



January 25, 2008

Dear Senior School Parents,

January has a funny reputation for being a long, cold and dark month. Nothing could seem farther from the truth here at the Senior School. Sure, it has been cold, dark, and 31 days long, but January has been filled with some good learning, reflection, and work by our students and faculty. I think, in the cold dark days, we often forget that this is when much of the heavy lifting of the year takes place and our students and teachers have approached this time with a high level of thoughtfulness.

We are also doing much in the next few weeks to think of others and to find a way to create broader understanding of difference in our community. I know you each have received *The Declaration for a Diverse and Inclusive Community* along with letter from Steve Lee '77 and chair person of the Board of Trustees. I know from the students here that this has sparked much conversation. Students have asked great questions about what diversity means here and we are seeing that recognition of difference as an important starting point for these conversations. Difference can mean race, religion, or any combination of those elements listed in the *Declaration* and beyond. Difference is also the unique elements each of our students brings to school each day. I see the *Declaration* as a statement of support for helping us find the strength each student brings and to support students where they are weak.

As an example, the faculty spent a good deal of time discussing the meaning of "learning style" noted in the *Declaration*. They asked how recognition of that difference will impact the work they do each day and impact the school community we create here. I take this version of diversity to mean that we need to understand the individual learning strengths and weaknesses each student has and consider how we use that knowledge to support that child's learning. We need to help build strength in the weak spots and utilize the strengths to help each student find success.

All this is to say that we have work to do, much the same work we have always done, albeit with a greater understanding of what that responsibility means. We also have a responsibility to understand our parents and help parents, students, and teachers connect and learn about how to support good learning here. I know we can best know you and support the learning of your child when you provide us feedback. Please do pass along your feedback in the manner outlined in the Parent-School Covenant. As I have not heard from too many of you, I trust that feedback is getting to the people best able to respond to it.

One final and important note of great excitement for me. On August 24<sup>th</sup>, which seems like a very long time from right now, the Parents' Association will sponsor a talk by Dr.

Robert Brooks. Dr. Brooks is an expert in creating resiliency in children and provides great insight into how to teach and parent effectively. He will follow up his talk with the parents with a morning with the faculty. Needless to say, I think this is quite exciting and please mark your calendars now for this date.

I hope the month of February gets off to the same great start as January. Please read below for some announcements and information from the Parents' Association about up coming meeting on February 6 and other assorted announcements from the faculty. Please pass along any feedback or thoughts you have and I hope to see you all on campus sometime soon.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy LaCasse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Jeremy LaCasse  
Head of Senior School  
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Announcements from the Parents' Association of the Senior School:

The Parents' Association will have a meeting on February 6 at 8:30 a.m. The meeting will take place in McCune Dining Hall. The following items will be on the agenda: Dr. Robert Brooks, Nomination for posts for next year, The Report of the Association, The Gala, Graduation Lunch, and the Lunch and Learn scheduled for February 20<sup>th</sup>.

Announcements and News from the Faculty and Students:

**From Mrs. Perry:**

GlobalFest Week is upon us. Look for events and discussions associated with greater understanding and good fun concerning the diversity of our campus and the world.

**From Mr. Ashworth:**

The Gateway Clipper Dance is on Saturday, March 1. Boarding starts at 6:45pm at the Station Square dock, sailing from 7:30pm to 10:30pm. If parents are meeting their children after the dance, they should be at the dock no later than 10:30pm, since the boat always docks on time. The cost of a ticket will be \$28 per person, which does not include any food onboard.

**Science Olympiad:**

Science Olympiad won third place at Clearview, Ohio invitational. Seventeen students attended.

**Service Learning at the Senior School:**

SSA participated in the Diversity bookshelf project at Manchester Craftmen's Guild on Monday, January 21; MLK day was a "day on" and not a "day off" for the participants. The project was sponsored by Pittsburgh Cares.

The successful January 24 Blood drive netted 30 units of blood for Central Blood Bank. The next drive is in late April.

Saturday, Feb. 16 (10:00 - 12:00) the Service Learning crew will sort medical supplies at Global Links in East Liberty. Twelve is the maximum number of volunteers Global Links can accommodate; permission slips will be available at the Service Learning meetings or from Mrs. Blair in the Service Learning office in Hunt.