

BB&N Link Newsletter

February 2009

Feature Stories

"Life-Changing Experience" Greets Students in Big Easy

This December six BB&N students traveled to New Orleans for a once-in-a-lifetime experience of bonding, eye-opening diversity, and confidence building. Along with 13 faculty members from all three campuses, the students spent a long weekend attending the People of Color Conference (PoCC). Now in its 21st year, the annual conference provides students of color in independent schools a sanctuary and a “voice,” a means for support and networking, and a chance to celebrate their roles in independent schools.

For the past two years, BB&N history teacher Gustavo Carrera has helped to design curriculum for the conference, and he embraced the opportunity to continue his involvement with the PoCC. “The conference has a curriculum that talks about race, gender, sexuality, religion, and ability...it lets students explore themselves and promotes leadership,” Carrera told the *Vanguard* recently.

Featuring workshops, affinity group work, and numerous speakers, (including legendary actor Sidney Poitier and poet/recording artist John Trudell) the conference was an opportunity for BB&N students and faculty to join a great community of like minds. Director of Multicultural Services Lewis Bryant was proud to see BB&N students seize the opportunity, an opportunity that was clearly not lost on junior Tanzila Ahad whose poignant reflection on her time at the conference follows:

When I first arrived in New Orleans, LA, I didn't know what to expect. As I walked out of the airport, I was greeted with warm weather and swaying palm trees. I was tingling with excitement. Six Upper School students, including myself, as well as various faculty members from the Lower, Middle, and Upper School campuses had just arrived in the city for the annual SDLC/PoCC Conference.

SDLC, short for the “Student Diversity Leadership Conference” is a conference where up to six students from each private school all across the country come together as a whole to talk about diversity. This conference was a life changing experience—I learned so much, met so many great people, and became so much more knowledgeable about society and our country as a whole. The conference was located at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, conveniently located across from our hotel. The conference lasted about two and a half days, which included time for many discussions, bonding activities, a talent show, lunch/dinner, assemblies, speakers, a student dance, a student teaching session to faculty, and more.

At SDLC, students were divided into “family” groups where we spent most of our time discussing topics such as: stereotypes, use/power of words, the involvement and

education of diversity at our schools, and more. We were also divided into affinity groups such as the Multiracial group, the Middle Eastern group, the African-American group, the Asian group, etc. In these groups we met students who had similar ethnic backgrounds. It was a great way for all of us to come together, and share our cultural similarities. It felt great to know people who had the same background, and understood certain parts of a shared culture.

I absolutely loved how all students were really friendly and accepted everyone warmly for whatever background they came from. It was amazing being with about 1,200 students who were just as motivated and eager as I was to bring change to our school, and hopefully some day to the world. As part of a group, I felt so empowered. I just thought to myself, that all of us united could bring so much change. The biggest concept I learned through this experience was that diversity is not just about your heritage/ethnicity or the color of your skin—it is much more than that. Diversity is also gender, sexual orientation, ability, and socio/economic class.

This conference was really eye and mind opening for me. It brought many things to my attention which I hadn't noticed before, and it really motivated me to bring change. It was great to see how much progress our nation has made in regards to accepting diversity, but there's still a lot more to do. I learned and gained a lot from this conference, and I plan to convey and share what I learned with BB&N, hoping my peers can learn something from me as well!

Inside The Classroom: Acting Out with Katie Glick '85

Most former students remember their first all-nighter before a big test, and the bleary-eyed nerves that accompany the next day. It's not a practice typically endorsed by teachers, but today in the Middle School Big Room, theater teacher Katie Glick is bucking the trend.

“Jett's going to pull an all-nighter to research his character—it's okay, it will be the day before winter break so he won't mess up his schedule,” Glick says. “Although we should probably warn his other teachers...”

Jett Oristaglio '13 is playing the lead character in *This is a Test* by Stephen Gregg, a one-act play about a student faced with a harrowing test taking experience after having been talked into an all-nighter by a friend. While the idea of Oristaglio pulling an actual all-nighter came from the class, Glick, in her colorful teaching style, embraced it.

“Drama class is a real reprieve for students from the pressures they are starting to feel everywhere else at this age,” Glick says. “If they have an idea that has merit or can be fun, I try to go with it.”

Beyond fun, applying real life situations to acting can allow students to discover insights in their daily lives.

“I’m having Thomas (Hislop ’13) study history teacher Gabe Mejail outside of class to help him understand his teacher character in the play—we warned Gabe not to be alarmed if he notices Thomas staring at him a lot in his history class,” Glick says laughing. “It’s an interesting exercise because students at this age have trouble perceiving teachers outside of class—thinking of them as real people.”

Pacing the room with a feather boa around her neck and a wooden cane in hand (both props from a previous show), Glick’s energy and excitement in class are contagious for students. Her mind is on any number of subjects at once—keeping track of lines, stage directions, visual and musical cues, student assignments—all the while keeping a steady flow of dialogue running:

“Which side should your backpack be on? Close the curtain all the way! Thank you, thank you, quiet back stage...Wait! Think about where your eyes should be, in a real classroom they wouldn’t be staring at me. You’re getting sucked upstage, sucka! Okay, cue the music, and...go.”

Glick’s 7th and 8th grade classes clearly respond to her lively style, throwing out their own ideas, and flourishing in her free-flowing classroom. Even those students whose passions might lie outside of acting seem to relax and enjoy the rehearsal—a fact that Glick can appreciate as a teacher with multiple interests.

As a student Glick loved athletics too but was continually told she had to pick between acting and sports. Remediating this dilemma was a big factor in leading Glick to teaching.

“People always told me you can’t do both. I never agreed...I coach junior varsity volleyball and middle school lacrosse, and I love it as much as acting,” says Glick. “I always encourage kids to pursue anything they’re passionate about. Even it means they have to miss a class for some other outside activity. If they love it, I think it has value.”

As a graduate of BB&N, Glick has strong ties to the school she first entered as a third grader at the Buckingham Street campus. She remembers current Middle School History Chair Bill Rodgers fondly as her homeroom teacher, the smell of the Sparks Street building (“it still smells the same”), and her first foray into acting as enticed by current Upper School theater teacher Mark Lindberg.

“My junior year he walked by me in the hallway and said, ‘Hey Kate, why don’t you audition for *The Threepenny Opera*...the worst thing that can happen is you make a complete fool out of yourself, which you do every day anyway.’ He totally had me nailed, and that was my start in theater.”

Even before coming to BB&N as a teacher, Glick combined her acting passion with education, working for a non-profit organization and performing a one-woman show

called *The Yellow Dress*. The play focused on a difficult topic, dating violence, and she completed over 137 performances at high schools throughout the country—the well-acclaimed play often left audiences shocked and moved.

When she settled on teaching Middle School, the transition was a smooth one.

“I try to shine a light on the choices they make in everyday life,” Glick says of her students. “Also at their age, they start being told they’re wrong—they don’t make a team, they don’t get the answers on their math test correct, their bodies are starting to act weird. In my class, I tell them that nothing they do is ‘wrong’, everything is just a learning process.”

Books Basketball & Neighbors: Learning On and Off the Court

“I don’t care if the ball goes all over the place, I just want you guys to become better ball handlers!” yells Isaac Maze-Rothstein ’09 to a group of young students standing along the sidelines of the Nicholas Athletic Center. Maze-Rothstein, along with several other BB&N Upper School students, spend their Saturdays during the winter helping local children (grades 4-8) with two important skills—studying and basketball, in the Books Basketball & Neighbors program. This year, BB&N students are tutoring kids specifically for the MCAS test, which they will take in the spring.

“It’s a lot of fun getting to try to teach something—standardized test taking—that I was learning not too long ago,” Maze-Rothstein says. “Also, all the kids love basketball. When you get to teach them something or help them figure out something it’s really cool—I guess it’s the reason why a lot of people choose to become teachers.”

Now in its 11th year, the program was founded by Director of Multicultural Services and Boys’ Basketball Coach Lewis Bryant and former Science teacher and Girls’ Basketball Coach Byron Bowman. Each year, 50 to 60 city students sign up for the program and are split into two groups, one younger and one older. The groups then take 90-minute turns being coached on basketball and receiving tutoring help.

Brianna Smith ’10 has been a part of the Books Basketball & Neighbors program since she was a freshman, and says all of her experiences have been positive. Although she thought she’d be helping primarily on the court, Smith surprised herself with how much assistance she has been able to provide in the classroom.

“I never really thought I would be much help with the academic part of the program where we help them get ready to take the MCAS and with their homework, but I realized that I am a huge help to them,” Smith says. “One moment that stuck out for me was when I was placed with about a dozen 6th graders. I was told to teach them about the writing section of the MCAS. It was intimidating, and so I just went for it by first playing a name

game and then we got started. I tried to tell about some of the test-taking strategies that I used, and some that I had heard worked. It was just fun getting to teach them.”

For Smith, however, the basketball part of the program is still her favorite.

“I love helping younger kids improve their basketball skills and most of kids are pretty good even at a young age,” Smith says. “Overall the program is fun but the best moments are when the kids know your name and they come up to you and give you a high-five or even a hug. It makes us feel like we have accomplished what we needed to.”

Winter Concerts Showcase Student Talent

Sixteen years ago, art teacher Sharen Bowden and 5th grade students made banners to decorate the Lower School Gymnasium for the Winter Concert. For many winter concerts since then these banners have been hung, promoting the spirit of the season. In an homage to this banner tradition at the Lower School, this year’s Winter Concert reflected one of those themes—JOY—as the performances bore out.

Under the direction music teachers Debbie Slade and Ada Park Snider, parent spectators were regaled with such tunes as *Joy in My Heart* (Brick Building Chorus), *Gaudeamus Hodie* (Brick Building Chorus), the Recorder Club’s take on *Dreydl Song* and *Jingle Bells*, and a performance of the *The Syncopated Clock* by the Grades 2-6 Orchestra. The performance was highlighted by guest appearances by four of Slade’s orchestra students from the International School of Boston.

The New Wing chorus (Grades 2-4) had their own performance at the start of the new year, performing *Here We Come A-Wassailing*, a spectacular traditional English New Year Carol as well as *Gaudeamus Hodie (We are Joyful Today)*, and a song sung in both English and Swahili, *Amani Utupe (Grant Us Peace, Give Us Courage)*. The youngest students also enjoyed the annual Morse Building Sing-a-long, in which parents joined their children for a morning of singing.

Starting with the hand made snowflakes glued to each program, and ending with the rollicking Jazz Band performances of *Stolen Moments* and *Do It Now*, Middle School Winterfest celebrated the season as usual with its blend of acting, singing, music, and humor.

“We had a full house of enthusiastic supporters. The concert was preceded by a visual arts display featuring students' works. Each musical number was introduced by the playwriting class with students in some kind of costume and/or using a humorous reference,” said director Chris Dwyer.

“All three Chamber Ensembles, the Chorus, and the Jazz Band performed really well! It was nice to see the groups mature after the many rehearsals and hear the fine results of all

the hard work. I know that I can speak for (music teacher) Kathi Gellar and (jazz teacher) Pandelis Karayorgis when I say that the three of us were indeed very proud of everyone.”

The Upper School Winter Concert held at the First Parish Church of Brookline showcased the sophisticated talent of student vocal and instrumental groups as parents, grandparents, and friends listened to and participated in an evening filled with merriment.

Under the direction of Brian Reasoner, the Upper School Orchestra performed several pieces from Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 1 in C Major*.

“I thought the U.S. Winter Concert was great,” Reasoner said. “The orchestra gave an outstanding, spirited performance of Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 1* with excellent solos from Elizabeth Wang ’10 (clarinet), Rory Page ’12 (oboe), Lyndia Personnat ’10 and Libby Zhang ’12 (flute), and faculty member Rob Leith (bassoon). The instrumentalists were very enthusiastic about the piece in rehearsals, and the resulting performance measured up with the best of past years.”

The Upper School Chorale, directed by Joseph Horning, delighted the audience with an interesting song called *Mi'kmaq Honour Song*, a contemporary piece by a Canadian composer that “incorporates chant and sounds of nature into a very unique antiphonal piece of music,” according to Horning. The Chorale also performed an English folk song *Marianne*, an African-American spiritual *Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel*, and a Finnish folk song about a romantic young couple. The Knightingales and Voices of the Knight then closed the evening with a fabulous selection of close harmony arrangements.

Keeping You Up to Date

Scientists-in-Waiting Present at Science & Technology Symposium

This January, Dr. Leah Cataldo’s Current Topics & Research in Science and Technology class held its annual symposium in the Upper School Theater. The forum, now in its third year, featured the work of five BB&N seniors who had spent the previous month carefully researching current “hot button” topics in the scientific community.

Each student presented their findings in slide show and poster formats to a fascinated audience of parents, peers, and faculty before opening the floor to questions. This year’s symposium featured the following students:

Adam Brudnick: Sunny Days—Solar Power and its Promise;
Susan Langer: Using Polymers for Detection, Sensing, and Biomimicry;
Linda Li: Nuclear Power—The Future of Nuclear Fusion;
Greg Michels: Wormholes—Science Fact or Science Fiction;
Hannah Semigran: Brain Computer Interfaces and Neuroprosthetics.

Student Artists Take the Floor at Upper School Gallery Talk

On January 15, the Upper School arts faculty hosted their annual student gallery talk, allowing students to showcase and discuss their works being displayed at the School. "It's always interesting to hear students talk about the process of making their art, where their ideas come from, and what technical issues were involved in crafting their work," said Upper School drawing/painting teacher John Norton.

Kathleen Oshima '10 talked about her piece "Gecko Tray", a tray made of ash wood with an inset of walnut wood shaped like a gecko, and Sam Wallis '10 discussed a painting he created with seven overlapping stencils and spray paint. Also speaking at the gallery talk were Morgan Dove '10, Diana Enriquez '12, Deby Guzman-Buchness '11, Rosie Johnson '09, Charles Northrup '10, and Emma Sagan '10.

All-School "Have-a-Heart" Food Drive Takes Place This Month

Hunger is on the rise in our state. More families than ever before are choosing between heating their homes and feeding their families. We can help. The All-School "Have-a-Heart" Food Drive for the Preventive Food Pantry at Boston Medical Center will be held this year; from Wednesday, February 18 to Friday, February 27. Specific grade assignments and drop-off information will be sent out to parents and students in February. Please plan to participate, as it is more important than ever this year!

Grade 6Z Impresses with Winter Play

Berhane Zerom's sixth grade class tackled a sensitive subject with their winter play, *Amazing Grace*, which they performed in Middle School Big Room. The inspirational story tells of a girl (Grace) who is held back because of her gender and skin color. Overcoming challenges with aplomb, Grace proves to herself that she can do anything she puts her heart into.

Upper School Students Embark on Interdisciplinary Project

Using funding he received from an In-School ART Grant award, Upper School woodworking teacher Paul Ruhlmann teamed up with science teacher Rachel Riemer this fall to pioneer an interdisciplinary project for BB&N students. Under Ruhlmann's guidance, students constructed rhombic dodecahedrons, dynamic three-dimensional geometric objects which Riemer explored in geometric terms with students throughout the project. Riemer and Ruhlmann set out to demonstrate the often hidden overlaps that exist between two seemingly different subjects, in this case woodworking and science. The hope is that this will be a jumping-off point for future interdisciplinary projects and a glimpse into the hidden synergies that exist throughout the School and the curriculum.

Dr. King Honored at Community Breakfast

On this historic Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the BB&N community honored the civil rights hero with poignant presentations and inspirational music at the annual MLK breakfast. Director of Multicultural Services Lewis Bryant welcomed the community as the Monday Night Jazz band rocked the crowd. De'na Johnson '09 and Abeselome Belete '09 discussed the work of Dr. King and his dream of a vibrant, multiracial nation united in justice and peace, while their Middle School peers gave a moving presentation entitled,

“Seeds of Change and Non Violence.” There were also several Lower School presentations by Dominique Norgaisse’ 15, Sophia Applbaum ’ 15, and Emma Applbaum ’ 15, followed by Babi Mitra’s (P’10) speech which tied together the legacies of Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi.

In closing, the BB&N community was asked to “think about this – what is YOUR dream for: Yourself? Your family? Your community? Your country? Your world?”

Fourth Graders Save 55 Trees!

Forty-two fourth graders joined forces with their counterparts at the Park School (which started the initiative) and the Shady Hill School for the Tree-O Catalog Canceling Challenge. Their challenge was to cancel as many catalogs as possible by calling catalog companies or going online. When the month-long challenge wrapped up, the BB&N 4th graders had canceled an astounding 1,391 catalogs! (The “tree-o” of schools canceled 4,323 catalogs altogether.) That’s equivalent to saving 55.4 trees, conserving 51,876 gallons of water, and preventing 6,225 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere.

***Teachers Matter* Garners Award**

Kudos to Janet Rosen, BB&N’s director of capital programs, for her award-winning work on *Teachers Matter*. The booklet, produced in the fall by the External Affairs Office, received an honorable mention in the 2008 CASE District I Communications Awards competition. The publication shared personal reflections on the impact of BB&N teachers from 22 alumni/ae and parents.

BB&N Celebrates Kwanzaa

Director of Multicultural Services Lewis Bryant welcomed guests to BB&N’s annual Kwanzaa celebration, which included presentations by students from each campus. The December holiday honors African-American heritage, pride, community, family, and culture in a seven-day festival.

BB&N Launches New Inauguration Tradition

In the start of a brand-new patriotic tradition at BB&N, the campus communities gathered together on Tuesday, January 20, to watch Barack Obama get sworn in as the 44th President of the United States. Middle School students were bused over to the Nichols Athletic Center late in the morning to join their Upper School counterparts in watching the historic occasion. Students and faculty covered the Gymnasium floor (and in some cases walls!) to watch the proceedings on a giant screen, culminating in a standing ovation at the conclusion of President Obama’s inauguration address. Meanwhile on the Lower School campus, Brick Building, New Wing, and Morse Building students watched the inauguration on screens in the in the Community Room, LS Gym, and Music Room respectively.

TeenLife Boston's Community Service Fair: February 8

Are you looking for ways to engage in community service? Wondering what to do this summer? Get started by attending the second annual TeenLife Boston Community

Service Fair on Sunday, February 8th from 1-4pm at the Mall at Chestnut Hill. Over 50 non-profits and sponsors will be present to speak with middle and high school students, parents and teachers about individual volunteer opportunities, group volunteer opportunities, special event help, administrative internships, and assistance with goods drives—both during the school year and the summer. Attendance and parking is free and all pre-registered guests will receive a free gift bag with lots of great information and goodies from our sponsors. To register, please visit www.teenlifeboston.com.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Additionally, TeenLife Boston is looking for 20 students and five adults to volunteer at the fair. All volunteers who work a minimum of a two-hour shift will receive a free gift from TeenLife Boston as well as a letter documenting their community service hours. If you are interested, please email volunteer@teenlifeboston.com.

Miles Harrison '13 Repeats Win at MS Geography Bee

For the second year in a row, students gathered in the Middle School Big Room, hooting and hollering as their contestant of choice was announced to the stage. While the scene seemed more like a WWF match, it was actually a favorite new Middle School event—the National Geographic Geography Bee. Clad in sunglasses and bowler hats, History Teachers Bill Rogers, Gabe Mejail, Harold Francis, and Miles Billings took over the stage, with Billings acting as MC. While many students had their chance, eighth grader Miles Harrison once again reigned supreme, earning the chance to take a national test which could qualify him for the National Geographic Bee later this year.

Lower School Starts New Book Talk Parent Program

A new Lower School parent program hit the ground running this winter as psychologist Dr. Jacqueline Kieff and Director Sue Scarborough began hosting Lower School Book Talks.

Last month, parents crammed into Dr. Kieff's office on the Lower School to discuss the book *So Sexy So Soon*, by Diane E. Levin and Jean Kilbourne. The book deals with the topic of childhood sexuality and what parents can do to protect their kids as they face an increasingly sex-oriented culture.

Stay tuned for the next Book Talk this spring, at which *Hold On to Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More Than Peers* by Gordon Neufeld will be discussed.

Campus Voices

Lower School
Jenny Weymouth
Grade 4 Teacher

When students are given the chance to use what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to the world around them, real learning takes place. From Upper School students at BB&N to our youngest students at the Lower School, serving our community brings us together and makes us stronger.

This fall, during our environmental unit, 42 fourth graders joined forces with fourth graders at The Park School and The Shady Hill School for the Tree-O Catalog Canceling Challenge. Our challenge was to cancel as many catalogs as possible by calling catalog companies or going online. This challenge was named by students to represent all three schools. The Catalog Challenge was originally created by fourth grade Park School teacher, Ted Wells. Bill Hritz and I, along with the support and encouragement of the math department, decided this would be a perfect project for our students. After contacting Drew MacKay at Shady Hill and Ted Wells at Park and proposing to them that we work together on this project, we were set to begin.

Students had learned about the perils that face our Earth and the importance of conserving energy, reducing waste, and reusing materials. They were already turning off lights, using less water, recycling, and bringing lunches that were waste-free by using cloth napkins, real utensils, and reusable containers. This may seem like enough, but they were doing all these things as individuals, and many of these activities were taking place at home. The Catalog Canceling Challenge gave our students a chance to work together as a team, ultimately showing them how powerful an individual's efforts can be when combined with their classmates' and peers' efforts.

During November, students collected catalogs from their houses, as well as from neighbors', relatives', and teachers' houses. They called the 1-800 number on the catalog or went to www.CatalogChoice.org to cancel online. From November 4 through December 4, 2008, BB&N students canceled 1,391 catalogs—well above our goal of 300! As a group, all three schools cancelled 4,323 catalogs. By doing this, we saved 55.4 trees, 51,876 gallons of water, and prevented 6,225 lbs of CO₂ from entering our atmosphere.

The Tree-O CCC was enhanced in our classroom with Skype on our SmartBoards allowing us to video chat with students at Park. We asked them questions, offered suggestions, and shared our successes. In our math classes, we integrated the CCC with our study of measurement. We also wrote articles explaining what we were doing.

Each morning of the challenge, students arrived exclaiming how many catalogs they had canceled. Their eyes lit up as they saw our tree graphs (made of catalog scrap paper) grow up to the ceiling and across it to the other wall. They knew and felt that they were making a real difference in the health of our Earth. They felt good about helping out their families, neighbors, relatives, and teachers who didn't have the time to cancel the catalogs themselves. They were inspired by the work of students just like themselves at neighboring schools. By combining knowledge with action, this year's fourth graders know that true success comes not just from learning, but from serving together.

**Middle School
Beth Brooks
Librarian**

As I reach the halfway mark in my third year at BB&N, I'm delighted to fill you in on what's new at the MS library.

When I first arrived, I wondered if the location of our school library at the back of the building would impact how often our students use it. As time has passed, I am delighted that our newly renovated space has become a popular hangout for students who enjoy a good read or use computers to catch up on their work. Not so long ago, Mary Dolbear, MS director, came into the library and asked, "What can we do to improve the *feng shui* of this space?" We spent months redesigning the library and I weeded and updated the collection, to create a more spacious, light, 'tween-friendly environment. Now, when students first enter the library, they find themselves in the reading area, a warm, cozy space with comfortable lounge chairs, a hanging plant, and sun streaming through the windows. Our new library abounds with current fiction, print, digital and electronic reference and non-fiction resources, magazines, easy reading, and more.

The library also houses a dozen laptop computers and several desktops. We all know that our students rely on technology to meet many of their research and social needs! We have only recently begun to reverse the trend of more than 25 years of declining reading rates in America, according to the National Endowment for the Arts. As MS librarian, I strive to teach students how to use electronic and print resources effectively and responsibly, and to motivate them to continue reading for fun in a warm, inviting environment.

I welcome Middle School classes to the library several times a year to learn library/research skills in the context of classroom projects. Seventh graders researching Latin America and eighth graders conducting science fair research visit the library in the fall. Seventh grade science classes return in the spring. Eighth grade English classes come in the spring to study poets and their poetry. Students learn about the MS library's organizational principles, our online catalog, electronic databases, and how to evaluate websites. They explore websites designed specifically to support their Latin American and science fair research. (Other classes also visit the library to conduct research on a more spontaneous basis.)

I have implemented a number of schoolwide programs to encourage recreational reading. Every fall, I survey students about their favorite books, authors, series, and genres. Results are posted in the library where students gather to compare their reading habits to those of their peers. Admissions tours always showcase the results, stimulating conversations with prospective students, which sometimes inspire new library purchases!

To further promote literacy, I have initiated author visits, all-school reads, and read-a-thons. Last year, students and faculty were invited to read *Freak*, by Marcela Pixley, for our first-all school read, which coincided with our four-week spring read-a-thon.

Encouraged to solicit sponsors to pledge them, students raised money for *Safe Passage*, a Guatemalan relief organization. We welcomed Ms. Pixley for an author visit in April.

This past summer, the MS community was required to read *The Misfits*, a book that ties into our co-curriculum. This spring, we will hold our second annual read-a-thon, and require all students to read a book by this year's guest author: two-time Newbery Medal-winning author, Lois Lowry (visiting April 17). A handful of read-a-thon winners (those who clock the most reading hours) will have lunch with Ms. Lowry the day of her presentation. Community service club students are currently deciding where to send this year's proceeds. Watch for more information about Lois Lowry, posted by KNBC, the Middle School's new broadcast club, and for this year's read-a-thon winners!

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like to join the cadre of library parent volunteers!

Upper School

Leah Cataldo, Ph.D.

Chair, Science Department

The beauty of science is that at its core, it challenges individuals to understand what is known and to reach beyond that knowledge through inquiry and experimentation. While Biology, Chemistry, and Physics are the foundation of a comprehensive science curriculum, BB&N's Current Topics and Research in Science and Technology (CTR) course provides an opportunity for students to deeply explore topics of unique interest to them and to experience firsthand how science is practiced in both university and industry settings.

Throughout the year we visit labs, invite speakers to share their research with us, and students undertake both collaborative and independent research projects where they perform extensive literature searches and become experts in their field. Through bulletin boards, posters, our class website, and their capstone Symposium projects, students share what they have learned and present their findings to each other and to the broader BB&N community. When we offered the course for the first time in 2006, four brave students enrolled. What a perfect number! Small enough to jump into a van and head off on a site visit, yet large enough to reflect a diverse set of scientific interests.

This year, four students are enrolled in the CTR course. Their interests were recently highlighted at the CTR Science Symposium, which is held each January. Student projects have spanned a wide range of scientific topics, most recently including solar energy, neuroprosthetics, wormholes, and nuclear energy. In preparation for the Symposium, students spend two to three weeks searching for current literature in scientific journals or on the Internet and preparing their slide shows. Their presentations are completed well before the January Symposium, providing an opportunity for the students to communicate their findings to each other, receive feedback, and refine their work prior to presenting to a broader audience.

I always ask and encourage students to share why they chose their selected topics, and I am delighted that their rationales are purely rooted in their curiosity and fascination with science. Following are a sample of student comments:

- "I remember reading in my Chemistry textbook about nuclear fusion...I think its awesome."
- "I became interested in this topic after seeing a story on 60 Minutes...I would like to better understand the science of this technology."
- "I care deeply about the environment...I want to learn more about solar power and the issues surrounding it."
- "These ideas really stretch the mind...[they] are truly fascinating to me and I would really like to explore them in more depth."

At the conclusion of the project, students share their reflections as well:

- "I loved the open-ended nature of the project which allowed me to spend time trying to grasp the concepts that I needed in order to fully understand my topic."
- "I was impressed by how much I learned about my topic and would actually consider continuing research on this topic later in life."
- "I found myself wanting to learn more and to make my presentation a 4-hour-long lecture on what I found interesting."

This last comment, which I love, does point out one of the biggest challenges for students: the 10-15 minute time limit on their presentation. They quickly grow to understand, however, the value of separating the wheat from the chaff and presenting a concise, cohesive body of knowledge.

Most of the students enrolled in the course incorporate scientific internships into their Senior Spring Projects, and throughout that time they continue to share what they are learning with each other during our weekly meetings in April and May. As they receive their college acceptances and begin to more clearly see their academic future beyond BB&N, the CTR course provides a forum for them to have explored aspects of science without bounds and to share their interests with other like-minded students.

All School
Kim Gold
Coordinator, Psychological and Learning Support Services

Since my arrival in September, I have had the opportunity to engage in some wonderful conversations with many of our families on all three campuses. I have enjoyed discussing a wide range of topics including child development, academic skills, organizational strategies, and learning disabilities. These conversations are mostly focused on learning; however, there are some questions which seem to be asked more regularly than others. These questions focus on the process for both Neuropsychological and Psycho-

Educational evaluations. I would like to take this opportunity to focus on the two most frequently asked questions:

1. How do we as parents know if we should have an evaluation completed?

Talk with one of the learning specialists located on all three campuses, the counselor, or the school psychologist. They will work closely with the teachers and advisors to gather the information you need to help you determine your next steps. There can be several outcomes from these conversations. The teachers may have information about strategies they are using in the classroom, and your child is responding well. They may need more time to assess how your child is responding. They might see patterns of a certain weakness, inconsistencies in a particular strength or weakness, or they may have the same questions as you about your child's learning style. This information might lead you to the conclusion that an evaluation would not be helpful at this time, or it might be exactly the type of information the evaluator will need from you if your family does decide to pursue an evaluation. Either way, you will have a bigger picture about who your child is as a learner before making your decision about an evaluation.

2. Shouldn't we start with a tutor before getting an evaluation?

Yes and No. This question needs to be individualized to your child's strengths and weaknesses. Students can present as being effective in utilizing their strategies across the curriculum except in maybe one area. This might be an appropriate time to consider assistance in a specific content area of the curriculum before moving toward an evaluation. Once again, this is where consulting with the learning specialists and teachers can be so important. They can help you determine if the struggle you are seeing and/or your child is reporting, is content specific, skill based, or a possible issue with functioning (working memory, language processing, attention, reasoning, etc). This information can help you determine where your child fits amongst multiple types of supports including teacher strategies, learning specialist consultation, tutoring, and even the need for an evaluation. ** Most importantly, don't assume we are seeing the same levels of performance in school that you are at home. It is not uncommon for students to present differently as learners in both the home and school environments. We learn as much about your child's learning style from your presentation to us about how they work at home, as you learn from us about how they work at school!

If you have any questions for me, if you are looking for additional resources/information, if you aren't sure what questions you should be asking, or if you simply want to introduce yourself, please feel free to contact me at 617-800-2227 or kim_gold@bbns.org.

Giving Update

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

To join your fellow BB&N Parents, Alumni/ae, Grandparents, Past Parents, Faculty, Staff, Students, and Friends in support of the 2008-2009 Annual Fund, which fills the gap between tuition and the actual cost of your child's BB&N education.

Goal: \$2,450,000 and 100% Parent Participation

Response to date: \$1,253,609 / 51% of goal

Date: Today or by June 30, 2009

Time: No time like the present

Location: Online at www.bbns.org/donate, or mail to: Buckingham Browne & Nichols School, 80 Gerry's Landing Road, Cambridge, MA 01238-5512

RSVP TO: Jo-Ann Lovejoy, Director of Annual Giving
jo-ann_lovejoy@bbns.org or 617-800-2723

We are grateful to those who have already responded to our invitation earlier this year in support of the Annual Fund. The elements of the economy that have impacted each of us have had an impact on BB&N as well. As a result, the Annual Fund will play an even greater role this year in helping to provide the critical financial support that will allow the school to continue to meet all of its stated goals and commitments.

Parent Annual Fund Participation by Grade as of February 2, 2009

Parent Participation	Grade
64 %	B
39%	K
53%	1st
45%	2nd
48%	3rd
53%	4th
44%	5th
64%	6th
45%	7th
45%	8th
61%	9th
47%	10th
58%	11th