nancy Rosenbacher

Bob Rosenbacher



Fran (Rosenbacher) Grossman, '58, AM'77

Bob Grossman

Lauren

Audrey, MD'88



Carolyn, MBA'86



Joel Rosenbacher, '81



David Rosenbacher, '79, Gabrielle Rosenbacher (grade 9)



Kate, '88



Teddy, '84



Tony, '86



Allison Kimball, '81



Jacob (grade 11)



Reed (grade 7)

clear to me. I was thrilled. It became my greatest entertainment. It wasn't until I was ten years old and living in France that I went to my first real school," she adds.

However, Marina feels that the Laboratory Schools—where she enrolled at age 12—gave her the true foundation of her education. "Lab was the real basis for me for building my future. In France, everything was extremely formal, rules and regulations, but at Lab, none of the learning was by rote, and student opinions mattered," she adds. She was a ballet dancer and remembers working with other girls to compose a ballet and build elaborate scenery for its staging. Pera recalls that ballet helped her daughter break the ice upon her arrival at Lab. She recalls that ballet was not yet widely studied by American children and tells of Marina dancing in a school talent show. The interest it generated among her classmates offered a nice counterbalance to the stress of not yet speaking English at her new school.

### CARRYING ON A FAMILY'S PASSION

Marina graduated from the College with an AB in 1959, earned a master's degree in counseling, and became a high school college counselor, a job that helped her guide students to find their value in education.

With their own children, Marina and her husband, Dr. Arnold Tatar, stressed the importance of education and also exposed them to the rich world of art and culture. "Education is about learning to appreciate those things," she says. The Tatars' three daughters all went on to earn graduate degrees, two of them from the University of Chicago: Audrey Tatar received an MD in 1988 and Carolyn Tatar received an MBA in 1986.

### TWO LAB FAMILIES UNITE

Meanwhile, the Rosenbacher family was forging its own roots at the Laboratory Schools. Joel Rosenbacher, '81, and his brother, David Rosenbacher, '79—both Lab lifers—lived in Hyde Park and went to school with their cousins. Their aunt, Fran Rosenbacher Grossman, '58, AM'77, and her husband, Bob, sent their three children to Lab for the majority of their school years: Kate Grossman, '88; Teddy Grossman, '84; and Tony Grossman, '86. Kate, a journalist, has returned regularly to

Lab to speak, most recently as part of this year's U-High First Day program. But wait, there's more: while at the wedding of two other Lab grads, Tony was reintroduced to 1981 U-High grad Allison Kimball, whom he later married.

The Tatar and Rosenbacher families came together when Carolyn Tatar married Joel Rosenbacher, and—not surprisingly—their two sons now attend Lab. But a love of learning is strong on both sides of this complex family tree: "When I think of the importance of what Pera said about education being something no one can take away from you, I think about how it's provided me a basis for being successful in my life," says Joel, who owns a custom packaging company in Chicago that employs 300 people.

**"THE ONLY THING THEY CAN'T TAKE AWAY FROM YOU IS YOUR EDUCATION."**

**THIS FAMILY PROVERB HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION FOR THE WIRSZUP-TATAR-ROSENBACHER FAMILIES, WHO SHARE A COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION WITH THEIR RELATIVES IN THE GROSSMAN-KIMBALL CLAN.**

"It's given me the ability to think on my feet, to go forward, to make good decisions," says Joel. "In our society, many people are just followers, but I think having a good education helps you feel confident to take on responsibility and to think critically," he adds.

David Rosenbacher agrees that Lab and U-High gave him leadership and communication skills—"a permanent part of someone's own personal capital." Says David, who works as a vice president for sales at a computer software company, "I constantly have to make presentations to top companies. Having had a good education at Lab, I have the confidence I need to make the presentations, and I have the ability to handle them well." He credits classroom discussions with history teacher Earl Bell for that ability: "Mr. Bell always set a high standard and expected us to do our best."

### AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION PERSISTS

David passes on the opportunity he had at Lab to his daughter, Gabrielle, who joined the freshman class at U-High this year. "We chose Lab because the school will help her become a lifelong learner. It will give her the foundation

she needs to achieve her full potential in life," he says. But the family's commitment to Lab is extraordinary in another way: it comes with a commute from Indiana that amounts to nearly 100 miles round-trip each day.

Gabrielle's more frequent after-school visits are welcomed by her Hyde Park Labbie cousins—Jacob, a junior, and his brother Reed, a seventh grader—and by her grandmother, Nancy Rosenbacher (who helped make possible many visits to Lab by her former client, the acclaimed children's folk singer Ella Jenkins).

It is a point of pride for Jacob and Reed that their family cares so deeply about education. And Pera, at age 96, has an abiding interest in what the children are doing in

school each day. She lives only a stone's throw from U-High and receives regular visits from them.

Jacob uses his own intellectual curiosity—and verbal skill—to fuel his involvement in debate and picks up on the family's artistic side through photography—both of which he has discovered while attending U-High. Preparing for a recent debate, he learned extensively about the establishment of North and South Korea and how the tensions on that peninsula reflect the ongoing effects of the Cold War. "That's what I like about debate; you learn about political systems in other countries and how to understand the contradictions in the world," he says.

"I think what I've learned about the value of education is the importance of enjoying what you're doing," he continues. "It enhances your life."

Or—as in this family's case—it can enhance a score of lives.

## from the Midway

### For sports heroes, look no further than U-High teams



#### An editorial from the Midway

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

#### Matt Hanessian

Sports commentator

**Hero [heer-oh]:** a man of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities.

U-High is lucky enough to have a number of its own heroes, notably in both academic areas as well as the arts. But, U-High enjoys its share of athletic heroes as well.

Take Danny Levine, Class of 2010, for instance. His diving header goal to win the boys soccer Regional Championship last year in overtime was nothing short of heroic.

Take Gabbie Clark, also Class of 2010, who defeated the reigning

Illinois State Champion of Girls Tennis, Parker's Elizabeth Epstein. Or, look at Nick Kogelman, Class of 2007, the first UHigh golfer to make the Illinois High School Association State Tournament.

Each athlete has his or her own hero. Some screamed "and Jordan wins it!" as the imaginary clock wound down and the basketball buried itself in the net.

Some pretended they were tennis champion Pete Sampras, firing serves and rushing the net as if Wimbledon had come to Hyde Park.

Freshman Varsity Basketball Max Rothschild has always counted down and fired an imaginary buzzer-beater. Max always looked up to Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers.

"He does everything, and he is clutch", Max explained. "I remember him playing with Shaq. I remember

"He has a large repertoire of moves, and I am trying to learn a large arsenal of moves as well."

Senior Soccerman Amir Hay also tries to integrate some of his favorite players' moves into his game.

"It's always fun to watch Ronaldinho, play," Amir explained. "He is very skilled, and the way he plays is mesmerizing to me. He is always smiling, and it looks like he is not even trying.

"I have tried some of the moves that he does, but nothing really comes of it," Amir said. "Ronaldinho puts in so much work."

Before a hero is made, a hero is watched.

Kobe Bryant grew up watching Magic Johnson's Lakers take on Larry Bird's Celtics.

Many U-High athletes agree: They owe an everlasting debt to those

who paved the way for the heroes of today to ascend to new heights in every area of life, as they give them the goals they aspire to.

**"I am trying to learn a large arsenal of moves."**

—Max Rothschild, freshman

how they always had chemistry between them on the court."

Max said he tries to emulate Kobe's style of play on the court.

**ALUMNI WEEKEND  
 EXPANDED FOR 2011: JUNE 2-5**

This year's Thursday-Sunday event will take advantage of some UChicago-sponsored activities and feature a new alumni basketball game.

All classes are invited to attend Alumni Weekend 2011. Special activities will be held for the "milestone reunion" classes:

1946	1971	1991
1956	1976	1996
1961	1981	2001
1966	1986	2006

**OTHER KEY EVENTS INCLUDE:**

Friday, June 3  
**All-Alumni Reception**

Saturday, June 4  
**U-High Jazz Brunch**

Saturday, June 4  
**Class reunion gatherings**

Look for registration materials in the mail in March. Contact Kerry Tulson for more information at [alumni@ucls.uchicago.edu](mailto:alumni@ucls.uchicago.edu) or 773-702-3789.

**...save the date...**

**Connections, Lab's annual gala**  
 March 5  
 Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier

**Alumni on the Road—  
 San Francisco**  
 April 2011

Details to come. Check your email and our website soon.

**Grandparents/Grandfriends Day**  
 Fall 2011

Grandparents and special "grandfriends" of students in grades N-4 are invited for this special morning of activities. Details to come.

**RECONNECT@  
 REUNION**

