

James Newman, Ph.D., Head of School

Dear Academy Alumni,

Happy New Year and best wishes for a healthy and productive 2010. I hope you had an enjoyable and restful holiday vacation with your family and friends.

The weeks prior to the vacation were busy ones for all of us. The Academy sparkled in many ways during those weeks and particularly at our Holiday Concert. A highlight every year is the final two numbers of the show, in which the entire group of musicians return to the stage to perform the closing songs together. What a wonderful and colorful sight it is to see! I encourage you to visit the [Photo Gallery](#) on the Academy's website to see some of our Concert photos.

The last 12 months provided quite a challenge to independent schools, colleges, and universities throughout our nation. As many of you are aware, our experience was similar to our peers. I am pleased to report that we not only persevered during 2009, we exceeded some of our expectations. We achieved this by holding our expenses in line and by continuing to think very carefully about our resources and how we use them. Based on the priorities our Board of Trustees and I developed shortly after the economic tumult unleashed its full force last September, we continue to support our academic programs to ensure their quality, the financial needs of students requiring support, and our school facilities.

I'm looking forward to the remainder of the school year and believe we will continue to accomplish the goals articulated in our five-year strategic plan, [Challenge 2013](#). Although we continue to be pressed by the uncertainty of the global economy, there is a strong sense of optimism about the Academy, its direction, and our ability to sustain our mission while we innovate. Because of your help and the support of many other friends of the Academy, we believe our optimism is properly placed and that success we've experienced thus far during our *Triple Anniversary* year will continue.

Preparing students for success in college, of course, remains one of the hallmarks of our school mission. Not surprisingly, therefore, I refer to that topic and the college admissions process often in my monthly electronic musings to the parents of our students. [Please click here](#) if you're interested in reading my December 2009 letter. For those of you who have not been involved in college admissions during the last fifteen years, the pressure surrounding the annual process has intensified significantly. Interest in admission to the "most-highly competitive" colleges and universities has soared, along with the number of applicants (including international students) and the number of applications they submit electronically with aplomb. In short, the stakes have only grown higher, and I don't envision a change to the trend. We continue to "prepare" and "place" our students with success, as my December letter illustrates.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition of our *Alumni eNewsletter*. Please continue to send us your news and forward a copy onto another alum who may not yet be receiving it. If you're into technology, why not connect with us on Facebook and Twitter? We continue to build our presence online, and we look forward to using these tools to help us expand connections with alumni.

With warm regards for a special year,

Jim