Highlights from the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the McDonnell STEM Facility and Brauer Hall, Project Play comes to fruition, scenes from the International Expo, MICDS joins the Global Online Academy and much more!
Students Invited to Perform at National Conference

Members of the Beasley Third and Fourth Grade Chorus and fifth grade musicians participating in the Beasley Drum Ensemble performed at the opening evening ceremony of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association National Conference on November 15 at the Renaissance Hotel.

More than 1,000 music teachers from across the United States enjoyed their program, “A Playground of Creativity.” Beasley was the only school in the Midwest to be honored by the invitation from the national chairs of the conference to perform.

A highlight of the evening for the students was the opportunity to perform with David Halen, concertmaster of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, who accompanied the young voices on violin. The students performed under the direction of Barb Spieler, Lower School music teacher, and were also accompanied on piano by Janet McMillion, Head of Lower School.

Ms. Spieler shared that MICDS received a tremendous amount of positive feedback from the audience members. “I think this was an experience the students will remember for the rest of their lives,” she said.

“It is rare when we have an opportunity to recognize the impact of a strong artistic curriculum on the lives of young students,” said Mrs. McMillion, “Artistry, skill, confidence and complexity were the themes of the evening, and our students shone in each and every way.”

“When the audience of over a thousand musicians added their voice to those of our children and David Halen, it was a testament to the power of music to transform even a simple song to something extraordinary,” she continued. “We are so fortunate to have on our Beasley faculty a teacher of the caliber of Barb Spieler, who brings musical joy and excellence to her students each day.”
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Senior Kindergarten students Caroline Bryan and Brian Gould tackle the hurdles during an Olympic-themed activity in P.E. class.

CHANGING LIVES. CHANGING THE WORLD.

MICDS MISSION
“More than ever our nation needs responsible men and women who can meet the challenges of this world with confidence and embrace all its people with compassion. The next generation must include those who think critically and resolve to stand for what is good and right. Our School cherishes academic rigor, encourages and praises meaningful individual achievement, and fosters virtue. Our independent education prepares young people for higher learning and for lives of purpose and service.”

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MEET ASHLEY KANE ’21

Activities include:
Book Club, soccer, basketball, baseball and tennis

Ashley came to the Beasley Lower School as a first grader. She and her family moved to St. Louis from New York City.

This is her MICDS.

A new school

When I first came to MICDS I was scared because I didn’t know anyone. My teacher, Mrs. Hillsman, really helped me to make friends and feel comfortable here.

Where everybody knows your name

My favorite thing about MICDS is that it is a big community. Everyone knows everyone else. It’s different from my old school, where I only knew the kids in my class.

Favorite classes

I like them all, but my favorites are art and P.E. We get to work on really interesting and creative projects in art and I love to draw and paint. I also love to run around in P.E., especially on rainy days when we can’t go outside for recess.

Making memories

I really like going to the Homecoming Carnival at the beginning of the year with all of my friends, and the Beasley Family Night at the Basketball Game in the winter is really fun, too. I like to go to the high school gym to cheer on the team with my friends.

Fourth grade so far

Mr. Brennan is an awesome teacher and I love all of the different projects we get to do. One of my favorites was studying Missouri government and making pamphlets that encouraged people to go out and vote in the elections last fall.

MATTHEW O'SHEA

"My favorite thing about MICDS is that it is a big community."

Eric Lay, who oversees our physical education program for grades JK–8, as well as our Essential Fitness Program for Upper School students, collaborates with the P.E. department faculty to align our program with national standards and is nationally respected by colleagues in his field for his work in this area.

Even with great nutrition and daily physical exercise, children cannot learn optimally unless they feel supported within their communities by their peers and the adults. While meanness among adolescents is a tale as old as schools are, we strive to talk about the dynamic, to buoy those who might be targeted, to embolden bystanders and to address with both counseling and discipline those who do not abide our expectations for appropriate behavior. This year in the Middle School, students have been empowered by discussions and activities inspired by the guiding question, “What does a Community of Kindness look like at MICDS?” This initiative is a wonderful example of a thriving student-teacher partnership that is already having far-reaching implications for how we think about our interactions with one another as a school community. Across all divisions of our School, students demonstrate in many ways the value they place upon acts of kindness and inclusion.

The articles in this edition of our magazine will give you a window into some of the programming in place to foster great habits of mind, heart and body. Enjoy!
MICDS EXTENDS ITS GRATITUDE
to the members of the Campaign Committee
who are lending their support to this
extraordinary effort.

Honorary Campaign Chairs
Jim ’54 and Libby Hall McDonnell ’58
Steve ’63 and Kimmy Thompson Brauer ’64

Campaign Chair
Bob Hermann ’70

Campaign Committee
Spencer Burke ’65
Stuart Campbell
Parker Condie ’81
Chris Danforth ’94
Greg Fox
Andrew Hereford ’85
Kathy Danforth
Hollo ’78
Ron Holtman
Chris Imbs
Karen Kalinowski
Maude Kandula
Terry Pflager III ’80
Bill Polk ’74
John Stupp ’68

“We are facing an
unprecedented opportunity
to write the next chapter in
the storied history of MICDS.
We invite you to join us
on this journey.”
ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

MICDS begins partnership with Global Online Academy

“Our institutional mission compels us to provide our students with ample opportunities to communicate, connect and collaborate in a global context. This is what membership in the GOA is going to bring to us.”

MICDS is pleased to announce that it was recently accepted as a member school of the Global Online Academy (GOA), a nonprofit, global partnership of leading independent schools working toward a common purpose: academic excellence and innovation. The mission of GOA is “to replicate in online classrooms the intellectually rigorous programs and excellence in teaching that are hallmarks of its member schools; to foster new and effective ways, through best practices in online education, for students to learn; and to promote students’ global awareness and understanding by creating truly diverse, worldwide, online schoolroom communities.”

MICDS is one of 28 GOA member schools; additional member schools include the Latin School of Chicago, Sidwell Friends, Jakarta International, Punahoe in Hawaii, International School of Beijing, and the American School of Japan. Beginning with the 2013–2014 academic year, Upper School students will have the opportunity to enroll in one of the many online courses available to them. A sampling of course offerings for Fall 2013 includes Bioethics, Arabic 1: Language Through Culture, Crimes Against Humanity, and Medical Problem Solving. MICDS faculty members will be invited to offer courses, as well.

“We exist in an ever-changing, increasingly interconnected world,” said Assistant Head of School Jeff Suzik. “Our institutional mission compels us to provide our students with ample opportunities to communicate, connect and collaborate in a global context. This is what membership in the GOA is going to bring to us.”

CONFUCIUS CLASSROOM

Mandarin program earns prestigious distinction

The MICDS Mandarin Program has earned the prestigious distinction of Confucius Classroom from Hanban, the executive body of the Chinese Language Council International, a non-governmental and non-profit organization affiliated with the Ministry of Education of China. As a Confucius Classroom school, MICDS will partner with the Confucius Institute at Webster University.

Confucius Institutes were created in 2004 to promote Chinese language and culture and have become platforms for cultural exchanges as well as bridges reinforcing friendship and cooperation between China and the rest of the world. In the United States, Confucius Institutes are typically established at universities and colleges who then support Confucius Classrooms at secondary schools in their regions. Currently there are over 300 Confucius Institutes and over 300 Confucius Classrooms in 96 countries. As a partner to MICDS, Webster University will serve as a liaison for feedback between our School and Hanban, will provide proficiency exams written by the Chinese government, and will make cultural experiences and other resources available to MICDS students.

The Confucius Classroom designation was awarded following an extensive application process that highlighted the strength of our School’s program and shared a vision for further enhancements. Confucius Classroom schools receive grant funding for salaries, technological equipment, cultural experiences and more.

In 2007, MICDS designed the first middle school and high school Chinese program in St. Louis to meet the increasing demand to understand the international, political, economic, and cultural impact of China. After six years of planning and hard work, the Chinese program at MICDS has grown and developed into a program that local schools have praised and emulated. Currently, 73 students are enrolled in the Mandarin program. Notes MICDS JK–12 World Languages Department Chair Patrick Huewe, “Our goal has been to expand our program with more classes and cultural studies, and to establish an international exchange program with China in order to promote Chinese language and culture in the local community. We are thrilled to partner with the Confucius Institute at Webster University to build a successful program that will stand the test of time.”
PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE

Athletic Department honored by “Coach and Athletic Director” magazine

This fall, Coach and Athletic Director magazine recognized MICDS as a recipient of the Interscholastic Sports Program of Excellence award, honoring the nation’s best athletic departments for their off-the-field achievements.

MICDS was one of four schools honored in the program’s inaugural class. The school was the award recipient in the category of private schools with an enrollment of more than 500 students. In recognition for this achievement, MICDS received a visit from a Coach And Athletic Director magazine Associate Editor Kevin Hoffman, who delivered a trophy and conducted interviews as part of a feature story that appeared in the magazine’s November edition. The story gives readers a glimpse into the MICDS sports program and why it was named one of the most remarkable departments in the nation.

“Director of Athletics Don Maurer has created an atmosphere unlike any other that encourages the intellectual growth of both student athletes and coaches,” said Hoffman. “It’s rare to see administrators embrace roles as coaches. It’s also refreshing to see programs place an emphasis on education through athletics, using sports as an avenue to prepare student athletes for the lives they’ll live beyond high school.” The inscription on the trophy presented to MICDS reads: “In recognition of promoting integrity, sportsmanship, ethics and a positive experience for student athletes.”

Judges were impressed by the 3.29 GPA held by student athletes and that all 99 MICDS coaches completed the National Federation Coaching Certification Program. The school also boasts a participation rate of greater than 70 percent, and it developed a “Captain’s Council” to improve the leadership qualities of its athletes.

The Program of Excellence was created to honor athletic departments not only for their accomplishments on the field, but also for their overall commitment to promoting a positive experience for student-athletes.

MICDS Athletics staff members and a video of the awards presentation are available online by scanning the code below or accessing this website: http://www.coachad.com/pages/Mary-Institute-Country-Day-School.php

(From left) Lisa Lyle, Kevin Hoffman, Don Maurer and Scott Small

Interviews with MICDS Athletics staff members and a video of the awards presentation are available online by scanning the code below or accessing this website: http://www.coachad.com/pages/Mary-Institute-Country-Day-School.php
IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES
Harbison Lecturer discusses advances in the field of genetics

Dr. Ting Wu ’72, Professor of Genetics at Harvard Medical School, visited MICDS on October 18 as the 2012 Harbison Lecture speaker. During her time on campus, she led a discussion with the Eliot Scholars and gave presentations to seventh and eighth grade science classes as well as the entire Upper School.

In welcome remarks during the Upper School assembly, Head of School Lisa Lyle thanked the Harbison Family for making possible the annual Harbison Lecture series. “The Harbison Family is deeply committed to education, and to ensuring that our students have opportunities to extend their classroom learning in ways that are really unique,” she said. “They want to inspire students to grapple with the biggest challenges they will face, and this morning’s speaker will provide perspective into some solutions for those challenges.”

JK – 12 Science Department Chair Bob Shaw introduced Dr. Wu and highlighted her interest in educating young people about advances in the study of genetics and, in particular, changing technologies that will make personal genome sequencing more accessible to the general population.

“The sciences are a really wonderful place to spend your life,” Dr. Wu began. At Harvard, she oversees a laboratory dedicated to genetics research. She works with a staff of 10 scientists who conduct experiments that study, for example, how chromosomes move through the nucleus and how they divide and compact. She described the scientific research process as “intellectual athletics.” “My colleagues and I spend hours debating, arguing and critiquing our findings. We don’t always win, but we eventually move forward.”

“I am so grateful to Mary Institute for preparing me for college and my career,” she continued. “In addition to the superb education I received at MI, we experienced a wonderful spirit of collegiality and learned the importance of treating our teachers and classmates with respect. Those lessons in particular have come into play so often in my life and have carried me through some trying times.”

The Wu Laboratory at Harvard also houses the Personal Genetics Education project (pgED), which promotes conversations about personal genetics and its social, ethical and legal implications for society. The mission of pgED is “To create and share curricula to facilitate the inclusion of ethical issues in genetics into the classroom and to serve as the meeting place for news, information, and resources about understanding the social, ethical, legal, and familial issues in personal genome analysis.” (source: pged.org)

“A few years ago we realized that what is being learned about genetics today is going to alter your generation in ways no one could have predicted,” Dr. Wu explained. She told Upper School students, “You will be able know things about yourself and your children before they are born — and you will have opportunities for personal genome analysis that no one thought would be possible. These opportunities carry with them legal, social and ethical issues that your generation is going to have to solve.”

She went on to describe the “technological revolution” that is occurring in the field of genetics that will make personal genome sequencing more accessible, more efficient, and more cost-effective than ever before. She shared details of medical cases in which the ability to sequence a human genome and the use of Preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) resulted in saving lives. PGD is a technique employed when one or both genetic parents carries a known genetic abnormality and testing is performed on an embryo to determine if it also carries a genetic abnormality.

Following examination of a few medical case studies, Dr. Wu engaged students in a discussion of the potential benefits and risks of advances in the field of personal genetics, and explained why issues related to genetics lead to debate and even controversy in our society. “How do you feel about this?” she asked. “You will deal with these issues in life, whether in your profession as a lawyer, a doctor, or even in criminal justice — and you may deal with it as parents.” She asked them to consider what role they believe government should play in the regulation of PGD, and concluded, “In your lifetime, you will experience excitement and opportunities to live a better life, but you will also bear the burden of responsibility to make sure our society handles these responsibilities in the right way.”
**CLASS DETURS**

*Students honored for academic achievement*

During a special assembly on October 1, Upper School Head Scott Small presented awards to students in grades 9–12 who achieved the highest grade point averages in their respective grade levels during the 2011–2012 academic year, and as a result, earned the distinction of “Class Detur.” Congratulations to the students who were honored.

- **Class of 2013:** Hayley Landman, Tally Portnoi and William Van Cleve
- **Class of 2014:** Jack Finlay, Kristin Geczi and Allie Meier
- **Class of 2015:** Tilman Bartelsmeyer, Lynn Dankner, Milly Judd, Emily Lee, Thomas O’Hara, Foster Thompson, Roey Vardi and Ellen Wright
- **Class of 2016:** Brittany Calkins, Bridget Condle, Harrison Critchfield-Jain, Sarah Finlay, Rebekah Greenspan, Katie Laughlin, Elizabeth Love, Joe McAllister, Grace Mikula, Michael O’Keefe, Tyler Raclin, Bear Reisinger, Mehrren Shafqat and Max Weiser

Middle School students earning the distinction of “Class Detur” were honored during a special assembly on August 28. Middle School Head John Carpenter said of the recognition, “As a public celebration of academic excellence, this Deturs Assembly is a formal declaration of the importance we attach here at MICDS to academic achievement, and to the firm belief that hard work and effort has its rewards.”

- **Class of 2017:** Nidhi Bhaskar, Carolyn Botz, Rohit Chouhan, Alex Curylo, Isabella Fox, Carlye Goldenberg, Benjamin Hasara, Nicole Kasal, Emma Klahr, Andrew Krause, Matthew May, Kumu Myla, Leila Payer, Jacob Platin, Peggy Rianhard, Kaleigh Riggs, Samantha Sansone, Sanchita Sen and Annabel Warren
- **Class of 2018:** Emilee Autry, Lou Chalfant, Shannon Gould, Amanda Kalishman, Hopie Melton, Katie O’Hara, Alexandra Quiroga, Delaney Schultz and Adie Thomas
- **Class of 2019:** Hope Abel, Sam Haner, Abigail Lee, Claire Nichols and Hayden Shively

**NATIONAL MERIT NEWS**

*19 students earn recognition*

Nineteen members of the MICDS Class of 2013 have earned recognition from the National Merit Scholarship Program. Nine students were named as National Merit semifinalists, one as a National Achievement semifinalist, and nine additional students received letters of commendation.

The nationwide pool of semifinalists represents approximately one percent of high school seniors across the United States. They were the highest scoring entrants based upon results of the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Qualifying test taken last year as high school juniors. These students will now have the opportunity to compete for National Merit Scholarships that will be awarded next spring.

Congratulations to the MICDS semifinalists: Amos Bartelsmeyer, Alexis Bollis, Diana DiGasbarro, Benjamin Gunning, Akili Hall, Girija Hariprasad, Hayley Landman, George Reynolds, William Van Cleve and Kevin Williamson.

Congratulations also to the MICDS commended students: Ellis Brown, Sohil Desai, Alexandra Donovan, John Dunagan, Elise Elliott, Catherine Huber, Tally Portnoi, Matthew Wolfe and Casey Zuccarello.

“This special assembly is a formal declaration of the importance we attach here at MICDS to academic achievement, and to the firm belief that hard work and effort has its rewards.”
PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

Upper School students participate in political forum

On October 30, Upper School students and faculty participated in a special assembly featuring a panel of experts on American politics as well as issues of domestic and foreign importance. During the four weeks prior to the panel, students in Cathy Leitch’s Presidential Politics course gave brief presentations during Upper School community time to provide background on our country’s political landscape. Presentation topics included political ideology, political opinion, campaign finance and the Electoral College. Upper School Head Scott Small introduced the series of presentations by stating, “This is my charge to you … be informed citizens, be passionate advocates for your beliefs, but be respectful of your peers and your fellow community members who might approach this election with a different perspective than your own.”

Panelists for the October 30 forum included:

Michelle Deardorff, Political Science Professor at Jackson State University and a Founding Faculty member of the Fannie Lou Hamer Institute on Citizenship and Democracy.

Jo Mannies, a longtime political reporter in the St. Louis area, first for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and currently for the St. Louis Beacon.

Janessa Wilder, formerly at the CIA and consultant for the U.S. State Department; founder and CEO of the Euphrates Institute, an organization that seeks to promote greater understanding and trust between the West and Middle East

Richard Weiss, former metro editor at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and currently managing editor at Beyond November — a collaborative effort by St. Louis Public Radio, the St. Louis Beacon, and Nine Network to provide political coverage in St. Louis.

AP Government students Olivia Gacka ‘13 and Ben Gunning ‘13 served as moderators, asking questions of each panelist and inviting commentary and questions. Among the questions asked of panelists were:

■ What factors are responsible for the increased polarization we see in U.S. politics?

■ Would you describe our current foreign policy as reactive or proactive? Why?

■ Given your different areas of focus, what curricular changes do you believe should be made in schools to meet the goals you feel are important?

All of the panelists spoke to the abundance of information and information sources that we as citizens have access to because of the internet and social media. They emphasized the need for students to become informed citizens who are capable of thinking critically and independently to discern fact from opinion. “You must have a solid grasp of geography and current events around the world,” added Janessa Wilder. “It is essential for your studies to take on a global focus so that you understand from a ‘big picture’ perspective the issues and challenges our world faces.”

LEARNING TO LEGISLATE

Eighth graders hold Mock Congress

Eighth grade history classes participated in a Mock Congress in January as the culmination of their study on the process involved when a bill becomes a law in the United States. Students were assigned roles as members of the House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate and were given some biographical information about the person they represented to learn that person’s political views. The task for this Mock Congress was to write a law on the federal death penalty and follow the actual procedures used to prepare a bill for review by the President. “What I liked about Mock Congress was that it gave us the opportunity to debate a real topic that is important to America and its citizens,” said Lexi Walsh ’17.

Following simulated House Judiciary Committee and Rules Committee meetings, students participated in a debate on the House Floor and voted on the bill according to their assigned representative’s viewpoints.

“It is essential for your studies to take on a global focus so that you understand from a ‘big picture’ perspective the issues and challenges our world faces.”
GAMES OF CHANCE
Seventh graders design Probability Carnival

Seventh grade math students studied theoretical and experimental probability during the first trimester. Their final project was to create a game of chance, determine the theoretical probability of winning the game, and predict whether their game would create a profit or loss based on the game’s price to play and payout to winners. On November 1, they hosted a Probability Carnival for third and fourth grade students to test their theories. Seventh graders hosted their games at the Probability Carnival, recorded their experimental data and then determined if their experimental results matched the theoretical predictions. Third and fourth grade students enjoyed spending their “Carnival Bucks” to earn stickers for winning games.

“This carnival is a great way to learn about probability,” said Jordan Brooks ’18. “This kind of hands-on work really helps me to understand the concepts.”

HIGH HONOR
Li wins Youth Orchestra competition

John Li ’15 was the winner of the 2012 – 2013 St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition and will perform the “Saint-Saens Violin Concerto No. 3” with the SLSYO on May 5 at McKendree University and on May 18 at Powell Hall.

MAJOR MILESTONE
Bartelsmeyer ’13 sets national record

In January, Amos Bartelsmeyer ’13 set the national record among high school students for the fastest time in the mile. His time was 4:13.26. His national ranking is posted at milesplit.com, a website that highlights track and field and cross country meet results for high school and college students.

On the final day of the Mock Congress session, the President of the United States joined the class to hear brief summary arguments of reasons why the bill should or should not be signed. Head of School Lisa Lyle, Assistant Head of School Jeff Suzik and Middle School Head John Carpenter assumed the role of President for the various Mock Congress sessions.

Isabel Fenoglio ’17 reported, “The biggest thing I learned by far was teamwork. We could not have gotten anything done without collaborating as much as we did. The biggest challenge was talking to the “President” (Mr. Carpenter) in our final meeting. Mr. Carpenter did a great job of lightening the mood, though, and in the end everyone had something to say!”

In preparation for Mock Congress, students learned about the steps involved in writing a bill, how the U.S. Congress is organized, profiles and positions of key leaders in Congress and what the President can do when he receives a bill from Congress.

“What I learned most about myself throughout the process was how to show my leadership skills,” said Kaleigh Riggs ’17. “I especially liked that everyone had their own roles and once we researched our roles, we had a Congress! It was just amazing how everyone came and worked together to accomplish something so big for an eighth grade class.”

“I especially liked that everyone had their own roles… It was just amazing how everyone came and worked together to accomplish something so big for an eighth grade class.”

(At right) Ehan Kamat ’18 explains his game of chance to Audrey Mahoney ’22
REMARKABLE RAMBOTS
MICDS team advances to FIRST LEGO state championship

On December 9, the MICDS team, Rambots-The Brick Lords, competed in the Eastern Division State Championships of the FIRST Lego League. The competition included three runs of the robot and three other presentations: Presentation of the Robot, Presentation of their Senior Solutions Project and Presentation of the FIRST Core Values. The Brick Lords’ robot scored 14th overall. In addition, the MICDS team won the trophy for Best Programming. Since the competition, the Brick Lords have given demonstrations for the MICDS Board of Trustees, for residents of The Gatesworth retirement community and for representatives of Ranken Technical College. Congratulations to the Rambots-The Brick Lords:
Clayton Pope ’17
Joshua Porter ’17
Nicholas LeNoir ’17
Niema Foroughi ’17
Atri Bhattacharyya ’18
Liam Weber ’21
Ben Stettin ’20
Christian LeNoir ’20
Henry Posega Rappleye ’20
Nishanth Boppana ’20

NATIONAL HONOR CHOIR
Students chosen to perform at national conference

MICDS was well represented at the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Conference in March 2013. Four Upper School students and two Middle School students were selected by audition to perform with the National ACDA Honor Choirs during the conference in Dallas, TX. These students participated in rehearsals March 12–16, 2013, and performed on March 16.

Kaytlin Houghtaling ’13 performed with the National ACDA High School Mixed Honor Choir, directed by Dr. Edith Copley. Madi Cupp-Enyard ’16, Molly Burgess ’16 and Molly Pfefferkorn ’16 performed with The National ACDA Junior/Middle School Honor Choir. Hope Abel ’19 and Maddie Goldberg ’19 performed with the ACDA National Community Youth and Boy Choir, directed by Dr. Anthony Trecek-King.

Selection for the Honor Choir is a tremendous achievement for our students. Over 6500 singers auditioned for the High School Mixed Choir, while over 3600 singers auditioned for the Junior High/Middle School Honor Choir.

“Performing with these choirs was life-changing for these talented students.”
RAVE REVIEWS

Students find success as theatre critics

For three years, MICDS has been a participant in the St. Louis Cappies program. The Cappies, “Critics and Awards Program,” is a program through which high school students are trained as critics, attend shows at other schools, write reviews and publish them in local newspapers.

In order to have our School’s shows reviewed and for our student actors to be eligible for awards, MICDS provides student reviewers who ultimately help vote on which actors receive awards. Currently, nine Upper School students are working as critics. They have committed to writing five reviews of area high school drama and/or musical productions. In turn, students from some of the 15 other participating St. Louis high schools come to review two MICDS shows. For each show, four reviews are selected by adult mentors for publication in such area media outlets as the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Patch.com, the St. Louis Beacon and others.

The MICDS critics are having a successful year. Seven of the 15 reviews written by MICDS students have been published.

Congratulations to our team of Cappies Critics:

- Tally Portnoi ’13 - Lead Critic, most recently published for Into the Woods at Marquette on November 16
- Jon Baer ’13 - published for The Comedy of Errors at Francis Howell on November 2
- Elise Barone ’15
- Alex Bush ’15 (published in past years)
- Laurel Button ’15 - published for The Laramie Project at Maplewood-Richmond Heights on October 20, The Comedy of Errors at Francis Howell on November 2 and Into the Woods at Marquette on November 16
- Milly Judd ’15
- Shubhi Shekhar ’15
- Ellen Wright ’15 - published for The Comedy of Errors at Francis Howell on November 2 and Murder at 221-B at Notre Dame on November 9
- Allison Telking ’16 - published for Metamorphoses at Clayton on October 28

The faculty adviser for the Cappies Critics is College Counselor Scott Hermann-Keeling.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

MICDS artists earn top honors in 100 Neediest Cases contest

Each year, the 100 Neediest Cases program sends out a call to local artists at the high school and college level, asking them to submit a piece of artwork that represents its mission. This year, MICDS student artists earned two very special distinctions — they captured first through fourth place in the competition, as well as 10 of 40, or 25 percent, of all the awards presented.

Congratulations to the following students and to their teachers, Tiffany D’Addario and Brad Heinemann:

1st Place: Jasmine Love ’15
2nd Place: Isla Mulvihill ’14
3rd Place: Matt Wolfe ’13
4th Place: Corey Collins ’14
8th Place: Blaire Stillwell ’13
13th Place: Mimi Shepley ’13
24th Place: Courtney Trowbridge ’14
31st Place: Ben Snyder ’15
32nd Place: Claire Rush ’13
33rd Place: Michael Gianino ’15

Their artwork was published in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch along with the 100 Neediest Cases information.

Each year, more than 10,000 families in need receive help from the 100 Neediest Cases program. The cases come as referrals from more than 70 local nonprofits. An effort is made to assist every case in some way, and every dollar raised for the 100 Neediest Cases program goes to help people.
Achievements

NATIONAL SIGNING DAY
12 seniors recognized

Twelve MICDS seniors were recognized during a ceremony honoring their athletic and academic achievements on February 6, National Signing Day.

Second team All-Metro lacrosse player William Morehead signed his Division I Letter of Intent to play lacrosse next year at Providence College. Senior rower Madi Hovis was also recognized for signing her letter to row for the University of Kansas.

Don Maurer, MICDS Director of Athletics, also introduced 10 additional seniors who have made or have received commitments to play collegiate athletics at their college or university of choice, including:

- Amos Bartelsmeyer – Georgetown University / Track and Field
- Charles Cella – University of Tampa / Swimming
- Denzell Conway – Valparaiso University / Football
- John Coulter – Denison University / Lacrosse
- Matt Gillis – Williams College / Football
- BJ Klar – Lawrence University / Baseball
- Jack Kurzu – Oklahoma State University / Football
- CeCe Moore - Wake Forest University / Track and Field
- Julia Olson – Stanford University / Squash
- Reed Whitney – Naval Academy / Squash

“IT’s a special day when we can recognize our students. The pride we take in their accomplishments at MICDS will continue as we keep up with their success in college.”

THE SUPER BOWL OF SCIENCE

Students honored at Science Fair

Upper School students Kristin Geczi ‘14 and Matt Wolfe ‘13 were among the top students who earned recognition at The Academy of Science-St. Louis Science Fair Honors Division competition on February 2. They will bring their project to The Academy of Science - St. Louis Science Fair in May to compete for additional awards.

Kristin was selected as a finalist and was the winner of a $1000 scholarship for her project “Similar Haplotypes in JPD Patients with the Balkan Mutation Indicate the Founder Effect.” Her project focused on the heredity of a genetic mutation in the Osteoprotegerin gene (or TNFRSF11B) that causes a recessive genetic disorder called Juvenile Paget’s Disease.

Matt earned semifinalist honors for his project, “Applying Concentrated Airflow Techniques Found in Servers to Full Tower ATX Desktop Water Cooling Systems.” The goal of his project was to design, build and test a full tower desktop computer system that implemented the concentrated airflow cooling methods common in enterprise servers.
THE TRADITION CONTINUES

MICDS sponsors another successful Turkey Train

The 9th Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Train at MICDS took place on November 19. In total, MICDS collected 7,551 pounds of frozen turkey and 2,589 pounds of non-perishable food items — enough to provide 8,278 meals for the area’s needy during the holiday season. The MICDS collection remains one of the largest donations of food items to the St. Louis Area Foodbank at Thanksgiving. The Turkey Train concluded with the annual all-school Thanksgiving assembly, during which the donations were formally presented by students to Casey Milton, project donations coordinator for the St. Louis Area Foodbank.

PEDAL THE CAUSE

MICDS team reaches fundraising milestone

RAMS RIDE — MICDS’ cancer fighting bike team — is the first and only high school team to raise $100,000 over a three-year period for cancer research being done in St. Louis at Washington University, Siteman Cancer Center and Children’s Hospital. This year, a team of students and parents participated in the annual Pedal the Cause biking event on October 7. MICDS was proud to host a refueling station, welcoming hundreds of riders with cheers and refreshments. Y-98 broadcast live from the MICDS campus, and MICDS cheerleaders and students were on hand to support the riders. Congratulations to everyone who made this day a success.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Win With Wellness honored by Siteman Cancer Center

In September, the MICDS Win With Wellness student organization received a special honor from the Siteman Cancer Center, earning recognition for their work hosting one of the top community events that raises funds for Siteman — the annual trivia night and silent auction. Win With Wellness faculty sponsor Stacey Morgan represented MICDS at a special luncheon to receive the award, which reads “Because of your support, together we are making an impact on cancer.” MICDS was included among the Siteman Center’s profiles as an “organization that gives back” in the August 2012 edition of St. Louis Magazine. The profile, titled, “It All Begins With an Idea,” salutes the 10 years of commitment the MICDS community has shown toward raising awareness and funds for cancer research. Congratulations to Stacey Morgan and the hundreds of alumni and current students who have been part of the Win With Wellness team over the years. Their dedication and hard work have raised over $150,000 in this 10-year period to benefit cancer research.

“At the Turkey Train assembly (from left) Maleeha Habib ’13, Hugo Engelhardt ’21, Casey Milton (Foodbank representative) and Girija Hariprasad ’13

“RAMS RIDE — is the first and only high school team to raise $100,000 over a three-year period for cancer research.”
FALL 2012 EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Students from Argentina and Germany welcomed to campus

MICDS students were excited to welcome 13 students and two faculty members from Instituto Albert Einstein (IAE) in Mar del Plata, Argentina, to campus on September 6 as part of our School’s newest exchange program. Fourteen MICDS students spent two weeks in Argentina in the spring of 2012. The students from IAE stayed with their MICDS host families, attended classes and participated in field trips and other special programs designed to introduce them to American culture as well as places of interest in St. Louis.

Students from Max Planck Gymnasium in Dortmund, Germany, arrived at MICDS in October to begin the third exchange program between the German school and MICDS. During this 15-day exchange, the German students attended classes, participated in after school activities and special events on campus. Field trips included a tour of Busch Stadium, a riverboat cruise, a canoe trip and visit to Meramec Caverns, a tour of Washington University, a day trip to Hermann, MO, and much more. MICDS families also hosted special meals for our German guests. MICDS students will visit Germany in June 2013.

HOW CHILDREN SUCCEED

Guest author shares insight with parents and faculty

MICDS and its Parent Education Network were pleased to present a special program featuring acclaimed author Paul Tough on September 11 in Mary Eliot Chapel. Tough visited MICDS to discuss his new book, How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character with parents and educators.

Tough’s book introduces readers to a new generation of researchers and educators who, for the first time, are using the tools of science to peel back the mysteries of character. Through their stories — and the stories of the children they are trying to help — Tough traces the links between childhood stress and life success. He uncovers the surprising ways in which parents do — and do not — prepare their children for adulthood.

During his presentation to an audience of more than 200 parents on September 11, Tough shared portions of the research he conducted while writing How Children Succeed, and focused on how educators are addressing the “character conversation” with students. He discussed seven essential character traits — zest, self-control, grit, curiosity, perseverance, optimism and gratitude — and the role these traits play in the nurturing of resilient and successful children. He encouraged parents to look at adversity from the perspective that some adversity in life helps us learn how to manage failure.

Tough also led a session for MICDS faculty and educators from neighboring schools on September 12.

Paul Tough has written extensively about education, child development, poverty, and politics, including cover stories in the New York Times Magazine on character education, the achievement gap, and the Harlem Children’s Zone. His writing has also appeared in The New Yorker, Slate, GQ, Esquire and Geist, and on the op-ed page of The New York Times.
DIALOGUE ABOUT DIFFERENCES
Middle School hosts 2nd Annual Diversity Conference

MICDS hosted the second annual Middle School Diversity Leadership Conference on November 15. Director of Diversity Erica Moore worked with a team of MICDS students to plan the conference. This year, more than 100 students from 13 schools, including a school from Iowa, participated in the conference.

In welcoming remarks, Head of School Lisa Lyle stated, “Whatever way we navigate the world, we do so worthy of respect from the people around us. Today you come to us uniquely yourselves, and we appreciate you for who you are.”

“The conference allows students from various schools and backgrounds to come together to talk about what makes us alike, different and wonderful,” explained Moore. “It takes a special effort to create opportunities for dialogue and understanding, to empower people to feel good about who they are and stand up for others.”

Students were trained to serve as diversity leaders at the conference, and then asked to help lead the charge and go back into their schools to promote diversity work. That outcome was achieved last year, according to Moore. “At MICDS, our student leaders hosted a workshop for their fellow 8th graders on perception and how to overcome stereotypes and bias. I’m aware of another school that started a Diversity Club, and another that hosted an equity lunch.”

The conference consisted of an opening session, an interactive theatre presentation and discussion, workshops, small group discussions, school group discussions and planning, open mic reporting and a closing session. There was also sufficient time set aside for the students from various schools to get to know one another. The time was extended this year to allow the students additional time for planning events for their own schools.

“MICDS is a school that values its diverse community,” said Moore. “Being able to offer this program to the Greater St. Louis area allows us to connect in ways we may not have the opportunity to do otherwise.”

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A DAY AT THE FAIR

Third graders demonstrate Colonial Crafts

On February 8, Lower School students, teachers and parents were invited to explore a Colonial Crafts Fair hosted by the Third Grade Class of 2022. The Fair was the culmination of the class’s study of Colonial America. To prepare, students worked in small groups led by Beasley parents to explore and discover how various crafts contributed to a colony’s success and prosperity. Each group researched a specific trade that was common during colonial times, using guiding questions provided in a rubric created by the teachers, and prepared an informational booth to display at the Fair.

Trades represented at the Colonial Crafts Fair included: Apothecary, Blacksmiths, Cabinetmakers and Coopers, Glassblowers, Homemakers, Innkeepers, Limners, Milliners, Potters and Silversmiths. Students were prepared to answer any of the following questions posed by visitors to their booths:

- What were your supplies and how did you get them?
- What were some of the tools that you used?
- What natural resources did you rely on?
- How did your craft contribute to colonial life?

Upper School Librarian Colleen Williamson also helped prepare students for the Fair. She met with a small group of third graders to give a lesson on the type of music that was popular during colonial times. Using cardboard mountain dulcimers provided by the music department, Ms. Williamson taught the students a simple tune. During the Fair, she shared the reasons why the dulcimer was popular in colonial times (it was more portable than a piano, it was good for dance tunes played alongside a fiddle, and musicians might have traded playing an evening’s worth of tunes for a free stay in one of the inns) and played several tunes on both a hammered dulcimer and a mountain dulcimer. Students were invited to try their hand at playing the instruments as well.

“The kids seemed to love it,” said Williamson. “They were amazed by the number of strings on the dulcimers and the fact that the hammers I used were so lightweight. I had so much fun sharing music with them.”

“The Colonial Crafts unit provides a great change of pace from our regular routine. The kids are mixed between 3A and 3B and have a chance to engage in hands-on art projects and conduct research, working together to produce a final presentation. The children had to be prepared to explain what they learned to JK students as well as parents,” said Third Grade Associate Margaret Hanser. “We really enjoyed the fair! The kids did a great job and had confidence when presenting their information and really took pride in their work,” added Third Grade Homeroom Teacher Sara Levine.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Richard Langdon Nuzum
St. Louis Country Day School and MICDS Faculty, 1980–2004

Richard Langdon Nuzum, who spent 24 of his 48 teaching years as a member of our School’s faculty, passed away January 19, 2013, at home in St. Louis, surrounded by his family. A caring mentor, friend, and role model to many, Mr. Nuzum extended his MICDS relationships with students and younger graduates by working in the Alumni Relations Office for two years after he retired from the classroom in 2004.

Dick Nuzum’s teaching career took him to four states — Minnesota, Michigan and Ohio as well as Missouri. A native of Janesville, WI, after graduating from Carleton College he taught and coached in the Minnetonka, MN, public school system, followed by six years in the Western Michigan University Education Department during which he earned master of science and arts degrees. In 1967, he moved to Maumee Valley Country Day School in Toledo, OH, where he taught science, was athletic director and dean of students, and was head football and baseball coach.

At Country Day, Mr. Nuzum first taught middle school science for Classes 8, 7, and 5 (grades 5, 6, and 8). In the ensuing years, he was Class 8 Dean and coached football, basketball, baseball, and varsity pole vault. His science classrooms were known as places of wonder and experiment where he specialized in making science enjoyable, exciting, and accessible. Whether he was “accidentally” lighting his arm on fire or brewing mysterious, bubbling compounds, mixtures, and emulsions, he held his students’ attention and earned their respect. In the process, he formed friendships that endured long after graduation as he kept up
PARTICIPATION IS CRITICAL
Alumni Annual Fund contributions make a difference

Many MICDS alumni have received the most recent issue of Class Notes, our sister publication rich with news of alumni travels, achievements, births, and more. The most defining features of the MICDS experience are treasured friendships and the admiration of beloved faculty. There is no doubt that beyond this campus and St. Louis, MICDS still has its arms around its alumni, connected in a multitude of ways. Alumni support through the years helped to foster these connections; enriching the daily life of many on campus, in the classroom and beyond.

Independent schools are not funded by the state and rely upon philanthropy to create the margin of excellence that sets them apart from other schools. Currently, 19% of Mary Institute alumnae and 17% of Country Day alumni have participated in the Annual Fund. At this time last year, MI and CDS were tied at 22% each. Even though the fall Phonathon calling season has ended, there is still time to participate. Each and every gift makes a difference in participation and helps MICDS. For classes ending in 3s and 8s, this is a special reunion year! Whether it’s a 30th or a 75th reunion, there’s no better way to recognize this milestone occasion than with a gift to MICDS.

It is vitally important that MICDS builds upon its cherished legacy of outstanding academics, that it continues to foster lifetime connections, and that it prepares young people to be leaders in the world they will inherit. MICDS can’t achieve this without the continued support of alumni, parents and friends, TODAY.

To make a gift, please visit www.micds.org/giving/giveonline. Become a sustaining contributor by enrolling in a monthly or yearly giving program. It will reduce the Annual Fund mailings received and will provide a steady stream of support that allows MICDS to achieve its short-term goals for the current academic year. The long-term benefit of a gift will change lives and change the world.

STRATEGIC PLAN - SUSTAINABILITY

“Beyond this campus and St. Louis, MICDS still has its arms around its alumni, connected in a multitude of ways.”

Giving
CHARGING AHEAD… AGAIN!

Young Alumni launch MICDS Madness giving drive

The MICDS Young Alumni team has completed another successful Annual Fund Challenge for 2013! The volunteer group of over 40 young alumni from the classes of 1992 — 2008 launched MICDS Madness — the now well-known 15-day giving frenzy with a goal of 30% participation in the Annual Fund. Social media strategies were in full force and leaked archival photos were being used as leverage making the competition between classes fierce! On the final day of the Challenge, 773 gifts had been received, and overall participation reached 36%, with the Class of 1994 taking first place with 83%.

We are enormously grateful to all young alumni who participated in the Challenge. Your gifts to support MICDS, especially those in honor or in memory of your favorite teachers, are most appreciated. What a wonderful way to give back!

We are delighted to announce the establishment of the Rams Loyalty Club, a donor loyalty program recognizing those young alumni who have made a gift to MICDS for three or more consecutive years or who enroll in a monthly or yearly giving program. We thank you for ensuring the future of this extraordinary school.

Many thanks to the following for their exceptional leadership with this initiative.

YOUNG ALUMNI BOARD FUNDRAISING CO-CHAIRS

Bob Koplar ‘98
Matt Krieg ‘03

ADVISORY CHAIR

Alex McMullin ‘04

CLASS CHAIRS

Elliott Benoist ‘01
Steve Braeckel ‘95
Jack Burkhardt ‘07
Sumner Charles Jr. ‘93
Jamie Corley ‘05
James Dominick ‘99
Aaron Druck ‘96
Hillary Olk Dutcher ‘97
Chris Forbringer ‘08
Andy Gail ‘08
Tracy Gellman ‘98
Jeff Giles ‘94
Geoffrey Grammer ‘06
Darby Grant ‘04
Elizabeth Hailand ‘07
Austin Hasek ‘93
Lindsey Herzog ‘07
Jono Hiemenz ‘05
Christina Horan ‘06
Victoria Caltagirone Iken ‘94
Steven Kofkoff ‘03
Emily Brady Koplar ‘98
Kevin Koplar ‘07
Sam Koplar ‘99
Margot Langsdorf ‘01
Emilee Lemp ‘06
Stephanie Cusworth McNally ‘00
Ross Millman ‘06
McKay Baur Mills ‘92
Kate Spencer Pitman ‘96
Whitney Gulick Reboulet ‘97
Louisa Rechter ‘05
Lindsay Reed ‘99
Molly Rhodes ‘03
Jeff Rush ‘92
Hillary Bean Schumaker ‘97
Mike Smit ‘93
Kevin Tipton ‘93
Katie Watt ‘02

BE BOLD: LEAVE A LEGACY

Help Lay the Foundation of MICDS by Joining THE ELIOT & THOMPSON SOCIETY

WHAT IS THE ELIOT & THOMPSON SOCIETY?

The Eliot & Thompson Society is a special recognition society of 143 members, and growing, that honors alumni, parents, grandparents, former parents and friends of MICDS who have expressed their commitment to the heritage and mission of our School by naming MICDS as beneficiary of a planned gift or bequest.

Gifts of all sizes are welcomed and ensure that future generations will benefit from the MICDS educational experience and enable donors who have been supporters of MICDS to continue their legacy of giving.

LEARN MORE WITHOUT OBLIGATION

If you have already provided for MICDS in your will or estate plans and would like to be recognized as a member of The Eliot & Thompson Society, or should you wish to be an unpublished, anonymous member, please contact Amy Rhodes, Director of Major and Planned Gifts, at 314-995-7382 or arhodes@micds.org.

Visit micds.org/giving/estateplanning for more information.
HONORS

Upper School History Teacher Changa Bey has been accepted into a post-graduate certificate program at Maryville University called GACE (Global Awareness and Civic Education Studies). Students enrolled in GACE focus on enhancing 21st century teacher/learner skills to promote democratic and civic education from a global perspective by working in cohorts. This year, Bey’s cohort will travel to Poland, where they will be assigned teaching partners and gain experience teaching in Polish schools. The primary goal is for GACE students to work with their teaching partners to develop sustainable collaborative experiences for their students. Following his participation in the GACE program, Bey will begin work on his Master of Arts in Education at Maryville University.

Middle School English Teacher Jan Jacobi was one of 12 outstanding community leaders recognized by the Mathews-Dickey Boys & Girls Club of St. Louis at the 23rd annual “Say Amen” Benefit Concert and Awards Gala in August. He received the Bill Maritz Award in recognition of his 15 years of volunteer tutoring and consulting work at Mathews-Dickey.

This fall, Director of Athletics Don Maurer received a 2012 “Southeast Salutes” award from Southeast Missouri State University’s Alumni Chapter in St. Louis. The award is presented in recognition of the distinction Southeast alumni have brought to themselves, their community, and to the University. Maurer was recognized for his years of coaching and athletic administrative work, including his current membership on the Board of Directors of the Missouri High School Athletics Association.

Maurer was also named the recipient of the American Cancer Society’s Stephanie Phillips Survivorship Award. The award is presented to a person in the Eastern Missouri Region’s sporting community who exemplifies strength and courage in the fight against cancer. Coach Maurer received the award on December 22 at the annual Coaches vs. Cancer Tip Off Breakfast. He is a survivor of prostate cancer and has participated on the Coaches vs. Cancer committee since its inception in 2010. Coaches vs. Cancer is a nationwide collaboration between the ACS and the National Association of Basketball Coaches. The objective of the program is to empower coaches, their teams and local communities to make a difference in the fight against cancer.

Assistant Head of School Jeff Suzik was invited to join the Board of Directors of the Landmarks Association of St. Louis. Organized in 1958 and incorporated as a non-profit in 1959, Landmarks is the primary advocate for the region’s built environment. In addition to education, advocacy and outreach work, the Association offers professional services related to historic preservation, including preparation of National Register of Historic Places nominations and formal building histories.
FOCUS ON STEM CURRICULUM

Math and Science Faculty participate in planning retreat

On September 21, Middle and Upper School science and math teachers, Bob Shaw, JK–12 Science Chair, Amy Scheer, JK–12 Mathematics Chair, and Elizabeth Helfant, Upper School Coordinator of Instructional Technology, participated in a science retreat at the Saint Louis Science Center. Dr. H.B. Lantz facilitated discussions and investigations into Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curriculum. These topics included analyzing the shift to STEM, Problem-Based Learning and Inquiry and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The NGSS will likely be adopted in late spring, so MICDS is pursuing this opportunity to align with these standards while shifting to a STEM model in anticipation of the completion of the McDonnell Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Facility.

BOOT CAMP WITH JAY McTIGHE

Understanding by Design curriculum expert leads faculty workshop

Jay McTighe, an internationally-renowned curricular design expert, visited MICDS in December to lead a session for the full faculty titled “UbD™ Boot Camp.” McTighe is the co-creator of the UbD™ (Understanding by Design) method for developing meaningful units of study for students at all developmental and grade levels. The emphasis of UbD™ is on “backward design,” the practice of looking at the outcomes in order to design curriculum units, performance assessments, and classroom instruction (source: www.authenticeducation.org).

Following McTighe’s presentation, department chairs spent the afternoon working on curriculum mapping using the Chalk-and-Wire portfolio and mapping application that MICDS began using this fall.

LEARNING AND THE BRAIN

Conference shares cutting edge neurological research

In November 2012, Director of Student Services Vicki Thurman and Middle School Learning Specialist Mead Ploszay attended the “Learning and the Brain” conference in Boston, MA. Speakers at the “Learning and the Brain” conference present their very own cutting edge neurological research and discuss implications for learning methods and interventions. The focal point of the November conference was current research that pertains to teaching students with reading and math challenges. Presentations by Gabrieli, Sousa, McCandliss, Ansari and Klingberg were among the most intriguing. Researchers spoke in depth about the importance of white matter connections that are formed between the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Brain imaging and in depth mapping reveal that both hemispheres are activated when higher-level thinking is occurring.

This conference inspires educators to find new ways to reach all learners, knowing that brain plasticity allows for brain growth. New information about math learning was shared with the Middle School math department and early intervention identification strategies were shared with the Lower School Learning Specialist. The learning specialists continue to investigate the efficacy of a working memory training program with supporting data that encourages us to explore the program as an institution.
ACCELERATING ACHIEVEMENT

Lower School Faculty focus on reading and writing curriculum

On February 4, Lower School Teachers Cindy Bender, Kelly Hummel, Rich Ives, Amy Lamb, Ruth Moulton, Aubrey Schmoll, Veronica Wachter and Donna Waters attended a one-day workshop, Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement, led by Lucy Calkins, founding director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. The focus of the workshop was helping educators understand the implications of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for instruction and devising plans for aligning reading, writing, and content-area instruction to the CCSS.

Calkins also offered instruction on how to teach the higher levels of comprehension and composition skills called for by the CCSS — including teaching students to compare and contrast, to theorize and analyze, to interpret and to think critically. Workshop participants received tips on how to plan for instruction not only in narrative writing but also in argument and information writing, and not only in fiction but also in non-fiction reading. Calkins also addressed ways that educators can use performance assessments to track and support students’ progress along that continuum, as well as incorporate this work in other disciplines such as science and social studies.

Lucy Calkins is the founding director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and the Richard Robinson Professor of Children’s Literature at Teachers College, Columbia University. The Reading and Writing Project is both a think tank, developing state-of-the-art methods, and a provider of professional development for hundreds of schools.

PLAYBACK THEATRE

Dougherty observes community-oriented drama technique

In February, Middle School Drama Teacher Charlotte Dougherty attended the 2013 Metro DC Middle School Student Diversity Leadership Conference at Sandy Spring Friends School in Maryland. She attended the conference to observe student performers and meet with Tim Reagan, a drama teacher at Sidwell Friends School who uses the Playback Theatre approach in his curriculum. Playback Theatre is an interactive and spontaneous form of theatre which bases its material on the stories of a community. Used in many schools, nonprofit organizations, hospices and even prisons, Playback Theatre brings people together to share their unique perspectives. During Playback Theatre performances, audience members are invited to reveal their inner voice while sharing a personal story to be replayed by a company of actors. (source: playbacktheatre.org)

Dougherty says, “My goal is to be able to introduce Playback Theatre into my sixth grade curriculum next year and also use it to form an after school group for ‘students for social change.’ It is an opportunity to start conversations among kids about how they can make a difference and promote community.” In April, she will attend The Centre for Playback Theatre’s Core Training seminar in Magnolia, MS.

JUST PUBLISHED

Roth writes about war and the military

In January 2013, Upper School History Teacher Tanya Roth authored an op-ed for the History News Network regarding the end of combat exclusions for women; the piece can be accessed here: http://hnn.us/articles/women-combat-not-new-milestone-nonetheless. In addition, she submitted five encyclopedia entries for ABC-CLIO’s forthcoming encyclopedia entitled The World of the Civil War (edited by Lisa Tendrich Frank). ABC-CLIO is an organization that provides an abundance of curriculum and reference materials for educators and librarians in secondary schools, higher education, and public libraries.

Dr. Roth will also contribute a chapter in an upcoming anthology to be published by Johns Hopkins University. Edited by Doug Bristol and Heather Stur, the book will be titled Dealing with Difference: The U.S. Military, Minorities and Women Since World War II. Dr. Roth’s chapter will be called “An Attractive Career for Women: Opportunities, Limitations, and Women’s Integration in the Cold War Military.”
MEANINGFUL MEETINGS

Carpenter and Lyle are ISACS panelists

John Carpenter, Head of the Middle School, participated as a panelist at the 2013 ISACS Academy for Division Heads in Chicago, an annual conference that ISACS hosts for Division Heads of ISACS Schools. The Division Head’s Academy is designed to offer both new and seasoned division heads the chance to come together to share current issues and challenges that leaders in independent schools are facing today, and to renew their capacity and enthusiasm for this vital work. The breakout session that Carpenter co-facilitated was titled “Meaningful Faculty Meetings” and involved discussion of best-practice approaches in planning and facilitating productive faculty meetings that engage and inspire teachers. His role as a facilitator stems from his work as a current member of the ISACS ASC (Administrative Support Committee), which he was invited to join this year for a three-year term.

In January, Head of School Lisa Lyle served as one of four panelists for a presentation on “Women, Men and School Leadership,” during the 2013 ISACS Heads of School Conference. The presentation explored the topic, “In what ways is the experience of headship different for women as compared to men?” The session’s moderator was Claudia Daggett of the Elementary School Heads Association.

INTRODUCING BOOM

MICDS teachers present at METC

Upper School English Teachers Chris Rappleye and Matthew Mahaffey, together with Upper School Librarians Katie Voss and Colleen Williamson teamed up as presenters at the Midwest Education Technology Conference (METC) held in St. Louis on February 12.

During their presentation, “BOOM – 9th Grade Brain Owner’s Operating Manual,” the faculty discussed the process they followed to create a required 9th grade mini-course that guides students to develop a Brain Owner’s Operating Manual (BOOM). They highlighted interdisciplinary instruction in study skills, library research, and critical reading, and emphasized how the Mind, Brain and Education framework is employed in leveraging technology for grade level, content area instruction.

At MICDS, BOOM is a required mini-course for all 9th grade students to help them effectively transition to the Upper School academic culture. It introduces students to the essential habits of mind necessary to be a successful Upper School learner and to the tools and skills that will support their learning. Using the concept of developing a Brain Owner’s Operating Manual (BOOM) for Learning, students learn strategies for taking notes, managing technology, organizing information, and conducting effective research.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Helfant shares expertise in India and Qatar

This fall, Upper School Coordinator of Instructional Technology Elizabeth Helfant traveled internationally to share her expertise with schools in India and Qatar. She participated in the American School of Bombay’s Unplugged Conference, leading two four-hour hands-on technology sessions focused on “Tech Integration Using TPACK to Design, Unify and Evaluate.” TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) is a framework that can help educators manage and drive change. It enables them to be intentional about developing a truly integrated curriculum that leverages technology and what is known about emerging brain research to deepen students’ learning and skills acquisition.

Helfant was also invited to lead a three-day professional development session at the American School of Doha in Qatar. She led a one-day workshop and spent the remaining two days working in the teachers’ classrooms implementing technology ideas. She will return to Qatar in September 2013 for another four-day training session.
EXPLORING A NEW PATH
Sadicario pursues interests in filmmaking and sustainability

Following his use of Rivinus Summer Sabbatical funding to participate in a 2011 “Backpack Journalism” workshop led by PBS journalist Bill Gentile, Upper School English Teacher Dan Sadicario is combining his interest in filmmaking and sustainability. The short video Sadicario made during the workshop (https://vimeo.com/46502089) caught people’s attention, and he has been making short videos professionally for the last year as a result.

In February 2013, after viewing a video made by Sadicario and his wife, Margaret, called Magnificent Missouri, Audubon Missouri asked them to produce a video that explains what they do and why people should donate to their organization. Audubon Missouri, in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers, has the enormous task of both cleaning up the Missouri River and helping it do its job as a source of water for Missourians, a habitat for wildlife, especially birds, and a source of sediment for the Mississippi River. “Audubon wanted us to make a five-minute video that explained what they are about, and, in the process, help attract financial gifts from its audience. After conducting interviews and shooting some of our own footage, we were given a treasure trove of pictures and footage of habitats and birds to use in our video as well,” said Sadicario. The end product is this: https://vimeo.com/59876599

Since then, Sadicario and his wife have started their own video production business, Gus and Wes Productions, and completed as their first assignment a series of videos for Slow Food Saint Louis called Ask Before You Eat. “Although we are not limiting ourselves to these kinds of videos, the focus has been on making videos that promote sustainability,” Sadicario says, adding, “Each video project has spurred on another; I love it because I make movies, help promote sustainability, and all the while still have enough time to be a husband, a father and an English teacher.”

IN SUPPORT OF STUDENTS
Thurman leads PREPaRE training workshops

In November and January, Director of Student Services Vicki Thurman trained the counselors, learning specialists and nurses in a three-day crisis preparation, intervention and response program called PREPaRE that was created by the National Association of School Psychologists. Thurman is one of two people in the state of Missouri trained in this program and presents about once a year on the topic of crisis response at the state level through the Missouri Association of School Psychologists. She will be working with a professor at Webster University to train her students in PREPaRE this June.

The focus of the first workshop in November involved crisis preparation and response phases. The second workshop (two-days), completed in January, focused specifically on the roles of school-based mental health professionals in crisis intervention and recovery. “My goal in training all members of our student services team in this program is to provide them the tools and knowledge necessary to respond in an efficient yet compassionate way to the variety of needs that crisis brings to a school community,” Thurman explained.

ISACS DIVERSITY SUMMIT
Moore facilitates cross-cultural communication

MICDS Director of Diversity Erica Moore, through her work as a member of the ISACS Equity and Justice Committee, helped organize the annual ISACS Diversity Summit, “Beyond the Why: Real-Life Approaches to Cultural Competencies,” held March 8 – 9 in Chicago. Topics covered included cross-cultural communication, managing difficult conversations and assessing multicultural curricula.
BUILDING BEGINS
Transformational philanthropy makes bold action possible

On October 26, 2012, the Upper School community and more than 100 guests gathered for the official launch and groundbreaking of the McDonnell Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Facility and Brauer Hall and Auditorium. Construction is underway, and the building is scheduled for completion in early 2014.

Head of School Lisa Lyle spoke of how bold action and transformational philanthropy are necessary to make our School’s ambitious vision a reality. This vision is to provide MICDS students with the best possible education in science and mathematics, to provide a resource for best practice teaching in these areas, and to partner with local institutions in ways that serve students everywhere.

Dr. William Danforth ’44, Chancellor Emeritus of Washington University in St. Louis and Chairman of the Board of the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, delivered the keynote address. He reflected on the proud history of our School and how over the years generous people have stepped forward to help shape great educational institutions. He urged students to follow this example.

The need for the new building was driven by advancements in the MICDS science and math curriculum, and the fact that the current population of over 600 Upper School students had simply outgrown the comfortable confines of Danforth Chapel. Shaping the current plans for the building has been an organic process, with input from many alumni, parents, students and faculty.

This transformation to campus would not be possible without the extraordinary generosity of donors. We are grateful to the JSM Charitable Trust and James S. McDonnell ’54 and Elizabeth Hall McDonnell ’58 for the largest gift in the history of our School, ensuring that the McDonnell Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Facility would be built. We are also indebted to the kindness of Stephen F. Brauer ’63 and Camilla Thompson Brauer ’64 for the second largest gift in our School’s history, helping make Brauer Hall and Auditorium a reality. The McDonnells, Brauers and other leadership donors were honored guests at the ceremony.

Scan this code to watch “Student Buzz About the Building” or use this url to access the video: http://bit.ly/13c1mtb.

Scan this code to watch highlights from the Groundbreaking Ceremony or use this url to access the video: http://bit.ly/VL0zJT.
1. MCDONNELL FAMILY: (Front row, from left) Ellie Stevens ’20 and Mac Stevens ’23; (middle row, from left) Katie Abbott ’14, Marcella McDonnell Stevens ’81, Libby Hall McDonnell ’58, Jim McDonnell ’54, Peggy James and Bethy Hall; (back row, from left) Greg Stevens, John Hall ’54, Toby James ’56 and Randy McDonnell ’70

2. HERMANN FAMILY: (From left) Bobby Hermann ’14, Bob Hermann ’40, Merrill Hermann ’13, Bob Hermann ’70, Signa Hermann, Lottie Hermann Holton ’67 and Rick Holton

3. FOX FAMILY: (From left) Merle Fox, Greg Fox and Megan Fox ’14

4. KOBUSCH/WERNER FAMILY: (From left) Susan Kobusch Werner ’85, Louis Werner ’16, Peggy Wightman Kobusch ’56 and Joe Werner ’84

5. JONES FAMILY: (From left) Wes Jones ’74, Casey Jones ’16 and Nancy Yawaker

6. BRAUER FAMILY: (From left) Keynote speaker, Bill Danforth ’44, with Kimberly Thompson Brauer ’94, Beau Brauer ’95, Suzy Snowden Brauer ’95, Gale Thompson McMullin ’62, Stephen F. Brauer ’63, Kathy Thompson Hanser ’60 and Fred Hanser ’59

7. KALISHMAN FAMILY: (From left) Jim and Amy Kalishman

8. Aerial view of the new facility from the Northeast.

9. WERNER FAMILY: Linda Tschudy Werner ’81, Nicki Werner ’14 and Pete Werner

10. POLK FAMILY: (From left) Olivia Polk ’14, Carine Polk and Jack Polk ’16

11. Upper School students enjoy the ceremony.

12. MARTIN FAMILY: (From left) Angela and Kayla Martin ’17

13. Head of School, Lisa Lyle, welcomes guests.

14. GOLDBERG FAMILY: (From left) Caroline Goldberg ’15, Will Goldberg ’18, Leslie Goldberg and Steve Goldberg

15. HARRIS FAMILY: (From left) Misti Harris ’16, Eugene Harris ’82 and Gabrielle Harris ’13

Leadership donors unable to attend included: Mr. and Mrs. William F. Holekamp, Ms. Carol B. Loeb ’59, Mrs. Louis L. Ward, Mr. Charles J. Cella ’54, Mitch Platin, M.D. and Maude Kandula, M.D.
An in-depth look at the MICDS commitment to teaching and modeling healthy habits

BY DEBBIE HIGGINS

Fit FOR Life

e live in an age where childhood obesity has become a national health crisis and educators and parents everywhere are grappling with the challenge to get kids moving and teach them to make healthy choices. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the National Center for Health Statistics report the following sobering facts:

- Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and tripled in adolescents in the past 30 years.
- The percentage of children aged 6–11 years in the United States who were obese increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 18% in 2010. Similarly, the percentage of adolescents aged 12–19 years who were obese increased from 5% to 18% over the same period.
- In 2010, more than one third of children and adolescents were overweight or obese.

At MICDS, however, the statistics are much different — only six percent of the student population qualifies as overweight, and during and after the school day, students of all ages are engaged in physical activities that are not only keeping them healthy, but are enjoyable and challenging as well. For many students, P.E. class is a highlight of the day, and an abundance of after-school athletic and fitness programs offer opportunities to hone skills as part of a team or in the company of friends.

The MICDS Physical Education Faculty have harnessed their expertise, passion for teaching and willingness to study best practices in their field as well as brain research to develop a truly student-centered, innovative curriculum with an intentional progression that begins in junior kindergarten. “We have created an atmosphere in which physical activity is required,” explains P.E. Department Chair Eric Lay. “Our school-wide focus on teaching kids to become lifelong learners applies to lifelong fitness.” This is the primary reason behind the intentional progression of the physical education program from JK–8th grade. A carefully structured P.E. program in Lower and Middle School, in combination with the Middle School athletics program, helps prepare students for the continued promotion of healthy, physically active behaviors in the Upper School and beyond.
THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE P.E. PROGRAM

The JK–8 physical education program supports the development of healthy, physically active behaviors by providing students with learning experiences that are based on the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) standards. These learning experiences promote the following:

- Development of movement skills in a variety of physical activities
- Understanding of movement concepts, principles, and strategies as they apply to learning and performance of physical activities
- Understanding of the importance of proper nutrition and regular participation in physical activities to maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness
- Understanding of the connection between responsible personal and social interactions in a physically active setting and all other social situations
- Understanding the importance and value of physical activity

Current brain research, as discussed in John J. Ratey’s book, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, and John Medina’s *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home and School*, further validates the need for a quality physical education program for all students. When we exercise appropriately, we increase the amount of a protein called BDNF in our brains. BDNF helps maintain and build neurons, or nerve cells. Following the vigorous exercise students receive in P.E., they arrive to class ready to build more neural connections and learn more efficiently. Additional positive results of increased fitness include:

- Miracle grow of the brain
- Increased tolerance to physical and psychological stress
- Improved attention

The P.E. department has further proof of the power of increased BDNF to enhance learning. “Since we have moved 7th and 8th grade P.E. classes to the first two periods of the day, we have received positive feedback from teachers who report that kids come to their classes ready to learn,” notes Lay.
A FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG SUCCESS
In the Beasley Lower School, P.E. teachers Sue Orlando and Jim Lohr work with our youngest students every day to ensure that they have solidly-developed motor skills, but perhaps more importantly, that they also possess a true enjoyment of physical activity that will last a lifetime. All grades in the Lower School (JK – 4) participate in a 30 minute P.E. class every day — which means that over the course of a child’s six years in the Lower School, Orlando and Lohr come to know each student’s abilities exceptionally well.

Developing motor skills, coordination and balance is critical for our youngest students, and the Lower School P.E. curriculum features creative units that hone these skills in developmentally appropriate ways. In his book, Children and Sports Training: How Your Future Champions Should Exercise to be Healthy, Fit and Happy, Dr. Jozef Drabik discusses the importance of developing movement abilities (endurance, coordination, speed, strength and flexibility) at an early age:

“Muscle innervation in children — the growth of motor nerve endings into muscle fibers’ interior and the entwining of a muscle fiber’s nuclei and blood vessels — is completed around the age of six years. It has great importance in neuromuscular coordination and thus, in learning movement skills. Innervation occurs earlier in great muscles than small ones. This is why a child can master swimming, bicycling or skating sooner and more easily than precise hand movements such as catching a ball.”

The first 8 – 10 minutes of every Lower School P.E. class consists of movement exercises that might include sliding, skipping, hopping, and even non-typical movements such as wiggling or scooting on bellies and backs. These activities achieve motor repetition and solidify motor memory. “Since we have class every day, our work to develop motor skills and movement skills is continuous,” says Orlando. Each class period builds upon the next. “A child who is exposed to a great variety of movement opportunities at a young age has an even greater potential to be a successful athlete later in life,” adds Lohr. “We work with each child to ensure they develop skills to their highest possible individual potential.”

With a combined 47 years of teaching experience at our School between them, Orlando and Lohr have been instrumental in shaping Lower School P.E. into the exceptional program it is today. “In the early days, it was all about competition, with team captains and tournaments with winners and losers,” Orlando recalls. “Our kids need to learn how to compete and win and lose, but first they need to enjoy the activities and experience some success so they want to keep playing.” Lower School P.E. equipment is kid-friendly — from the height of basketball hoops to the size of the ball, to the distance between hurdles.

To keep the students’ interest level high, P.E. units are a maximum of two weeks in length and are tailored for each grade level. For example, during the cup stacking unit, junior and senior kindergarten students begin with three cups. As they grow older, they advance to six and 10 cups and so on. “Our expectations for each unit grow with the students,” Lohr explains. Other examples of units include the Olympics, Skatetime, Creative Movement, Favorite Games, Stunts and Tumbling, and much more. Quite simply, Lower School students LOVE their P.E. classes. The younger children typically run into the gym, eager to see what is planned for the day. “The excitement they bring when they see something new set up makes all of the work well worth it,” Orlando says. “The kids understand that we are there to help them learn and improve their skills, but in a fun way.”

Orlando and Lohr are always researching ideas for new units as well as ways to improve what they currently offer. “We hope to keep things interesting and new from year to year,” Orlando says, adding that because they know their students so well, they are able to differentiate their instruction to accommodate a variety of learning styles as well as tailor activities to suit a specific child’s personality. “When we demonstrate a new skill or rules of a game, we employ verbal cues and color coding, and introduce activities two or three different ways to accommodate verbal learners and visual learners,” Lohr explains. A comprehensive knowledge of kids’ abilities also helps Orlando and Lohr organize them for group activities, in ways that challenge and motivate students to improve.

In the Lower School, though the NASPE standards are applied to curriculum development, Orlando and Lohr assess students based on their movement abilities. “We do not test skills,” Orlando says. “Since we see the kids every day, we are able to thoroughly observe them in class
and note how much they have grown and accomplished.”

As they work with the Lower School students from age four to age 10, Orlando and Lohr strive to achieve specific goals. “We hope to give these students as many opportunities to make them the best they can be athletically as they grow, so no matter what they decide to do, they will have the foundation to be successful,” says Lohr, noting that if a student has endurance, speed and flexibility, he or she can be trained to play any sport. Another element of P.E. instruction, and a critical objective is to teach students to handle competition with grace, to not be over confident, and overall, to be good citizens.

The ultimate guiding principle is simply to do whatever is best for the students. “No matter what it takes, we want to give our students the best possible opportunities. If they love physical education at a young age, there is a much greater chance they will have healthy habits as adults,” says Orlando.

THE YEARS IN THE MIDDLE
Like the Lower School program, the Middle School P.E. curriculum grows with the students. Students in grades 5 and 6 have physical education class five out of every six days for 40–45 minutes. The 7th and 8th grades have physical education every day for 45 minutes. Class size is between 15–18 students.

Organized sports are introduced in 5th grade so that students can begin to develop the skills they will need to participate in physical education and after-school sports in the future. Each subsequent year, instruction builds on what has already been taught and age-appropriate opportunities are provided for students to practice and refine these skills. For example, basic skills are taught in 5th and 6th grade lacrosse, while game strategies and techniques are put in place in 7th and 8th grade. There is a noticeable difference in the skills and concepts being taught for each activity across grade levels.

Thirty-six units are offered in Middle School P.E., including soccer, volleyball, strength and flexibility training, speedball, swimming, squash, yoga, badminton and much more. Most units are only eight class periods in length to keep students interested as well as challenged. “Our teachers work exceptionally hard to make classes enjoyable for students,” says Lay. “This enjoyment comes from being presented with an appropriate challenge and working toward completing that challenge. This parallels our fifth competency, ‘Understands the importance of valuing physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction’.

Differentiating in P.E. is a challenge for faculty and a mainstay of the annual goals for the department. To differentiate for a variety of skill levels, P.E. teachers create environments where every student can experience some form of success. An example, according to P.E. teacher Eric North, is to increase the size and decrease the speed of an object by using a balloon instead of a ball in a racquet sport for a student with poor hand-eye coordination. The P.E. teachers also provide rubrics when assessing skills to give students clear guidance on what they need to know and what they need to do to improve. Lay explains, “We never say, ‘You’re not good at this activity and you will never be good at this activity.’ We say, ‘Right now your skill in this activity needs to improve, here’s what you need to improve on, here’s how you do it, if you want to improve you have to work at it.’ Or, ‘Your skills are outstanding. If you continue to work to improve you could be very successful’.”

The frequency of P.E. classes in the Middle School offers the same benefit it does in the Lower School — teachers know their students well. “We design lesson plans that are on par with our students’ abilities and challenge them in appropriate ways,” says faculty member Pete Jans. “I believe that because we teach following the approach of learning the skills, then bettering and finally mastering the skills instead of winning and losing that all kids feel more included and are willing to try new things.”

The Middle School Athletics Program offers a wide variety of opportunities for students wishing to participate in after-school
sports. Students may select from 19 different programs supporting 38 total teams, including: Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Field Hockey, Football, Lacrosse, Soccer, Tennis, Track & Field, Volleyball, Water Polo and Wrestling.

Middle School students also are invited to participate in the Middle School Strength and Conditioning Program two days per week after school that offers opportunities to perfect exercise technique and increase their understanding of why certain exercises are beneficial. Student interest in this program is high, and the department is working to create a solid 7th–12th grade sport performance program.

**BEYOND THE SCHOOL DAY**

The Upper School does not have a formal physical education program, but through the athletic requirement and year-round access to exercise instruction, students have many options to continue to learn how to improve health and fitness. As part of their curricular obligation, 9th and 10th grade students are required to participate in two seasons of athletic activity per year. Students in 11th and 12th grade are required to participate in one season of athletic activity per year. This yearly requirement can be met in a variety of ways.

Students may select from 29 different programs supporting 57 teams in the Upper School: Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Crew, Cross Country, Cycling, Dance, Field Hockey, Football, Golf, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer, Squash, Swimming & Diving, Tennis, Track & Field, Volleyball, Water Polo and Wrestling. Students can serve as team participants, managers or trainers.

Essential Fitness, an alternative program to sports participation, was developed three years ago to replace the Recreation and Fitness program. The primary objective of Essential Fitness is to create an environment where students can learn about exercise and improve overall fitness. They are required to complete three hours of exercise in the fitness center or McDonnell Athletic Center each week. Participants in Essential Fitness also work with fitness coaches to learn proper exercise techniques, and each student meets one-on-one or in small groups with a coach to develop an individualized workout routine.

In order to ensure students’ maximum well being and promote year-round fitness, P.E. teachers, coaches and certified trainers lead Winter Workouts focused on preparing off-season athletes for their upcoming spring seasons. These sessions also focus on preventing injuries. “Reducing risk for injury and improving athletic performance are the two major goals of our evolving sport performance program. We have put in considerable time researching the best methods for screening students so we can properly identify risk factors for injury. In the near future we hope to have an assessment tool that will be used in grades 7–12 that will provide injury risk data on each student as well as proper progressions for reducing risk for injury and improving sport performance,” Lay explains.

“We could fill McDonnell Athletic Center with all of the research that supports the need to develop good fitness habits in young people,” he concludes. The most popular reasons include:

- A reduced risk for the top seven leading causes of death in the U.S.: heart disease, some cancers, respiratory disease, stroke, Alzheimer’s and diabetes (source: http://exerciseismedicine.org)
- Improved cognition
  (*Brain Rules* and *Spark*)
- Decreased anxiety and improved ability to handle stress (*Brain Rules* and *Spark*)
- Reduced risk for non-contact sport injuries (source: http://www.acsm.org)
- Improved athletic performance
- Increased confidence

“At the age of 25–35, everyone is on a downhill slide in regard to the physical function of his or her body,” Lay explains. “If our young people build up their aerobic fitness, bone health and strength during adolescence, they will be at a higher peak before they decline. If they develop appropriate habits and maintain a physically active lifestyle, they can significantly improve their quality of life when they are 80–90 years old.”

A key influencing factor in our students’ motivation to be physically active is the culture of our School — a culture in which healthy habits and physical fitness are highly valued and emulated. “I’ve seen many students come in at 7th grade with previous experiences in P.E. and athletics that were negative,” says Lay. “After a few years in our school community, that all changes.”

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**JK–12 P.E. & Athletics Progression**

**Lower School**
- Learns to perform basic motor skills
- Understands that physical activity helps improve health and fitness
- Understands how to work with others in a physically active setting
- Learns to enjoy physical activity

**Middle School**
- Learns to apply basic motor skills to a variety of sport and fitness activities
- Deepens understanding of motor skill development and sport strategy
- Deepens understanding of how physical activity helps improve health and fitness
- Deepens understanding of the connection between the social interactions in physically active settings with other life settings
- Continues to learn to enjoy physical activity

**Upper School**
- Chooses forms of physical activities to pursue
- Deepens understanding of sport skills needed for the sport(s) or physical activity they enjoy
- Has opportunity to be physically active in order to improve health and fitness
- Continues to deepen understanding of the connection between the social interactions in physically active settings with other life settings (CHAMPS program)
- Has the opportunity to find enjoyment in the physical activity they choose to pursue
When students convene for their first formal gathering in Brauer Hall sometime in 2014, the surroundings will be brand-new, but the tradition this state-of-the-art facility will support dates back to the earliest years of Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School.

Brauer Hall is being made possible by the generosity of Stephen F. ‘63 and Camilla (Kimmy) Thompson Brauer ‘64. Their gift, the second largest in School history, was the catalyst that gave the MICDS Board of Trustees the confidence to greenlight construction last summer. The Brauers have a particular interest in the longstanding concept of “school community” because five generations of their family have attended classes on each of the campuses occupied by Mary I., Country Day and MICDS over the past 154 years. Assemblies have always been integral elements of the school schedule regardless of building location.

As Mary Institute grew, the School progressed from its buildings on Lucas, Locust and Lake in St. Louis to the intersection of Ladue and Warson Roads in St. Louis County. Its daily routine involved opportunities to draw the entire student population together for purposes of common learning and “community.” Mary Institute volunteer archivist Anne Stupp McAlpin ’64 notes that alumnae in 1908 raised funds to construct an assembly hall as part of the Lake Avenue building. It was called “Founders’ Hall” in honor of those who created Mary Institute in 1859.

Headmaster Ronald Beasley (1949–1969) increased the frequency and quality of assemblies, known as “Chapels,” in the ’50s and ’60s, bringing in representatives from the St. Louis Symphony and St. Louis Art Museum, movies covering a variety of subjects, and numerous speakers reflecting a wide range of interests. Students attended daily Chapel beginning in the fourth grade. Although the School has always been deemed non-sectarian, Mr. Beasley’s Chapels tended to follow the Church of England format with hymns, prayers and quiet reflection. “Chapel was an influential part of my experience at Mary Institute and a steadying force in my life,” shared Kimmy Brauer. “It is hugely important for students to have shared opportunities together in assembly. Everyone gains from the experience.”

A strict seating plan found fourth graders in front, across the aisle from seniors, with classes gradually moving to the back of the room and then across the aisle and toward the front once again, until senior status was reached. Mondays, in Mr. Beasley’s era, were generally devoted to cultural programs. Another day each week featured a seventh grade reader, and Friday
Chapel was led by seniors — one reading a prayer and announcing hymns, and another speaking on a topic of interest she wanted to share. After the merger in 1992, assemblies generally involved smaller divisional groups due to space limitations and scheduling issues.

At the original St. Louis Country Day School campus on Brown Road, daily assemblies were part of the schedule from opening day in September 1917. An excerpt from the 1919–1920 Country Day catalog reads: “The boys reach the school at 9:00 a.m. by special electric cars and after a brief chapel service of a non-sectarian nature classes begin.” In 1925, gatherings were moved to the school’s new 335-seat auditorium in a building which also housed a gymnasium and a lunchroom.

By the 1940s, the chapel seating arrangement was interpreted by some as mirroring the unquestioned “pecking order” aboard CDS buses — Lower School in front, followed by the Middle School, and then the Upper School in the exalted rear section. Long-time faculty member C. Robert Wells remembers that assemblies were held the first period in the school day for many years, with students marched into the auditorium soon after they piled off the buses. It was eventually acknowledged that bleary-eyed youngsters could not be counted upon to pay close attention to the speakers, and the assemblies were then pushed back later in the morning. By the late 1950s, when CDS had moved to Warson Road and into Danforth Chapel, all-school events were held twice weekly. Programs varied little from one administration to the next, with the common challenge of finding topics and speakers of interest to students ranging in age from 10 to 17. Most popular were assemblies featuring sports figures, among them St. Louis Cardinal Stan Musial, who was pictured in the Country Day News signing autographs after he had encouraged students to join the school’s Boy Scout troop. “I always enjoyed assemblies at the start of the school day,” Steve Brauer recalls. “They gave us a window to the outside world that was not so academic. I remember two in particular. One was a visit by Sir Edmund Hillary nine years after he conquered Mount Everest. The second was a presentation by NASA’s John “Shorty” Powers, the well-known voice of the Mercury manned space flights. A year earlier at another CDS assembly, a speaker from McDonnell Aircraft, the firm which designed and built the Mercury capsules, had shown us a film about Alan Shepard’s Mercury flight, so Colonel Powers’ in-person remarks really brought current events home to us as students.”

Lack of seating capacity was a recurring challenge for assemblies as both schools grew. At Country Day, graduation on the Brown Road campus was finally forced outdoors in 1954 when the stage of the aging auditorium could no longer accommodate the number of attendees.

Brauer Hall will strengthen our School community and its traditions.

CONTRIBUTORS: DEBbie HIGGINS, ANNE STUPP MICALPIN ’64 AND CLIFF SAXTON ’64
"This is a special place. When we gather here, it’s a chance for us to stop what we’re doing, come together, put aside our individual conversations, and think about what it means to be part of a larger community."

The Taylor Family Hearth Room will feature cozy armchairs, small tables and a fireplace. A warm space with a fireplace.

... of honorees; 19 years later, the same occurred on the Warson Road campus when commencement attendees outgrew the Danforth Chapel stage. After the two schools merged in 1992, Danforth’s seating was expanded slightly for MICDS Upper School use by lengthening the balcony, but increasingly, major events were held in McDonnell Gymnasium or McDonnell Athletic Center, neither of which was designed for such gatherings.

Though many of the spaces available for divisional and full community gatherings have changed or have been outgrown since the merger, the value placed upon bringing students and faculty together for assemblies is stronger than ever. Every division meets regularly for assembly time, in addition to convening three times each year for all-school assemblies in McDonnell Athletic Center.

In the Beasley Lower School, assemblies typically occur once a month, and programs vary to include news about upcoming events, guest speakers and presentations by students and faculty. As they progress into Middle and Upper School, our youngest students carry with them the memories of singing “America the Beautiful” as a Lower School community, celebrating classmates’ birthdays, and enjoying the latest edition of the Beasley Broadcast news program. Though most assemblies follow a similar format, Lower School Head Janet McMillion stresses, “There’s nothing predictable about the content. The Beasley Broadcast and assembly gatherings help all grade levels become more aware of activities throughout our division and strengthen our sense of community.”

In the summer of 2007, Middle School teachers Charlotte Dougherty (drama) and Jody Marberry (math) designed a new format for the weekly “Chapel” gathering, now called Middle School Meeting, to make it more student-centered. They formed an after-school club composed of students in grades 5–8, who help plan each week’s program by writing scripts, preparing skits or slides and serving as emcees. “We look at what’s on the horizon in Middle School, advisory themes, hot topics and things the kids are concerned about, and tailor our programs to complement or address them,” explains Marberry.

“The week’s theme or topic determines the tone we want the kids to follow,” adds Dougherty. “We use humor, music and skits, but we also show respect during formal situations.” In recent years students have adopted a new tradition — reinforcing the Middle School Honor Code at the conclusion of each Meeting by repeating in unison, “Do the right thing — because it’s the right thing to do.” Students and teachers alike look forward to their weekly time together in Eliot Chapel. “This is a special place,” said Middle School Head John Carpenter during the first Middle School Meeting of the 2012–2013 school year. “When we gather here, it’s a chance for us to stop what we’re doing, come together, put aside our individual conversations, and think about what it means to be part of a larger community.”

In recent years, the Upper School has intentionally increased the time spent assembled as a full community, moving from the former tradition of Monday morning Chapel to designated community time two or even three times per week. Students and faculty gather to hear announcements, celebrate achievements, hear from a guest speaker, or mark special occasions such as Prize Speaking, the Cum Laude Society Induction, or the Harbison Lecture.

Upper School Head Scott Small believes that scheduling community time during the school week is essential. “It is a meaningful experience for our students,” he explains. “Building community through formal and informal gatherings has immediate relevance to our Mission Statement and academic pursuits. The time we spend together as a full community — thinking critically and discussing ideas in a larger setting, showing compassion toward one another, demonstrating respect for a guest sharing a personal story — these are experiences that are critical to the sustenance of a vibrant learning environment.”

There are also occasions when school communities need to gather to feel safe, and to strengthen those personal connections so important to us all. Many alumni who were students at the time of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks vividly recall gathering in Danforth Chapel for reassurance and quiet reflection. An impromptu assembly similar in tone took place in December 2012, when the Upper School filed silently into McDonnell Gymnasium to process the tragic events at Sandy Hook Elementary School and find comfort in their classmates and teachers.
While construction is in progress, the Upper School is using McDonnell Gymnasium for community time. With the opening of Brauer Hall in 2014, the School will have the facility it needs to sustain the beloved tradition of frequent community gatherings in new and exciting ways.

The central space in Brauer Hall will be an auditorium that seats 800, easily accommodating the entire Upper School community as well as 100–200 guests. “It will restore the community spaces we have temporarily lost in an inviting, functional space,” says Small. The auditorium will be a comfortable, intimate and beautiful venue for students and adults to share their ideas, and develop leadership and public speaking skills. It will filter in lots of natural light, the seating configuration ensures great sight lines to the stage, and the acoustics for vocal or instrumental performances will be superb. “We are looking forward to having a space that can be adapted for a variety of purposes — entire class meetings or lectures, parent meetings, special celebrations — these things that are currently a challenge to facilitate will all be possible,” says Small. “The spaces that we inhabit define who we are; these new spaces will elevate much-loved traditions.”

The Upper School also has a great need for designated student commons areas. In recent years, students have claimed various spots, such as overcrowded hallways adjacent to Messing Gallery and Orthwein Theatre, or McCulloch Library, as places to gather during free periods. These spaces have other official purposes and are not ideally suited to meet students’ needs for informal student-teacher interaction and socializing. The new spaces that will be housed within Brauer Hall, including the Taylor Family Hearth Room and the Holekamp Study Commons, will come complete with cozy armchairs, functional work tables and even a fireplace. These spaces are just as critical to building community as the auditorium. “It is a fundamental truth that a learning community extends far beyond the classroom,” says Small. “Traditionally we think of students not using free time well. This is not the case with our kids — they are eager to find space to meet in small groups to study together, to be social or connect with their teachers. Providing these informal spaces is vitally important to our students’ maturation as respectful and responsible young men and women.”

The multifaceted design of these additional spaces will also accommodate many of community-related events that currently sacrifice some measure of connectedness in using less-than-ideal or even off-campus locations, including, for example, the Blue Whale Café, dances, special lectures, parent meetings, sports team banquets and alumni gatherings.

“Ultimately, gathering as a community gives us affirmation that we are, in the very best sense, a part of something bigger than our individual selves,” Small concludes. “Our freshmen can look across the way and see where they will one day be as seniors, and the seniors can reflect back upon their first days in the Upper School. We sincerely hope that the memories and friendships nurtured in these moments together will last a lifetime.”

For the Brauer family, active involvement at the School extends back to the very first days of Mary Institute when Mrs. Brauer’s great-grandmothers, Camilla Stiles Thompson, Class of 1861, and Rosalie O’Fallon Randolph, Class of 1881, were students. Both of Mrs. Brauer’s grandmothers also attended Mary Institute, as did her mother and her three sisters. Additionally, her father, Ford W. Thompson Jr., is a member of the Country Day School Class of 1935. Together, Mr. and Mrs. Brauer chose MICDS for their son, Beau ’95, whose wife, Suzy Snowden Brauer, was a member of the Class of 1995. The family is hopeful that Beau and Suzy’s daughter, Camilla, will represent the family’s sixth generation at our School by joining the Class of 2027.

“Our desire to support the School’s goals is most certainly motivated by our family’s deep roots here,” Kimmy Brauer shared. “We are pleased to make possible this beautiful facility that will cast the beloved tradition of building community in a new light.” Steve Brauer adds, “We are happy that this new building keeps the community tradition alive in ways that are forward-looking, and that it will be seamlessly connected to classrooms dedicated to the STEM disciplines which are so vitally important to our students’ educational experience. Our family endorses the vision of MICDS, and we sincerely hope many more members the School community will join us by lending their support to realize the School’s aspirations for the future.”
As young children growing up, we learn some of life’s most important lessons our very first days at school: “Be nice”... “Play fair”... “Wait your turn”... “Share”... “Keep your hands to yourself”... “Say you’re sorry when you hurt someone,” and last but not least, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Indeed, even before we learn to read and write, we are taught the Golden Rule as a sure guide for making our way in the world around us.

As we grow older, however, life becomes more complicated, and these simple rules for good social behavior are no longer enough to help us make our way in the wider world. This is perhaps most true in middle school, an often confusing time of marked cognitive, physical and emotional change when powerful forces and peer pressures pull at our students from all sides. Not surprisingly, our
middle schoolers during this critical period find themselves asking a lot of questions: “Who am I?”... “What do I want to become?”... “Who are my real friends, and how to I balance my own idea of right and wrong with my simple and overwhelming desire to fit in?”

The Middle School Milieu

Growing up is never easy. Psychologists tell us that 10 – 15 year olds are at a critical stage of identity formation, when peer influence is paramount and feelings of social inclusion and difference are especially heightened. Unfortunately, young people often approach the question of “who they are” by focusing on “who they’re not” and resort in an attempt to build themselves up by putting other people down, with everything from eye-rolling and obvious whispering to more blatant forms of teasing and exclusion, cliqueness, and other forms of relational aggression. This behavior is further normalized by an avalanche of negative behavior that our young people see on TV and in movies today, particularly in television sitcoms with their crass glorification of put-downs, one-liners, sarcasm and one-upmanship as socially acceptable behavior. We see across the country how these attitudes can lead to bullying, harassment, and other forms of social aggression and cruelty in schools, and feel obligated to help our middle schoolers navigate these issues with sensitivity and understanding. We should acknowledge though that this phenomenon is not restricted to young people alone. More than one critic has observed that this decline in social norms mirrors in many ways the larger decline in civility present in much of our public discourse today, from national politics and social mores to local school boards and neighborhood associations. Even driving seems less civil than it used to be a generation ago! Looking back years later, many adults wonder how they ever survived middle school at all.

A Community of Kindness

Although middle school may be fraught with challenges, it also presents wonderful opportunities for us at MICDS to make a real difference in the lives of our students. As part of our work to serve the specific developmental needs of this age group, our Middle School teachers and students have devoted a good portion of their time together tackling these very issues. Starting with a renewed emphasis on the Honor Code in the Middle School two years ago, and continuing with our work around issues of diversity leading to our first annual Middle School Diversity Conference last year, the Middle School has been engaged in a series of intentional conversations this year in our ongoing effort to build a strong school culture founded on principles of honor, respect, personal integrity and positive interactions within our Middle School community.

Introduced to our students as the “Community of Kindness” at the start of this year, this initiative is proving to have far-reaching implications for how we see ourselves and our interactions with each other as a school community. Recognizing that the work of fostering healthy relationships among adolescents is never easy, our full Middle School community has committed this

“Be kind whenever possible — It is always possible.”

– MAHATMA GANDHI
Giving our students authorship and agency in this process was a critical piece of this endeavor, as it offered them a chance to speak their own truth and see their own fingerprints on the final product.

Kicking off the Conversation

Our kickoff to the “Community of Kindness” this year began on our very first day of school. Following an Opening Day presentation in Mary Eliot Chapel which introduced the “Community of Kindness” concept to our Middle School, students were challenged to explore more deeply in advisory and class meetings what a true “Community of Kindness” might look like and where our challenges and opportunities lay in bringing this vision into being. Specifically, our students were asked to discuss three questions:

1. What would a true “Community of Kindness” look like?
2. What are the practical everyday obstacles and challenges we face in making this happen?
3. What words of wisdom or advice can you offer to help us bring this kind of community into being?

These last two questions were particularly important, as they ask students to identify specific situations from their own daily experience where unkind behavior is likely to take place. To our students’ credit, they took these conversations to heart, and ended up brainstorming a wealth of practical ideas and suggestions for their fellow students to consider.

Our advisors took careful notes of these discussions, which we collected and then reflected back to the entire student body in a follow-up Middle School Meeting. Giving our students authorship and agency in this process was a critical piece of this endeavor, as it offered them a chance to speak their own truth and see their own fingerprints on the final product. Knowing that kids who are deaf to adult advice are much more likely to listen to their peers, we wanted to give them the opportunity to frame their own expectations to increase the likelihood of their buy-in to the final results. Such an approach also reflects the lessons wise educators have learned from their previous experience:

In their desire to tackle efforts at character education (often referred to as the ‘second curriculum’) schools often err in relying on pre-packaged, off-the-shelf programs that feel canned and contrived and lack the organic qualities germane to the host institution. Like the student-drafted Honor Code that emerged from our Middle School Student Council 15 years ago, this year’s “Community of Kindness” statement bears all the hallmarks of an authentic process, with a legitimacy that far exceeds any rules that adults might seek to impose on a student body.

In Their Own Words

And so we allowed our Middle School students to tell us what they wanted. While the full list of responses is too long to share here, a sampling of the results we received should whet the appetites of those eager to better understand what our middle schoolers today are thinking. Of course, some of the suggestions and ideas we received were predictable: “Be nice to and respect others”... “Accept other people”... “Help one another out”... “Lead by example”... and of course, “Treat others like you want to be treated (Golden Rule).”
But the vast majority of the comments and ideas we received spoke directly to the heart of our middle schoolers’ everyday struggles and experience in specific and practical ways. In their own words, here is brief sampling of what our students told us — and each other — what they needed to change in order to make our Middle School a more accepting and inclusive for all:

- Look at things from another’s point of view — stand in his or her shoes.
- Avoid the drama! NO RUMORS!
- Look someone in the eyes when they are talking to you.
- Avoid bragging.
- Don’t use nicknames (unless someone tells you it’s OK to do so).
- If you have hurt someone, apologize with sincerity, rather than offering a casual ‘sorry’ and moving on.
- Don’t judge!!!
- Lose the sarcasm.
- Grades are confidential and we shouldn’t point out when others are struggling.
- Listen more, talk less.
- Let your friends make new friends.
- Don’t change a story when you’re upset with someone to suit your needs.
- Don’t be a bystander…
- And last but not least: Eliminate the phrase “Just Kidding” from our vocabulary!

Having invested so personally in this effort, our students were eager to hear what we had learned when we gathered again in Eliot Chapel to report out on the results. The collective list was greeted enthusiastically by our students, and became the foundation on which we have continued our conversations this year.

Moving the Conversation Forward

Another key to the success of our initiative this year has been our commitment to actively revisiting these themes at various points during the school year. Like a young seed that has been freshly planted, the success of our “Community of Kindness” effort depended on careful watering and nurturing to help it take root and grow. To avoid the fate of so many “one and done” efforts that begin promisingly but are left to wither and die, we knew we had to find ways to keep our conversation with students moving forward in ways that felt authentic rather than forced or contrived. To this end, we have seized several opportunities to regularly revisit this topic this year, in ways that speak directly to the reality of what our students face inside and outside of school each day.

The first of these opportunities presented itself very early on in the school year. Recognizing the powerful influence that the online world and social media has in the lives of young people today, we used October’s National Bullying Awareness Month to address issues of cyberbullying and the specific impact that online communication can have on our daily human relationships here at school. Part of our larger digital citizenship program in the Middle School, this focus on peer online behavior is meant to help our students better appreciate how their online behavior can be seen as an intentional or unintentional reflection of their deeper values, and … can leave a lasting impression and unflattering ‘digital footprint’ for others to follow.

"The focus on peer online behavior is meant to help our students better appreciate how their online behavior can be seen as an intentional or unintentional reflection of their deeper values, and … can leave a lasting impression and unflattering ‘digital footprint’ for others to follow."
discussed how the perceived distance and safety of a keyboard can sometimes embolden people to say things that they would never dream of saying in public. Again, these issues are not restricted to young people alone: As adults, we have all found ourselves involved at one time or another in online conversations that quickly heat up or sour due to perceived slights or misread intentions on the part of the receiver and sender. Encouraging our students to be more thoughtful about their online communications is one way of helping them navigate the challenges today’s digital world presents.

“
We explained to our students that the same tolerance and respect we show to people of different races, faiths and backgrounds must also extend in this election season to those whose political persuasions differ from our own.
"

Cast Your Vote: The Election

The elections this past November offered us another opportunity to revisit our “Community of Kindness” conversation. As we all know, politics is a potentially heated topic of conversation with ample opportunities for healthy differences of opinion to boil over into highly charged criticism and debate. In the weeks leading up to our recent Presidential Election, our Middle School history teachers were asked to frame this quadrennial event in Middle School Meeting within the larger context of political pluralism of our country, and to share our expectations for what healthy and appropriate debate should look like within our own classrooms and hallways. Knowing that political differences often stir up strong passion and emotion, we explained to our students that the same tolerance and respect we show to people of different races, faiths and backgrounds must also extend in this election season to those whose political persuasions differ from our own, be they liberal or conservative, Democratic or Republican. As we shared with our students in Middle School Meeting, civil discourse is at the heart of American democracy, and it is our ability to come together to discuss these differences peacefully that makes the United States such a shining example to the rest of the world. Subsequent Middle School Meetings in the run-up to the two Presidential Debates were used for students to hear from student representatives from both sides on issues ranging from education and the economy to world affairs, prior to our own Middle School mock election in November. As a lesson in civics, we feel that teaching our students how to “disagree agreeably” is part of our larger effort to build the respectful climate we all seek in the Middle School.

Yet a third opportunity to further the idea of a “Community of Kindness” came courtesy of our 8th grade class. As part of the December holiday season, our entire 8th grade took part in an activity called “No Dis Week,” a nationwide campaign which challenges students across the country to put aside their usual habits and pledge to avoid using any negative comments or casual put-downs as part of their usual everyday interactions. As our students
told us at the beginning of the year, the phrase “Just Kidding” is often used as an innocent excuse to cover a wide range of negative comments and behaviors that are at best insensitive and at worst purposely hurtful and embarrassing. As many of our 8th graders discovered that week, resisting the temptation to ‘dis’ (disrespect) others proved harder than they had imagined, so engrained is this habit in the culture of young people today. This March, on the heels of this experience and our return from Winter Break, our 8th graders decided to share what they had learned in Middle School Meeting and formally issue this same challenge to the rest of the Middle School student body. As leaders of our student community, our 8th grade more than any other class sets the tone for the rest of the Middle School. Their leadership in this effort is a wonderful example of how positive peer pressure can be used to healthily influence an entire school community. As we begin the final trimester, we look forward to joining our Middle School “Community of Kindness” effort with our larger community service efforts as a school to serve our broader St. Louis community.

Continuing the Conversation

These conscious efforts to revisit our “Community of Kindness” theme have been furthered by more modest efforts throughout the school year. Students at each grade level regularly revisit their own ‘Words of Wisdom’ in Class Meetings to assess their collective progress in meeting these ideals. Elsewhere, our Middle School teachers regularly seize upon teachable moments to remind our middle schoolers of the principles of “Community of Kindness” in both formal and informal interactions throughout the school day. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we find our students themselves spontaneously using the phrase “Community of Kindness” to address specific behaviors as they occur, and to remind their peers of the pledge we have all taken to build a kinder and gentler school community. More than anything else, the inclusion of this phrase in the lexicon of our middle schoolers’ vocabulary tells us that we have succeeded in penetrating the student culture of our school. Indeed, as we have come to discover, the phrase “Community of Kindness” has provided all of us in the Middle School with a useful shorthand to address a wide variety behaviors, in classrooms, hallways and other communal spaces that might otherwise slip into the background of our daily lives at school. Disciplinary issues are down markedly from previous years, and both teachers and students note that there is a distinct difference in the general tone and climate of the Middle School this year. As our Middle School Counselor Kara Friedman observes, “the Community of Kindness is not about a themed program or formal lesson plans, but a way of life based on a simple idea: We teach kindness by modeling it for others.” The great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi’s urged people to “Be the change you want to see in the world.” We have taken that message to heart in the Middle School this year.

Our School’s Mission Statement reads, “More than ever our nation needs responsible men and women who can meet the challenges of this world with confidence and embrace all its people with compassion.” Respect, meanwhile, lies at the heart of our Middle School Honor Code, while our School’s 2009–14 Strategic Plan clearly establishes the goal of “embracing diversity and inclusivity as critical components of the MICDS community” as part of our larger commitment to “Leadership and Community Engagement For the 21st Century.” Together, these three sources represent a powerful call to action. And while skeptics may wonder if efforts like this can really make a difference, we know that this year’s “Community of Kindness” effort brings us one step closer toward reaching these goals, and that by honoring our School’s mission, we honor the very best beliefs that have of each of our students.

Want to learn more? Come visit our Middle School and see for yourself. Odds are, you’ll find one of our students holding a door open ready to greet you!
CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

International Expo is a school-wide celebration of diversity

MICDS students, families, faculty and staff celebrated cultural diversity within our School community at the second annual International Expo on November 2, 2012. The festivities began in Mary Eliot Chapel with a parade of flags representing 45 countries, and an uplifting cultural show of dance, song, and martial arts. Attendees collected “passports” (event programs), moving to several locations within the Middle School to view a myriad of booths exhibiting the ethnic artifacts, customs, clothing, musical instruments, artwork, and food of the various countries. Seema Chouhan and Susan Hiemenz, parent co-chairs for the Expo, described the evening as “a beautiful showcase of the diversity present at MICDS, and evidence of the impact of the Parent-School Partnership.”

Collaboration and support abounded from multiple groups within the school community, including: the International Exchange Program, the World Languages and Communications Departments, Facilities and Housekeeping, Admissions, Technology, Food Services, the Upper School International Student Council, and the MICDS Parents Association. “Without each and every person, achieving this level of success would have been difficult,” said Chouhan. “Many individuals volunteered tirelessly for the entire day, a few having only been members of the MICDS community for a year.”

Upper School student Liz Lewis ’14 (Spain booth) has been involved with the International Expo since its inception: “I think the Expo gets people to learn about other people and cultures in a fun way” and inspires attendees to “go out and learn more about something that interested them at the Expo. It also is a good way for the whole school to come together. Many Upper School students volunteer and this helps them get close to the younger students,” she said. Certainly even the youngest Expo attendees felt included, collecting stamps for their “passports” as they viewed booths and discovered the beauty of each country. Chouhan agrees with the Expo’s emphasis on promoting school unity, and stated, “It was a chance for our Lower School families to be a part of a bigger event that included more than just the Lower School community.”

Those responsible for booths shared their personal association to respective cultures, often telling stories of their own heritage and family. Connie Schoenecker (MICDS parent) provided her thoughts as a volunteer (Switzerland booth) and attendee, noting, “When you have a special connection to a country and its culture, you are only too happy to share it with others.” She described her thoughts as she walked through the displays. “My senses were overloaded with the sights and sounds, and of course, the yummy smells and tastes. It was easy to realize that our MICDS family is richly multicultural and diverse, and that sharing who we are is a fun way to learn and grow.” Erica Moore, MICDS Diversity Director and participant (Ghana booth) had a similar take on the joy of cultural sharing: “The International Expo is a great opportunity for our entire school community to share their cultures with one another in a fun and informative way.”

Head of School Lisa Lyle spoke of the importance of events like the International Expo as a way to promote the growth of engaged and compassionate world citizens. “We must help students develop a view of the world that invites curiosity about the richness and diversity of human societies and encourages respect for the humanity of all people,” she said. “Through contact with others whose experiences and worldviews are different, and through carefully structured learning
opportunities that offer both windows and mirrors into a range of cultural perspectives, our children begin to develop cultural competency and an eagerness to engage across difference.” This diversity and opportunity for learning is plentiful within our School community, exemplified by the fact that there are 42 different languages spoken in the homes of MICDS families.

The impact and importance of the 2012 International Expo to the MICDS community is clear. For volunteers, it was a true labor of love evidenced by enthusiastic descriptions of contribution and learning. Richard Baldwin, Upper School parent and Expo volunteer, recognized the long-lasting impact of the event. “The International Expo highlights MICDS’ diverse cultures, experiences, and points of view in the context of a trusting community. This is the recipe for broad learning, lively debate, and better understanding among students and across cultures,” he explained. “As global citizens, MICDS graduates will need the insights that come from events like these to solve the problems of our future.” Indeed, the partnership and inclusion of all segments of the MICDS population in this multicultural event truly inspires a continued desire to reach out of comfort zones and engage in collaborative discourse about positive change in the world.
Two years ago, while I was an undergraduate student at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, Canada, I attended a presentation by Dr. Alec Couros. Dr. Couros is a world leader in education technology and the purpose of his presentation was to share various technological tools and his thoughts for how they might fit into education. Around this time, I was starting to contemplate where I would complete my four-month student teaching internship as part of my degree requirements. During the presentation, he mentioned a number of schools around the world where he had traveled and presented; schools that were doing incredible things with technology. He really caught my attention when he described an independent school in St. Louis he had recently visited that had a one-to-one laptop program, something I did not even know was possible. For the rest of the presentation, I found my thoughts drifting, imagining how amazing it would be if I could do my student teaching at such a school.

After the presentation, I asked Dr. Couros about the possibilities of doing an internship at MICDS. He connected me to Elizabeth Helfant, the Upper School’s Coordinator of Instructional Technology, through Twitter to explore the idea further. A few tweets later, I found myself making the 1500-mile drive down to St. Louis from Saskatchewan, something no one from my program had ever done in the past.

Having never been farther south than Montana and North Dakota, I was a little nervous. My nervousness only grew when I arrived on MICDS’ large, beautiful campus. After I was given a tour and shown all the incredible things MICDS had to offer, I found myself both intimidated and excited for what was to come. I had never seen or been to a school like MICDS and I knew I was in for quite an experience.

I was right. During the four months of student teaching at MICDS, I was given an unprecedented opportunity to learn and grow as a teacher. MICDS gave me an incredible opportunity to work with an open-minded, motivated faculty who was willing to help a brand new teacher despite their already busy schedules. In my time at MICDS, I was able to implement a flipped classroom in my student teaching, something that my classmates later told me they could have never dreamed of doing during their internship experiences.

With each and every student having access to laptops, the possibilities for what we could do in the classroom were endless. Every student in my class had access to a wealth of knowledge and limitless resources at their fingertips. I was able to personalize each students’ learning and use the school’s technology tools to push my students in ways I didn’t know were possible. This type of classroom setting allowed me the opportunity to grow and learn alongside my students. My students were not only becoming stronger in their content knowledge and skills, but the technology allowed them to develop a digital fluency that will put them steps ahead of others in today’s colleges and workplace.

My internship came to an end right before winter break and it was time to head back to Canada to complete the final semester of my degree. It was difficult to part from the students and teachers I had grown so close to over my time at MICDS. Needless to say, I was thrilled when MICDS invited me back to teach the next year.

It was a tough decision to leave my home country and start my career somewhere new and exciting. However, I realized that MICDS would provide unparalleled professional development opportunities, technology resources and administrative support, in addition to well-rounded, enthusiastic students. So here I am, learning and growing more than ever.

Following his 2011 internship, Kyle Webb joined the MICDS faculty in 2012. He teaches math and science in the Upper School and is head coach of the varsity ice hockey team.

“I realized that MICDS would provide unparalleled professional development opportunities, technology resources and administrative support.”
New playground dedicated at North Side Community School

Project Play, the school-wide service project that was initiated in 2011 by Upper School students, came to fruition on December 4 when a new play structure was formally dedicated at North Side Community School. The entire MICDS community came together to support Project Play through a variety of fundraising projects and collected more than $30,000 to construct a new, safe play area at North Side.

At the dedication, Ross Woolsey ’67, North Side’s Director of Business and Development (pictured below, at left), presented a handmade thank you sign to MICDS students as a gesture of appreciation. Speaking on behalf of MICDS, Gabrielle Harris ’13, Kera Bussey-Sims ’14 and Anna Robson ’13 shared, “We are so happy to provide you with a safe and enjoyable place to play, and we hope our relationship with North Side continues to grow.”

A steering committee comprised of Upper School students took on leadership roles to make Project Play a reality. They interviewed North Side students and offered design input for the play structure.
“WE SHAPE
OUR BUILDINGS;
THEREAFTER
THEY
SHAPE US.”

–Winston Churchill

Progress on the construction
of the McDonnell Science,
Technology, Engineering and
Mathematics Facility and
Brauer Hall is apparent every
day on the Upper School
campus. Be sure to check out
the online Construction Cam,
where images are updated
every 15 minutes,
at http://ibeamsystems.com/
private/micds/