



Nightingale Faculty Newsletter

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Remembrances of Karen Dressner



The following pages of the Faculty Newsletter are dedicated to Karen Dressner. Be it our first-graders, colleagues, parents, Middle and Upper School students, or alumnae (some of whom she taught twenty years ago), all felt a deep sense of loss when Karen died. Her children's desire that her funeral service be held at Nightingale brought our school community together to honor her memory and filled the schoolhouse. The following is a sampler of the many tributes to Karen we have received, starting with Dorothy Hutcheson's, Sara Allan's, and Marc Travanti's eulogies at her service and the eloquent words of her colleagues in the Science Department.

DOROTHY HUTCHESON

To her colleagues, Ms. Dressner quickly became an inspiration. She was a source of advice, friendship, laughter, lots of it—and she was living proof that teaching is not just a gift to students but a gift to oneself, endlessly renewing. She taught this year's lower-schoolers with the same vitality and passion and enthusiasm that she had shown when she taught her first class. Years ago, she led faculty discussion groups on diversity in education. These eventually morphed into After Hours Seminars for faculty and staff—rich discussions and often field trips led by faculty experts or experts outside of Nightingale, followed by delicious dinners back in the schoolhouse on the theme of the evening prepared by Chef Vazquez and his staff. Ms. Dressner could talk him into cooking anything.

For generations of parents, myself included, Ms. Dressner was a rock star on Curriculum Night. I remember her explaining how she taught the girls about the senses. She brought big tin cans sealed up with something that they were supposed to try to identify without seeing. She would toss them out to the parents, who invariably would hesitate to venture a guess, but she would shame us into trying. She taught her girls that it was wonderful to guess incorrectly—as long as you weren't afraid to guess. Time and again, I heard from parents who were grateful that their daughters had learned this lesson from the start.

Along with her insistence on venturing a guess, there was also the spirit of fun and playfulness that marked every class with Ms. Dressner. As one Lower School parent, Emilie Cohen P'20 noted in an e-mail to me: "Ms. Dressner was quoted daily in our household—from the silly to the profound—and her humor and puns developed my daughter's sophistication even as they helped solidify her mastery of the facts. Although 100 raffle tickets for an outing with Ms. Dressner seemed like a lot (and didn't yield us a win, there were so many in the pool!), we were happy to do it; what parents do not want to grant their child the ideal day?"

Of course, it was on her students that Ms. Dressner made the ultimate and perhaps most important impression. For her students, as it was for her, science was an adventure, and surprises lurked around every corner. She created the field-studies trimester for third-graders, leading her girls out to Central Park and other sites across the city to embrace the intricacies and miracles of the natural world.



Observing Pale Male and his family nesting on a Fifth Avenue building through binoculars; climbing up to Belvedere Castle to visit the conservatory and do some bird watching; throwing that hula-hoop on the ground and writing a detailed observation of everything within the circle.

You can go visit the Lower School science lab after the service today. It's a testament to Karen's passionate belief that the best learning emerges from children's questions and observations, and that learning should involve all the senses. Her classroom feels different and looks different from all the others. Like nature itself, it holds extraordinary treasures: a skeleton dangling from the ceiling on one side of the classroom, a large gourd on the other, animal skulls hanging on the walls, and a bevy of beehives filling a corner. All of you parent and student tour guides out there know that the best way to get families excited about Nightingale is to pause for a few moments in Ms. Dressner's fifth floor lab.

Who else but Ms. Dressner would write the following question for extra credit on a fourth-grade test: "In the space below, write a pun, joke, or cartoon using at least one botanical term." What other teacher but Ms. Dressner could name the class skeleton "Miss Bone-apart," or hand out "the Clothespin of Honor" when a student offered a particularly insightful observation. We wear clothespins today in her honor.

Curiosity was the one absolute mandate in her class. It simply wasn't cool for a girl to be squeamish. Year after year, with every girl she taught, Ms. Dressner insisted that the phrase "ooh, gross," or "that's yucky" be replaced by (and please join me) "AAH... interesting."

Let me close with Ms. Dressner's own words from an article she wrote for a Scholastic Magazine teachers' guide:

"In a coffee shop recently, I overheard a parent complaining that her daughter had reached that annoying stage where she was constantly asking why. I smiled, thinking that what I do as a science teacher is try to preserve children's natural and often insistent curiosity... to lead us into our investigations...[so] that [my students] become involved in what they are learning. And this involvement creates learning experiences that, unlike many facts, won't soon be forgotten."

Well, this fact is certain: Ms. Dressner will never be forgotten in the lives of Nightingale girls and women and colleagues who have been taught so much by her.

MARC TRAVANTI

Karen was like a sister to me. She was one of the best listeners that I have known, as well as a great talker filled with knowledge, humor, wisdom, and compassion. We could comfortably say anything to one another. While our conversations would easily sway in any direction, there was one subject that consistently arose and that was her children; Adam and Annie were a constant source of love, joy, and wonderment to her.

Something that amazed me about Karen (along with her stylish dressing, her stunning looks, her creative cooking, her appreciation of art, her cultural awareness, her writing ability, and her quick wit) was her uncanny ability to plan and get things done quickly. Whether it was organizing a trip or creating a lesson plan, she would zip through it, and this talent was graciously extended to me and any others who needed help: if there was something I hesitated to do because it was too difficult, just mention it to Karen and an original solution would soon emerge. She had the same can-do attitude with her students as she taught them not only content, but the joy of learning. She understood the innate playfulness of a young student and

combined that quality with the act of learning. The girls loved her classes and looked forward to them. Because of Karen, most Lower School girls will tell you that their favorite subject is science. All you have to do is walk into her classroom to imagine the kind of teacher she was. The visuals are museum quality, and just viewing them (not to mention studying them) was a treat for her students: snakeskins, snails, skeletons, beehives, and Darwin, her live bird. Nothing was ordinary with Karen's teaching. She developed a superior personal style and delivered it to her students with a contagious enthusiasm.

With Karen gone, it feels like a gigantic door has been closed forever.

SARA ALLAN '11

"Throughout high school I have often peeked into my Lower School science classroom, and each time my love of learning has been reinvigorated. My teacher, Ms. Dressner, opened my eyes to the wonders of science by letting us freely explore her packed classroom. Ever since, problem-solving, discovery, and hands-on learning have been my passions."

That was the opening paragraph of the first college essay I wrote. When asked to present myself on paper—to explain my academic motivations, and the root of my intellectual curiosity—Ms. Dressner, or "Dressy," as she affectionately let us call her—was the first thing that came to my mind. After she heard about my essay, she asked to read it. She then wrote in an e-mail to me, "You will never know how much your essay means to me..."

Her reaction truly showed her dedication to teaching. I am glad I was able to share with her a small piece of the incredible imprint she left on me, but it would have been impossible for her to have ever known how much of a mark she left on all of her students. Usually it takes a tragedy to realize how important someone has been in your life, but Ms. Dressner was so special that I routinely told and heard stories about how great a teacher and mentor she was.

There was also the time a Kindergartener ran out of the classroom when she saw Miss Bone-apart, the classroom skeleton. What was Ms. Dressner's obvious solution? She dressed Miss Bone-apart in a Nightingale tunic.



There were also the everyday things she did that set her apart: how she used to pull out our loose baby teeth and give us the tooth to carry around in a treasure chest that hung on a string around our neck; how she would put up any nature-related specimens we brought in on her wall, such as butterflies and leaves; how she would always invite tour guides and prospective parents in to meet her bird and see the glass vials of specimens she had on her counter; how we were all allowed to sit on the tabletops when we were “examining” things and thought we were really rebellious since the rest of the Lower School was so structured; how nothing was gross or yucky, but instead it was “ahhhhh, interesting” (a phrase that was adopted into my family’s lexicon, as well as many other families’).

In fourth grade, I wrote, “My favorite subject is science because I have Dressy.” I think that sums up my experience with her. We loved science because we loved how she taught it, and once our attention was sparked by such an incredible teacher, many of us were set up to be captivated by science forever.

One always got the sense that even while she let us play and explore in class every day, she was having even more fun than the rest of us—she really loved her job and she loved us, which was what made her so great at it. As we moved on to Middle and Upper School, she became a steady source of vitality—a familiar smile at the end of the hallway that reminded us of carefree Lower School days and put the stresses of older years into perspective.

I think I can speak for anyone who has ever been taught by Ms. Dressner—she was an incredible teacher who imparted her passion and love of learning to all her students. She maintained a child-like enthusiasm for everything she did. And she had an elegance in the way she carried herself—she set an excellent role model for all. On Friday, while reviewing plant anatomy in AP Biology, I found myself vividly remembering how Ms. Dressner taught us the same material almost 10 years ago.

It takes a special type of teacher to get you to remember the definition of monocots and dicots for 10 years... Thank you, Ms. Dressner.

FROM THE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

The fifth floor is undoubtedly a less spirited place without the presence of our dear friend and colleague, Karen Dressner. Simply put, Karen made life in the submarine fun. Her quick comebacks, unique perspectives, and constant questioning kept all of us on our toes. We treasured the witty banter she encouraged each day and the element of surprise and wonder she contributed to our tightly shared space. And although she might have appeared to be able to seamlessly “wing it” through a lesson at a moment’s notice; it was really her total dedication to her craft, her level of engagement with and knowledge of her students; and her ongoing, impassioned relationship with the natural world that allowed her to so swiftly create and deliver a well-crafted science lesson. Even more significant than Karen’s incredible presence was her generosity; it was impressive and far-reaching. As soon as she knew Nikki’s Southern Californian mother was coming to visit the city and was woefully unprepared for the winter weather, a shopping bag with a lovely winter coat and boots appeared in Nikki’s chair the next morning for her mother’s use. When Jon’s family paid a visit to the schoolhouse one day, Karen immediately whisked Jacob into her classroom for an impromptu teaching apprenticeship. And it can’t go without mentioning that she kept the department well stocked with coffee and all sorts of supplies that encouraged collegiality and civility and kept us closer to sane. Karen took care of each one of us in the department in some unique way, and often when we weren’t the slightest bit aware of her actions or intentions. The Science Department will forever miss her and her countless contributions to our lives.

FROM THE FACULTY AT LARGE

Karen Dressner is my dear friend, who I will always remember smiling, laughing, enjoying life as it is meant to be enjoyed. A beautiful, intelligent soul searcher that I am honored to have known.

—Yvette Louise Canizares, *former colleague and friend*

I first heard about Karen through my niece, a former Nightingale student, who announced that her science teacher wouldn’t let them say “eeeewwww,” when they saw something “disgusting,” like organic decaying material or eggplant. Instead, they were supposed to say,

“interesting.” Then I was lucky to meet her myself and last year, at one of the After Hours programs, we all made lamps. Karen’s was, I thought, exceptional, but what really struck me was that the proportions looked like no one else’s. It is a small thing, I guess, but her venturing encouraged me to follow my own instincts, as well. What more could anyone ask of a teacher and colleague but that they help you to find your own way? I will think of her as I turn on my lamp in the evenings and be grateful for that bit of light she shed.

—Betsey Osborne, *English Department*

A joyous friend and colleague. Her quick wit and sense of irony infected any occasion. I was always happy when in her company and will miss her very much.

—Christine Schutt, *English Department*

Karen was awesome. She helped me on numerous occasions for no reason except to be helpful. My son wears the jean jacket she gave him when I was pregnant in her honor today.

—Claire Lecomte du Nouy, *Dean of Students*

Karen was not only a colleague but a dear friend, as well. I will miss her wisdom, wit, and spirit.

—Roz Smith, *Lower School Learning Specialist*

Karen made the world a better place for us all. She was a joyous spirit lighting up every room she entered, enlivening every conversation with wit and insight: she brought people together, put them at their ease and made them feel appreciated. Karen loved children and spoke their language as no one else. She shared their boundless curiosity and never lost that ability to see the world as endlessly interesting and exciting. Karen was creative and original in everything she did; she never wrote an e-mail without a pun; taught a boring, conventional class; or planned a faculty seminar that didn’t have a special twist, a unique menu, tantalizing excursion, a pot-throwing, or a dumpling-making. She loved to make people happy and was the most generous of friends. What I most admired about Karen was her candor and courage. She showed us all how to dig into life and make the most of every moment. Our brave and beautiful Karen, you will always have a place in our hearts.

—Diana Frangos, *History Department*

In the art office one could hear Karen's interactions with her students quite clearly and as a new teacher at Nightingale in 1999, I practically took notes.

We became friends fairly quickly, although I now wish I'd spent more time and done more things with her. Karen is the one who ushered me into the nurse's office the day my 16-year-old cat died, telling me—as only she could—that I might scare the students if they saw me and making me laugh despite the tears. Being Karen, she of course had the Kleenex/grief supplies in the always well-stocked emergency drawer in her desk.

My last conversation with Karen was the afternoon of Thursday, January 20. She'd returned to Nightingale a day earlier—after her fall—and I'd missed seeing her, although we exchanged e-mails. Thursday morning I was on the way in to school and at the last minute thought, "Karen needs some rugelach" from the terrific bakery in my neighborhood.

I have never been more grateful for following a last-minute impulse. As we ate the rugelach, we talked about Harlem's remaining institutions from the past, like my local bakery and Rao's. Karen then told me the funny story of her and Neil's attempts to talk the owner of Rao's into letting them hold their wedding at the restaurant, a conversation they had with him during their first engagement and this one. They also asked Mayor Koch, who happened to be having dinner there recently, to officiate, only to be turned down—good naturedly—by both mayor and restaurateur.

Karen also talked about how happy she was for her daughter, Annie, who'd also recently gotten engaged. She felt that her fiancé was a great guy and that the two of them were good together.

The last time we talked, Karen was looking forward to so much...

—Kira Lynn Harris, *Art Department*

So there I was, a third- or maybe fourth-grader, faced with the opportunity to taste a hard-boiled terrapin turtle egg. How did I end up here? Well, this teacher, this funny, vivacious teacher of the Lower School girls had heard a classmate's mother was preparing terrapin turtle soup. Seizing on any opportunity she could to turn experience

into science, she had invited this girl's mother to poach that turtle in the science lab and take the class through the step-by-step dismemberment. These out-of-the-box moments were what defined Ms. Dressner's classes, every single one of them. She had infinite tricks up her sleeve, creative explanations for life's toughest questions asked by the toughest and most curious questioners—girls ages six through ten. With the snap of a Koosh ball, she explained gravity. With a song and dance, she turned us into environmentalists. With a scalpel and a pair of gloves, she turned the queasiest of us into biologists with stomachs ironclad. How fortunate I was to be her student and to become her colleague twenty or so years later.

—Fernanda Winthrop '00, *Class K Homeroom*

FROM STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Those of us who joined the schoolhouse too late to be Ms. Dressner's students were nevertheless aware of her bright and graceful manner, her distinctively cheerful voice. She exuded the kind of presence one aspires to, wishes upon her older self without realizing it. Her effortless example will be missed by her students and colleagues, of course, as well as by those who simply remarked, from a distance, how lovely a woman she seemed.

—Maya Popa '07

Your enthusiasm and dedication for teaching science to the girls at Nightingale will never be forgotten. Your memory will live long within the hearts and minds of the hundreds of women you have touched. May your loved ones know how deeply grateful we are for your outstanding contribution to the families of Nightingale-Bamford. We will miss you so!

—Holly Heston Rochell and Ridley Rochell '15

We think of Ms. Dressner every fall when the Osage orange trees are dropping their fruit in Central Park. It was Ms. Dressner who first told our daughter Charlotte '09, a third-grader at the time, what these were and that they were "definitely not edible!" Karen Dressner instilled in both Charlotte and her sister Emma '16 an enduring love of science, and our family will never forget her.

—The Pettit Family (Charlotte '09, Emma '16)

Ms. Dressner was a great teacher. She made science class so fun and exciting for everyone. She always had funny stories to tell us and she was not only a teacher to us. She was a friend.

—Katherine Burgstahler '18



Karen Dressner was a light that burned so brightly in the Lower School at Nightingale. Her love of learning, her joyous method of teaching science both inside the classroom and outside in Central Park will be remembered by our entire family. She's one of the special ones in a school filled with amazing teachers. Dressy, you will forever be in our hearts.

—The Gleicher Family (Casey '18)

With sincere fondness, we remember Nightingale's beloved Ms. Dressner. Her love for science, and for the girls that entered her magical room, was abundantly apparent. Our daughter, Caleigh, has been greatly impacted by Dressy's vitality and passion. Caleigh will forever view nature, animals, and the climate through the eyes and voice of her special teacher.

—The Leyton Family (Caleigh '18)

Thank you for instilling in our daughter a love of science and all things gooey, furry, and otherwise dissectible. "Kingdom, phylum, class order..." will remain in our family's songbook forever. Kate will always cherish the clothespin that she very proudly received for her memorizing it. We especially love the use of the expression of "ooh, ahh,

that's interesting," versus just plain "gross," which she learned in science class. Thank you for a WONDERFUL three years.

—Christina Evans P '21

Ms. Dressner holds a special place in our hearts, as she provided Ella strength and a safe place to believe in the beauty of the world. She taught her to respect her body, to respect nature, and to respect the planet at large. She exhibited behavior that we need our girls to see—a strong, confident female scientist with a great sense of humor (and style)! She respected the girls and the girls knew it.

—Bob Kay and Kimberly Whitfill-Kay P'23 and '19

Karen Dressner was, plain and simple, my daughter's favorite teacher. For a little girl who loves science, Karen was the perfect role model, projecting the potential immediacy and joy of the subject in her varied and detailed world. Ms. Dressner was quoted daily in our household—from the silly to the profound—and her humor and puns developed Summer's sophistication even as they helped solidify her mastery of the facts. Although 100 raffle tickets for an outing with Ms. Dressner seemed like a lot (and didn't yield us a win, there were so many in

the pool!), we were happy to do it; what parents do not want to grant their child the ideal day? I must add that as a colleague, Karen was among the first to welcome me openly and with memorable warmth—she made it easy for a newbie to join a table of strangers and start talking.

As always happens at a time like this, my first thoughts after hearing the news were about my last exchange with Karen. I am not exactly sure when it took place, but I am confident in assuming that it had been about what a beloved and superior teacher she was for our daughter; John and I have taken every opportunity to tell her so since Summer joined the Lower School.
—Emilie Cohen and John Williams P'20

Our family will really miss Dressy. The truth is that I have thought of her every morning for all these years and I am not exaggerating. When Charlotte was in first grade in 1997, she came home from school after having science class one day with a new rule for our family: "No running the water when we brush our teeth." Charlotte said Dressy told the class that you waste too much water by letting it run. Well, I have to admit that I had a hard time brushing without the water running, but we all tried to conserve and eventually I went back to my old ways. Two years later when Katherine began her science classes with Dressy she came home with the same rule and again I went back to conserving for a little while at least. This is why I never brush my teeth without thinking of her!

As a volunteer parent tour guide, you learn early on that one of the best rooms to take prospective families to is the Lower School Science room. The people I toured were always beyond impressed with what the girls were doing in that room! Ms. Dressner always warmly asked the parents taking the tour to come in and would explain what the girls were doing or have a student discuss what the lesson or experiment was about. It was a proud moment for any tour guide to "show off" a teacher like Dressy. I always left the room feeling lucky and thinking to myself that my girls got to be her students for four years!

I will so miss seeing her at the schoolhouse. Her kindness, vitality, and great sense of humor will be remembered always by our family.
With deepest condolences,
—The Lipman Family (Barbara, Gene, Charlotte '09, and Katherine '12)

Fly away,
Fly away sweet spirit.
Nature has called you too early...
but in every bird that should pass me now,
I will sense your spirit lift me.

Feathers that my daughter has collected with eyes wide
under your tutelage, pressed tightly, will be held
with special affection.
The birds, the squirrels, the many plants, acorns, and
seeds you taught us all about with gusto
Bugs and snakes made me shudder, but for your ardor,
not my Caroline!
The snail, for months, duly fed and cared for, finally let
go in the garden
The baby mouse, eyes unopened fur tousled, the
thought...
What would Dressy do?
To my children's delight, a box!
The small eyes opened, the fur set straight, saved from
raccoons.

So many ways your vitality and passion permeated our
household... attaching itself, reminding me of the
verve my mother shared with you in your love for
the world of nature.

So many conversations shared about our children,
marriage, marriages... life and its adversity... The
subtle ways we thought to keep our hearts afloat,
our souls thriving

All these memories and more flood my heart with
warmth... sadness
Twenty years, A profound fondness and respect
Your eccentricity and passion will be missed...

Fly away,
Fly away sweet spirit.
Perhaps your soul can soar with Pale Male,
Go see Nature as you wished, the world you loved so
much from a different view.
—Cynthia Coudert P'15 P'20, *Theatre Department*



- *Jazmyn Blackburn*
(CLASS OF 2015)

Nightingale is extraordinarily supportive of her teachers and students as "hearts and minds." We all love learning. Teaching, learning, teaching, learning; the perfect circle of life.
- Karen Dressner, 2009

Lab Notebooks

Jon Fuller / Science

Some innovations are driven by work, as seen with Thomas Edison. Others are more driven by a desire for “seeking the prize,” as identified by Watson and Crick. My small innovation was catalyzed by utter confusion. I was looking at a lab report graph produced by a student. While I knew the subject and process of what the student did, I didn’t have the slightest idea of what the student was saying. And based on previous experience, I had a sneaking suspicion that the student didn’t know either. This confusion told me that something was wrong and that it had to change.

Most of the courses taught in science are laboratory-based. Once a week, through a double period, students conduct various protocols, gather data, and analyze it. Historically, they would then, at least for more important labs, produce a two to three page typed lab report. The report would contain an introduction, materials and methods used, data, graphs putting the data together, and then a discussion. The report would often be turned in the next week, graded and passed back to the students, and would then disappear down an Orwellian memory hole.

This lab format has been widely used for decades, and there is nothing really bad about it. But I was seeing confusion and I didn’t like it. Part of the issue was technology. I and other members of the science department had taught students how to graph with Microsoft Excel. It isn’t very difficult, and produces wonderful graphs (the Class VIII students loved being able to use multi-colored backgrounds). The students had learned how to graph data, but the mistakes being made indicated that the graphing skills had preceded understanding what was being graphed. Another issue was disposal. Students would struggle for an hour or two to produce a lab report, turn it in, and then forget about it. There was no connection between one lab and another, though in fact many labs produced results that could only be completely explained months later.

Facing these problems, I tried to think of a better way. A solution came through a combination of several avenues.

The first was a comment made by a visitor during our accreditation process some eight years ago. He noted that Fieldston School had adapted a carbon copy lab sheets format. While interesting, there were enough problems with the idea that I never moved ahead with it. The second avenue was through our Lower School science teacher, Karen Dressner, who had for a long time had her students write down and draw their observations in composition books. After a bit of searching and discussions with another science teacher, Charlotte Jennings, I adopted a lab notebook system, with one spiral bound book to be used by my students throughout the year. It seemed like a small change.

But small changes can lead to big changes. The first was that students would now have to handwrite their notes and graphs for labs. The process of writing by hand slows the students down, perhaps giving them an opportunity to think about what they are saying. Making the graphs now has to start with questions such as, “What should it look like?” rather than highlighting data and clicking “insert.” But in addition to changing the student product, the teacher process has started to change. I have added pre-lab questions to each lab exercise, as a way of getting the students to think about the lab before we begin. I am now asking about previous labs, beginning the process of asking the students to review their notes from earlier work. The content is being subtly shifted to use the old labs to inspire new thoughts. Other science teachers have adopted the lab notebooks as well, often with their own slant. In Physics, extended homework problems are included. Biology is using a slightly different format so that drawings can be better rendered.

The use of lab notebooks has expanded from Classes VII through XII, and this year we have added the Nightingale logo to the spiral-bound books, furthering the integration among teachers in the department and within the school.

These changes occurred from a catalyst of confusion—but from that, a new way of approaching the lab experience has been generated. As has been stated, “Confusion is the welcome mat of creativity.”

Visual Education and Class V Curriculum Development

Carolyn Hastie / Art



Last June, April Tonin and I once again spent a week planning museum visits and considering possibilities for guest speakers, as well as evaluating exhibition trips and special programs from the previous year. My schedule of museum trips for 2009–2010 was full to bursting. I took various Middle School sections and Upper School classes on a total of 18 museum trips. With major retrospectives of Man Ray, Robert Frank, and Henri Cartier-Bresson as well as some smaller, but no less impressive, exhibitions all in one season it was impossible (for me) to resist. Additionally, we launched the “Behind the Scenes at the Met” program, a series of four Friday afternoon seminars with senior curators and conservators from the museum, to which Upper School students were accepted by application. After reviewing last year’s schedule, we decided that for the Middle School one museum/gallery visit per section each term was more realistic, and for my Upper School classes two visits for the fall semester and one for the spring, as the new exam schedule has resulted in a somewhat shorter semester and adequate preparation time had to be allowed for our annual Upper School Arts Fest. We received very positive feedback from the six students who participated in the Met’s program, and plan to offer it again in the 2011–2012 academic year.

So far this year, Classes VII, IX, and the Upper School photography students have been to the Whitney to see the exhibitions *Lee Friedlander: America by Car* as well as *Modern Life: Edward Hopper and His Time*. The Hopper exhibition included the work of photographers who were contemporaries of the artist in order to illustrate the shared aesthetic sensibilities between painters and photographers who were active in New York City during the early 20th century. Also on view in the exhibition was *Mannahatta*, a seven-minute film by Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand, inspired by Walt Whitman’s poem of the same name. Classes VI, VII, IX, and students in Upper School photography sections also went to see three concurrent exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: *Our Future Is in the Air: Photographs from the 1910s; Stieglitz, Steichen, Strand*; and *Between Here and There: Passages in Contemporary Photography*. For the spring, we are hoping to take my Upper School students to the Museum of Modern Art to see *Pictures by Women: A History of Modern Photography*.

Our first guest speaker this year was Maria Yoon, who did a short performance (that required audience participation!) and discussed her ongoing project, *Maria the Korean Bride*, which evolved as a response to family and cultural pressures placed on Ms. Yoon to marry. The goal of the project is for the Korean bride to travel across America and stage a wedding in each of the fifty states. At the time of her presentation, she was just one state short of her goal. Our guest speaker in January was the art historian John Welsh, who is the director of educational outreach at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the architect of the “Behind the Scenes” program. His presentation was about how the political rivalry between Great Britain and France contributed to the evolution of two very different photographic traditions.

Last year it was decided that photography would become part of the Class V art rotation, so as of this fall it is



required for Middle School students in every grade. While I'm someone who enjoys having a large market share, so to speak, and believes that everyone should take a moment to consider all the things that the invention of photography has made possible at least three or four times a day, this new assignment did present the challenge to design a series of projects that was both complementary and distinct from the sequence that I already teach in Classes VI, VII, and VIII. With that in mind, I decided to revisit the basics and design a series of projects that illustrate how photography works. I settled on four different projects (cyanotypes, pinhole photography, light graffiti, and large-scale photogram self-portraits), with a goal of completing three each term. (I needed to have one project in reserve just in case the weather was not on my side. This turns out to have been a good thing given that since the end of December the weather has not been on anyone's side.)

At the beginning of each term, I give a brief overview of early photographic processes and a preview of the

projects that we will be working on. For the first term, we began by looking at the cyanotypes of Anna Atkins and then we made our own using leaves, flowers, and scraps of lace. We made our exposures up on the roof on a succession of sunny days, with very successful results. We moved on to making pinhole images using recycled paint cans as cameras. The girls worked in teams and we made exposure tests on the roof and in front of the schoolhouse. We then went down to the darkroom to develop our paper negatives and select the best exposures. Depending on the amount of available sunlight, exposure times varied from one to four minutes. Passersby on the street were quite bemused to see students frozen in various poses in front of the blue doors and next to the benches. Once the paper negatives were washed and dried, students were able to choose the ones they liked to make positive prints from them. Since paper negatives have to be contact printed and cannot be enlarged, the size of their prints was determined by the size of the negatives. We were using quart- and gallon-size paint cans, so the final prints were 4 x 5" and 6 x 9", respectively.

This project encouraged the students to work together and focus on process, rather than results. They were excited to see their images appear in the developer tray and really appreciated the hands-on aspects of the project. For their third project, the first-trimester students made large-scale photogram self-portraits that are currently on display in the lower lobby opposite the auditorium. The second-trimester students began the term with pinhole photography, as there just wasn't enough available light early in the morning in December to make cyanotypes. We then moved on to the light graffiti project, where we took five- to 15-second exposures on manual film cameras of the students creating patterns and words with penlights. Before we began, we looked at examples ranging from the motion studies of Marey and Muybridge to the famous portrait of Picasso from the cover of *Life* magazine where he's drawing a bull in the air with light. My students attempted everything, ranging from smiley faces and New Year's greetings to figures from Greek mythology. This section is currently working on their own photogram self-portraits, which will soon be joining the ones currently on display.

Modern Languages in the Lower School

Samuel M. Howell / Modern Languages, Head

A learner who can already read her own language, who has the ability to contrast and compare the sounds of her language with those of another, with high energy and fervent intellectual curiosity, young enough to be fearless and unfettered with an exaggerated sense of self: these are all qualities that make students in Class III ideal beginners in a foreign tongue. In ongoing and lengthy discussions among faculty in the Department of Modern Languages, we have often questioned what moves a student to favor one language over another when starting our Middle School program.

Often we found that students had chosen a particular language at the behest of parents or because of a friend's choice, only later to discover that she lacked enthusiasm for her chosen language in Middle School. Believing firmly that the choice should be one borne of intrinsic motivation coming solely from the learner, offering a trimester of well-structured study in each of our offerings (French, Mandarin, and Spanish) is the best way to equip our girls with the information they will use to choose their first foreign language for lifelong study.

Whether in college, upper, middle, or lower schools, the building blocks for a language are the same. Obviously, due to differences in age, the astute foreign language teacher must adjust his pedagogy to the learner. Although older learners grasp grammatical rules and syntax in a more abstract fashion, younger learners often accept the structure of language on its face value without concerning themselves with the *why* and *how*, the nuts and bolts of a sentence. More simply stated, girls at this age are great mimics. As the program that begins in Class V is highly structured, centered upon not only the acquisition of

vocabulary but also grammar as this applies to various parts of speech and conjugation, we Modern Language faculty require more time to hone our students' use of a language's phonemes and how these interplay with its graphology and grammatology. Thus, to achieve this end, starting earlier is indeed the best course of action. At the end of Class III, students will elect the modern language that they will study for a full year in Class IV and subsequently in the Middle and Upper Schools.

Each trimester of study in our three offerings in Class III will focus on the rudiments of the language, but these will, of course, vary in content by language. Mandarin is a tonal language expressed in writing with characters. For Anglophones, French and Spanish use a recognizable alphabet; however, like English, French is highly irregular, with words spelled in a manner that does not always match pronunciation and often contains a plethora of silent letters. Spanish is consistently pronounced as it is written, but its tenses and moods are much more complex than those in French. Each language has its particularities. Nonetheless, to give the non-specialist an idea of what will transpire in each language in each trimester, the following will be covered in the Class III curriculum modern language offerings: the alphabet in French and Spanish and Pinyin (phonetic transcription) in Mandarin; everyday expressions and tasks, especially those related to the classroom; rhymes and songs; geographical names; classroom objects; simple and common commands; food and meals; clothing; colors; to be, to have, to go, and to do; animals; numbers; days of the week, months, and dates; human anatomy; sports; cultural appropriateness; customs and manners; national holidays; and family.

Being a White Ally at the People of Color Conference

Laura Kirk / English

When Gene Batiste welcomed participants to the 2010 People of Color Conference (PoCC) this past December, he invited us to take part in “the most ancient form of initiating change: the human conversation.”

I thought of Janie Crawford talking to her friend, Phoebe, in the opening chapter of Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; Janie, having not seen Phoebe for years, is “full of that oldest human longing—self revelation.” Much of Hurston’s novel feels like an intimate conversation where trust is assumed, friendship is confirmed, and knowledge is shared. Though there were over 1,200 people at PoCC, the conference had that same feeling: personal, safe, and affirming.

Perhaps the atmosphere of PoCC stems from its roots. I knew little about PoCC before I went and assumed the conference was only for people of color. What was I doing there as a white person? Talking to people helped me learn some of the history. The first conference was held with 100 people in 1986 in Reston, Virginia.

The original mission was to create a conference “by and for people of color” in independent schools. As the conference grew, the focus on establishing a sanctuary for people of color remained the same. An aspect that changed was the inclusion of white people. In order to build and sustain inclusive environments, schools sent white participants to PoCC as allies.

What is the responsibility of a white ally? This was the question that guided me through my three days. Being white in the minority at PoCC was a powerful and instructive experience. The speakers, workshops, and conversations encouraged me to think critically about the privileges I experience as a result of being white and the ways in which I am and am not aware of the discrimination

people of color experience regularly. PoCC expanded my definition of what it means to be an ally and reminded me that being an effective ally is about learning skills to identify power and privilege and to act against racism and oppression.

My most memorable workshop was with Dr. Eddie Moore, the founder and director of the White Privilege Conference. “Diversity, Privilege, and Leadership: Are We Making Any Progress?” challenged us to examine how society replicates rather than dismantles white male power structures. Dr. Moore asked the question: Could you be an oppressor and not know it? As a way of modeling personal bias, Dr. Moore acknowledged his own homophobia and the ways in which he “tests” himself to examine and deconstruct his prejudice. He also dissected the systemic oppression people of color confront daily. One of many examples was a case study where an employer received two résumés, one with the name Neil and another with the name Tyrone; the employer hired Neil despite the fact that he had a criminal record because the employer assumed Tyrone was black and did not want to hire him. Dr. Moore’s stories illustrated the prevalence of racism and white privilege. For the last half of the workshop, we separated into groups to discuss the progress in race relations America has made since 1776. We were to rate the country on a scale of one to 100—one being no progress, 100 being great progress. When we reassembled, we discovered that groups had had the same experience: each began with numbers like 50, 65, and 70, but the more the group talked—about our prison system, healthcare, and immigration laws, to name a few—the more each group’s number decreased. Final numbers were 20, 15, and 10.

Another workshop was by Dr. Steven Jones: “How to Make the Invisible Visible: Tools for Pulling Back the Veil

of Privilege.” His presentation was dynamic, funny, and enlightening. In one exercise we worked with a partner, asking “Who are you?” several times; the first time you could describe yourself in any way you wanted, the second time you were not allowed to use roles or labels (such as daughter, teacher), and the third time you could not repeat yourself. The exercise challenged us to go beyond the words we often rely on to describe ourselves and to articulate who we are as individuals.

As we switched roles, Dr. Jones reminded us of the importance of good listening: “You have two ears and one mouth—use them proportionally!”

As I went from one workshop to another, I found that information and stories built on one another and spoke to what Phoebe Eng, one of the keynote speakers, referred to as “cultural fluency.” Eng defined a “culturally fluent person” as someone with an “ability to understand and be understood across perceived boundaries and among many communities.” She encouraged us to practice asking: “How are you related to me?” and to “create bonds of trust” by talking to each other and finding the threads that connect us.

Two other workshops I went to were Rosetta Eun Ryong Lee’s “What I Said and What I Meant: Cross-Cultural Communication” and Benny Vasquez’s “Anti-Oppression: Exploring Your Privilege, Power, and Identity.” Lee, who spoke at Nightingale last year, pointed out that being “culturally effective” doesn’t mean being an expert; effectiveness is about respect, curiosity, and openness. She highlighted how conflicts can occur when people have different cultural relationships to time, authority, or activities. One person might subscribe to the notion that “time is money” and must be “used” wisely, while another might believe “time is for life” and ought to be enjoyed. Lee offered tools for productive cross-cultural dialogue and addressed the ways in which visible and invisible privileges can prevent constructive conversations. I appreciated Lee’s description of how white people being able to see white privilege is “like fish being able to see water.” Vasquez’s workshop was intimate and active. He began by reading statements, such as: “People are comfortable being out in my school,” and we had to move to “yes,” “no,” or somewhere in between. He then

asked people to talk about their responses. The second half of the workshop focused on strategies for creating safe spaces for all students regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, class, or ethnicity.

In addition to workshops, I went to three affinity sessions. Affinity work allows each participant to explore his or her racial or ethnic identity with others who share that identity. Talking with other white people about being white felt odd. Before PoCC, the only affinity group experience I had was with the LGBT community, and my experience had felt affirming and necessary; being in a queer affinity group allowed me to connect with the comfort that comes with being in the majority. The white affinity group at PoCC made me think about the privileges I have as a person who is part of the dominant white culture in this country—a country that was, in the words of Eddie Moore, “started by white people and for white people.” More than once at PoCC, I heard people of color express frustration about white people not being able or willing to talk about racism and oppression. In the affinity sessions, I found myself thinking about when I have felt uncomfortable talking about race and why. PoCC helped me become more aware of my privilege and my hesitation to talk about this privilege, and it provided me with tools to enter into dialogues that might initially feel hard, uncomfortable, or unfamiliar.

On the last day of the conference, the adults at PoCC joined the students who were at the Student Diversity Leadership Conference for a student-led dialogue. This was one of my favorite moments. Nightingale students joined Dalton students and guided us all through a “silent movement” exercise that allowed students and adults to share personal stories and experiences. I was thoroughly impressed with the leadership, confidence, and generosity of our Nightingale students—Tori Van Amson, Ariana Silvan-Grau, Arame Niang, and Francesca Haass. I want to thank them for their participation in the conference and the enthusiasm and knowledge they are bringing back to the school.

PoCC was a transformative experience for a variety of reasons. Being part of “the human conversation” strengthened my commitment to diversity and anti-racism work. Attending a meeting in January at Trinity for white

allies allowed me to continue participating in important and energizing conversations. PoCC provided me with an opportunity to experience moments of “self-revelation” with colleagues from Nightingale and educators from across the country. I am grateful to all the people that make PoCC possible, to Nightingale for allowing me to go, and to my Nightingale colleagues—Aléwa Cooper, Noni Thomas, and Sherwyn Smith—for sharing the experience.

End Notes:

Gene Batiste is the Vice President of Leadership, Education, and Diversity (LEAD) at the National Association of Independent Schools.

Dr. Eddie Moore is the Director of Diversity at The Bush School in Seattle, Washington, and he is the founder and director of The White Privilege Conference.

Dr. Steven Jones is the Chief Executive Officer of Jones & Associates Consulting. He is a speaker, trainer, and consultant in the areas of leadership, multicultural education, and effective mentoring.

Phoebe Eng is a strategist, national lecturer, and author of Warrior Lessons, a memoir-based examination of race, empowerment, and leadership in a rapidly changing world.

Rosetta Eun Ryong Lee is a sixth-grade teacher and a diversity consultant at Seattle Girls’ School. Her areas of expertise include single-sex education, neurobiology, ethics, learning, equity and social justice.

Benny Vasquez is the Director of Diversity at The Town School, and he teaches first- and third-grade Spanish. He is a passionate educator and activist.

A Student's Perspective

Arame Niang / Class of 2012

The Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC) was a poet's paradise: it was my paradise. It was a place of metaphors, of similes, of beauty, and emotion. I wrote 15 poems during my time there. Upper-schoolers from all over the country congregated in the Marriott Hotel of San Diego with open minds. I was fortunate, along with three other girls from Nightingale, to attend workshops, hear speakers, and join in discussions for two days in December. The theme for this year's SDLC was "Catching The Tides of Change/Riding The Waves of Opportunity."

The theme was a mouthful, but brilliant nonetheless. It summed up my experience before and after SDLC. I had never "surfed with diversity" before but I did float with it. I floated with diversity by understanding the seven cultural identifiers and by attending C.A.F.E. meetings. SDLC forced me to dig deeper into diversity, trying to understand what it means to me and what it should mean to the Nightingale community.

We started the conference in a large group session (with over 1,000 people). Our first exercise was called "the silent movement." Statements were read aloud and people would stand if they identified with the statements. This was all done in silence. As the exercise progressed, the statements became more personal, it became harder to stand up, and it felt like less and less people were in

the room. This exercise was the first thing we did at SDLC, but it was one of the most powerful. As the conference progressed, we split up into smaller groups of about forty people called "family groups" and to even smaller groups of ten people called "home groups." In these smaller groups, I was able to hear stories and experiences that made me laugh, cry, and frown. I listened to stories about people being bullied and harassed because of their sexual orientation and of people being judged because of their race or religion. I heard these stories and realized that I was lucky to live in New York City and attend Nightingale, where diversity is on every street corner—literally. But I still knew that Nightingale could work on implementing diversity in new ways that both involve and interest the students and faculty of the Upper School.

Why does Nightingale have limited classes on ethnic studies? Why don't we have any openly lesbian students? Why don't we have student-run groups that discuss religion? Why is C.A.F.E. the only place where students can talk about diversity? These questions are my way of organizing how I want to implement what I learned at SDLC into Nightingale. I wish I could share everything I learned, every person I met, and everything I did at SDLC. But it would be hard to organize all my thoughts in paragraphs and sentences. I guess the rest is poetry.

PoCC Report

Sherwyn Smith / English



From left to right: Ariana Silvan-Grau '12, former Director of Community Life and Diversity Derrick Gay, English teacher Sherwyn Smith, English teacher Laura Kirk '94, Class II homeroom teacher Aléwa Cooper, Francesca Haass '12, and Arame Niang '12.

Usually I look forward to the People of Color Conference (PoCC) as a chance to catch up with old friends and to “recharge my teaching battery.” After nearly 20 years as a teacher in independent schools, I have made many friends along the way, some now teaching in schools outside of New York City. Over the course of this same time period, I have also developed a kind of “institutional fatigue” regarding my place and role in my school.

So the PoCC sometimes serves as an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone: I can reconnect with old friends and colleagues and I can use the time away from my school to re-energize myself about the school year.

However, this year’s PoCC in San Diego was a slightly different experience for me in that it was “doubly restorative.” What do I mean by that term? Well, since this year’s conference fell just three months into my new post here at Nightingale, I really didn’t need a trip to San

Diego to feel replenished. Just working at Nightingale those first three months of the term had done wonders for my energy level and had already restored my love for teaching again. Already bolstered by my new experiences at a new school, a visit to PoCC in San Diego just proved to be the proverbial “cherry on top.”

While there, I decided to broaden myself somewhat by attending workshops that not only pertained to my teaching load (seventh-, ninth-, and tenth-grade English), but also to any hobbies and interests I have. To that end, I attended such varied workshops as “Using Film in the Classroom” and “South African Education.” Along the way, of course, I was able to visit with long-lost friends and colleagues, ending each rekindling with a promise to do it again next year in Philadelphia. After this year’s “soul building” trip to San Diego, I eagerly await doing it all over again next year in The City of Brotherly Love.

Microaggressions: The Latest Buzzword in the Diversity Conversation

Noni Thomas / Head of Middle School

The first workshop I attended at the 2010 People of Color Conference in San Diego was entitled, "The Color of My Race Shields the Blindness of Your Whiteness." The intriguing title and the fact that the workshop was being facilitated by my former colleague Sandra Chapman, director of diversity at Little Red Schoolhouse/Elisabeth Irwin High School (LREI), was enough to get me through the door. The purpose of the workshop was to explore racial microaggressions and the "everyday impact they have on people of color." I was introduced to the term *microaggressions* at the NYSAIS Diversity Conference last year, but it has been around for quite some time. First coined in the 1970s by psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce, MD, racial microaggressions refer to "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs'" (Pierce et al, 1978). The most recent research on the topic has been led by clinical psychologist and Columbia professor Derald Wing Sue. In his paper, "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice," Dr. Sue defines microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards people of color (Sue et al, 2007). Dr. Sue and his team refined their research so as to examine the emotional and psychological toll that these microaggressions can have on people of color over time.

In Ms. Chapman's workshop, we had the opportunity to hear the research, share our experiences, and explore ways that we, as people of color, can develop effective strategies for dealing with microaggressions in the workplace. In my group, an African-American woman shared her distress of constantly having to hear how "articulate" she is—as if it was a surprise, that she could "string more than five words together." An Asian-American educator expressed his frustration at being asked continually where he was from, the first assumption

of many being that he is foreign-born. The most uncomfortable moment came when a white woman stood up to ask why more women were not included in the videos presented on the topic. A black woman stood up, tearful and visibly upset, and asked, "Why can't we just talk about race?! Whenever we try to have a conversation about race, someone wants to talk about something else." The anger this woman felt at her perceived invalidation was real-time evidence of the emotional impact of microaggressions over time. Pierce (1995) notes that the cumulative effects of racial microaggressions may result in "diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence." Ms. Chapman underscored this research by showing a 2007 video by anti-racist activist, Tim Wise, where he describes the increased levels of high blood pressure and hypertension among people of color who have the same socio-economic status and access to health care as their white peers. He theorizes that the psychological energy given over by people of color to deal with daily racial invalidations and insults exacts a physical, as well as an emotional, price.

The most insidious aspect of microaggressions is that they are invisible to the perpetrator and, often, the victim (Sue, 2005). The experience of the perpetrator is easy to understand. No one wants to see themselves as being insensitive or ignorant, especially around issues of race. On the other hand, the fact that the victim may be left confused as to whether a microaggression has occurred or not is more problematic. In our group, many members spoke about how they will often seek out another person of color at work to confirm whether an incident could or should be perceived as racist. The phrases, "Am I crazy?" and "Did what I think happened, actually happen?" came up often to describe how these subtle insults had my group members doubting their reality and sometimes their sanity.

Some of Dr. Sue's detractors worry that this research will only serve to "restrict rather than promote candid interaction between members of different racial groups" (DeAngelis, 2009). Can real dialogue come if people feel they need to watch every word that comes out of their mouths? This is a fair question. No doubt, the white woman who stood up to ask her question in the workshop may think twice about doing so again. However, some important learning did take place in the room that may inform her participation in the diversity conversation moving forward.

Dr. Sue has stated that he hopes his research will work "to make the invisible visible." He goes on to say, "Microaggressions hold their power because they are invisible, and therefore they don't allow us to see that our actions and attitudes may be discriminatory" (DeAngelis, 2009). If an exploration of microaggressions allows for a deeper understanding between different racial groups and the kind of meaningful conversation that I experienced in San Diego, then I welcome it enthusiastically.

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Educating Girls

Nikki Vivion, Kitty Gordan, and Rebecca Urciuoli

INTRODUCTION

On the day we returned from winter break, Erin Mumford, Nikki Vivion, Rebecca Urciuoli, and I went to a conference sponsored by NYSAIS. Over 300 educators from both girls' schools and co-educational schools came to share their experience and delve more deeply into how we can best educate girls. Entitled "Educating Girls," the conference addressed curriculum, as well as pedagogical and psychological factors, including the role of popular culture and technology. The day started with the "Mirage of Equality: Women in Science, Why So Few?" a talk by Dr. Nancy Hopkins, a professor at MIT and a member of the National Academy of Science. The closing talk was by Lyn Mykel Brown, who worked with Carol Gilligan on the seminal research about girls, and spoke passionately about the messages that popular culture and marketing sends to girls in her talk, "Packaging Girlhood: Media and Marketing Influences on Girls."

A panel of recent independent school graduates spoke eloquently about the value of girls' education in the professional world and confirmed that women meet with a lot of challenges. The conference also included an array of workshops on topics ranging from the teaching of geometry and a K-12 science program for girls, to what the "online worlds and transgressive education" can offer to girls, assessing engagement in class discussion, and the role of male educators in an all-girls' school.

– Kitty Gordan

CHANGING THE FACE OF SCIENCE ACADEMIA

Nikki Vivion / Science, Head

Upon first learning the details of the NYSAIS Educating Girls Conference, I was most eager to have the chance to hear Dr. Nancy Hopkins present her opening remarks entitled, *The Mirage of Equality*. Professor of Molecular Biology at MIT, Dr. Hopkins was sure to have unique insight into the experience of a woman in the still male-dominated world of science academia at a leading research institution. She most certainly did not disappoint.

Dr. Hopkins began by recounting her time as an undergraduate student at Harvard, during which she worked under the close advisement of Dr. Jim Watson, Nobel Laureate and co-discoverer of the structure of the DNA molecule. According to Hopkins, "whatever Watson said, [I] did." It should be noted that at the time, Watson was at the top of his game, but more recently, he has been reduced somewhat to notoriety instead of a figure to be admired. This fall from grace has largely been due to his public comments, made on several occasions, about the reason behind the relative lack of progress among women in the sciences. Failing to recognize any sociocultural or institutional barriers, Watson has said that whatever challenges women have faced are of their own making or are reflective of their lack of aptitude. He has also insinuated that the underrepresentation of people of color in the field is a result of some innate difference in brain function. Given that there is no biological/genetic basis for race, this type of analysis was immediately rejected by the larger scientific community and Watson was released from his long-held position as chancellor of Cold Spring Harbor Labs.

Dr. Hopkins knew from an early age that she wanted to commit her career to science, and very much acknowledged the likely barriers she would face. She vowed not to marry or to have children in an effort to remove any potential distractions and threw herself fully into her work. She even purposefully avoided feminism altogether, as she worried that some demands of the movement would also deter her from reaching her goal. Hopkins quickly came to realize, however, that achievement in science is not only merit-based; male scholars repeatedly had their work over-valued and received more accolades than their female counterparts. When Dr. Hopkins dove deeper into the data, she discovered that the female faculty tended to outperform the men when using key indicators for assessment.

She could only persist under such conditions for so long. After seeking the mentorship of another female faculty member who already had tenure, Hopkins pushed the MIT administration to closely examine the differential treatment of male and female faculty members. She presented convincing evidence to the president of the university, MIT launched a full-scale investigation into the matter, and Hopkins was asked to chair the committee. The published results of the two-year effort at MIT, which finally admitted unintentional gender bias in the treatment of their female faculty, pushed other leading educational institutions to evaluate their own actions and implement new policies, and triggered a national debate that continues today.

Dr. Hopkins also spoke about her sudden decision to walk out during then-Harvard President Lawrence Summers's speech upon his suggestion that women's underrepresentation in the sciences is due to a low "intrinsic aptitude." She received some criticism from peers, but mostly received an outpouring of support from those who understood and appreciated her actions. Dr. Hopkins continues to work toward gender equality today, acknowledging that science is a networked activity and if one is out of the loop, success is difficult to come by.

As her talk was wrapping up, I found my mind flooded with questions for Dr. Hopkins. What was it *really* like working under the tenure of James Watson? Were any of her early beliefs about feminism shaped by his teachings? How important is it that we hold scientists like Watson or educational leaders like Summers accountable for their

publicly stated opinions about women or people of color in the field? What *would* she do if she could do it over again and change the trajectory of her career?

Of all her fascinating accounts and words of wisdom, what struck me the most is when she shared that, given the knowledge she now has and the sacrifices that she has made, she is not completely sure that she would repeat her career path as an MIT professor in the sciences. This is in spite of her sincere confession that she "loves her job" and says that teaching at MIT is "the best job." What a daunting yet exciting challenge we face in keeping bright, determined young women in the science pipeline.

THE ONLINE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS: AN ONLINE PEDAGOGY FOR GIRLS

Kitty Gordan / Associate Head of School

The Online School for Girls is a consortium of over 30 girls' school from all over the United States and its 85 students come from 24 schools in 13 states, Australia, and London. The faculty is drawn from member schools, including Holton Arms, Harpeth Hall, Madeira, Hockaday, and Marlborough. It is the first single-gender online school and it aims to create the best educational experience for girls in a digital environment. Its charter affiliates include Chapin, the Bryn Mawr School for Girls, Laurel, Nightingale, and Winsor, to name a few. These affiliates play an advisory role in deciding what courses the school should offer. I was thrilled to see it on the program as it gave me the opportunity to meet members of its faculty whose passion about the possibilities of online learning and commitment to their students is inspiring.

The Online School for Girls thinks and behaves like a girls' school that happens to be teaching online and describes itself as focusing on "Communication, Collaboration, Application, and Creativity." Classes are small, the teacher plays a central role, and the courses are designed to build ongoing personal relationships between the student and teacher and the students and their classmates. Asynchronous posting and responses give students time to reflect, edit, and arguably more space to take risks. The Online School for Girls faculty lecture, run Socratic classes and general discussions via postings and responses, make extensive use of Skype for both group



and individual meetings involving more spontaneous interactions, and correspond with students by e-mail. They also make individual appointments with students either during office hours or an ad hoc basis. For instance, Beatriz Stix-Brunell, who is taking AP Statistics with the Online School for Girls, “Skypes” on a weekly basis with her teacher, just as she met with Miss Yokoyama last year. “Class time” is complemented by a wide variety of online assignments, including collaborative assignments. Students seem to have no difficulty picking up an array of technology along the way and sending schools are in ongoing communication with the Online School for Girls and the faculty teaching our students, monitoring both content and student progress online.

The Online School for Girls opens up many possibilities. Next year it will offer AP Computer Science, AP Macroeconomics, AP Music Theory, AP Psychology, AP Statistics, Environmental Science, and Japanese I, as well as semester courses including Multivariable Calculus,

Introduction to Human Physiology and Disease, Global Issues, and Graphic Art. At the recommendation of its member schools, it is also offering summer courses that can serve a “bridge courses,” such as Review of Algebra I; Introduction to Computer Programming; Write with Confidence, Clarity, and Purpose; Transition from Spanish II to Spanish III; and Transition: An Enrichment Course for French. These courses will enable the schools that don’t offer them to provide for students with specialized interests and needs that can’t be met by the regular curriculum.

The Online School for Girls has also been offering courses for faculty interested in learning about how to teach online and about blended learning. “Blended Learning I: Introduction to Theory and Practice” is a course designed for the teacher who has limited experience engaging students online, but is interested in learning more about the *concept* of blended learning and the variety of online tools available, while “Blended Learning II: Reverse

Instruction and Enhance Learning” expands on the subject. These courses will include studies of current theory about online learning and address the practical aspects of online teaching, including existing online applications. Further details about these courses are available on the Online School for Girls Web site.

Online learning has grown at a phenomenal pace in the last few years, both at the college level and at the high school level. Harvard, Stanford, Yale, M.I.T, Columbia, Carnegie-Mellon, and many other colleges and universities are putting some of their courses online. There are currently 1.5 million high school students enrolled in K–12 online learning, two of whom are Nightingale students! Meanwhile, “blended learning,” a term coined to describe the incorporation of online learning with classroom instruction, is seen by many as a way to incorporate the mindset of the “digital natives” into our pedagogy and is increasingly widespread. These developments will inevitably have an impact on how independent schools teach, and it has been argued that as the faculty at independent schools’ high level of expertise enables them to select appropriate and challenging printed materials, it is only a matter of time before they will do the same with online resources.

PACKAGING GIRLHOOD:

MEDIA AND MARKETING INFLUENCES ON GIRLS

Rebecca Urciuoli / Director of Middle and Upper School Counseling

Did you know that a new “fashionable” Dora the Explorer has been created to appeal to fans over age five? And that even Strawberry Shortcake has had a makeover? These were some of the examples highlighted by Dr. Lyn Mikel Brown in her presentation on media and marketing influences on girls in our society. Dr. Brown, Professor of Education and Human Development at Colby College, has written four books relating to girls’ social and psychological development. Her most recent book (co-authored with Dr. Sharon Lamb), *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing our Daughters from Marketer’s Schemes*, focuses on marketers and media attempts to claim girls from a very early age and what parents and educators can do to give girls the tools they need to navigate this world.

Dr. Brown described the eroding border between childhood and adolescence. Childhood characters, such as the two previously mentioned, are becoming increasingly sexualized. Clothing companies make fewer distinctions between different age groups as they design clothes; the same styles are geared towards teenagers and five-year olds. When Brown projected an image of infant booties with retractable stiletto heels, she pointed to how early these marketing campaigns begin.

Dr. Brown spoke of the history of girl power and identified the “New Girl Power,” which limits girls’ ability to make choices. The range of images of girls that is being packaged and sold is narrow (e.g., diva, boy-crazy, sexy, shoppers, make-over obsessed). The phrase “girl power” has been co-opted by marketers of mainstream media to mean the power to shop and attract boys. According to Dr. Brown, the “New Girl Power” encourages girls to use their “voice” to choose accessorizing over academic pursuits, and sex appeal over sports and hobbies.

Dr. Brown spoke about the importance of helping girls understand gender diversity and that there are many ways to be different kinds of girls. She offered the following advice for teaching girls to be media savvy: 1) know what is out there; 2) start deconstructing images, product placement and viral marketing when girls are young; 3) listen to girls—know what they like and why; 4) take back the power of language, identity, and choice; and 5) encourage critical voices and activism (see resources listed at the end of this article).

Dr. Brown’s presentation was well-timed, as Class VIII students have been examining the role of girls and women in the media this winter in the WISE Advisory program. They have been surprised by some of the images they see out there, including Diesel’s Be Stupid campaign and certain American Apparel ads. The Class VIII students recently made a collage of images contrasting how girls and women are presented in the media and how they would like girls and women to be portrayed. This topic is also explored in the Upper School in Ms. John’s Women’s Life Studies course, as well as in Class IX peer group.

Dr. Brown recommended the following resources for educators and girls: Hardy Girls, Healthy Women <http://www.hghw.org/>

Singapore Math Comes to Nightingale

Lower School Faculty

On Friday, February 11, the Lower School faculty met with Char Forsten, an expert on Singapore Math. The term "Singapore Math" often refers to a collection of math teaching strategies, common in Singaporean classrooms, and describes the full math curriculum used in Singapore for grades K through VI. As the educators from Singapore Math put it, "the program emphasizes the development of strong number sense, excellent mental math skills, and a deep understanding of place value. The curriculum is based on a progression from concrete experience—using manipulatives—to a pictorial stage and finally to the abstract level or algorithm." This sequence gives students a solid understanding of basic mathematical concepts and relationships before they start working at the abstract level. Singapore Math focuses on developing students who are problem-solvers. It includes a strong emphasis on model drawing, a visual approach to solving word problems that helps students organize information and solve problems in a step-by-step manner. Concepts are taught for mastery, then later revisited but not retaught.

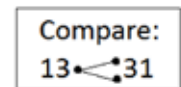
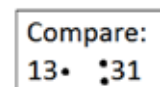
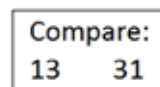
Singapore Math is based on a British model and is foundational in its approach to move slowly towards mastery. It relies on short amounts of varied practice as a student moves from the concrete to the pictorial to the abstract as they become increasingly able to visualize. It is essentially reflective and not focused on fast answers, but rather on learning in patterns during the journey towards algebraic thinking. Ms. Forsten spoke about the work of Jerome Bruner, Zoltan Dienes, and Richard Skemp, educators who have influenced her thinking and philosophy.

All of the Lower School math teachers attended a Lower School meeting in November devoted to an introduction to Singapore Math led by Rebekah Zuercher, Lower School math specialist. Our meeting with Char Forsten in February was an opportunity to extend our incorporation of Singapore approaches.

KINDERGARTEN

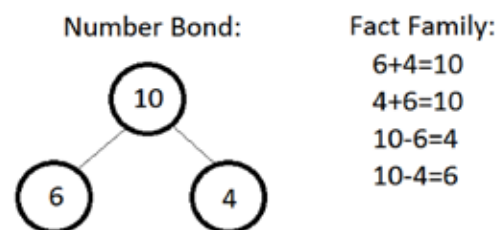
The Kindergarten math teachers, Mrs. Cummins, Mrs. Daley, Miss Butler, and Miss Winthrop, commented that their ongoing focus on explaining strategies, not just the answer but the route one takes to get there, is of the utmost importance. They hope to incorporate adding more math décor to the classroom, i.e., numbers on the dramatic play stairs, the use of two dots vs. one dot signifying greater than or less than numbers (connecting the dots gives you the proper symbol).

Greater than/Less than symbol:



The Kindergarten team is working to solidify foundational aspects of math, even if these areas seem "too easy"—one can never understand too much. They are doing away with scrap paper terminology replacing it with "proof" or "work papers"; the story of a given number focused on exhaustive information on each number from one to ten; the zipper number line designed to help with counting and adding numbers; and full body math, which calls for acting out story problems with children in the rotating and collaborative roles of narrator, actor, and illustrator. They will address fewer topics in greater depth, moving from simple "look and talks" to pictorial number sentence language. They have introduced the term "number bonds" as the girls create them for partners of ten.

Number Bonds and Part-Whole relationships



The Kindergarten team is examining what constitutes purposeful practice.



CLASS I

In Class I Ms. Munson, Ms. Shen, Ms. Horboychuk, and Mrs. Hale are already using:

- **Number bonds:** instead of memorizing the answer to $8 + 6$, we help the girls understand that $8 + 6$ can also be seen as $8 + 2 + 4$ (making groups of 10).
- **Happy hands:** in this game, students practice skip counting by using their hands and saying numbers out loud. When hands are up in the air, we count up; when hands go down to the ground, we count down; when hands are in the stop position, the number remains the same.
- **Various games:** we regularly play card games such as Go Fish and Memory.
- **Antlers:** the teacher holds up 8 fingers for instance, and the girls hold up 2 fingers and say $8 + 2 = 10$.

The Class I math teachers are planning to implement:

- **CPA:** keep in mind the Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract sequence when teaching new concepts or reviewing lessons that have been taught previously.
- Stress depth over breadth.
- Use pre-leveled decks of playing cards for differentiated instruction.
- Every week, focus on a different number and talk about all of the different ways you can make that number.

CLASS II

In Class II Miss Fan, Miss Cooper, Ms. Horboychuk, and Mrs. Hale have incorporated Singapore Math in many ways.

We have been using some aspects of Singapore Math in our curriculum already. We have used number bonds in order to show the fact families of a number, which builds understanding of part-whole relationships. The girls have taken to this idea of part to whole quite readily.

They have also been working on a project in connection with our social studies curriculum based on New York City, in which they are creating their own buildings. Each building has a number (the "address") and several windows. The windows show the four number sentences that make up the fact family. Additionally, we have been using model drawing to solve addition word problems. Although there is more work involved in solving word problems using model drawing, the girls are very eager to use model drawing when applicable. We feel that through the use of model drawing, the girls are gaining a much deeper understanding of the math that we are currently learning.

We loved Char Forsten's way of teaching the concept of greater than or less than. She suggested putting two dots next to the number that was greater and one dot next to the number that was less; the students can then connect the dots to form the symbol. This tangible method clarifies the use of a symbol that can be confusing to children this age.

CLASS III

The Class III math teachers, Mrs. Hallen, Miss Hayashi, Mrs. Field, and Ms. Zuercher, will be or are now using the following techniques:

- Model drawing: we have started using this process in teaching multiplication, and we would like to extend its use into other math areas, specifically multi-step word problems.
- Acting out number sentences (directors, actors, writers).
- Card games in multiplication/division (e.g. Game of 24).
- Active warm-ups (e.g. Happy Fingers).
- Helping students to view math as part of their everyday life (e.g. taking math-related pictures for a class project or scavenger hunts).
- Part/whole: understanding fractions through part/whole thinking (eg. number bonds).
- Creative approach for choosing operations, such as using the metaphor of the doctor's rounds to determine which operation a patient needs to solve their "medical" problem.

We are examining the concrete/pictorial/abstract concept in other parts of our curriculum to help third-graders become more conceptual in their thinking. We also found the discussion of teaching for mastery through short amounts of varied practice useful and will keep this in mind when modifying the curriculum for next year.

CLASS IV

The Class IV math teachers, Miss Anderson, Ms. Kim, Mr. Blyth, and Miss Mumford, started model drawing recently with great success. The girls took to it quickly and liked it. It was particularly valuable for finding the mathematical mean as it let the girls see exactly what finding an average was all about. "Sprints" are differentiated mental math warm-ups designed to build flexibility and facility with mental calculations.

We will use "number bonds" to add fractions and mixed numbers with like denominators and continue with model drawing for all operations, comparison problems, and averages.

Rebekah Zuercher, our Lower School math specialist, comments: "In addition to some of the many activities, games, and model drawing lessons, I enjoyed teasing out 'the big picture.' What makes Singapore Math work? There are three fundamental ideas that the math program from Singapore champions: a) the emphasis on depth over breadth, b) the dual focus on mental math AND complex problem-solving, and c) the age-appropriate transition from the concrete to the pictorial to the abstract. These ideas are not unique to Singapore nor are they new to math educators. But at our Friday workshop, I learned that the creation and implementation of an entire curriculum based on these fundamentals **IS** the unique quality of Singapore Math: it's 'what all the buzz is about' because it works."

The Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing

Erin Mumford / Academic Technology Coordinator

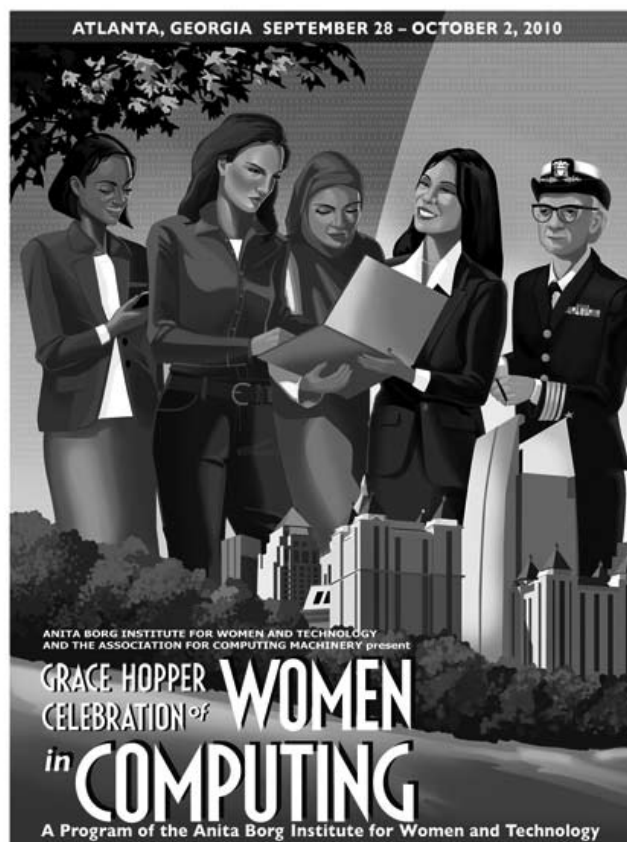
Here is my confession: I almost failed one of my introductory-level computer science classes in college. In fact, during the spring of my sophomore year, my midterm average in that particular class was a D. I'd never had a D before, not even in the dullest history class you could imagine (Dark Ages, indeed). There are plenty of excuses I could make to justify how I ended up in such a predicament, but the bottom line is that the required labs were difficult and I didn't know how to ask for help. I just stopped going.

Ultimately, I didn't have to seek out the help I needed. The D meant that my professor, Jenny Walter, who at the time was an associate professor and new to the school, called a meeting with me and gave me the tips and tools I needed to complete the missing labs. She was gentle and helped me get back on track, but my ego never really recovered, nor did my enthusiasm for computer science. By my junior year, I had stopped taking classes in that department. (It was fortunate that every summer found me in yet another technology-related job or internship; otherwise, I may not have found my way to my current position!)

I never thought I would have to face my near-failure after leaving Vassar, but this fall I was unexpectedly presented with the chance. Last spring, I applied for and received a scholarship to attend the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing, presented by the Anita Borg Institute, and the K-12 educators' workshop that followed. Grace Hopper, an annual event since 1994, is the world's largest technical conference for women and is geared towards professionals and academics.

Participants have opportunities to network, present new projects, share job prospects, and attend panel discussions. The K-12 educators' workshop was pioneered in 2009 and repeated this past year.

Though invited for the whole week of activities, I was able to attend only the final day of the regular conference as



well as the K-12 workshop the following day, which meant that the celebration was in full swing when I arrived. I'd scarcely made it through the front doors of Atlanta's Hyatt Regency when I practically collided with Dr. Walter. It has been almost ten years since I was enrolled in her class, but I recognized her right away. Though I considered sneaking away, I chose the braver path, reintroduced myself, and explained how I had come to be at Grace Hopper. I tried to ignore the look of mild astonishment that crossed her face when I told her about my position at Nightingale and my eagerness to build our computer science curriculum. Dr. Walter, now the chair of the computer science department at Vassar, could not have been more kind or interested in my job—so much so that she asked if I would visit Vassar to talk to students about working in secondary education.

Though it caused me to relive an embarrassing period in my life, this encounter with Dr. Walter (and the ensuing conversations that I had with the current Vassar students whom she had brought along to the conference) made me even more excited for the events of the next few days. On that day, I attended a mix of presentations geared towards K–12 educators and panel discussions for all participants. The overwhelming emotion evoked by being there was one of solidarity: all the participants in the regular celebration were women.

The first panel addressed what is known as “Impostor Syndrome,” which is the notion common to professional women, particularly those in math and science fields, that they do not have the credentials or abilities to be in their particular jobs and positions.

Speaking mostly to the college and graduate students, the panelists recommended finding good mentors; I’m sure I wasn’t alone thinking that this is good advice for people in all stages of their professional development.

The second session brought together all the K–12 educators, as well as a few college professors and computer scientists and engineers, together in a discussion called “Bridging Boundaries: Engaging Stakeholders to Address Equity in K–12 Computing.” The discussion leaders tried to engage us in a discussion in which professors and computer scientists told teachers what skills students should have before arriving at college, and teachers in turn explained the obstacles they face in creating classes that teach those skills. The problem is that some schools represented did not have computer science programs at all, and some schools had two or three sections’ worth of AP students. The college professors were not sure what high school students would be able to achieve and the computer scientists wanted to be helpful and were not sure how. Because the field is so new, there are no standards for computer science in secondary education, either nationally or on state and local levels. However, it was in this session, as jumbled as it was, during which I learned about the Computer Science Teachers Association and the CSTA website, which have been invaluable tools for me in the past few months.

In the evening, we attended a networking event hosted by sponsors in the Georgia Aquarium. At this party, I was able to spend more time talking to the Vassar students whom

I’d met earlier in the day, as well as some women who had been working in the field for more than 40 years. (I also was able to watch as stereotypes of the typical computer science nerd were shattered: these women danced up a storm! The party was still raging when I wandered back to my very fancy—and free!—hotel room.)

The next morning, we gathered to hear Eric Roberts, a computer science professor at Stanford, make a compelling case for computer science in the secondary classroom. Following his thoughtful and thought-provoking talk, we attended breakout sessions. I was particularly interested in one about Dot Diva, a Web site dedicated to making the field of computer science more attractive to girls. The Web site was also piloting its own Web-based show about two young women working in the industry. While I am a little skeptical about the show’s potential to influence female students, I was happy to learn about the resources available through the organization.

The second session I attended was about the programming environment, Alice, which I have dabbled in but had not committed to learning completely. Alice’s difficulty level is a step above that of Scratch, a teaching tool we use with students in Class IV and Middle School. Some of our students have become Scratch experts; they have downloaded the software at home and have used it to build exceptionally complex programs. Alice is similar to Scratch in that it uses sprites, a visual representation of the object of a program, but uses conventions of object-oriented rather than procedural language structure. In this way, Alice supports the programming that Nightingale students do in eighth grade and Upper School, but gives them more freedom to create games and animations.

In the final sessions, we heard about ideas to make computer science relevant to students by integrating other subject areas as well as social and media topics, and we learned strategies for advocating for computer science in the secondary classroom. Again, I was struck by the feeling of solidarity present in the room during these conversations. I was sad to leave Atlanta—and not only because of the gorgeous weather—but also because I felt that the two days I spent among the educators and computer scientists at the Grace Hopper Celebration were not nearly enough. I hope that I’m lucky enough to be accepted as a participant again.

Who is an American?

Dorothy A. Hutcheson / Head of School

In early February, I attended the Headmasters Association conference, where 100 independent school heads and public school principals gathered to discuss the opportunities and challenges of immigration. I knew going into the conference that we would be approaching this topic from an academic standpoint, but I didn't realize how personally touched I would be by the discussion. It is a contentious issue, absolutely, but one that is so vital to the future of our country. I've written some thoughts and impressions below—both abstract thinking and more concrete examples of connecting immigration to teaching—in the hopes that all of us will find ways to address this issue with our students and our community.

SHARING STORIES

When the first scheduled speaker, Professor Randall Kennedy from Harvard Law School, could not make it to the conference due to heavy snow, we spent our opening session sharing successful school projects on immigration, as well as the challenges of teaching students from many different backgrounds. I reported on our Class VIII immigration project with students from a nearby public school and learned about some other ideas that may be of interest.

The Nichols School in Buffalo offers a playwriting class where students interview refugees in the Buffalo area and use their words and stories to develop short plays. Interviewees are invited to the readings of the plays, and faculty and students have been inspired by the power of art to cross boundaries that had previously seemed insurmountable in the Buffalo community. At the Chapin School, all tenth-graders complete an interdisciplinary assignment in history and English entitled "The Voices Project." Journalists come to class to share interview techniques, after which students interview someone who grew up outside the United States. The students then choose an artistic medium (video, poetry, short story, graphic novel, etc.) to present the person's coming-of-age

story. Through "living another's experience," students report that this project is one of the most memorable in their high school education. Another school head talked about the success of "home visits" where faculty members are invited into students' homes outside of the school's neighborhood to share a meal.

Finally, colleagues shared ways to expose students to some of the "raw realities" of immigration that they might be sheltered from in an independent school. In Lewiston, Maine, students talk with migrant farm workers and learn about the social, political, and cultural issues involved with temporary workers. Another head discussed working with consultants Brenda and Franklin Campbell Jones on "cultural proficiency" to help faculty feel more comfortable in navigating difficult student conversations that often arise from cultural differences.

With the talents of the Nightingale faculty and the unlimited possibilities of New York City, I am hopeful that we can learn more about these various projects and come up with new ideas for our students to be actively engaged in this important topic of immigration.

GOVERNOR PETE WILSON

Former California governor Pete Wilson, a fierce proponent for immigration reform, addressed our group by video conference from Sacramento. Wilson's political career has included being mayor of San Diego, two-time United States Senator, and the governor of California from 1991–1999. He ran for the Republican nomination for President in 1996—though, as he jokingly shared, after a vocal chords operation left him with impaired speech, the novelty of a "silent candidate" running for president quickly wore off.

Governor Wilson focused on the growing problem of illegal immigration and the failure of the federal government to develop a comprehensive immigration



policy. While the U.S. annually admits more legal immigrants than the rest of the world combined, the legal contingent is dwarfed in number by the illegal population because life is better for them here “even in the shadows.” Two out of three babies born in public hospitals in Los Angeles are to illegal immigrant parents, and the largest cost in the state budget—roughly 7% when Mr. Wilson was governor—is for educating children who have either entered the U.S. illegally or who are born here to illegal immigrant parents. The education, health, and incarceration costs for states such as California have spiraled out of control and led to a taxpayer revolt in the form of Proposition 187 (which he named a “real tea party revolution”) in 1994. Prop 187 never made it to the Supreme Court, and he hopes that the more recent Arizona statute will be get there to force the federal government to take action where it has abdicated responsibility.

Regarding possible solutions, Governor Wilson advocates construction of a fence/barrier on the borders with adequate staffing to stop the steady flow of illegal

immigrants. This must happen, he says, before any intelligent debate on amnesty for those already in the country can take place. He is against citizenship for children born in the U.S. to illegal parents because it is “naïve and invites continued illegal immigration.” Criminalizing the conduct of employers who hire undocumented workers is the right step, but we have not had the technology to hold employers accountable. His most basic point was that, in developing comprehensive immigration reform, we should be unabashedly self-interested in what the country needs over the individual interests of family reunification, and we must be fair to those who have immigrated legally.

ALAN KRAUT

A different perspective on immigration was offered by Dr. Alan Kraut, professor of history at American University. He specializes in U.S. immigration and ethnic history, along with the history of medicine in the United States. He is the past chair of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island History Advisory Committee and is a consultant to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, which Nightingale

students regularly visit. Dr. Kraut stated at the outset that the history of immigration is truly the history of our country because of its connection to jobs and economic opportunity. Currently 12% of the American population, or 37–38 million, are classified as foreign-born, versus 14.8% of the population in 1910. The U.S. has always depended on the labor of immigrants, and today that is a highly skilled labor group. Immigrants are currently responsible for one-fourth of all patents in the U.S., producing them at a rate of two times the rate for those native-born. Foreign-born students receive 40% of the advanced science degrees, along with 65% of degrees in computer science, all fields that are currently vital to our national interest.

Dr. Kraut gave a fascinating history of immigration at Ellis Island, which I have invited him to share at Nightingale in the fall as the guest speaker for the annual Joan Stitt McMenamin Lecture. As a visiting scholar at the independent, non-partisan Migration Policy Institute in DC, he sees the issue of punishment for those already here as the biggest sticking point between Republicans and Democrats in the current immigration debate. One solution is a type of community service program in which illegal immigrants could earn their green cards by maintaining parks, bridges etc. He feels that we simply

cannot deport the estimated 11.2 illegal immigrants, and too many businesses benefit from these immigrant workers. There will have to be multiple solutions to this thorny problem, and he agrees with Governor Wilson that we should project America's legitimate needs for labor in the future and shape our immigration policy accordingly.

NAJLA SAID

Finally, the most stimulating part of the conference was Najla Said's performance of her one-woman show, *Palestine*, which she premiered in NYC last year. Ms. Said is an alumna of Chapin and Trinity and the daughter of Professor Edward Said at Columbia, and the show is her coming-of-age story as an American-Palestinian-Lebanese-Christian-culturally Jewish girl on the Upper West Side. The *New York Times* review can give you a sense of her work: <http://theater.nytimes.com/2010/02/19/theater/reviews/19palestine.html>

Ms. Said stimulated so much conversation about identity and diversity that we immediately invited her to perform *Palestine* for Interschool faculty and staff this fall. Stay tuned for information about the late afternoon event that will take place at the Trinity Chapel, followed by a cocktail reception with our colleagues from Interschool schools.

The Nightingale-Bamford School
20 East 92nd Street
New York, NY 10128

www.nightingale.org