

November 2010

James Newman, Ph.D., Head of School

Dear Academy Families and Friends,

Recently Sophie West, a current junior and assistant editor-in-chief of our yearbook, asked me to compose my annual quote for *The Spectator*. Sophie wanted me to focus my remarks this year on “the Academy as a community.” Sophie’s request led me to think about our school community and its uniqueness, and it’s these thoughts I want to share with you.

The greatest strengths of the Academy community stem from its commitment to the school’s [mission](#), [core values](#), and [Community Compact](#). The mission of Harrisburg Academy has not changed markedly during the last 50 years except for our recent commitment to being more “globally-minded.” Three years ago, as part of our current *Challenge 2013* strategic planning efforts, Academy stakeholders worked together in crafting our core values – brief descriptions of the elemental beliefs to which our faculty, staff, and administrators are firmly committed. This year, we composed our Community Compact, which outlines the basic responsibilities of Academy employees, parents, and students. The core values and the Community Compact are statements of morals and commonly-accepted principles that have defined the actions of students, parents, and Academy employees for many years.

I hope you periodically will read our core values and Community Compact. Both are posted to our website and the core values hang prominently in the two entrances to our school. During the next few months, our division heads and teachers will devote more time to engaging our students in conversations about the Community Compact in morning meetings and classroom discussions. As we’ve learned with Responsive Classroom® and Developmental Designs®, successful implementation of programs that create valuable social relationships requires practice with effective role modeling. The result has produced an environment in our school where students treat their peers with kindness and respect, take responsibility for their actions, and become involved in the busy and rewarding life of the Academy school community.

The Community Compact is simple to understand, yet ambitious in its vision. Take, for example, one of the commitments requested of parents: “We value the culture of giving fostered by our Academy community. We agree to give as we can of time, treasure, and talent to our community.” A sizable proportion of our parents currently are engaged — either continuously or periodically — in activities sponsored by the Parents Association. If every parent chose to volunteer in these activities, our dynamic school community would become truly remarkable. If every parent shared a talent or gift with a classroom or teacher, our collective knowledge would expand exponentially. If every parent gave of his treasure, as able, we would have the ability to provide increased opportunities to the young learners in our community.

The goodwill among Academy parents for our school community is a deep reservoir. It helps us sustain our deep sense of common purpose and action. It has created long-lasting bonds among parents, students, faculty, and alumni. Please add your goodwill to the reservoir and join us in demonstrating what our commitment can achieve for the entire Academy community.

With warm regards,

Jim Newman

Challenging our students in an environment that nurtures and inspires.