

James Newman, Ph.D., Head of School

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Dear Academy Families and Friends,

For centuries, people throughout the world have regarded a lifetime as if it were a journey. They've told stories about "life journeys" and how these adventures often take surprising and unique turns that ultimately shape the character and fortune of the protagonist.

One of my favorite stories of a "life journey" is Twain's wonderful book, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. There are many more – such as *Don Quixote*, many of Dickens' novels and Kipling's *Kim*. I'm sure you have your favorite.

At Harrisburg Academy, we regard education the same way – as a journey. Like all highly meaningful journeys, the one at the Academy is a personalized one. Our teachers are adept at understanding who your child is and how he or she learns best. Our teachers "travel" with their students, giving them individual attention, and encouraging and mentoring them along the way. Year in and year out, our graduating seniors attribute much of their learning success to the personal interest teachers took on their behalf. Ten, 15, and even 20 years later, our alumni continue to praise our faculty for the guidance they received and the high standard of performance to which they were held. No two children are alike; therefore, each Academy learning journey is a unique experience that is neither anonymous nor standardized.

The Academy's learning journey traverses a wide path because it is based on study of the liberal arts. Our liberal arts program enables children to read a broad variety of literature, for example, participate in laboratory science and produce an assortment of artwork. It is an extensive learning adventure that consistently provides opportunities for children to explore and discover, and in turn, master critical 21st-century learning competencies which will make them successful independent thinkers and active contributors to a global society. Our students repeatedly show they can analyze problems critically, and articulate their thoughts clearly and concisely. Our learning journey is not a narrowly prescribed one that assesses knowledge by merely asking students to fill in the bubbles of a "Scantron® test."

At the Academy, students learn how to travel successfully with their peers by making thoughtful and respectful choices. Our teachers model this kind of behavior daily and demonstrate honesty, kindness, and humility to our students. By the time students graduate from the Academy, they have learned how to compete and collaborate. Their learning journey is not characterized by a lack of concern for others and social cliques that belittle their peers.

Finally, the learning journey at the Academy is extensive. Along the way, students experience points of success and challenge. By committing to travel the entire route, students learn how to persist during challenging times and accept their successes with humility. As Malcolm Gladwell (the noted author of *The Tipping Point*), wrote in *Outliers*, his new successful work, "Success follows a predictable course. It is not the brightest that succeed" but those "who have been given the opportunities – and the strength and presence of mind to seize them." Over time, Academy students learn to recognize the wonderful learning opportunities presented and take full advantage of them.

This year, we began what I hope will become a longstanding tradition at the beginning of each new school year. At our opening all-school assembly, each member of the senior and kindergarten classes was introduced to the entire school body. The pairs of students walked together across the floor of

Challenging our students in an environment that nurtures and inspires.

our Lehrman Gymnasium. Their short walk characterized the longer learning journey that is Harrisburg Academy. It was a poignant moment for everyone in the gym.

Learning is a remarkable journey of exploration, discovery, and self-discovery. We are most pleased to make the journey together with your children.

With warm regards,

Jim