

THE

Parker Way

Parker owns its home at last

The Parker School community breathed a sigh of happy relief when trustees closed August 29 on the purchase of Parker's current building and nine-acre site at 49 Antietam Street in Devens, Massachusetts. Since opening its doors in 1995, the school and teachers center have occupied leased quarters, continually seeking a permanent home to assure a sustainable future.

"We are delighted to take our place as a member of the Devens community for the long term," said Anne Perkins, who chairs Parker's Board of Trustees.

The purchase, she noted, was critical to Parker's willingness to invest \$2 million for a classroom addition and related improvements to the property.

Parker bought the property from its landlord, MassDevelopment, with loan financing from the MassDevelopment Finance Authority and TDBanknorth. Building Committee Co-chair Richard High had high praise for both. "We're extremely grateful for their flexibility and commitment in helping us to achieve this milestone," he said. ■



School As a Home

Students and teachers often stay at Parker long after the school day is done. In this issue, we look at some ways in which school can feel like a safe and nurturing place where anyone can rise to meet new challenges.

Letter from the Principal

Dear Parker friends,

We often joke about Parker School seeming a bit like a neighborhood convenience store with its “open all night” feel. Our days begin early and can end quite late, particularly as the pace of the school year picks up and the events that add so many dimensions to the community start happening. Soccer and cross-country practices lead to games and meets, and the fall, if we’re lucky, stretches into the post-season with late nights and games under the lights. Exhibitions and student presentations, community feedback night for Senior Projects, and forums keep our lights on after dark. Students and families can log as many footsteps from six to nine p.m. as we do during school hours. Parker has always generated a sense of great activity and interesting motion. And for many, our school has become a kind of second home.

Some of us remember the early days of Parker, when the occasional faculty member, after working another 15-hour day, would decide it was easier and more efficient to spend the night on one of the many sofas that used to populate our classrooms. (Why drive back and forth from Cambridge when that precious time could be spent sleeping?) We are long past the frantic days of start-up, but we still spend a good deal of time at our school taking care of, getting ready for, and generally tending to the

details that make the place sing at just the right time.

But it’s more than our extended hours of activity that make Parker feel to so many like another home.

When school begins to mirror the comforts we most closely associate with feeling “at home”—whether that place is our house or some other—we unpack and settle in. We begin to exhale, trusting that we will be safe, that others are there to help us find what we need most. Taking the time we need, we grow comfortable enough to eventually take the kinds of risks involved every time one learns something of worth. Sometimes this settling in is conscious and deliberate; aware that we are well supported, we decide to dig in. At other times, we begin by thinking of school as a place we would rather flee, only to discover that it has become a haven.

Visitors are sometimes envious, sometimes appalled at the use our students make of the hallways and niches in our school. Parker students sit on the floor in small circles to read and work together or singly, reading or writing with backs propped against the walls. They jam themselves into the nook behind the stage, the niches in the courtyard, the gaps that exist between doorways and closets. Some of the best work emerges as we wedge into such self-made living rooms, where we settle



down for a bit to puzzle over the questions and predicaments, academic and otherwise, that give our school its fertile character.

When is our school most like a home? Maybe it is during advisory, speaking the words that bind us to each other. Perhaps it is during class time, thinking out loud or figuring out what we believe, know, or need to learn. It might be in the quiet hours, when not much seems to be happening at all, but where that world of comfortable risk is taking shape.

Or it might just be when our students, staff, and families feel as though they are always welcome, and act as though they are responsible for our place.

My very best to all of you,

Principal

Making It Personal

The whys and hows of Parker's academic advising system

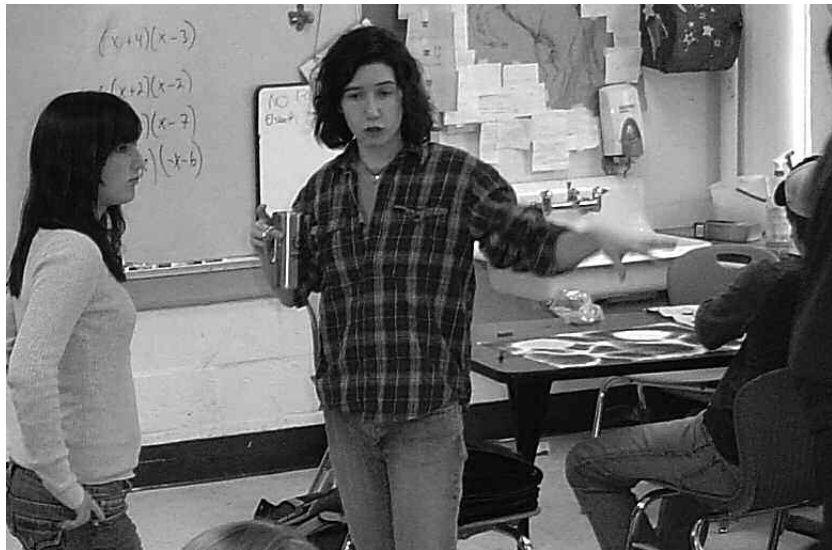
BY TERI SCHRADER AND
DEBBIE OSOFSKY

What we hope most for at Parker is that students become reflective learners who take responsibility for their own learning. We want advisers to know their students well, so they can advocate for the whole child and help their advisees grow into effective advocates for themselves. We want teachers to pay careful attention to their students and to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment that best meet those students' needs. We want parents to feel welcome in the school, to fully engage in discussions about their child's learning, and to trust that goals and priorities make sense for their child.

Situated within Parker's advisory structure, our Personal Learning Plan (PLP) establishes a foundation for meeting all these hopes. The document itself articulates a student's strengths, goals for the school year, and strategies to help attain those goals. So how does it actually work?

From Reflection, Goals Take Shape

The PLP process begins at the start of the year in both advisory groups and academic classes. It is a time of



Developing a Personal Learning Plan is an extended process between students and advisers.

information gathering and reflection, in anticipation of the Fall PLP Conference, which takes place in the third week of October.

In advisory, students and their adviser begin the year by getting to know one another. In addition to social activities, advisers encourage students to reflect on their strengths, their learning styles, the things that cause them to feel anxious or excited about the year, and how they feel about their classes thus far. Students are asked to think honestly about their homework level, their level of participation in class, their domain-based skill areas, and life outside of academics. Crossing academic domains, they review Parker's habits of learning and self-assess their

progress along a continuum. Returning students also look back on their formal progress reports and PLPs from years past.

Students might work in pairs, small groups, and the large group to think through potential goals for the year. They may share their responses to the prompts, ask each other clarifying questions, and listen for patterns; then switch partners and share out again. In the end, they articulate two to four potential goals for the year, which they will bring to the conversation at the conference. We intentionally send the message to students that "you are not alone in this," that we learn best in collaboration, and that we will support each other in reaching our goals.

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Making It Personal *continued from previous page*

In the classroom, teachers in each academic domain also ask students to think specifically about goals related to their work. For example, a Math-Science-Technology teacher might ask students to look back on their most and least favorite project to date, considering why those projects still hold meaning for them, what strengths they brought to that work, and what challenges it presented. Ultimately, students look within and across domains for goals that are worth working toward over the year.

Teachers Sharing Their Notes

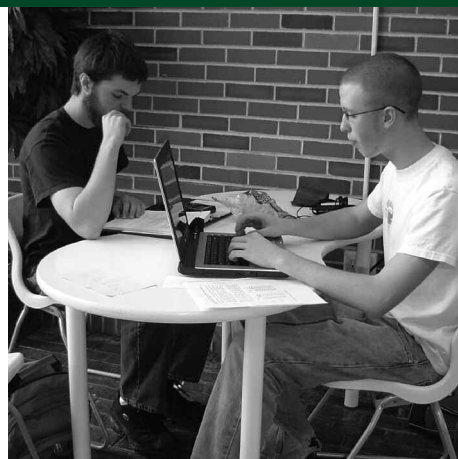
By mid-October, the conversations expand beyond advisory and individual classrooms. To facilitate communication among those who work with each student, teachers complete the Academic Check-in worksheet, commenting on a student's progress thus far and documenting information on assessments, homework, class participation, and anything else that may be useful in the conference or the development of the PLP.

In an Advisory Check-in worksheet, advisers similarly document the first weeks of the advisory group, emphasizing individual students' participation. They identify patterns (a student's tendency to arrive late to advisory), or general observations (a student's apparent shyness). These notes create space in the PLP discus-

sion to address learning goals that may not directly link to one academic domain but rather involve important personal growth.

To prepare for the PLP conference, advisers look over these worksheets, which are also mailed home for parents or guardians to consider. Parents, too, fill out a preliminary worksheet, responding to prompts about their child's strengths, areas in need of improvement, and homework habits. They are asked to think about their hopes for their child for the year—hopes that often extend beyond academic achievement and toward personal development.

At this point especially, Parker sets aside purposeful time for "kid talk" among teachers and advisers. In divisional meetings, teachers share specific anecdotes and student work. They look for patterns that could offer greater insight into how a student approaches and understands school and its tasks. They share the domain-specific goals that students generate in class and suggest possible strategies to help achieve them. And they talk about other factors (an identified learning disability, a situation at home) that might affect a student's success. The adviser (usually one of the student's teachers) listens, adds perspective, and takes notes, so as to serve as the "voice" of the teachers during the PLP conference itself.



Perspectives Come Together

By the Fall PLP Conference in late October, all three "voices" vital to PLP creation are ready to be heard. Instead of regular classes, the student, the parents or guardians, and the adviser meet for 30 to 45 minutes to discuss the year so far and come to consensus about the student's goals for the year and the strategies to achieve them. The conference itself is quite structured, to ensure that every voice is heard and that conversation stays focused on developing the PLP, which the adviser will synthesize and mail home within two weeks.

A Guide and a Resource

For the rest of the year, work with the PLP will continue. Typically, advisers check in with advisees each week to make sure they are carrying out the strategies articulated in their PLPs. Informal check-ins take place during morning connections and afternoon reflections. ("Debbie, you are staying today for after-school help with your

continued on the next page

In schoolwide survey, students praise Parker's culture, curriculum, and teachers

What sets Parker apart from other schools? Students replied in a schoolwide survey conducted during advisory in March 2006. Of the 370 students in the school, 302 completed surveys, a response rate of 82 percent.

Nearly half the students included some aspect of the school atmosphere in their answer—most often, community and freedom. About community, students wrote: “It’s a smaller school, more tight-knit. Teachers I don’t even know know my name.” “Parker is

like family.” “Older students are friends with younger students [and] interact with our classes.” The words “tolerant,” “open,” “respect,” and “accepting” also occurred frequently in students writing about school culture:

“I feel more comfortable than I have felt with any other school.” “Parker teachers and children respect each other and each others’ ideas.” “The environment is very safe.” “We are all respected even by the teachers, which gives the school a more

comfortable atmosphere.” One student wrote, “Parker is my home.”

Students praised the individual approach to learning—“the way Parker personalizes each student’s education and allows them to learn in the way that’s best for them” and “the idea of valuing a student as an individual.” They wrote: “Different people can learn at their own pace.” “People actually care about each individual and want them to do well and understand what’s going on.”

Students had positive

comments about the quality and commitment of the teachers and staff, describing their teachers as “nice,” “good,” “kind,” “caring,” and “chill.” They wrote: “The teachers help you more and care more.” “The teachers come off as someone you can talk to. They make learning and school fun.” Students also remarked extensively on the close relationships between students and teachers: “The close connection between students and teachers is what sets us apart.” **P**

Making It Personal

continued from previous page

MST teacher, right?” “Teri, can I see your planner to make sure you’ve got your homework written in it for tonight?”) Every four to six weeks, advisers ask advisees to undertake a more formal reflection on their progress toward their goals. The release of progress reports also provides opportunities for students to reflect on their progress in relation to their teachers’ perceptions of their development.

At the same time, teachers dedicate time to looking at the PLPs of their students. They speak directly to

PLP goals when writing students’ assessments and progress reports. They also chart the goals students have in common, looking for patterns that can inform their curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

While the PLP’s primary focus is on students and their achievement, it also offers an entry point for conversation among students, parents, and advisers. It tacitly invites parents to remain connected to their child’s progress, allowing them a legitimate place in conversations about school.

Reflection on each student’s progress continues throughout the remainder of the school year (includ-

ing at the Spring PLP Conference) and is documented in advisory folders. At year’s end, as students and adviser look back together, they are often surprised by how well they now know each other, and how they have moved through difficult moments. That recognition often lays the groundwork for the following school year, with relationships among students, advisers, and parents providing a solid foundation for success in school. **P**.

This article is excerpted from its writers’ chapter in the forthcoming book Cultures of Change: Stories of Personalized Learning in High School.

What makes a school a safe place to grow? Parker students talk it over

Why do Parker students often choose to spend more time at school than is required? Recently a cross section of Parker students met with principal Teri Schrader to share some thoughts on when, and why, Parker “feels like home.”

Parker is really connecting me to how I relate to the world. – CONOR

Because we are so spread out where we live, school is a good common ground for all of us to hang out.

When we are here for even an extra 15 minutes, that’s an extra 15 minutes that we get to spend with our friends who may live an hour away. – HUGH

Everyone is connected, and we’ve been going to school [together] for so long. When I talk to friends from other schools, they say they don’t know everyone in their graduating class. I know everyone in my grade and people from other grades too. It’s just a family atmosphere. – SOPHIA

Even when I don’t have an afterschool activity, I don’t rush out of the school to go home. I try to find something to do. It’s a good atmosphere and I can always do something to help. – MIKE

I’ll stay after to go into people’s classrooms, and bother the teacher and say, “Hey, what’s up? Can I babysit your kids?” I can talk to [a teacher] from five years ago, and they say,



Students from different Divisions gather in Principal Teri Schrader’s office to talk about what makes them feel connected to the Parker community.

“What’s up?” They come to sports games, they come to the plays, they are active in all our lives. It goes beyond academic bounds. – CONOR

Sometimes I think it can be too personal, but it shows that the teachers really care. My Div 2 AH gateway project was about bullying. Later, a teacher approached me in the hall and said, “Liz, is there anything you need to tell me?” Though it shows they cared, I was taken off guard and felt really uncomfortable. – LIZ

All the teachers here want to be here. The ones that last at Parker, they love teaching, they love the kids. I had Clay in the seventh grade, and now in Division 3. He is an awesome teacher because he’s so passionate about

everything he teaches. It gets us pumped up about what we are learning, if he is pumped up. – CAROLYN

New teachers, it might take them a while to get into the “Parker Way” but they are willing to listen to the students who have been here for a while and take our suggestions. – NIKKI

Parker really opens you up. It really changes a person. – SOPHIA

When I was younger—and it might have just been my age—I was someone who had a hard time being myself around other people. It’s not that you find your niche in the school, it’s like the whole school is your little niche. – NIKKI **P**

Suzy Becker



“What if . . . ?”

Reaching deep when we most need help,
the Parker community once more makes room for learning

On behalf of the entire Parker community, the Board of Trustees expresses profound gratitude here for the generosity of those listed below, whose contributions are making possible Parker’s new classroom addition. In this effort, as in everything Parker does, one of the school’s great strengths is the diversity of our families, and an obvious part of that diversity is financial. We are grateful for every donation we have received. Every gift matters. Every gift counts.

The school is particularly indebted to our staff and faculty, more than 70 percent of whom donated to the classroom campaign. Special thanks also goes to our students, who as individuals and as advisories, through contributions from their own savings and events ranging

from penny wars to one-act play contests, raised \$6,677.48, matched in its entirety by an anonymous donor.

As of August 1, 2007, Parker had raised a total of \$850,000—85 percent of our goal of \$1 million. There is still time to donate, for those who have not yet had a chance to do so; information on contributing to the Classroom Campaign is available on the Parker website, www.parker.org.

The list below includes all donations made as of September 1, 2007. Donors (except anonymous donors) are listed in chronological order of the date each gift or pledge was received. Our heartfelt thanks to all. ■

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*The next edition of the Parker Way will acknowledge gifts
received after September 1, 2007*



The Class of 2007 graduated 53 students in June. Above, Brenton Kulik receives his diploma from Parker's principal, Teri Schrader.

Parker's graduation ceremony is well known as a ceremony that one really *wants* to attend—with tissues to wipe away tears of laughter and poignancy, not to mention the occasional thundershower. Of special note: the two-minute valedictories delivered by any student who wishes (turn the page for an example); the remarks of teacher-speakers chosen by the graduating class; the roses handed by the graduates in their exit processional to each member of the rising senior class; and the magnificent celebratory repast catered each year by the families of juniors. On the next pages, read more about how one flies Parker's nest. — THE EDITORS

A safe circle, providing space to risk and learn

In her graduation speech, a student tells of growing up at Parker

BY SHANNON STOCKWELL '06

Parker is a circle. Literally. This was one of the first things that I noticed about Parker when I came here in seventh grade. It is impossible to get lost. No matter which direction a new student chooses to turn, they will eventually wind up in the same place. Being a very nervous twelve year old, this relieved me, as I had often heard horror stories of kids entering their new schools and getting hopelessly lost on their first day, without a clue as to where their classes were, the stigma of “new student” hanging heavily around their necks.


*No matter which direction
I took while at Parker,
I would wind up some-
where familiar, some place
I know and love.*

As I have progressed at Parker, I have been walking around this same circle. I retrace my footsteps every day as I walk down these halls, shuffling across the red tile, noting the new posters on the walls, and which doors are opened or closed. I know the nooks and crannies where people

eat lunch. I know where the bathrooms are and the classrooms. The circle is safe and familiar. I'm comfortable in the circle. And because I walk this same safe circle everyday, I can take risks. I can stop mid-walk and change direction and try something new, whether it's admitting that I have no idea what formula I just used to solve for x, or acknowledging that I'm having a hard time and asking for help. Sometimes I would have absolutely no idea where I was headed when I began making my way around the circle. But I kept walking. I kept going forward. Sometimes I would stumble, and sometimes I would fall flat on my face. But there was always someone to help me up.

It was comforting to know that no matter which direction I took while at Parker, I would wind up somewhere familiar, some place I know and love. I could never mess up, even if I started walking and had no idea where I was going. As long as I was walking, I would get somewhere comfortable eventually.

And now I'm about to leave this comforting round shape. I'll be going to a school that isn't constructed in a circular manner. There are going to be multiple directions I can choose to go in, and they won't all wind up in the same safe place. But you know

what? That's okay. I've been walking in comfortable little circles for six years. I've learned that it's all right to make mistakes and to try something frightening. Now I can continue doing that, even if I risk getting completely lost, because I know I'll find my way eventually. Now, I stand here before you, finally happy and healthy, and ready for whatever geometric shape life may throw at me. I'm ready to say goodbye. I'm ready to step out of the circle. I'm ready for life. 



Did you know . . . ?

Everyone can be a valedictorian

“Valedictory” literally means “saying farewell,” and ever since Parker’s first commencement exercises in 2000, all members of the graduating class have been invited to give a two-minute valedictory speech at the ceremonies.

If they wish to do so (and not all do), students receive coaching beforehand from a speech mentor. (It helps to have a theatre director as principal!) The result: Parker’s graduation is renowned for making its audiences laugh and cry, often at the same time.

LIFE AFTER PARKER:

A more personal take on the college admissions process

In preparing students and families for “life after Parker,” Parker takes a humanistic approach that values the individual, providing a rudder through what can feel like a turbulent transition to college and beyond. The school schedules in time for college guidance, providing resources and counseling for students and parents.

Susan Whalley, Parker’s college counselor for the past eight years, starts early in her effort to mitigate the media-driven frenzy about college admissions. Instead, she says, she encourages students to see themselves as consumers who will choose the college that best fits their situation. At the outset of their planning, she gives juniors the message: “You are all definitely going to be accepted to college. Now let’s find the ones that you will like best, the ones that will meet your needs, and where you can grow over the next four years.”

Ever since Parker’s founding, the school has worked hard to acquaint colleges with its narrative assessment system and to show them its value as a way of documenting what students know and can do. A three-year “narrative summary” (boiled down from the student’s year-end assessments from grades 9 through 11) goes to colleges where students apply, along with a transcript that shows what courses our applicant took. Assessments from individual teachers follow, containing information on senior year work. Admissions officers have come to appreciate such information, which gives them an excellent sense of how a student will fare once in college.

Since graduating its first class in 2000, Parker has sent its graduates off to a wide range of colleges and universities, and every year we add a few new names to our long list. Members of the class of 2007, for example, will be the first Parker alums to attend



Parker adults are very much a part of the process of bringing students to graduation and beyond.

Providence College, the Rhode Island School of Design, the United States Naval Academy, Rhodes College, Ohio Wesleyan University, Lawrence University, the University of Denver, and the Franklin Olin College of Engineering.

Many Parker students choose to postpone college for a “gap year” in which they explore other opportunities, such as work or travel. Others seek out institutions that have a “Parker flavor,” such as the interdisciplinary, project-based approach that drew Carl Tappan ’07 to Olin College, a small new engineering school in Needham, Massachusetts. But wherever they go and whatever they do, those at Parker make every effort to support them in continuing their learning and development in the best possible way for them. **P**

Contributors to this article include Kathleen Cushman, Laura Rogers, and Susan Whalley.

A founder looks back and takes stock

BY LAURA ROGERS

As a psychologist, not an educator, I brought a set of hopes and commitments to the school's early days that were welcomed, but not particularly useful to answering our most pressing question: "What are we going to do today?" The answers of our teachers helped build the school as you know it.

My role was to influence how we answered. Two things mattered most to me: keeping children's developmental needs in the foreground of our school planning; and creating a school where, when difficult decisions must be made, our community would not fracture along the usual fault lines, creating the "we-they" adversarial battles I had witnessed all too often in schools.

These two principles are wonderfully evident in Parker today. In every aspect of our curriculum and program, there is a gradual ramping up of expectation, consistent with the intellectual and personal trajectories of growth that characterize adolescence. When Parker students do research in Division 1, they are building the skills needed for research in Division 3. When they complete independent projects of their own design for Division 2 gateways, they are also taking steps toward their senior projects. Students helped us develop our programs. If we had too big a gap as they passed a new threshold, or not enough of one, they told us; and so we created, with them, programs like Directed Studies and discretionary time. Transitions at Parker are not all perfect or graceful. But we continue to adjust our expectations and students' challenges, keeping alive the questions, "What are you ready for now?" "How can we help?"

Instead of lapsing into a divisive and adversarial

culture (parents vs. teachers, everyone vs. kids), I hoped we would work together at Parker, always

assuming good faith as we looked for common ground. Inevitably, differences of opinion emerged, occasionally more passionately than wisely expressed. Even so, a school community willing to hear out these differences, and to accept solutions hammered out in good faith, is a safe and respectful place for children and adults. Whether we are discussing the choice of a text, a decision about gatewaying, a disciplinary altercation, the activities for a large-scale field trip, or a new addition to the school, we have a culture of considering points of view, looking for solutions that reflect the interests and concerns of all, redressing miscommunications, trying again. The process is not always seamless; occasionally feelings run hot and words sting. Not everyone feels equally pleased with the outcome. But fair and respectful decision-making—using mediators (including student mediators) whenever doing so will ensure a better outcome—is at the core of our school's impulses and practices.

As my role changes from being a school leader to being a school elder, I can see that Parker has become more than I ever imagined. I salute each and every member of our community, past and present, for bringing dreams to life. I am delighted to be a citizen of Parker. ■

Laura Rogers, one of Parker's four founders and its school psychologist since the start, stepped down in March 2007 as a member of the school's administrative team. She now works at the school two days a week, providing clinical services and supervision.



Parker ideas go to college

Teacher educators with roots at Parker help shape a new generation of teachers

A number of Parker’s leaders from its earliest years now teach at the university level, bringing their Parker experience to education students and future teachers.

BIL JOHNSON, one of four founders who wrote the original Parker charter, was lead teacher in AH during its first year. From that time through summer 2007, he was a clinical professor in the Brown University education department, with responsibility for preparing social studies teachers. In August 2007, he moved to Yale University, where he supervises future English teachers for Yale’s teacher preparation program. Bil is author of a number of

books about curriculum and assessment.

JIM NEHRING came to Parker in 1996 and spent ten years there, as its first principal and later as a teacher-leader. In 2006 he joined the education department at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. Jim writes: “At Parker I learned that while a good idea is valuable, a powerful question is more so. Spending a good long while with the right question develops a basis for ideas that are more than just good; they fit, they move an organization forward, they thoughtfully manage ongoing dilemmas, they address the deeper calling of an organization and its peo-



Jim Nehring

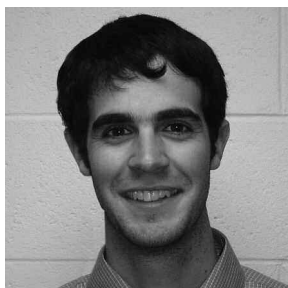
ple. As I work with colleagues in higher education and collaborate with school leaders, I try to incorporate this insight. I have just come from a session with a dozen professors in the social sciences where we explored a dilemma using a question: What challenges am I likely to encounter in my combined role as community partner

and researcher, and how do I manage the tension between these two roles?” Jim has published several books, including *Upstart Startup*, about Parker’s early years.

LAURA ROGERS (see page 13) teaches part time in the education department at Tufts University. She is co-author, with Kathleen Cushman, of a forthcoming book about middle school teaching and learning from the perspective of students. **P**

Are you a Parker alum or former teacher and working in education? Send your news and reflections to “The Ripple Effect,” a regular feature in the Parker Way.

Do you know these Parker teachers?



Anthony Shaker
Division 3 Arts & Humanities

Anthony grew up near Chicago and studied government and international relations at the University of Notre Dame.

After college, he lived and taught on the Northern Cheyenne Native American Reservation, in Montana. After a year of Parker teaching, Anthony says that he loves the comfortable yet professional student-teacher relationships at Parker.

John Bohannon
Division 3 Math-Sci-Tech

JohnBo’s father was in the Army and John traveled as a child, attending first through

third grades in Germany. His family settled in Vermont when he was 13, and he graduated in 1993 from UVM, where he studied mechanical engineering. At Florida State University he earned a masters in Mechanical Engineering; then he worked at General Motors, designing and testing automatic transmissions. Looking for more meaningful work, in August 1999 he came to Parker, where, he says, every day he sees his work



make a difference. John lives in Shirley with his wife, Deb Merriam (Parker’s Academic Dean), and their son, Zaden, who turned one year old in September.

2000

Andrew Pearlman graduated from Bentley College in 2005, where he studied marketing and information technology. He hopes to complete his masters at Bentley in 2009, in Human Factors for Information Design. During his undergraduate years, Andy played rugby (believe it or not) and was a programming director for WBTY, the Bentley radio station. He lives in Newton, MA (right near Moody Street in Waltham) and works in Boston's Copley Place mall as an associate for Compete.com. Compete anonymously accesses the click-stream behavior of 2 million U.S. consumers on the web—collecting, analyzing, and reporting aggregate data about which pages people visit in what order. With that information it can project the number of people who are doing certain activities online—data shared recently on CNN's "Situation Room," in relation to campaign spending.

2001

Jenny Gapinski graduated from Dartmouth College in 2005 with a degree in Environmental Sciences; she studied abroad in Southern Africa and wrote a thesis on liver cancer. After working in healthcare consulting in Boston, she is now attending medical school at Columbia University and hopes to earn her MD in 2011. She also recently completed the Chicago Marathon. Jenny lives on Manhattan's Upper West Side and enjoys getting frequent homework help from her mother and Parker's longtime nurse, Mary Ann.

2002

Blake Buckalew spent his four years at Evergreen State College studying anthropology, sociology, and evolutionary psychology as a part of the school's Student Originated Studies (SOS). Though he knew nothing about the SOS program before enrolling, he considers it a stroke of luck. Each year, he worked with a team of four teachers and a class of 30 to design and execute a curriculum. He studied why we fight, deceive, and cooperate, and how culture develops and shapes our psychology (yes, those fun memes and game theory).

After he pays off his loans, Blake plans on going on for a masters in anthropology or a law degree. Currently he is being mentored in Labor Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution—subjects he enjoys partly because of his memories of Parker's justice system.

Blake also owns a music recording and production business, working with longtime friend Jon Andrews, a Juilliard School graduate in composition. They have worked with the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, producing works for a string quartet with voice, as part of its "Inspired by China" exhibit. They also recorded the renowned Moscow Chamber Orchestra, and in April they were commissioned to do a baroque music piece for the Salvador Dali Museum in Florida. Currently they are working on a project to accompany a new book of poetry, *The Alchemy of Grief*, by a woman who lost her son. They also work with a company called Audiux, which does live sound reinforcement. Blake lives on his farm in Westborough.



Lianna (Adrien) Condon 2002 and her husband Luke welcomed a new baby boy, Hosea Dean Condon, on April 13, 2007. Hosea weighed 9 pounds 8 ounces and was 22 inches long. He joins big sister Selah, age 2.

Pete Clark received his B.A. in spring 2007 from Hampshire College, where he explored social enterprises and non-profit work, sustainable living, assistive technologies, and atmospheric and environmental studies. Pete's Division Three project (yes, there are three divisions at Hampshire, too) was titled "Decoupling Signals from Pandora Moth Outbreaks and Climate Variation in Pinus Ponderosa Tree-Rings Over 1,500 Years in Central Oregon." The project interested him greatly, as he used annual growth rings retained within very old pine trees in Oregon as a proxy to reconstruct drought and the presence of certain insects from 435 A.D. to the present day. Keep an eye out later this year in *Ecological Monographs* for the published version.

Rock climbing, something Pete first encountered at Parker, has virtually taken over his life. Since Parker, climbing has brought him through nearly every state, as well as Mexico, Australia, Canada, Central America, and soon Europe and Southeast Asia. As a result, Pete even managed to learn the Spanish language! He recently engineered several outdoor-oriented festivals as fundraisers for a local nonprofit, the

Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition (www.westernmacc.com), hoping to purchase and preserve a tract of land in Erving, MA. The project aims to protect this land from further residential and commercial development, and to allow public access to a natural area with some of the best rock climbing in southern New England, endless hiking and biking trails, and habitats for such species as the peregrine falcon. Pete is currently the caretaker of a home on the land, acting as an impromptu guide, maintaining climbing routes and hiking trails, and developing some of the best and hardest rock climbs in the country. He was recently interviewed by *Wilderness* magazine about his tree-ring research and conservation work, so look out for that too!

2003

Dan Murphy attended UMass Amherst for a year, then transferred to the Citadel, a military academy in Charleston, South Carolina. In his fourth year there, he is studying criminal justice and political science. Dan is a member of the Criminal Justice Society and the 2008 Summerall Guards, a precision drill team. Once Dan graduates, he will be commissioned into the United States Army as a 2nd lieutenant. In December he expects to be assigned to a branch of the service and a duty station.

2004

Aurelia Moran is living in Portland, Oregon, and attending Reed College, where she will graduate in May 2008 with a degree in biology. Aurelia worked on campus for the summer, in an immunology lab where she studied p53, a tumor suppressor gene, in an amphibian model. She spent the first

semester of her junior year abroad, at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

Henry Schrader is a senior at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, where he majors in English Communication with a concentration in writing and is captain of the basketball team. He stays active by playing basketball, hanging out with friends, and, of course, studying hard. This summer he worked at Camp Emerson, a summer camp in the Berkshire town of Hinsdale, Massachusetts. Henry was both the basketball and swim instructor and had a real blast; he highly recommends the camp to anyone.

2005

Drew Crampton received a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to do a research internship at the Technical University of Munich in Germany this past summer. His job was to help a PhD student with research on the electrocatalysis of fuel cell reactions. They worked on creating and testing the catalysts that can be used in fuel cells. Drew stayed in Munich from May 21 until August 3, doing experiments and helping the research team. The group was so pleased with his work that he was named as a coauthor on a research paper being submitted for publication. Drew is going into his third year at the University of Vermont as a Chemistry major and hopes to go on to graduate school.

2006

We are still awaiting news and photos of our most recent Parker graduates.

GRADUATES AND FAMILIES!

Please send news and photos of what Parker alums are doing. Email rkane@parker.org or call Rebecca Kane at 978-772-2566.



Did you know . . . ?

Parker PLUS is taking off!

Could your place of business benefit from college student interns who are Parker grads? Might your company be interested in tapping the community of Parker college graduates for their first jobs?

Parker PLUS (Parents give a Leg Up for Students) makes the cold and competitive work world a little bit warmer for Parker alums in and after college. In college, they need meaningful internships to build their skills and prepare for the world of work. When they graduate, they need a foot in the door. If you would enjoy the advantage of having minds raised in the Parker tradition in your workplace, please email Sue Whalley (swhalley@parker.org) to start the ball rolling. In the message line, write "Parker Plus." Thank you!

From the Board Chair

Dear Parker community,

Two years ago, when the Parker Board of Trustees gathered to decide on some



key strategic initiatives, we quickly found that one goal rose right to the top: we needed a permanent home, and we needed that home to

meet the educational needs of the school and teachers center.

The challenge was formidable, as Massachusetts charter schools are not eligible for the facilities funding available to all other public schools. But after months of hard work, with some good luck thrown in, I am thrilled to say that we have met both goals. At 3:30 p.m. on August, 29, we closed on the purchase of our building and nine-acre site. And as I write,

over at the school bright yellow bulldozers are preparing the foundation for our new classroom addition.

This success is made all the more meaningful because it comes as the result of the commitment and contributions of hundreds of members of the Parker community. Teachers, students, parents, alumni, alumni parents, trustees, former trustees, and friends of the school have all pitched in, and we are grateful to every one of them. Thanks to you all for making this important milestone possible for Parker.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Anne G. Perkins

Chair, Parker Board of Trustees

The Parker Way

FALL 2007

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Please send news and photos to rkane@parker.org. For ongoing news and information, visit Parker's web site, www.parker.org.

THE

Parker Way

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