

THE

# Parker Way

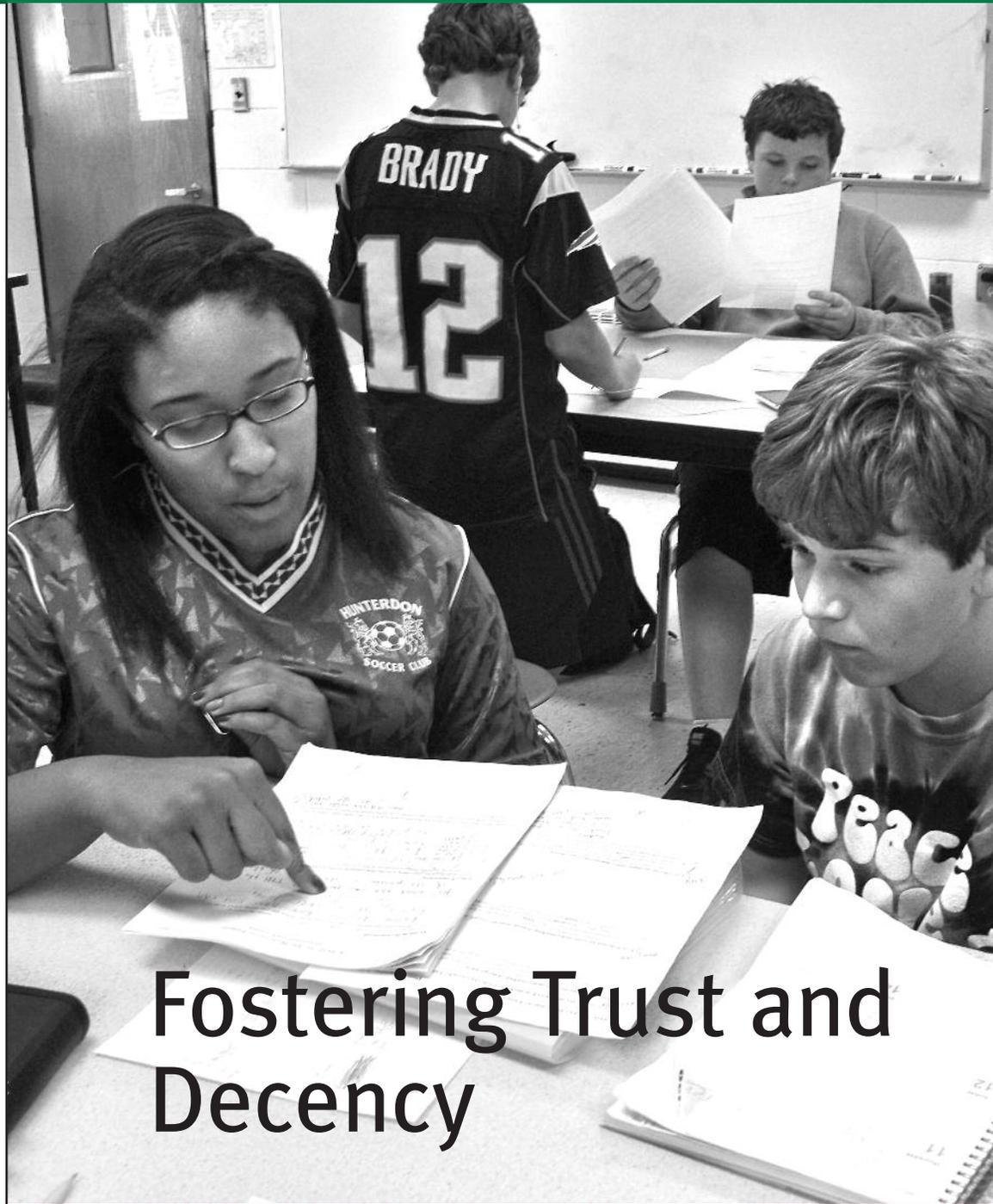
## Parker starts a close study of its teacher corps

What attracts teachers to the Parker School, and what factors keep them there? As the first step in carrying out its new Strategic Plan, Parker this fall has launched an inquiry into the career paths of its teacher corps—just as the national conversation is heating up on the topics of teacher preparation, induction, evaluation, and compensation.

Parker's design rests on a highly collaborative teacher corps in which experienced teachers co-teach with new ones in most classrooms and take on leadership roles as their level of expertise develops. Teachers in training at Parker typically move on after their induction year, but when openings arise, Parker aims to achieve a balance of teachers at different experience levels.

With the goal of a "highly satisfying work environment" for the faculty, the Strategic Plan has laid out a research and action plan. Its first phase—to gather and analyze data about what draws

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## Fostering Trust and Decency

*Peer mentor Jocelyn Foshay goes over an outline with Andrew Welton in "Seventh Seminar," in which Division 3 students coach new Division 1 students in the habits they will need at Parker. This issue focuses on the social and emotional aspects of the "Parker way."*

## Letter from the Principal

### Dear Parker friends,

In this issue of the Parker Way, you can hear what students think about the pros and cons of being a school that strives to create a tone of trust and decency. While talking to them at lunch about school culture and climate, I appreciated their ability to articulate the many ways a tone of trust and decency matters to them, helps them learn and grow, and contributes to a sense of agency as they move through Parker's academic program and through its halls. They spoke of respect—offering it to others, coming to expect it from others—and how some of them came to respect themselves only after coming to Parker. They shared examples where they had had to work hard in order to preserve a tone of trust and decency; sometimes they sought help from a teacher, sometimes they worked through the episode on their own.

That tone is palpable on campus and among the first things one notices. When a visiting committee of educators came to Parker last spring as part of the reaccreditation process of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), they commended Parker for “the overall school culture that promotes a safe, positive, and respectful environment for all students.” The visiting committee's report (available on our website) paints a picture of a school deeply committed to the core values

expressed in the Ten Common Principles, including “a tone of trust and decency.”

Also available on our website is the first edition of Parker's new Strategic Plan, developed in 2012 by students, teachers, parents, trustees, and community members to shape Parker's priorities for the next five years. Its framers shared a commitment to the school's mission, to the Ten Common Principles, and to the ideals of progressive education.

Reflecting those values, our group chose a process that was inclusive, deliberative, and iterative. The first phase of plan development took place during a two-day Future Search conference in April of 2012. Future Search is a facilitated protocol in which our 80 participants from all stakeholder groups reflected on the past, described present realities, and expressed preferences among possible futures for Parker.

During the second phase of the work, a task force of volunteers took the themes and ideas expressed at Future Search and clustered them into nine areas of strategic focus for Parker. For each area, they then developed measurable objectives and timelines. In early September of 2012, Future Search conference participants came back together to review the draft. They confirmed its fidelity to the themes and priorities expressed by the larger group at the conference.

The thoughtfulness, passion, and



Todd Sumner

wisdom invested in the process give all of us confidence that the Strategic Plan represents our community's best effort to name and claim the future we want for Parker. Maintaining our commitments to the things we hold dear—like a tone of trust and decency—while evolving new models and exploring new terrain will be one of the dynamic tensions we'll experience as we work together toward this shared vision of Parker's future.

Todd Sumner  
Principal

## Those Backpacks Carry Beliefs: Trust and Decency at Parker

by Deb Merriam

Parker prides itself on working hard to achieve a “tone of trust and decency” throughout the school, but what does that actually look like? New visitors to the school immediately notice a difference in some typical school norms: students wear hats and headphones, address teachers by first names, and leave backpacks unattended everywhere.

During class time, students are as likely to be working in the hallway as they are to be in a classroom. At lunchtime, they seem sprawled across the entire campus, eating lunch in crannies, corridors, classrooms, and courtyards.

A friendly atmosphere permeates daily interactions: a cheerful and surprisingly substantive exchange between a student and her teacher from three years ago; a rambunctious crowd of students passionately debating the merits



Unguarded, these backpacks left by students stand for the common values of respect and trust among the Parker community.

of new state regulations on food in schools. From the front office to the athletic field, adults try to lead with the tone, “How can I help you?”

No matter whom you ask to describe the Parker community, everybody uses the words “respect” and “relationships.” These two concepts stand at the core of how

Parker creates a tone of trust and decency. Headphones and first names simply manifest the school’s deep beliefs: that every person in the school community must have a voice, and that students must do the best they can in any circumstance.

Rather than arbitrarily imposing rules, the Parker community engages in dialogue and discusses norms when things don’t go quite as one would like. In some schools all students must sign a form confirming they have read the rules in the student handbook. At Parker, the school year begins with students and teachers discussing and setting behavior norms together, in classes, advisory groups, and whole-school meetings.

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### A Tone of Trust and Decency

#### The Seventh Common Principle of Essential Schools

The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation (“I won’t threaten you but I expect much of you”), of trust (until abused), and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school’s particular students and teachers should be emphasized, and parents should be treated as essential collaborators.

*Theodore R.Sizer (June 23, 1932 – October 21, 2009)*

## Those Backpacks Carry Beliefs

*continued from page 3*

Parker’s commitment to knowing students well and maintaining a low teacher-to-student ratio “allows us to have really meaningful relationships with students in which we are continually in dialogue,” notes Jim Desmond, who teaches Arts and Humanities. When a student does have a hard time or makes a mistake, he says, “We have already built up trust and a rapport with the student or the group, and we can address the teachable moments.”

As Ted and Nancy Sizer point out in their book *The Students are Watching*, students learn as much, if not more, from how adults treat them as they do from anything they see in the curriculum. Accordingly, students tend to treat each other with the same respect and tone of decency that they experience from the adults in the community. When students take part in creating community expectations, they understand them and enforce them—even when the teachers “aren’t watching.”

So those backpacks that are spread around the school? One might interpret them as a sign of messy (or irresponsible) adolescents. But they actually signal a community where students trust



Peer mentor Justin Desjardins (at right) works with Camryn Skinner in Seventh Seminar, a course that orients new students to Parker’s way of learning.

each other. “You can just leave your stuff around and no one will touch it,” Mac Perkins-High, a senior at Parker, said, “because they respect your stuff as they want their stuff to be respected.”

“We have a mutual respect for each other, and students are honest with each other,” added Siobhan Bailey, another senior. “It’s that whole ‘commitment to the entire school’ thing from the Ten Common Principles,” she continued. As students learn in class to “be honest and describe how we are feeling,” she said, those values also infuse their nonacademic lives.

One year, Siobhan recalled, something actually was stolen from a student’s bag. To address the incident, she said, the entire senior class got up in front of the school to reinforce the community expectations of trust, respect, and safety. “That’s not the kind of school we are,” they made clear to the assembled student body. “And that is not the legacy we want to leave.” **P**

## In Justice Committee, Students Work for What Is Fair and Decent

by Matt Smith

When we started the Parker School in 1995, we wanted to put into action the Common Principles modeling “democratic practices” and creating a “tone of trust and decency.” So we began the year with a government/civics unit that had the ultimate goal of creating a Constitution for the school. All Parker students—122 seventh- and eighth-grade students—helped think through what sort of student voice they wanted for Parker, exploring models and systems that

could achieve that. Several months into the year, after many rounds of feedback and revision, the entire community rejoiced as students and teachers ratified our new Constitution.

That founding document created two main branches of student government. The Community Congress (CC), our “legislative” arm, would create the norms and rules enshrined in our Student Handbook. The Justice Committee (JC), our “judicial” body, would publicize and tend to those norms and

rules and hold mediation sessions and disciplinary hearings if they were broken. Our Constitution and our Handbook are living documents. We review and revise them on a regular basis, a process that helps us, in the words of JC co-leader Hannah Joseph, “make school a place we want to be.”

The JC comprises students from all three Divisions and meets every other week during choice block on Wednesdays. Meetings chiefly focus on creating and main-

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Justice Committee and Community Congress members (from left) Thomas Danko, Suji Yi, Hannah Joseph, Michael Perry, and Anirudh Mahajan.

## JC students work for what is fair and decent

*continued from page 5*

taining the tone of trust and decency in our school. Meetings might involve training new members to run mediation and discipline hearings, discussing a norm that is being consistently abused, or publicizing an addition to the Student Handbook. Always, they address school culture: how individuals treat each other and our environment. The group's work, as Hannah said, is "all about making this a safe place to take risks."

The JC elects its own leaders,

who meet on the off Wednesdays as well as during Monday lunch. They identify the work of the JC, plan meetings, schedule cases, and communicate with the CC and teachers.

Discipline issues at Parker are dealt with through "incident reports" that any member of the community can submit. The principal reads these reports and then decides what action should be taken. That may include sending the case to the JC, which hears a range of discipline matters, like

habitual lateness to class, disrespectful behavior, or harassment.

All JC members receive training in how to facilitate disciplinary hearings and mediation sessions. The goal of these interventions is to "show people that trust and decency is about how we treat people," JC co-leader Tommy Danko said. Three JC members serve on each case, with one person facilitating and one recording the discussion and decisions. In addition to the individuals involved in the situation, a faculty member partici-

### What's Parker? A school community defines its identity

In a student-produced video made last year, Parker students, faculty, and parents were asked to complete the statement "Parker is . . ." Many of those responses had to do with the climate and culture of the school; excerpts appear below.

- A place where you can be yourself
- A safe community of people
- A safe place to fall
- My home away from home
- A place where you can be accepted for who you are
- The place where I found out who I am
- A place where everybody can express themselves
- A place where you can go to be you
- A place where you can take chances and risks and it is safe and you get to learn from them
- Where I learned to come out of my shell
- A place where I can have authentic relationships with students
- Accepting
- Where students are a big part of how our school runs
- Family
- A community where people come together and help solve school problems and everyone is treated equally
- A place where we have spirit
- A healthy place for us all to learn
- Where people can have different opinions and have discourse about them in an intellectual way
- Where I can learn the way I need to
- A great place for kids to morph, to learn, and to be encouraged to figure out what strategies work best for them
- Where we celebrate the work of the mind
- Filled with engaging and thoughtful teachers
- Where students and teachers work together to create a dynamic learning opportunity
- Where if you are having a hard time, there are lots of people there to help you
- Freedom and privileges that you would not normally get in school
- A lifesaver, I don't know what I would do without it, I look forward to coming to school every day
- What school was always meant to be like

pates as an equal member of the deliberation. The JC has authority to assign a range of consequences, from a letter of apology to detention.

According to JC co-leader Michael Perry, a tone of decency “comes through the mediation of the case by your peers.” A mediation may involve two students, an individual student and a group of classmates, or a student and a teacher. Its purpose is that both parties in the conflict speak their minds and listen to the others. JC members ask questions, seeking clarity, common ground, and compromise in what originally may seem a win-lose situation. The outcome is often a written set of agreements, intentions, or hopes, to be revisited later.

Through small-group discussions, public announcements, and informational posters, the JC also helps publicize rules from the Handbook and tends to community norms when they are not being upheld on a consistent basis. In one recent example, cafeteria workers said they felt disrespected by some students. At the weekly all-school gathering the JC spoke to the community about what was happening and how it was affecting the cafeteria staff. It then facilitated advisory conversations about the issue of respecting all members of our community and creating a culture of trust and decency. **P**



In her Seventh Seminar class, Debbie Osofsky (at right) talks over a revision by Division 1 student Grace Hickey of her math Challenge of the Week.

## Parker launches a close study of its teacher corps

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teachers to Parker and what causes them to leave—will conclude in January 2013. The next stages, slated to conclude in June, begin by developing a clear “professional feedback system” for teachers. This would integrate their individual plans for professional growth with the timing of their evaluation cycles.

At the same time, Parker’s leadership seeks to determine a financially sustainable staffing model that reflects Parker’s status as a charter school and its mission as both an

Essential school and a teacher education site. It aims for Parker to be “a school where excellent teachers can afford to spend a portion of their career,” as the Strategic Plan puts it.

With that in mind, the plan calls for clarifying the school’s stance on teacher advancement through “levels” as they grow professionally at Parker, as well as its views on desired teacher longevity. Finally, the plan asks leadership to determine an appropriate compensation package for each professional level of staff. **P**

## What are the tensions and benefits of “trust and decency”?

*Students joined Principal Todd Sumner to reflect on how “trust and decency” play out in their experiences.*

You have to do a lot of community conversations and a lot of programs like peer mentors just to make it happen—because if you don’t work at it, things fall apart. It is definitely worth the work, but it is hard work. It’s not painful work; it just takes a lot of thought and a lot of commitment.

– HEATHER PATERSON, Div. 3

I was scared of my teachers for years. When I got here, it was a more relaxed environment where the teacher got to know the student and the student got to know the teacher, and they became friends but also student-teacher. It was then that I got to relax. This is much better than being afraid that my teachers were really big and that I was really small.

– COLE MANCE, Div. 2

At my old school, I had a set of things that everybody had to do exactly the same. At Parker it was like this whole new window of opportunity. I like taking the learning my teacher gives me and mixing it up and making it my own so I can benefit best from it. If everyone has that, then we have an even stronger community as a whole.

– PATRICE MITCHELL, Div. 2

We tend to more than just our minds, here. We are all seen as people, and that is very important to me. At my



In a lunchtime conversation with principal Todd Sumner, Parker students from Divisions 2 and 3 talk about the ways the school’s tone affects their social, emotional, and academic lives.

old school, it was always about doing the best and the most you can. It was not about cultivating yourself and asking what do you want to learn and what is the best way for you to learn and how can you best use that so you can get the most out of your education. It was about racing to the finish point, and never quite getting there.

– HANNAH JOSEPH, Div. 3

With academic assessments, a lot of my teachers give us options on what to do. They give you the trust that you’re going to do the work—but they trust you to do it the way you want to. So there’s the opportunity to do better work.

– TOMMY DANKO, Div. 3

It takes a while to learn what you are supposed to do at this school and when you have this much freedom

you just have to realize you can ask for help and they will coach you to get where you need to be.

– JACOB DANIELS, Div. 2

We get to be our own person. We aren’t categorized into groups, like “jocks” or “nerds.” You are viewed for what you can do, not just for what your label is.

– OWEN BIGELBACH, Div. 3

One group will overlap with another one and another one and another one.

– COLE MANCE, Div. 2

I think it’s great here that even if you don’t know a person, they can be the most helpful.

– LEXII THOMAS, Div. 2

It’s kind of like preschool here—you can be friends with anyone in like ten minutes.

– PATRICE MITCHELL, Div. 2 **P**

## ‘Get ready to show you care’: A Parker teacher’s journey

by Caroline Beasley

At 20 years old, I looked 15 and dressed like a 1950s schoolmarm on my first day of student teaching. I tried desperately to fool my high school students into thinking I was 40. To match my cardigan and loafers, I also tried on a commanding voice, quick wit, and readymade responses. I can’t tell you the name of any of my students; I can’t remember any of my lessons; all I can really recall is what I wore and how I felt: scared, intimidated, and determined to not show any weakness. “They would eat me alive if I gave them half a chance,” I thought.

I traded in authenticity to feel safe from the discomfort of ever being wrong or vulnerable in front of my students. The fear of vulnerability is fierce. My internal dialogue sounded like this: “I’m the teacher/boss, you’re the student. Do as I say, or else—because I don’t know how to handle being wrong. It’s scary. I don’t know what it looks like for an adult to be wrong. I don’t like the feeling of being wrong, and I’m not sure what will happen if I’m wrong.” My firm façade kept me from reaching my students.

Over time, I learned that relationships with students were key to reaching them in the classroom. I recalled my own important relationships with my teachers and wanted to pass along the same love and care to my students. Still, I struggled to let go of my schoolmarm ways when behavior ran amok in the classroom. When I felt threatened, I would attack and return to my rusty old dialogue. The result was continuously dissatisfying. With my uncompromising, one-sided lectures, I isolated my students, gave them reason to distrust me, and put a barrier in front of the opportunity to reach them academically. Moreover, I was consistently deeply unsettled in knowing that I wasn’t being my best self as a teacher or person; I wasn’t modeling effective communication, fairness, decency, trust or respect.

In recent years, I’ve been trying my hardest to shift gears. With every curse word, paper-plane launch, and outburst, I have the opportunity to cultivate and model a tone of decency and trust. This is one of the Ten Common Principles at Parker, and I really should have it framed somewhere in our classroom. I’m retraining my internal dialogue to sound more like this: “It’s okay, breathe. Get ready to show you care. Get ready

to show that you believe in this student’s best potential. Get ready to communicate empathy, high expectations and hope.”

When I’ve taught from this place, I’ve found a stronger connection to students. Students are calmer when I’m calmer, more fair-minded when I lead with fairness. They can gain a greater vision of themselves and their behavior when I communicate my belief in them. My classroom is a more trusting community, and this has increased students’ willingness to take academic risks and to ask for help. Students are learning that making mistakes is not a weakness, but an opportunity to build character. Students are more open to share with me what they need to succeed. We laugh more, and this

helps us stay more engaged. When you know your students and they know you as a whole person—not perfect or never-wrong—they learn to believe in themselves as whole people.

It’s a win-win situation, really. What more can we ask for in a school than one in which we get to practice being

our best selves so others can do the same? It’s not easy. Days aren’t perfect, and each class offers a new challenge. But at Parker, where everyone is committed to growing towards the Ten Common Principles, it’s possible. It is our work as educators to take what’s possible and make it real. **P**

*“When you know your students  
and they know you as a whole  
person—not perfect or never-wrong  
—they learn to believe in themselves  
as whole people.”*



Division 1 coordinator and AH teacher Caroline Beasley (at right) in conversation with her students Carley McMillan and Evan Tucker.



Emily Knupp Riordan '00 with Shannon Murphy '01 at Emily's September wedding.

### 2000

**EMILY KNUPP RIORDAN** got married over Labor Day weekend! She and her husband Tim live in the D.C. area, where she has been working at the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council for more than four years. The Center coordinated the first annual Green Apple Day of Service on September 29, with more than 1,200 schools and campuses coming together for improvement and sustainability projects. You can get your community involved by visiting [mygreenapple.org](http://mygreenapple.org).

After six years in cold Chicago, **AMANDA CADOGAN** finally fulfilled her dream of moving to California. She now lives in beautiful Oakland and works at California College of the Arts as a Financial Aid Counselor. She spends her time painting portraits and exploring the Bay Area. Her brother Dylan (Parker '08) lives in San Francisco and they frequently go adventuring together.

### 2001

**MARCIE MUEHLKE** finished her masters in business and public policy this spring at UMass Amherst and loves living in western Massachusetts. She is starting a sustainable wedding dress company called Joya

Bride ([Joyabride.com](http://Joyabride.com)), which empowers women around the world.

**BRIAN MURPHY** teaches American literature and composition as well as AP English literature and composition at the nationally ranked Newport High School in Bellevue, Washington. Brian's undergraduate degree is in secondary education and history and he has a graduate degree in curriculum and instruction from Seattle Pacific University. He has been happily married since July 2010 and lives in Renton, WA, with the beautiful Pacific Northwest at his doorstep. When he's not grading or planning, he spends free time reading, hiking, skiing, playing with his dog Attila, attending Sounders matches, and crafting delicious homebrewed beer. Cheers!

### 2004

**JESS NOLLET** is in her fourth year of teaching at Prospect Hill Academy Charter School in Cambridge, MA, where she recently welcomed Kara Dalton '04 and former Parker teacher Jess (Jacob) Flick to the faculty! Jess still loves to travel to Spanish-speaking countries (most recently Colombia) and still sees her classmates Leah Maroni-Wagner and Athena Drosos on occasion.

**KARA DALTON** moved back to Boston from D.C. in August. She teaches high school English and history at Prospect Hill Academy and lives in Boston with Emily Browning (Parker '05).

**DAVID (BEN) NYER** is a second-year graduate student in the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University. He's currently studying the behavior of photosynthetic bacteria in desert soils and how they have adapted to their extreme environment.

### 2005

After finishing his masters degree in computer science, **GARTH GRIFFIN** spent last summer in a second engineering internship at Google, where he worked on geographic modeling of interest in conceptual entities. He recently took the position of data scientist at Recorded Future, a small technology company in Cambridge, where he tries to predict the future using data mined from the web. Garth is enjoying the beautiful New England fall from his apartment in Somerville, MA.

**KATIE GAPINSKI ADAMSON** got married in August to Christopher Adamson. (Yes, she was dating him in high school!) She is currently in graduate school and will receive her masters in counseling psychology from Assumption College in May 2013. Katie also works as an in-home mental and behavioral health counselor for children and is completing a clinical internship at a residential program for adults with chronic mental illness. For the past few years, she has been training and competing in various triathlons. "I love it!" she says. "Almost everything I know



Katie Gapinski Adamson '05 with Kaitlin Roop '05 at Katie's wedding in August.

and have done to train I learned from Ben Benoit—so thanks, Ben!”

Through Americorps VISTA, **ERIN BARSTOW** is at the Missoula, Montana YWCA doing her “heart’s work” by supporting adolescent girls in a program called Girls Using Their Strengths (GUTS). She describes her multifaceted experience in an interview at <http://bit.ly/erinbarstow>.

**BECCA LINDAMOOD** is working as a special education teacher at Concord Carlisle High School.

## 2006

After spending a year studying business and accounting in Dublin, Ireland, **KELSEY SAMPSON** took some time off to focus on her career. She went back to school a year later at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, majoring in interactive media and game development and computer science. Kelsey left school again less than two years later, and after some time working in food service and tech support, she began at Newbury Comics. After a year in store management, she is currently an assistant to the CEO, doing product analysis, merchandising, and buying.

## 2007

**ABBY LINDAMOOD** is teaching preschool students at the Jewish Community Center in Newton, MA.

**SASHA WHITE** graduated from Temple University in Philadelphia, where she majored in broadcasting, telecommunications, and mass media with a concentration in music industry. In June 2011 she moved to Paris, France, where she is now a sales and music consultant for the Paris branch of a London-based production music library, West One Music

Group. Sasha got her start in the music industry during her Parker senior project, when she was an intern for a Nashville, Tennessee music festival.

## 2008

**LIZ GELLER** earned her bachelors degree in early childhood education from the University of Vermont in May, and has applied for her Vermont teaching license. She is substitute teaching for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District and also volunteers at a pre-school in Harvard, MA.

## 2010

**CHRIS BREW** went to Salve Regina University for a semester before transferring to the University of Vermont. He then took a year off, moving to South Africa to work in a township at an orphanage for chronically ill children. On his return, he transferred once more and now studies at UMass Amherst.

**ADDISON VAN AUKEN** is currently studying art and art history during a semester abroad in beautiful Florence, Italy. A creative writing major at Endicott College in Beverly, MA, she says she loves being surrounded by beautiful art, even as she walks to class each day!

## 2011

**LILLIAN HAYWARD** spent a gap year volunteering at St. Joseph’s Orphanage in Capetown, South Africa. She is currently in her freshman year at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina.

## 2012

**ROB MAYO** is a freshman at Ithaca College, majoring in emerging media and design with a minor in computer sciences. After college he hopes to work with video games or other interac-

tive media. Noticing that his campus paper, the Ithacan, published reviews of movies but not video games, Rob offered his services, and will now be reviewing both blockbuster and indie games for the paper.

## NEWS FROM THE FACULTY

**JOSIE DICKSON DULLES**, who taught Division 3 AH from 2006 to 2009, had her second baby, Matilda (Tilly) Jay Dickson Dulles, on September 6, 2011. Josie is teaching part time in the English department at Amherst (MA) Regional High School. She misses all her Parker homies and as she teaches *Macbeth* to her ninth graders, she says, she has “a lot of excellent flashbacks to Shakespeare Craziiness at Parker: basketballs dripping with fake blood, festering Banquo costumes, cross-dressed Lady M. Good times!”



## GRADUATES AND FAMILIES!

*Please send news and photos of what Parker alums are doing. Email [kdrew@parker.org](mailto:kdrew@parker.org) or call Katrina Drew at 978-772-3293 ext. 164.*

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## From the Board Chair

### Dear Parker community,

As our Board determines what activities on our part would best



support the school's longer-term strategic plan, we are learning that we need to develop new ways of working. The strategic plan,

created through an inclusive process this year, lays out major areas for Parker to prioritize. One such focus area calls for us to create a sustainable funding model, with revenue sources in addition to monies from the Commonwealth. The Board of Trustees is currently setting our goals for the year based on the Strategic Plan, and we expect to spend considerable time on sustainable funding.

Being a charter school board at an Essential school also means exploring the topic of governance within a democratic system. What is ours to explore this year? The Commonwealth gives a board very specific duties, bound by law—yet we also are part of a school that examines power relationships. It's an interesting juxtaposition and one that we are already discussing at our meetings. We welcome your input!

Yours truly,

Cheryl Coonahan

*Chair, Parker Board of Trustees*

## The Parker Way

FALL 2012

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Please send news and photos to [KDrew@parker.org](mailto:KDrew@parker.org). For ongoing news and information, visit Parker's web site, [www.parker.org](http://www.parker.org).